
WHISTLE STOP



Volume 29 No. 1

January 2009

+++++

Watauga Valley NRHS Chapter Meeting is January 26

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The next General Membership Meeting of the Watauga Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical will be held Monday, January 26, 2009, at 6:30 p.m., at the Johnson City Public Library, 101 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. We will start out the New Year with a program featuring a cab ride down the Clinchfield Railroad from Erwin, TN, to Spartanburg, SC, on time freight #92. You will get a chance see Nolichucky Gorge, the Blue Ridge Loops with many tunnels, and the tall river bridges that lead into the flatlands of the Carolinas. This will be a meeting you do not want to miss, so bring a guest and enjoy the first meeting of the New Year and a great night of railroading!

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Dues notices have been sent out for 2009. Please get your dues in to the membership chairman ASAP. It makes it so much easier if everyone can get their dues in before the their membership expires. Please send back to the Chapter's address on the dues notices or just bring your renewal fee to the January meeting.

DINNER ON THE DINER

We would like to thank all the volunteers who made the 2008 Dinner on the Diner event December 6 so successful. The ladies did a great job in setting diner, and I thank Helen Calhoun who did the decorations. For those who missed this year's event, you missed out on some good food and fun everyone had on the *Moultrie Dining Car*.

ACTIVITIES FOR 2009

Many of our 2009 activities including excursions and special events will be announced at the January meeting. Get involved in the planning stages of our 2009 activities, and volunteer for one of the many committees that will be formed.

NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS FOR 2009

Mike Tilley	President
Bob Schubel	Vice-President
Betty Jackson	Secretary
Duane Swank	Treasurer
Jim Pahr	National Director
Gary Price	Historian

Directors

Jim Calhoun
Helen Calhoun
Art Devoe
Mike Jackson
Nick White
Carol May
Bob Yaple

Appointments

Jim Magill	Chief Mechanical Officer
Bob Yaple	Asst Chief Mechanical Officer
Mike Jackson	Newsletter Editor
Duane & Harriett Swank	Newsletter Circulation
Fred Waskiewicz Jr.	Webmaster
Mike Tilley	Trip Director
David Denny	Chapter Attorney
Nancy Jewell	Membership Notes
Harriett Swank	Membership Chairman
Jack Maloney	Spring Street Coach Yard Maintenance

PROGRAMS FOR 2009

We need programs for our General Membership meetings each month in 2009, so if you have any programs, including railroad slides, a video, a DVD, or know a possible speaker, please volunteer at the January meeting or call the Chapter phone at 423-753-5797.

HELP AT THE SPRING STREET COACH YARD

Due to demands in preparing our equipment for the 2009 season, we need volunteers to work at the Jonesborough Spring Street Coach Yard. Projects, such as restoring the *Crescent Harbor* and General Maintenance work on our other equipment is at the point where we need more volunteers. Please volunteer one day or as many days as you can to help us out. **THERE IS A JOB FOR EVERYONE, AND YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE MECHANICALLY INCLINED TO HELP OUT.** All you need to do is show up, and we will have all kinds of jobs available. Workdays are Tuesdays and Saturdays. Please call the Chapter office at 423-753-5797 and leave message so we know you will be coming.

CSX – ERWIN, YARD GETS NEW POWER SWITCHES INSTALLED

Have you been by Erwin Yard at night lately? Well, it looks like a Christmas tree with all the power-operated switches and their many colors displayed throughout the yard. A total of 31 switches have been installed and will be controlled at the Erwin Yard office to move trains faster through the yard. The switches will save time for the train crews who have to get off the engines and throw the switches. Coal trains and time freight trains should be able to pass through the yard at a faster speed.

Also, it was announced several months ago that the manned pusher units at Erwin have been replaced by Distributed Power Pusher Units (DP). These units are unmanned and are radio controlled from the head end. The DP pushers go all the way on the rear of the train to the destination and are returned back to Erwin on the head end. The DP power enables the coal trains to operate at a faster speed to its destinations.

