

Whistle Stop



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

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Last month CSX unveiled another addition to its Heritage series of locomotives, ES44AH #1967, honoring Seaboard Coast Line (the result of the 1967 SAL and ACL merger). The CSX Heritage fleet is now composed of units representing these 15 predecessor lines: ACL; B&O; Chessie System; Conrail; C&O; Family Lines; L&N; Monon; NYC; Pere Marquette; P&LE (the 15th, added in June, 2024); RF&P; SCL; Seaboard System; and Western Maryland. [TRAINS photo]

June 24th General Membership Meeting

Our next regularly-scheduled General Membership Meeting will be held on Monday, June 24th, 2024, 6:30 pm, at the Chuckey Depot / Railroad Museum, 110 South Second St., Jonesborough, TN (at the railroad crossing). For this month's program, we'll be treated to a DVD show of O. Winston Link's famous photos of the Norfolk & Western Railway. Bring a friend out and enjoy a great night of railroading.

Member Notes

Please keep the following in your thoughts and prayers: Gary Price, Fred Phofl, Tony King, Lois Tilley, and Jack Maloney. If you know 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.membership@gmail.com.

Welcome Aboard! Please welcome our newest members: Michael and Beth Brennan and Andy Watts, all of Johnson City; Ralph and Debbie Gragg of Bristol, TN.

PROGRAMS NEEDED FOR 2024

The Program Committee continues to seek programs for 2024 General Membership meetings. Please notify us at the next meeting or email wataugavalley@gmail.com if you are interested in providing a program. Also, we are looking for speakers if you know someone who would come and present a railroad-related program. And, as always, we're looking for DVD and slide shows.

FALL EXCURSION ON THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS RAILROAD

Mark your calendars for Watauga Valley Railroad Museum's fall excursion on Saturday, September 14th, over the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad. Tickets will go on sale soon. Watch our web site at <http://www.wataugavalleynrhs.org> for details.

Whistle Truck Available for Rent ...



Add excitement, fun and education for the entire family at your next event or parade by renting Watauga Valley's "Whistle Truck". This truck is a self-contained trailer featuring a collection of unique, historically-significant whistles from the steam locomotive era and the means to blow them.

Steam locomotive whistles, more resonant and musical than modern, electronic horns, were audibly distinct. Also, engineers of that day had their own unique way of blowing whistles, providing an aural "signature" that identified the man at the throttle to anyone within hearing distance. The "Whistle Truck" offers an opportunity to everyone of all ages to thrill to this bygone, haunting sound and, perhaps, create their own "signature" whistle sound. The collection includes vintage steam whistles from railroads such as the N&W, SOUTHERN, CB&Q and WESTERN MARYLAND and an accurate replica of the famous "Casey Jones" whistle. Historically significant in the collection as well are air (diesel) horns from CSX, N&W and VIRGINIAN and various cabooses (signal) whistles.

The whistles safely use air from a 185 CFM *Sullair* compressor and a 125-gallon surge tank. There is no steam involved in the operation. The rig - the Truck and trailer - is towed by a custom-built Ford F900 Diesel Truck.

For more information on having the Whistle Truck at your event, contact the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum at (423) 753-797 or email wataugavalley@gmail.com.

Mechanical Department Report

by Art Devoe

The weather has been good to the Watauga Valley Mechanical Team and there have been a lot of good working days at the yard over the last several weeks. 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 the WVRHS&M office at (423) 753-5797 or email wataugavalley@gmail.com. You do not have to be specialized in any field, just come down and we'll have a job for you.

ROLLING STOCK

“Moultrie” diner (WATX 400): back at the Yard having new motor mounts installed along with the roof being repainted.

“Powhatan Arrow” coach (WATX 539): new signage applied after recent paint job; also receiving air conditioning work. At right the 539 and “Clinchfield” are seen homeward-bound passing through Thomasville, NC.

“St Augustine” coach (WATX 500): back at the Yard receiving various, updated mechanical work.

“Crescent Harbor” sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351): at the Yard awaiting its next assignment.

“Clinchfield 100” office car (WATX 100): at the Yard receiving interior renovations of the rest room and lounge tables. Exterior work includes the roof being painted along with new wiring on the gen set.



Former WVRHS&M Equipment



At left is a photo of dining car “Fort Ribault,” once owned by Watauga Valley. The car, built in 1950 by Pullman Standard and delivered to the *Florida East Coast Railroad*, was from the same FEC series as the “Moultrie”. Over the years the car underwent a change of many owners, including Amtrak. We sold it to a museum in Florida many years ago.

Train Trivia: The first railway dining cars for use by passengers was put in service in what year? A.) 1859; B.) 1863; C.) 1868; D.) 1872. Answer on the next page.

Chuckey Depot / Museum

CHUCKEY DEPOT / MUSEUM RECEIVES HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT DONATION

Recently the Chuckey Depot / Museum received a great donation. The David DeVault family of Kingsport donated the cab and tender signage from Union Pacific 4-6-6-4 #3985 that was used to transform that engine into Clinchfield Challenger #676 for the 50th Anniversary in 1992 of the Clinchfield Santa Train. UP #3985 was brought into Huntington, WV where it became CRR #676 by using this signage. The train was operated on the ex-Clinchfield line between Shelby, KY and Kingsport, TN but not without some problems like side-swapping a north bound train at Boody VA and derailing on the wye in Kingsport.

