

Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum
P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN. 37605-0432
(423) 753-5797
www.wataugavalleyrhs.org



Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

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GSMR 2-8-0 #1702 added power and excitement to the natural beauty of WVRHS&M's excursion through the mountains of Western North Carolina. [Photo posted on Facebook by Karen Sipple]

September 25th General Membership Meeting

Our next General Membership meeting will be held on Monday, September 25th, 2023 at 6:30 pm at the Chuckey Depot / Railroad Museum, 110 South Second St., Jonesborough, TN (at the railroad crossing). Our program this month will offer a brief history of the Norfolk & Western and the Southern railways. This program will promise to be a great and informative program. Bring a friend out for a relaxing evening with your fellow members.

Member Notes

WELCOME ABOARD! New members: John & Linda Mayoka, Jonesborough, TN



If you have a friend or know of someone interested in railroads, please hand them a New Membership Brochure. We have the brochure available at the general membership meetings.

If anyone knows of a member that needs a card, thoughts for various concerns, or 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 or railfan04041961@gmail.com.

WATAUGA VALLEY UNIFORMS NOW AVAILABLE

The Watauga Valley uniforms are available. Order your new uniforms now for these beautiful uniforms. If you want an order form sent to you, please email wataugavalley@gmail.com requesting one.

PROGRAMS NEEDED FOR 2023

Howard Orfield and Brad McCroskey, WVRHS&M program directors, are looking for General Membership Meeting programs for 2023. Please call (423) 753-5797 or email wataugavalley@gmail.com if you have an interest in offering a program this year. We are looking for speakers interested in

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 our 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!

2023 Steam Train Excursion



Our Great Smoky Mountains Railroad train excursion was a big success with over 900 PASSENGERS on the train. A good time for all. More photos on page 5.

TRAIN TRIVIA: The British 4-6-2 steam locomotive "*Mallard*" reached a record-setting speed of 126 mph in 1938. Since then: A.) many steam engines have broken this record; B.) the engine was damaged in an attempt to break that record; C.) the engine occasionally powers excursion trains; D.) no steam engine has broken that record. Answer on page 5.

Mechanical Department Report

by Art Devoe

GENERAL

If you would like to help at the Jonesborough Coach Yard on Tuesdays between 9 am to 5 pm or Saturdays 9 am to 12 noon, please call our office at (423) 753-5797 or email wataugavalley@gmail.com.

ROLLING STOCK

“Moultrie” diner (WATX 400), “St Augustine” coach (WATX 500) and “Powhatan Arrow” coach (WATX 539): at North Carolina Transportation Museum in service.

“Crescent Harbor” sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351): in service at Goshen, VA on the “Shenandoah Valley Limited”, the N&W #611 trips over the Virginia Scenic Railway.

“Clinchfield 100” office car (WATX 100): Clinchfield 100 has been under restoration work since May 2023, receiving new wheels and truck work. The wheels and bearings have arrived at the shop and cranes have been called in for the week of September 18th to begin installation. We hope to have the car operation-ready within the next couple of weeks. See photos below.



Chuckey Depot / Museum

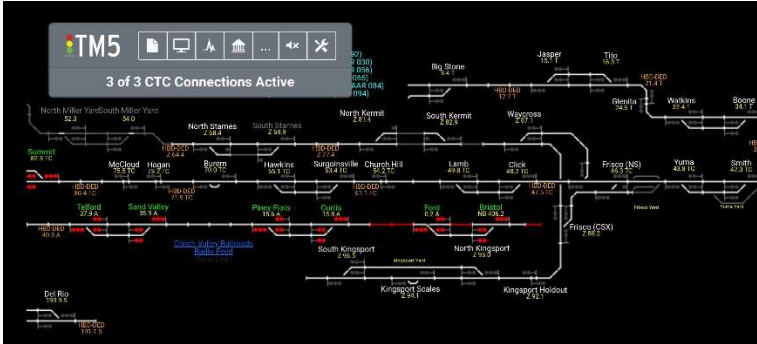
Things are very busy at the Chuckey Depot with record attendance during the month of August. Please come by and enjoy the new exhibit on the history of railroads in the Johnson City area. We appreciate all the WVRHS&M volunteers who host and make the museum more enjoyable.

TRAINING SESSION FOR THE CHUCKEY DEPOT

We're getting ready to schedule host training sessions for any WVRHS&M member who is interested in hosting at the Chuckey Depot. If you would like to attend one of the host training sessions, please call the office at (423) 753-5797 or email wataugavalley@gmail.com.

In the News ...

Disappointing "News" for Local Railfans



We understand from good sources at Norfolk Southern that the railroad's ATCS (Automatic Train Control System) will be removed from the Bristol to Knoxville A Line in the Spring of 2024 as NS will be transitioning to a satellite system.

This move affects the Chuckey Museum as well as railfans in general. Currently the ATCS system at the Depot monitors

rail activity (photo above) for visitor enjoyment. Railfans have this visual ability on home computers and phones. The move to a satellite system removes this video capability. Without this valuable tool the only way to track trains will be by radio and word of mouth.