BRISTOL TRAIN STATION IS OPEN

The Bristol Train station held an open house recently so everyone could visit this beautiful building. It is now open for parties and other acuties if anyone wants to have a special event there. **WE HOPE IT WILL BE OPEN ONE DAY FOR PASSENGER BUSINESS FOR THE VIRGINIA TRANS DOMINION EXPRESS PASSENGER TRAINS ACROSS THE STATE OF VIRGINIA!** **Mike Tilley, Chapter President.**

Watauga Valley Chapter (NRHS)

Chapter Meeting Minutes for November 24, 2008

The general membership meeting of the Watauga Valley Chapter (NRHS) was held November 24th, 2008, at the Johnson City Public Library, 100 West Millard Street, Johnson City, TN, 37604. There were 33 names on the attendance sheet. Chapter President Mike Tilley presided and called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. **Bill Smith's Death.** Mike announced the sad news that Bill Smith passed away November 23, 2008, at the Johnson City Medical Center after a seven-week illness and hospitalization. Bill was a charter member of the Chapter, and he had served in a number of positions including vice-president and on the board of directors. Mike gave information of visitation hours (5 to 7 p.m., November 25) and the funeral (7 p.m., November 25) in the Rhododendron Chapel at the Roan Mountain, TN, Funeral Home. Mike observed that Bill had been an active member since the beginning of

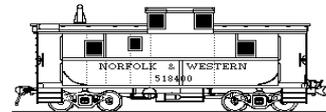
the Watauga Valley Chapter, and was instrumental in the Chapter's formation in 1981.

2. **Crescent Harbor.** Work continues by the mechanical crew on the Crescent Harbor. Preparations are underway to raise the car and replace the trucks.
3. **Dinner on the Diner.** Mike reminded everyone to turn in their forms for the Chapter's annual Dinner on the Moultrie Diner, scheduled December 6th at 12:30 p.m. The Chapter will provide Roast Beef and Ham, plus drinks and deserts. Members were given a sign-up sheet to bring either a salad or a vegetable.
4. **Amtrak Excursion.** The remainder of the meeting included discussion of the positives and negatives of the November 1 and 2 Amtrak Excursion, co-sponsored by the Watauga Valley Chapter and the North Carolina Transportation Museum (NCTM) at Spencer. To begin the discussion, Mike informed the meeting that a meeting was held at Spencer on Saturday, November 22, and that the Chapter's two coaches, the Clinchfield 500 and the Powhatan Arrow 539, will be going to Ohio for the Polar Express. Also, Mike said he reviewed some of the patron surveys/comments, and that most of them were good. A few riders asked for a refund because of various objections, and Mike reviewed, evaluated, and resolved the refund requests.
5. **Overall, the Excursion went well.** There were few complaints, and car hosts and the safety directors were successful in resolving problems that developed. We'll need around 50 volunteers next year, Mike said, and he encouraged everyone who went to sign-up again and asked other members who did not go to consider volunteering in 2009.

After the discussion, the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m. Respectfully submitted, Betty Jackson, Secretary

Gary Price on the Triple Crossing, Richmond, VA

Keeping the ole N&W safe...one tie at a time



Every time that I take to the rails, it is like taking a journey through the pages of history. Now, it is true that most sections of track lay quiet, un-noticed, except for the occasional train that is depending on that stretch of rails to make its journey successful. But occasionally, there are certain stretches of rail that become world famous for unique reasons, and Gee, the railroad pays me to maintain a portion of this famous track.

The track that I am referring to in this month's column is the World Famous Triple-Crossing located in downtown Richmond, VA. The tracks are located just south of the intersection of Main Street and Byrd Street.



Here, it is believed to be the only place in the world where three separate railroads cross each other on separate levels. The ground level rails belong to the Richmond Division of the

former Southern Railway and were laid shortly after the Civil War began in 1861. This line today runs from Burkeville, VA, to West Point, VA, and is operated by Norfolk Southern. The middle tier was built in 1900 and operated as the Virginia Division of the Seaboard Air Line Railroad, which ran from Richmond, VA, south to Raleigh N.C. The top tier was built by the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad in 1901, and is part of a 3-mile long bridge that skirts along the James River. This is the CSX James River line that runs from Fulton Yard in Richmond, VA, westward to Clifton Forge, VA. Both the middle and top tiers are operated today by CSX.

It is virtually impossible to catch and photograph three trains on all three lines at the same time. However, there have been a few staged photo shots with all three railroads in co-operation, and these have resulted in very famous photos that became widely distributed on postcards. The first photo shoot featured three steamers in 1911, and the second was also shot using three steam locomotives in 1926. However, by the time the third photo was staged in 1949 (the postcard shot I have and is on the front cover of the newsletter), only the C&O sent a steam locomotive, and the Seaboard sent a passenger diesel while the Southern sent a road switcher. This was a sign of the times as the world of railroads quickly was changing. The next shot featured all diesels from the Chessie System, Family Lines and Southern and was shot at night, while the last staged scene showed that all of the original railroad identities had been lost to mergers as two CSX trains and one Norfolk Southern train were lined up to honor their predecessor lines. In the last few years the city of Richmond built a massive flood wall along the James River in the vicinity of the Triple Crossing, and asphalt and concrete cover most of the NS mainline ties making it tough to ever get a decent shot of the crossing again.

