

# Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum  
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Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

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Thanks to some fine work by our Mechanical Team, CRR Business Car 100 now sports brand new track lights.

## *August 23<sup>rd</sup> General Membership Meeting*

Our next General Membership meeting will be held on Monday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 at 6:30 pm at the Chuckey Depot / Railroad Museum, 110 South Second St., Jonesborough, TN (at the railroad crossing). The August program is entitled "Rails to Bristol", highlighting material put together by the late local author and historian Bud Phillips. Come out, bring a friend, and enjoy a great night of railroading with your fellow railfans.

## *Member Notes*

### *By Edna Kay Carter*

Please remember those who have lost loved ones over the past several months.

Watauga Valley mourns the loss of charter member Anna Banner. Long time members will remember her warm presence and contributions along with husband Herrmann at many meetings and events. Anna's obituary can be found at the end of this newsletter.

Continue to keep Nancy Ritchie, Sharon Slagle, Gary Price, Jack Maloney, Lois Tilley and Billy Walker in your thoughts and prayers as they deal with various health concerns. As always, let us know of any member, friend or family member to whom a card might be sent or a phone call made. The office number is 423-753-5797 or call Edna Carter at 423-571-4612.

Welcome our newest member Dyke Carl Parker; we look forward to seeing you at the meetings.

Hope everyone will stay safe and healthy.

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### **WATAUGA VALLEY UNIFORMS**

Order forms are available on page 9 for ordering official WVRHS&M uniforms. If you need a uniform or name badge, email [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com). If you ordered a uniform and have not got it yet, please contact us at that address.

### **WATAUGA VALLEY BROCHURES**

If you know someone that is interested in joining the Watauga Valley Railroad Museum, new brochures are available to hand out. Either go by the Chuckey Depot and pick them up or phone the WVRHS&M office at 423-753-5797.

### **LIBRARY DONATIONS**

Our library collection in Jonesborough is growing fast. We appreciate all the donations that have been made. Please bring your railroad book donations to any membership meeting or call the chapter office at 423-753-5797. If you are finished reading or just want to donate, put your books to good use. We have plenty of room to add more books!

### **GET THE WHISTLE STOP IN BEAUTIFUL COLOR VIA E-MAIL**

If you're receiving the Whistle Stop in hard copy you are missing out on the beautiful colors each month. Whistle Stop is being offered to all members in digital copy which is so much more detailed and colorful. Also, you will receive it about week in advance than the mailed out hard copy. If you're interested in changing out to the email copy, please call the office at 423-753-5797.

## *2021 WVRHS&M Train Excursions*

**GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN SUMMER TRAIN EXCURSION A BIG SUCCESS.** We experienced a very fast sell out for our September 11<sup>th</sup> excursion on the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad.

Tickets for our **HIWASSEE GORGE EXCURSION**, scheduled for October 16<sup>th</sup>, will go on sale soon.

## *Chuckey Depot / Museum*

Plans are to have another Chuckey Depot/Museum Host Training session which lasts about 1 hour later in the year. If you would like to host at the Chuckey Depot one day a month, please email Mike Tilley at [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com) stating you would like to get trained. When a date has been set for the training, we will call you to get everything confirmed. We had over 200 volunteer hours at the depot last month with record crowds.

### **Next Exhibit at the Chuckey Depot Railroad Museum**

The next themed exhibit at the Chuckey Depot Railroad Museum in Jonesborough will open on Thursday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The museum will be open that day at its regular hours from 1:00-4:00 pm, with a special Opening Night event starting at 6:30 pm. Refreshments will be served during the event.

The new exhibit will review the history of the original East Tennessee & Virginia Railroad from Knoxville to Bristol; its merger into the East Tennessee, Virginia & Georgia Railroad; and its subsequent merger into the Southern Railway. This important piece of our upper East Tennessee railroading history will feature early artifacts from each line, including remembrances of one of Southern's local passenger trains, "*The Tennessean*".

The exhibit will run from September, 2021 through the end of February, 2022. Hours of operation are Thursday, Friday and Sunday from 1:00-4:00 pm and Saturday from 11:00 am-5:00 pm. We look forward to seeing everyone at the Chuckey Depot!

## *Mechanical Department Report* *by Jim Magill and Art DeVoe*

If you would like to volunteer at the Spring St. Coach Yard in Jonesborough on Tuesdays or Saturdays, please call 423-753-5797 or email [wataugavalley@embarqmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@embarqmail.com). There are projects for everyone; hope to hear from you.

