

Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society &
Museum

P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN. 37605-0432

(423) 753-5797

www.wataugavalleyrrhsm.org



Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

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For the seventy-first time, Santa rides the rails through Southern Appalachian coal fields on his namesake CSXT train spreading Christmas cheer and goodies. Joe Henrichs, new CSX CEO, was on board, providing corporate support. [Gary Price photo.]

November 28th General Membership Meeting

Our next General Membership meeting will be held on Monday, November 28th, 2022 at 6:30 pm at the Chuckey Depot / Railroad Museum, 110 South Second St., Jonesborough, TN (at the railroad crossing). Our program will be presented by Ralph Clarke on the burning of the East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad bridge during the Civil War, one of several bridges burned in our region. We will also be discussing our 2023 train excursions. (Note we are hoping to get back into bussing out of Johnson City and Asheville.) Bring a friend out and enjoy a great evening of railfanning.

Member Notes

Please remember the following in your prayers: Richard Baker, whose mother passed away; Fred Phofl, who has been in the hospital; and Charlene Cleveland, whose husband passed away.

To request that one of our members or family be reported for various concerns in the *Whistle Stop*, email a request to wataugavalley@gmail.com.

2023 OFFICER AND BOARD ELECTIONS

At the October General Membership Meeting, Nominating Committee Chairman Frank Gricus asked for nominations from the floor. As there were no nominations forthcoming, it was voted to close the nominations. The following are now presented as candidates for office:

Officers

President -----	Mike Tilley	Incumbent
Vice President -----	Howard Orfield	Incumbent
Secretary-----	Connie Hunt	
Treasurer-----	Jeanie Walker	Incumbent
Historian-----	Gary Price	Incumbent

Board of Directors (vote for 3)

Les Billings

Rick Chinouth

Bob Mushet

Ballots were mailed out recently and must be returned by 12:01 am, December 12th, 2022. A ballot box will be available at the November meeting or you can mail to Nominating Committee, Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society, P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605-0432.



WVRHS&M CHRISTMAS EVENT / 41th ANNIVERSARY DINNER



Our annual Christmas Event / 41th Anniversary Dinner will be held on December 10th at 11:30 am at the Food City Banquet Room, 920 N. State of Franklin Rd, Johnson City, TN. A program, a photo show of our events over the past 40 years, will be part of the festivities. Details and registration form are included at the end of this newsletter.

2023 WVRHS&M DUES

The 2023 Dues Notices were recently mailed out. Please return your dues and check back to the Membership Chairman ASAP at Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum, P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605. You can join the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum for \$20.00 individual and add each family members at \$5.00 for each member. For questions, email wataugavalley@gmail.com.

2023 WVRHS&M Rail Events

The Watauga Valley 2023 excursion season will start in late April with a ride through the Great Smoky Mountains. More details will be available in the coming weeks.

Mechanical Department Report

by Jim Magill

GENERAL

If you would like to volunteer at the Spring Street Coach Yard on Tuesdays or Saturdays, please call 423-753-5797 or email wataugavalley@embarqmail.com. There are projects for everyone; hope to hear from you.



ROLLING STOCK

“Moultrie” diner (WATX 400), “St Augustine” coach (WATX 500), and “Powhatan Arrow” coach (WATX 539): All three cars are at the NCTM in Spencer, NC serving on their annual “Polar Express Train”.



“Crescent Harbor” sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351): At the Coach Yard for upgrades.

“Clinchfield 100” office car (WATX 100): Also at NCTM for the “Polar Express Train”. A heat blanket was installed over the water tank to prevent freezing. (Photo at left.) The 100 will receive extensive truck repair during the first quarter of 2023 at NCTM.

Chuckey Depot / Museum

Since the Museum was opened on October 2nd, 2017, we have had several thousand visitors at the depot whose experiences have been enhanced through hundreds of volunteer hours adding to their enjoyment. WVRHS&M wishes to thank all the volunteers who are trained to host at the museum. If you would like to be trained to host at the museum, please call 423-753-5797 and leave a message or email wataugavalley@embarqmail.com. We are planning more training sessions in 2023. Everyone is having a good time at the museum; please consider volunteering one day a month for four hours.

SANTA TRAIN VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

WVRHS&M and the Town of Jonesborough will again sponsor their annual Santa Train Exhibit on December 17th at the Chuckey Depot in Jonesborough, 210 South Second Street from 3 pm to 6 pm. Everyone is welcome to come out, bring their children and visit the restored Southern Caboose X450 to meet Santa Claus. We will need volunteers to help marshal visitors waiting in line. Please sign up by signing the volunteer sheet at the November 28th General Membership Meeting, emailing wataugavalley@embarqmail.com, or calling 423-753-5797. This will be good publicity for Watauga Valley as we are expecting a lot of people to come aboard our beautiful red caboose.