CSX has already transitioned to satellite.

2023 CSXT Santa Train



As mentioned in last month's newsletter, it was announced that the CSXT *Santa Train's* 110-mile journey from Pikeville, KY to Kingsport, TN will take place this year on November 18th.

"We are honored to once again bring the *Santa Train* to life and share in the joy of the holiday season," president and chief executive officer of CSX Joe Hinrichs said. "I had the privilege of riding last year's *Santa Train* and was able to see firsthand how beloved this tradition is by CSX employees, community members and volunteers alike, and we are looking forward to another year of serving the Appalachia area."

N&W #611 Featured on "The Shenandoah Limited"

For a limited time only, train enthusiasts will have a unique opportunity to see the Shenandoah Valley's fall color show by rail. Pulled behind the legendary 611 – the sole surviving Class J steam locomotive built by Norfolk & Western Railway.

The Virginia Museum of Transportation, Inc. (VMT) and the Virginia Scenic Railway (VSR) are excited to jointly announce that the Norfolk & Western Class J No. 611 steam passenger locomotive is returning to service in the Shenandoah Valley this fall on a series of specially scheduled passenger excursions.

The 1950 Norfolk & Western Class J No. 611 is exclusively owned and operated by the Virginia Museum of Transportation as a traveling exhibit. The Virginia Scenic Railway is delighted to host these 611 excursions in partnership with the museum; the 611 will run twice daily as the "*Shenandoah Valley Limited*" this fall. [ED. NOTE: VSR operates over the Buckingham Branch Railroad in Central Virginia.]

Trips start and end at the Victoria Station in Goshen, Virginia. Upon boarding the train in Goshen, guests will travel under steam eastward through the fall foliage of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, into the rolling hills of the Shenandoah Valley all the way to the historic city of Staunton where the train will pause without disembarking, to be joined by a pair of diesel locomotives for the return trip back to Goshen.

The sleek and powerful Class J locomotives, designed and built in Roanoke by the Norfolk & Western Railway, were widely hailed as the finest steam passenger locomotives in the world.

Seating options will include Coach, Premium Coach, First Class, and Dome Classes, ranging from \$99.00 to \$249.00 per seat. [See <https://www.virginiascenicrailway.com/> for more information]

September 2023 WVRHS&M Excursion

Offered are the few snapshots below that capture the excitement and action of our most recent excursion on the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad.



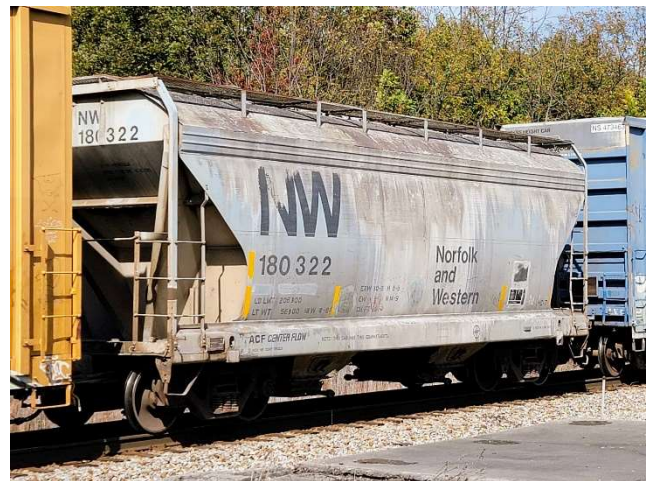
Display in the Block By Les Billings

Hope this finds everyone well. Fall is just about here, and this is one of the best times of the year for taking Railfan photos. Along with the trains you can get the Fall foliage. I am going to switch tracks this month and feature some Southern/Norfolk and Western cars that I have run across in my outings. These are getting harder and harder to spot. But when you do, it is a treat.



[Above] March 6, 2021, I caught this rare Hopper, Southern # 103779. I was in Piney Flats videoing and snapped this shot on my still camera.

[Below] On October 22, 2022, Norfolk and Western Covered Hopper #180322 as seen in Jonesborough. It was traveling east on NS 126.



[Above] December 6, 2022, this rustic Norfolk and Western Covered Hopper #182760 heading west through Johnson City on NS13Z.



[Below] On June 20, 2021, this Southern Box Car # 531276 rolled through Johnson City westward bound on NS 127.





[Left] On a run to Sand Valley, I caught this Norfolk and Western 3-Bay Covered Hopper # 178841. This was on 13Z traveling west.



[Right] January 30, 2022, is when I ran across this Southern Gondola #66739. I was in Limestone on a chilly afternoon.



[Left] September 5th, 2021, I found this Southern, short 2-Bay Covered Hopper # 92150 at the Bristol Depot. NS 126 had pulled down the siding and stopped to make a crew change and probably drop and add a few cars.



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TIME-SENSITIVE MATERIAL