### **ROLLING STOCK**

**"Powhatan Arrow" coach (WATX 539):** is at North Carolina Transportation Museum in service.

**"Moultrie" diner (WATX 400): 400 Moultrie Diner:** is at the Spring St. Coach yard getting some upgrades.

**"Crescent Harbor" sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351):** is at the Spring St Coach yard getting some upgrades.

**"St Augustine" coach (WATX 500):** is at the Spring St. Coach Yard getting new windows and floor repair.

**"Clinchfield 100" office car (WATX 100):** has come a long way with its restoration project. New air conditioning along with track lights installed. All the dining tables and chairs have been installed.

## *In the News*

### *CSX Santa Train Won't Run Again in 2021*

[*Trains News Wire*] For the second straight year, there will be no CSX Santa Train in the southern Appalachian mountains. Instead, organizers will hold drive-through distribution of gifts at four locations.

The train had run for 77 years until it was replaced by the drive-through distribution last year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ongoing COVID-19 concerns will sideline the train again this year, the *Kingsport Times News* reports.

“Planning the Santa Train takes several months, so the decision to hold our drive-thru gift event was made out of an abundance of caution in light of ongoing concerns about COVID-19,” Bryan Tucker, vice president of Corporate Communications at CSX, told the newspaper.

Instead of the 110-mile train trip, Santa Train team members will distribute gifts from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. on Nov. 20 at four Food City locations: Shelbiana, Clintwood, St. Paul, and Weber City. Last year, backpacks were distributed with winter accessories and toys donated by the First Responders Children’s Foundation.

The railroad, Kingsport [TN] Chamber of Commerce, grocery chain Food City, Appalachian Power, and Nashville non-profit organization Soles4Souls are involved in the train’s charity effort.

The Kingsport Chamber and Clinchfield Railroad launched the Santa Train tradition in 1943. It most recently has featured a train pulled by CSX’s F40PH2 executive train locomotives, but in the past has featured such notable power as a restored Clinchfield F7 and SD45, Union Pacific Challenger No. 3985 (rebadged as “Clinchfield No. 676”) and other steam power.

### *NS to Reopen PA Intermodal Terminal*

[*Trains News Wire*] Norfolk Southern will reopen an intermodal facility in Greencastle, Pa., to increase terminal capacity and address the supply-chain congestion that is leading to container delays across the U.S. rail system, the railroad has announced.

The Franklin County Regional Intermodal Facility, about 65 miles southwest of Harrisburg and 11 miles north of Hagerstown, Md., will began a gradual phase-in on Sept. 10, first handling traffic that currently moves between Memphis’ Rossville Intermodal Terminal and the Rutherford intermodal facility between Harrisburg and Hershey, Pa. A customer advisory indicates the first Greenville-Rossville train No. 201 will depart Sept. 13, with the first train No. 202 from Rossville arriving the same day.

With strong growth in volume driven by e-commerce and a recovering economy, we believe the timing is right to bring our Greencastle facility back online,” Chief Marketing Officer Alan Shaw said in a press release. “We are excited about the new opportunities that this reopening provides for us and for our business partners across Pennsylvania and beyond.”

The Greencastle terminal opened in January 2013, but was closed in 2019, with the railroad leaving open the possibility of reopening the facility if market conditions warranted.



## *WMSR Negotiates New Terms for #1309 Purchase*

[Greg Larry, *Cumberland Times-News* via *Automatic Block*, Western Maryland NRHS] Western Maryland Scenic Railroad officials have negotiated new terms for the balance of payments on their Baldwin steam engine No. 1309. The railroad purchased the massive locomotive in 2014 for \$100,000 from the B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore. A total of \$50,000 was paid then and the remainder was due last year. Then the scenic railroad had fallen into difficult financial times, particularly with the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic disease last year, making processing the payment difficult.

Del. Mike McKay, president of the scenic railroad's board, recently met with Francis Smyth, chairman of the B&O Railroad Museum board, to talk about the balance owed. "We paid \$50,000 but we owed them \$50,000," McKay said. "We went down to Baltimore and spoke to Mr. Smyth, and he and I were able to negotiate a payment plan where we will give them \$10,000 each year for the next five years. We made that first payment to them, so the next one won't be due until 2022." McKay said the payment plan has helped restore the scenic railroad's relationship with the B&O Railroad Museum. "That relationship that was a little soured since we had not fulfilled the agreement has now improved, and we were also able to establish more favorable terms for the scenic railroad as well, McKay said. "The payment schedule is a zero interest rate, and we are pleased with the terms."

McKay said the contract also includes language that the 1309 could not be transferred anytime in the future into private hands. "The idea was that we didn't want it privately owned," McKay said. "We wanted to make sure the public would always be able to see the No. 1309 steam locomotive." The restoration of the No. 1309 is continuing. Officials hope it will be on the tracks for fall foliage excursions.