In the News ...

COME AND SEE SANTA IN HIS RED CABOOSE



The Historic Southern Railway X450 Caboose at the Chuckey Depot/Museum at Jonesborough will be open for everyone to see Santa Claus greeting guests from the caboose platform on Saturday, December 17th, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Santa will greet guests from outside the

caboose, providing the perfect photo opportunity along with a chance for everyone to see the historic 52-year-old railroad caboose. Santa won't just wave; he will talk with the children. The caboose and Chuckey Railroad Museum will also be open prior to the greeting of Santa the same day from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. for tours of the depot and this historic piece of equipment, an additional treat for many children who have never seen a caboose. Santa will ride the car from the North Pole to Jonesborough to greet everyone, giving his reindeers a vacation.

Many railroad enthusiasts in the area are likely familiar with the caboose as the Southern Railway x450. The caboose was used for many years on Southern Railway trains traveling through Jonesborough.

Southern Railway Caboose X450 was built in 1970 and ran the rails for over 22 years before it was donated to the Town of Morristown, TN. It was purchased 17 years ago by the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society from the Town of Morristown. It was moved to Jonesborough in 2005 and stored at the Spring St. Rail Yard in Jonesborough. It was restored several years ago and moved to its new home at the Chuckey Depot/Museum, 110 South Second Street in Jonesborough.

This will be a unique opportunity for both young and old to visit Historic Jonesborough, see Santa, see this historic railroad car, and attend the Jonesborough Christmas Parade. This will be a memorable event for the whole family for years to come. Plenty of parking at the depot parking lot will be available.

There is no charge for this event.

Visits with Santa and the historic train car are sponsored by the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum and the Town of Jonesborough. For more information, call the Jonesborough Visitors Center at 423-753-1010.

America Faces Possible Rail Strike in 2 Weeks

[CNN Business, 11/22/2022] America faces a growing risk of a crippling national freight rail strike in two weeks. The rank-and-file members of the nation's largest rail union, which represents the industry's conductors, rejected a tentative labor deal with freight railroads, the union announced Monday [November 21st].

The nation's second-largest rail union, which represents engineers, ratified its own contract. But the failure of the conductors to ratify their deal is another setback to efforts to avoid a strike.

With these votes, all 12 rail unions have now completed their ratification process, with members of eight of the unions voting in favor of deals and four voting against it. The four unions that have voted not will remain on the job until at least early next month while negotiations are held to try to avoid a strike that could cause widespread disruptions in the nation's still struggling supply chain and overall economy.

If even one of the dozen railroad unions were to go on strike, the other 11 would honor the picket lines, shutting down the railroads.

If a strike goes on for an extended period, it could cause shortages and higher prices for goods including fuel and food. If the four unions that rejected the deals are unable to reach new deals before strike deadlines, Congress could order the railroad workers to remain on the job or return to work.

The two unions that released voting results Monday are the transportation division of the Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, Transportation union (SMART-TD), which represents about 28,000 conductors and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET), which represents about 24,000 engineers. The engineers and conductors make up the two-person train crews.

For complete CNN article, see <https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/21/business/railroad-unions-votes>.

Strasburg (ex-N&W) 475 Accident



[TRAINS.com] Strasburg Rail Road 4-8-0 No. 475, damaged in a November 2nd collision with a piece of track maintenance equipment, is back in operation on the railroad's trains today (Monday, Nov. 7), Strasburg General Manager Jim Hager reports in a note to *Trains News Wire* correspondent Dan Cupper.

The locomotive suffered damage to its smokebox front and door, headlight, and some other parts in the collision with a "trackhoe," or tracked excavator, after running through a misaligned switch onto

a spur where the maintenance machine was parked. No one was injured. The accident was captured by a Virtual Railfan streaming camera; video from that camera was widely shared online. [ED. NOTE: Click <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQ5JwKY7ytg> for that video.]

The Federal Railroad Administration was scheduled to inspect the locomotive and investigate the incident last week.

No. 475, the only operating 4-8-0 in the U.S., was built by Baldwin in June 1906 and operated on Norfolk & Western until 1962. [ED. NOTE: The 475 served in branch line duties on the Blacksburg Branch between Christiansburg and Blacksburg, Virginia – the “Huckleberry”.] It has been at Strasburg since 1991.

WVRHS&M Board Candidate

I am a widowed senior citizen and a resident of Washington County since 1985. Bob Hand and I are cousins, but I hope you don't hold that against me!!

I am a candidate for the position of secretary of the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society, having served as interim secretary since September, 2022.

