

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

Volume 44 No. 8

August 2024



This classic shot finds recently acquired GSMR F9A #4210 at the head of a July excursion train.
[Photo posted by Noel Bradley on "Southern Railway's Murphy Branch" Facebook page.]

July 22nd General Membership Meeting

Our next regularly-scheduled General Membership Meeting will be held on Monday, July 22nd, 2024, 6:30 pm, at the Chuckey Depot / Railroad Museum, 110 South Second St., Jonesborough, TN. For this month, we will be treated to a program on the ex-L&N Corbin Division (now CSX), a great history lesson on railroads. This in addition to enjoying the Chuckey Depot/Museum and watching trains pass the depot.

Member Notes

Please keep the following in your thoughts and prayers: Gary Price, Fred Phofl, 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: Thomas Willoughby and Suzanne Willoughby, Oakridge, TN and Mike Jacobs, Limestone, TN. See you around the Depot!

RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS

If you know of someone interested in railroads, hand them a New Membership Brochure; brochures are available at the General Membership meetings.

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.

TICKETS AVAILABLE FOR FALL EXCURSION ON THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS RR

Tickets are now ON SALE for Watauga Valley Railroad Museum's steam-powered fall excursion on Saturday, September 14th, over the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad. To learn more about this trip and to order tickets, visit our web site at <http://www.wataugavalleynrhs.org>.

Invitation to All WVRHS&M Members

Asheville Chapter NRHS is inviting all Watauga Valley Railroad Museum members to the Asheville Chapter potluck picnic. Please feel free to bring children, grandchildren, family members and friends. Details follow:

When: Saturday, August 3rd, 11:00 am - 2:00 pm

Where: Picnic shelter at Asheville's Riverside Park off NC 251 next to French Broad River. Construction has not yet begun in the area, so it will be the same picnic shelter in Riverside Park as previous years.

Craggy Mountain Line: Will provide ride(s) beginning about 12:30 - 1:00pm, whenever people are done eating lunch. Trolley Rides and maybe speeder car rides as well.

Food: Please bring your favorite dish for this potluck picnic and contact Tom Phelps at tompelps16@gmail.com, letting him know what you're bringing. Asheville Chapter will provide utensils, cups, cold beverages, and ice.

Train Trivia: The station at Spruce Pine, NC is one of only four remaining Clinchfield passenger stations. Where are the other three? Answer on page 5.

Mechanical Department Report

by Art Devoe

Good weather over the last several weeks continues to provide the Watauga Valley Mechanical Team with excellent work conditions at the yard. 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): receiving electrical repairs.

“*Powhatan Arrow*” coach (WATX 539): receiving a/c work.

“*St Augustine*” coach (WATX 500): receiving restroom upgrades.

“*Crescent Harbor*” sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351): generator installation.

“*Clinchfield 100*” office car (WATX 100): restrooms are being remodeled along with additional repairs.

Chuckey Depot / Museum

DEPOT HOST TRAINING

The next host training session for the Chuckey Depot has been **scheduled for September**. 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.

CLINCHFIELD #676 SIGNAGE DEDICATION

A dedication ceremony on Saturday, August 24th, at 11 am, is planned at the Depot/Museum, recognizing the donation of the signage transforming UP Challenger #3985 to CRR #676 for the 50th running of the Santa Train. The signage, CRR 676 number board and Clinchfield letter board, is a gift from the David DeVault family and the East Tennessee Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. Activities include a welcome and thanks to Charlotte Devault on behalf of David. Speakers Ron Flanery, Scott Jessee, Charlie Morris, and Don Royston will share how the UP transformation came about and experiences during the trip. After the dedication ceremony, everyone is invited to the Coach Yard to tour our “Car 100”, the former Santa Train Car and Clinchfield General Manager’s Car.

TRAIN SHOW COMING TO JONESBOROUGH NOV. 2nd

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.wataugavalleynrhs.org>. More details will be announced soon.

Clinchfield "South End" Tour

Recently a group of WVRHS rail fans spent an enjoyable and informative (and sunny!) day touring significant sites and locations along the former Clinchfield "South End." The photos below capture but a few snippets of that day.



Spruce Pine, NC station.



Tour group viewing The Loops from the Blue Ridge Parkway, MP 328.6.



Information signage at the Loops Overlook informing visitors of The Loops history.



Bostic, NC Yard Office.



The remains of a bridge over the N. Fork Catawba River on a former spur off of CRR MP 207 (Sevier) into what was American Thread's Sevier plant.



Thermal Belt Railway SW1 #1.

The Thermal Belt Railway (reporting marks TBRY) is a Class III short line railroad that operates for freight service on an irregular schedule on a former CSX line from Bostic to Forest City and on a former Norfolk Southern line from Forest City to Alexander Mills, NC. Total mileage is 8.5 miles. Connections are made with CSX at Bostic. The former CSXT Bostic-Forest City line was originally built by the Central Carolina Railroad in 1886 as part of a route from Rutherfordton to Charlotte, NC.