## *Rare Fairbanks-Morse Locomotive Donated to TVRM*

[*Trains News Wire*] The Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum has added a rare Fairbanks-Morse locomotive to its collection thanks to a donation from the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The H16-66 "Baby Trainmaster", built in 1958, is one of the few surviving Fairbanks-Morse locomotives, and one of less than 1,500 produced by Fairbanks-Morse before the company exited the locomotive business in 1963. It spent its entire working life at the TVA's Gallatin power plant near Gallatin, Tenn., until its retirement in 1997.

With the plant isolated from rail service, the locomotive languished at the plant until the TVA approached the museum about possible donation and preservation. Extensive planning has taken place to allow the locomotive to be moved by truck to Chattanooga.

"TVRM is honored that TVA would place this locomotive in our collection for future display and possible operation" museum resident Tim Andrews said in a press release. "TVRM's mission is to educate the public on the role of railroads in developing the Tennessee Valley region and what better example than this locomotive to showcase the intertwined efforts of the railroads and the supply of electricity by TVA in powering our economy."

Plans are for the locomotive to be moved in time to be displayed for the start of the museum's year-long 60th anniversary celebration beginning Oct. 14, 2021. The museum is seeking sponsorships to help defray the moving costs; more information is available at the museum website (<https://tinyurl.com/2w2jt8jv>) or emailing [60years@tvrail.com](mailto:60years@tvrail.com).

## *Woman Injured in RR Station 'ghost-hunting' Search*

[Trains News Wire] Ghost hunting can apparently be a dangerous activity. The Buffalo News reports a 35-year-old Kenmore, NY woman was injured during a ghost-hunting expedition at Buffalo's landmark Central Terminal railroad station. The woman fell 15 to 20 feet through a substation roof near the back of the station property while exploring the facility without permission.

Police received a call about the accident about 10:30 p.m., and the woman was transported by ambulance to a hospital for treatment of multiple injuries. A male companion was uninjured. Police said no charges have been filed.

The station, built in 1929 but last used for trains in 1979, has gained a reputation for among ghost hunters — once being the site of a 6-hour live broadcast by the Ghost Hunters TV series. A nonprofit group which maintains the building and hosts events there has also held ghost tours.

## *CSXT Towers*

CSXT is installing new signal towers at the end of the sidings at Boone and Johnson City, TN. We understand that PTC will be cut in on part of the north end of the railroad.




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## *DINNER ON THE DINER*

On August 14<sup>th</sup>, the Watauga Valley Railroad Museum sponsored a fundraiser for the Chuckey Depot Museum. We sold over 180 tickets to the event for dinner on the *Clinchfield 100* (below right) and the *Moultrie* (below left). Twenty-two WVRHS&M members helped make the event successful. Great fun and a lot of happy patrons.





## *Display in the Block*

### *by Les Billings*

August is here already, and it is time for another Display in the Block. Time flies when you are having fun. I hope you enjoy these photographs as much as I love taking them. Railfanning can be a very adventurous hobby.

As I sat on the side of the bridge, on a cloudy Sunday afternoon, I was waiting on NS 127 in Telford. Generally, 127 is a morning train, but it was running late. I looked up and saw a dark pickup truck heading towards my direction. The driver stopped and said hello. At first, I did not know who it was. It was Mike Tilley and his wife. We talked for a few minutes and then he went on his way. I did not recognize him because he was not wearing a mask. When I joined back in December, we all were wearing masks and there were people you would meet and did not know them without it.



[Below] NS 127 switching cars at Bristol yard, looking back toward the depot from Mary St. bridge These appear to be Grain or some type of fertilizer hoppers. The Conductor looked up and asked me if I wanted to help. I said, sure. He was very nice.

[Above] On a trip to middle Tennessee, where my daughter lives, my wife and I drove down to the old Murfreesboro depot and happened to see these 3 CSX units pulling a couple of tanker cars down the line





On July 17<sup>th</sup>, I took a little visit to Duffield Va. to the Natural Tunnel Railroad Days event. It was a threatening day. We rode the chairlift down in a sprinkle of rain. The last time I was there was 30 years ago when my wife and I were dating. This is an awesome place to visit knowing that it is a naturally formed cave which is up to 200 feet wide and 80 feet high. This day annually is the only time you are allowed to walk all the way through. This is something every railfan should attend. Here are a few samples of the many photos I took.