I could write a book about what I do not know about railroads and their history; only know that I have been interested in trains since having been told by my parents that my first 'ride' was from TN to OH when I was an infant. In 1998 I rode a WVRHS sponsored spring trip to North Carolina and loved every minute riding in that wonderful dome car! It was a sold-out trip, but I was fortunate to acquire tickets from a fellow in NC who found that he was unable to make the trip.

During the 1980s through the 1990s, I have served as both President and V-President/Program Chairman of the Historical Society in Blount County, TN. I also served as Treasurer, and was interim secretary for a time. In the late 1990s into the early 2000s, I served as Treasurer and as Secretary of my church in Blount County.

During my membership in the WVRHS, I have served as a bus captain on a number of rail trips, and am a willing volunteer at our Museum in Johnson City, as well as a volunteer to clean the interior of rail cars in the early spring, after our cars were used on the Santa Train. I have also served for two years as a bus captain for Dinner on the Diner, as patrons were transported from the Senior Center to the rail yard.

If nominated for the position of Secretary, I will fulfill my duties to the best of my abilities.

Connie Catron Hunt
155 Country village Drive E
Limestone, TN 37681

PS: I do have a pretty good sense of humor (that always helps!) and usually get along with folks pretty well. I'm certainly not perfect, but I am human!



Happy Thanksgiving !!!



Display in the Block

by Les Billings

As Thanksgiving time approaches, we all need to take a moment from our railfanning and reflect on what we are thankful for in our lives. Sometimes we forget to do just that. So, in reading this, stop and take a moment and give thanks. ***Happy Thanksgiving***



On my way home for lunch, one Friday a few months ago, I caught NS 278 coming down the hill approaching McKinley Rd. seconds from crossing over the Defect Detector @ MP 27.2. Today's cargo was shipping containers & Auto Racks. After the last car passed over the detector, I heard a voice coming from the control box and it was the announcement of no defects. There is a speaker in the box.

A little trip down into the country, in Washington County, TN, reveals NS 126 passing by the signal and detector @ MP 40.4, eastbound (Washington College Station Rd). Having just left Limestone, TN, "7632" is on its way to the Telford, TN community as it continues its journey eastward. An interesting sight is looking west and seeing the rise in the grade before it makes the curve.



Heading south, CSX 7245 is running down the main on the "Highline" in south Johnson City. This section of track runs parallel to Highridge Road and along the base of Buffalo Mtn. This Mixed Freight is rumbling by with a single unit up front and a pusher on the rear. This is a good place to photograph, because of the long straight section of track.



On a fine Sunday afternoon for Railfanning, I was lucky and caught NS 279 emerging from behind the Salt House in Jonesborough, TN, Fox Street Crossing. His intermodal load was heading to the Louisville, KY area. Engine 4050 was in the lead, an AC44C6M built in January 1995. This was my second train out of four I photographed that day.

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Watauga Valley RHS & Museum
P.O. Box 432
Johnson City, TN 37605-0432

TIME-SENSITIVE MATERIAL

WATAUGA VALLEY RHS&M



ANNUAL CHRISTMAS GATHERING & MEAL



SATURDAY,

DECEMBER 10th, 2022

IT'S TIME FOR THE WVRHS&M ANNUAL CHRISTMAS MEAL. THE FOOD WILL BE PREPARED BY FOOD CITY, AND ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS SHOW UP AND ENJOY A GREAT MEAL. WE WILL GATHER AT THE DEPOT AT FRANKLIN COMMONS (FOOD CITY), 920 NORTH STATE OF FRANKLIN ROAD, JOHNSON CITY, TN 37604.

THE MENU WILL CONSIST OF OVEN FRIED CHICKEN, APPLE GLAZED PORK TENDERLOIN, TWICE BAKED POTATOES, MIXED VEGETABLES WITH CITRUS BUTTER, ALONG WITH SALAD, ROLLS, DESSERT, AND CHOICE OF DRINK – ALL FOR \$14.00 PER PERSON. WHAT A DEAL!!!

THE PROGRAM WILL BE PRESENTED BY WVRHS&M HISTORIAN GARY PRICE ON OUR PAST NORFOLK SOUTHERN STEAM EXCURSIONS. YOU DO NOT WANT TO MISS IT!

TO MAKE RESERVATIONS, MAIL THIS FORM TO WATAUGA VALLEY RHS&M ANNUAL CHRISTMAS MEAL, P.O. BOX 432, JOHNSON CITY, TN 37605-0432, ALONG WITH YOUR PAYMENT. **RESERVATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2022.** PAYMENT MUST BE MADE BEFORE THE EVENT. WE CANNOT COLLECT MONEY AT THE DOOR ON THE DAY OF THE EVENT.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Number attending _____ X \$14.00 PER PERSON = Total Enclosed \$ _____

ARRIVE BY 11:30 AM; THE SERVING LINE WILL OPEN AT 12 NOON.