I was fortunate myself to capture a true triple crossing of my own while replacing ties for NS in Richmond in 2007. While our M-O-W machinery was occupying the ground level track, a northbound CSX grain train passed on the middle level, and to my surprise, I heard another train and a CSX rail-train passed heading west. I grabbed my cell phone and snapped a quick photo [above] to remember this unique experience in a world famous place.

Finally, Pulaski, VA, is on track to rebuild its depot that was destroyed by fire November 17, 2008. You can read the story in the *Roanoke Times* at <http://www.roanoke.com/news/nrv/wb/189689>

Gary Price, Keeping the ole N&W safe... one tie at a time



Anna Banner (above) received her 25-year membership certificate and pin during the Watauga Valley's annual Dinner on the Diner, December 6, 2008. Also honored at the Chapter's Christmas dinner was **Nancy Jewell (right)**, who received a plaque for her many years of service in various offices to the Watauga Valley NRHS, including her service as membership chairman and Members' Notes reporter for the *Whistle Stop*. Congratulations, Ladies! Photos by Gary Price.

Rail News with Jeff Jones

WASHINGTON - The hammer is coming down on freight trains that block Amtrak passenger trains from running on schedule, the Kansas City Star reports. President George W. Bush signed a new law in December 2008 giving federal authorities the power to investigate and fine freight railroads for not giving priority to passenger trains. On-time performance is a needling problem for Amtrak passengers nationwide, especially in Missouri where tardy trains between Kansas City and St. Louis have contributed to declining rider-ship in recent years. Amtrak trains were at least 30 minutes late almost one-third of the time in 2007-08, state figures show. The new law allows the federal government to start an investigation if Amtrak's average on-time performance is below 80 percent for two consecutive quarters. The definition of on-time has yet to be determined.

ROANOKE, VA - When Norfolk Southern Corp. Chairman Wick Moorman recently offered \$1 million to the Virginia Museum of Transportation, Bev Fitzpatrick was as surprised as anyone. Fitzpatrick, the museum's executive director, was one of about 500 people listening to the speech by Moorman at the Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce's membership meeting at the Hotel Roanoke. Moorman, according to those present, offered \$1 million and challenged the community to ante up an additional \$2 million for the troubled museum. "We're willing to contribute a million dollars to make this museum better," said Moorman, in remarks recorded at the event by WVTF Public Radio. "We want to see a museum here that showcases what generations of people in Roanoke, people who worked for this company and people who supported this company, built and are still building today." "He said, 'I'll give you a million if you raise a million from the local governments and a million from the private sector in the valley,'" Fitzpatrick recalled. "We can do a lot of things with \$3 million. Once we do some world-class things to go with those world-class locomotives, our attendance will go up. We're excited." Roanoke Mayor David Bowers quickly offered his support, asking the city council to pledge between \$500,000 and \$1 million to the transportation museum. The transportation museum has struggled financially and otherwise in recent years. Its problems were made worse when thunderstorm winds ripped part of its roof off in July 2006. In January 2007, the museum agreed to sell one of its prized steam locomotives to help with expenses.

NORFOLK, VA - NS will soon be taking delivery of two former EMD SD50 locomotives that have been rebuilt with Caterpillar engines by Progress Rail Services in Mayfield, KY. The units are designated as PR43C models and are rated at 4,000 horsepower and will be numbered NS 4000 and 4001. The units feature a flared radiator compartment that is somewhat similar to that of the late EMD SD70M's. The units will have dynamic braking and will be cab signal equipped. These units were re-painted and were rebuilt from:
NS 4000, a former UP EMD SD50 9881/UP 5001/MP 5001, and NS 4001, a former NS EMD SD50 6509.

JACKSONVILLE, FL - CSX Transportation is one of the best places for the nation's veterans to work following their military careers, according to G.I. Jobs magazine. CSX Transportation ranked 8th on the annual list of the nations most military-friendly employers. This marks the third straight year the company has made the list, rising from number 45 in 2006 to its current position. In selecting companies for recognition, the magazine considers the resources dedicated to military hiring, Reserve/Guard policies, percentage of new hires who are veterans, veteran training programs and previous rankings. Only 2 percent of the 2,500 eligible companies were selected. CSX is proud of its 150-year history of service to America's military and actively recruits individuals with military experience to operate the nation's largest eastern railroad and a critical part of U.S. transportation infrastructure. One in five CSX employees has served in the armed forces, and in 2008 the company has recruited nearly 600 military people for careers in railroad operations and management. "Military men and women bring a special discipline and commitment to getting a job done right," said Michael Ward, chairman, president and CEO. "Veterans know how to work in, and lead effective teams in an industry that is built on attention to detail, safety and putting the needs of the customer first."