In the News ...

CLINCHFIELD RAILROAD MOTOR CAR DONATION

Recently Watauga Valley RHS&M was donated an original Clinchfield Railroad motor car by the Alexander family. The motor car, used by the signal department, is complete; we hope to have it back home in the coming weeks. Look for further information in the next *Whistle Stop*.

SIX MEMBERS RESIGN FROM VMT BOARD

[ROANOKE TIMES NEWS] Six members of the Virginia Museum of Transportation Board of Directors have resigned. They submitted letters of resignation at the museum's annual meeting [June 22nd]. And their departure has fueled speculation and concern about the future of the museum and the steam excursion program.

It took a team to pull off the excursions with the 611 steam engine last fall, but Will Harris spearheaded the effort, and owns the property where passengers boarded the train. Now, he and at least two other board members who were instrumental in that operation have stepped down. In a telephone conversation Thursday morning, Harris said he was motivated by health concerns and a desire to spend more time with his grandchildren. He said he wishes the museum well and will do what he can to support the continuation of the excursion program.

Former Executive Director Bev Fitzpatrick is not a current board member and did not attend the annual meeting, but he says the news of the six resignations is a major concern. "And for something that's that important to me and to Roanoke, your first reaction is something's not right," Fitzpatrick said. "And that's not what we want from a major icon."

We [the newspaper] sat down with Board Member Tom Cox, who was speaking for the museum Thursday afternoon. He thanked the board members for all the work they have put into the museum and the recent excursions. He acknowledged some differences of opinion among board members, but said he doesn't believe there was a major rift that prompted the departures. Cox said the museum is committed to keeping the 611 in operating condition, and he said the museum is looking forward to running excursions again in the future.

Closed Canton, NC Paper Plant Sold

[WYFF-TV, Greenville, SC] Pactiv Evergreen has announced a \$110 million deal to sell its facility in Waynesville, Haywood County, NC along with a paper plant in Arkansas, according to the company's website. Global paper and pulp manufacturer Suzano S.A. has agreed to buy the facilities. The facility in Waynesville provides "incremental extrusion capacity" for the items produced in the Arkansas paper plant, the company said.

Hopefully this is good news for Blue Ridge Southern Railroad, which reportedly lost 72% of its freight traffic [Asheville Citizen Times] when the plant was closed last year.

Train Trivia answer: Dungannon, VA; Kingsport, TN; and Erwin, TN (which is in danger of being demolished).

Display in the Block

By Les Billings

Hope everyone is surviving the heat the Summer of 2024 has brought us. But the heat does not stop railfanning, so I have been doing so. Jonesborough to Johnson City, as you all know, is my best location to capture my shots. The first weekend in June was the time frame of the following adventures. So, sit back and grab a good cold glass of lemonade or tea and enjoy. Stay Cool!



[Left] At mile post 33 we see two Jonesborough visitors videoing NS 289 as it goes through town and past the Chuckey Depot Museum. It was 11:25 am on Saturday, and I was hosting at the Depot. One hopes as they host, that there will be a few trains passing by. There were three that day and I was satisfied with that.



[Below] NS 16T had a very interesting car that day which I had never seen before. The Southern Belle American IPA. CP218027 from Value Brewing. It had plenty of graffiti as well.



[Above] Just after 1:00 pm, NS 16T rolled by with its many freight cars powering on towards Bristol to work the yard and set off and pick up a few cars then proceed east.



[Above] Later that evening, I caught NS 126 in Johnson City passing over New St. and heading into Carnegie Yard. It sure clouded up from a sunny start to the day.

[Below] NS 126 brought an interesting locomotive with it. The 3rd unit was an old Mississippi Central Railroad GP16 #1600. With its rust and weathered condition, it followed the newer GE 4782 and 4019 down the tracks.



[Left] As NS126 moves on, we see the pusher behind some Auto Racks as it crosses where the 3C's railroad was once going to be located. This is the section shooting off to the right. That section of track is only used by the ETRY to work Carnegie Yard.



[Right] On Sunday my only catch of the day was this northbound CSX empty coal train. I am not sure of the number. It was crossing Embreeville Road, MP 118.100 in Johnson City. It must have been a slow day on the CSX route.



Whistle Stop

Published Monthly by the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum
P.O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN 37605-0432
whistlestop.editor@gmail.com

Opinions or viewpoints are those of the writer and may not necessarily reflect those of the organization members, officers or directors. Items of interest are welcome and will be credited to the author; however, because of space constraints, all submissions are subject to editing. Permission to reprint *Whistle Stop* articles with the exception of photographs is granted if proper credit is given. Reuse of photographs must receive permission by the editor and the photographer.



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

TIME-SENSITIVE MATERIAL