Ground view of the west end of the Tunnel



A bird's eye view at the east end of the Tunnel



Looking back at the manmade Tunnel just east



Looking from inside toward the front



Looking from high above at the rear of the Tunnel



WVRHS&M UNIFORM ORDER FORM

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL/PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SHIRTS:

ROYAL BLUE – PORT AUTHORITY SPORT POLO SHIRTS (WITH CHAPTER PATCH) SPECIFY NUMBER.

MENS - NO: K500

LADIES – NO: L500

SMALL \$20 \_\_\_\_\_ 2XL \$22 \_\_\_\_\_ SMALL \$20 \_\_\_\_\_ 2XL \$22 \_\_\_\_\_

MEDIUM \$20 \_\_\_\_\_ 3XL \$23 \_\_\_\_\_ MEDIUM \$20 \_\_\_\_\_ 3XL \$23 \_\_\_\_\_

LARGE \$20 \_\_\_\_\_ 4XL \$24 \_\_\_\_\_ LARGE \$20 \_\_\_\_\_ 4XL \$24 \_\_\_\_\_

X-LARGE \$21 \_\_\_\_\_ 5XL \$26 \_\_\_\_\_ X LARGE \$21 \_\_\_\_\_ 5XL \$26 \_\_\_\_\_

ROYAL BLUE – PORT AUTHORITY EASY CARE BUTTON UP SHIRT (WITH CHAPTER PATCH)

DESIGNATE MENS LONG SLEEVE – NO: S608 OR MENS SHORT SLEEVE – NO: S508 SPECIFY NUMBER.

SMALL \$22 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 XL \$23 \_\_\_\_\_

MEDIUM \$22 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 XL \$25 \_\_\_\_\_

LARGE \$22 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 XL \$26 \_\_\_\_\_

X LARGE \$23 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 XL \$28 \_\_\_\_\_

ROYAL BLUE – PORT AUTHORITY EASY CARE BUTTON UP SHIRT (WITH NEW CHAPTER PATCH)

DESIGNATE LADIES LONG SLEEVE – NO: L608 OR LADIES SHORT SLEEVE – NO: L508 SPECIFY NUMBER.

SMALL \$22 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 XL \$23 \_\_\_\_\_

MEDIUM \$22 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 XL \$25 \_\_\_\_\_

LARGE \$22 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 XL \$26 \_\_\_\_\_

X LARGE \$23 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 XL \$28 \_\_\_\_\_

JACKET LINED

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ADULT SMALL TO XL - \$33 2XL \$36 3XL \$37 4XL \$38

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HATS:

ATHLETIC GOLD PORT & COMPANY SIX-PANEL TWILL CAP – NO: CP80 (WITH CHAPTER PATCH)  
-\$11.00 \_\_\_\_\_

***Whistle Stop***

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**TIME-SENSITIVE MATERIAL**

## **Anna Zelko Banner**

*August 01, 1918 - July 22, 2021*



Anna Zelko Banner, 102, long time resident of Elizabethton, TN passed away in the loving arms of her daughter in Rapid City, SD. She was born August 1, 1918 in Johnstown, PA to the late Martin and Catherine Buso Zelko. She was the oldest of nine children. Anna was a registered nurse for 60 years, beginning as an Army Nurse during WWII. She continued her career at the Franklin Clinic, Carter County Memorial Hospital and retired from the Mountain Home Veterans Administration.

Anna was a member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Johnson City, TN. She was also a long time member of Elizabethton B&PW and Carter County Democratic Women.

Survivors include her son, Skip (Claudia) Banner, Virginia Beach, VA; daughter, Ruth Stabile, Rapid City, SD. Grandchildren: David (Michelle) Banner, Virginia Beach; Kevin, Canton, GA, Robin Gasser (Mark), Virginia Beach, Travis (Sherye) Jones, Southbury, CT, and Curtis Jones, Rapid City, SD. Great Grandchildren include Hunter Banner, Chesapeake, VA, Devin Banner, Augusta, GA, Brooke Gasser of Virginia Beach; Dylan Banner, Canton, GA, Waylon Jones, Rapid City, SD, Martin Jones, Sturgis, SD; Shelby Wyatt and Cody Jones of Southbury, CT. One cute great-great grandson, Drew Banner of Chesapeake, VA also survives. Surviving brothers are Daniel Zelko, Michigan and Edwin Zelko of Pennsylvania. Several nieces & nephews and her long-time friends and neighbors: Christine Eller and Edna Williams also survive.

Anna was preceded in death by her husband, Herrmann, January 07, 1998, son-in-law, Paul Stabile; her parents and six siblings, brothers George, John, Martin, Robert, Albert and one sister, Eleanor Church.

Funeral Services were held on Sunday, August 1<sup>st</sup>. Memorials were requested to be made to Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Anna's memory.