On Saturday, August 24th, 2024 at 1 pm at the Chuckey Depot, Watauga Valley will host a dedication and grand showing of the signs. Also on hand will be engineer Charlie Morris; Trainmaster Scott Jessee; Don Royston (present-day Santa and helper to 1992 "Santa" Frank Brogden); and Ron Flanery, who will have photos of the event. All these speakers will be sharing their stories and experiences on the 1992 Santa Train. Many artifacts related to the 50th Anniversary trip will be on display. Mark your calendars for this event on August 24th at 1 pm.

DEPOT HOST TRAINING

The next host training session for the Chuckey Depot will be scheduled soon. To get involved with volunteering to host one day a month, email wataugavalley@gmail.com or call our office at (423) 753-5797 to get your name on the training list. We are needing more hosts since the hours of the depot have been extended during the summer months.

TRAIN SHOW COMING TO JONESBOROUGH, TN NOVEMBER 2nd, 2024

The Chuckey Depot/Museum, Watauga Valley RHS&M, Heritage Alliance, and the Town of Jonesborough will be sponsoring a Train Show on Saturday, November 2nd at the Jonesborough Visitors Center from 9 am to 5 pm. Set up for vendors is scheduled for the preceding Friday from 11 am to 7 pm. The cost is \$20 for a table for vendors and \$5 admission for guests. Vendor sign up for the event will be opened on Monday, August 5th, at <http://www.wataugavalleyrhs.org>. More details will be announced soon.



The 1990 photo at left finds N&W 2-6-6-4 #1218 steaming past the Chuckey Depot at the station's original Chuckey, TN location. [Greeneville Sun photo]

Train Trivia answer: B.) The Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad first operated two dining cars in 1863 (called Eating Cars). The 50-foot cars were fitted with an eating bar, a steam box (there were no kitchens, food was pre-cooked) and "other features usually found in a first-class restaurant." In 1868, Pullman built the first "real" dining car, the *Delmonico*. [Source: AAR]

In the News ...

Virginia Moves Closer to Amtrak Service to NRV

[CARDINAL NEWS, June 4] The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority on Tuesday announced that it is in preliminary discussions with Norfolk Southern about an alternative way to extend passenger rail to the New River Valley that would avoid a costly tunnel upgrade and make it easier to eventually bring service to Bristol.

After receiving information earlier this year regarding the cost and timeframe for a previous plan that would use about 28 miles of the Virginian Line, which the commonwealth purchased from Norfolk Southern in 2022, the authority revisited negotiations with the railroad operator to find a more cost-effective and timelier alternative.

The previous proposal — which included building a temporary platform on Cinnabar Road in 2028 with an extension through the Merrimac Tunnel to a permanent station near the New River Valley Mall in 2030 — would have had a price tag of an estimated \$951 million. Under the alternative plan, a new platform would be built on Norfolk Southern's main line, the so-called N-Line, at the company's Cambria Yard in Christiansburg, which served rail passengers from 1904 to 1979. A cost estimate has not been made available yet.

"The shift to a Cinnabar mall location was much more expensive than any of us expected and would also take a lot more time," DJ Stadtler, the authority's executive director, said at Tuesday's board meeting.

"We took that and we went back to Norfolk Southern and talked with them, and we said that this is not what any of us had in mind when we made the announcement back in 2021. Is there any way we can revisit getting Christiansburg back on the mainline? And Norfolk Southern totally understood where we were coming from, and they said, 'Right, the main line is a better solution; let's work together to see if we can make that happen.'"

To continue reading this article, go to <https://tinyurl.com/y8vft7f3>.

FRA Meeting on Passenger Service Held in Nashville

[WCYB-TV, June 12] A Federal Railroad Administration working group is meeting in Nashville this week. It's the final meeting part of a year-and-a-half study into expanding long-distance passenger rail nationwide. The draft proposal represents 15 new long-distance routes, including a proposed line from New York City. "I know it's just a couple of words, but I want to tell you how words matter," [TN] State Sen. Jon Lundberg said. "Because that study said, rail 'from Washington to Bristol.' That's how it was. Now it says 'to and through Bristol.'"

The plans are not final, and this week's meeting is not public. But the results will be presented to Congress with recommended action. Lundberg said it's important that Congress is involved. "When you're talking about railroads, you're talking about billions of dollars in infrastructure," Lundberg said. "Most states can't do that alone. They don't have the extra funds."

To continue reading this article, go to <https://tinyurl.com/4fd7xrtu>.

Display in the Block
By Les Billings

First, I would like to say **Happy Summer!** With all the nice green foliage this time of year, it really makes for some good backdrops. With weekends being my main railfanning time, I am presenting a weekend adventure from a couple of weeks ago. Location Johnson City. I was able to work both the CSX line and Norfolk Southern. It really turned out to be a good two days. So, sit back and enjoy.



My best catch of the weekend was CSX M692 as it came into Johnson City. It is hard to get one Heritage Unit, but this train had two. The P&LE and Chesapeake & Ohio. Hard to Believe.



Around MP 120 I caught this CSX, M693, heading south. A mixed freight from Russell, KY to Rice Yard – Waycross, GA. It had one lead unit and one pusher on the end. Maybe there was not much weight.



Sunday morning brought NS 126 down the tracks in Johnson City where we see the CSX (Clinchfield) Bridge in the background. You can see a dip in the track as it goes underneath. Is it by design? Not sure.



After I finished photographing 126, I looked down where I was standing and saw these Oxeye Daisies.

This was a weekend for Heritage units. NS 126 gave us the Norfolk and Western as a DPU #8103. Many were waiting for it in Bristol.



NS 15T at Mckinnley Rd. crossing. Looks like too many signs to me.



This was the last train of the day, NS 15T, westbound with a long string of TrinityRail Petroleum Tankers. I wonder if they were loaded.

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TIME-SENSITIVE MATERIAL