JACKSONVILLE, FL - CSX Corporation has announced that it is examining all strategic options for The Greenbrier resort in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, and has retained Goldman, Sachs & Co. as its financial advisor to assist in the review. "The Greenbrier is at a crossroads," said Michael J. Ward, president, chairman and CEO of CSX. "While we have continued to make

investments to keep the resort competitive, the market for luxury hospitality services is shrinking rapidly in this economy. The Greenbrier lost \$35 million last year, and the resort faces even more difficult challenges in 2009. It is imperative that we respond to this situation without delay. Our goal is to make The Greenbrier not only one of America's great destinations, but also a viable business entity." Also, CSX announced the appointment of Michael Gordon as president and managing director of The Greenbrier. Gordon has been general manager of the resort since February 2007.

NORFOLK, VA -The perfect storm of events that caused a surge in coal prices and international demand this year - and boosted activity at the port of Hampton Roads - probably will pass in 2009, predicted industry experts speaking at the U.S. Coal Imports and Exports conference in early December. Those conditions, including flooding in Australian mines, the weak dollar and transportation shortages, are not sustainable, said Ed Roarty, director of commercial fuels for Virginia Power Energy Marketing Inc., a subsidiary of Richmond-based energy producer Dominion. As a result, coal exports from the United States, including from Hampton Roads, probably will slow next year [2009], said Lloyd Kelly, president of Greenmont Energy Consulting. If U.S. coal exports fall softly, they'll return to normal levels during the next few years, Kelly said during his presentation.

NORFOLK, VA - Norfolk Southern hauled 49.67 million tons of coal in the third quarter of 2008, an all-time quarterly high driven by strong export demand and more shipments of domestic metallurgical coal. Third-quarter 2008 coal tonnage increased 6 percent, up from 46.84 million tons during the same period last year. The previous record for any quarter was 49.27 million tons in second quarter 2008.

CHAMBERSBURG, PA - At a National Gateway coalition event in early December 2008 hosted by CSX Chairman and CEO Michael Ward, Pennsylvania Governor Edward G. Rendell announced his support for the National Gateway's goal of creating a state-of-the-art, double-stack transportation corridor connecting manufacturing centers in the Midwest with deepwater ports on the East Coast. The event was held at a CSX Intermodal Terminal in Chambersburg, that serves as a key transportation link connecting shippers with both truck and rail service. "This terminal is a prime example of the kind of economic growth that comes from investing in our infrastructure," said Governor Rendell. "I will do my part as Governor, but states cannot address these needs alone. I look forward to a national partnership so we can design and implement strategies for smarter, environmentally-friendly, more cost-effective infrastructure investment such as through groundbreaking public-private partnerships."

WASHINGTON - With 716 large and small U.S. railroads reporting, total accidents and incidents in last year's first nine months were down 10.3 percent to 9,232 compared with the corresponding period last year, according to the Federal Railroad Administration's Office of Safety Analysis. Fatalities were up fractionally in last year's January-September period, to 637 from 633. Most of these fatalities involved highway-rail grade-crossing accidents and trespassers. Train accidents declined 9.5 percent to 1,828 for the first nine months in 2008.

LYNCHBURG, VA - The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation is recommending \$17 million to add passenger train service between Washington, D.C. and two Virginia cities. The money would provide additional trains between the nation's capital and Lynchburg and Richmond. If the Commonwealth Transportation Board approves the recommendation in January, agency spokeswoman Jennifer Pickett says a second daily train could depart Lynchburg by the fall of 2009. Commuters have been asking for more trains for more than a decade.

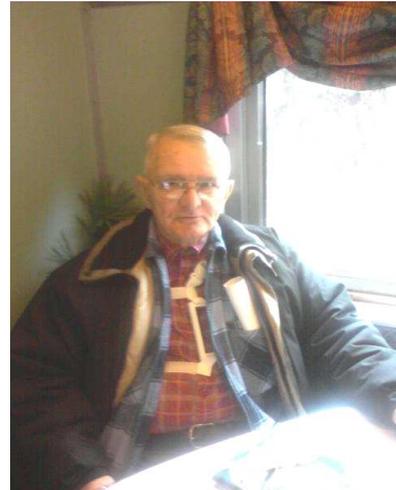
Welcome to our New Chapter members!

Louise C. Haase of Erwin, TN

Jack Butler, and Family Members, Robin Butler and Peyton Tholl of Orlando, FL

And Charles, Dianne, and Maggie Williams of Moravian Falls, NC

Invite and Friend to join the Watauga Valley NRHS!



Above left, Watauga Valley NRHS Members and guests enjoyed the Chapter's annual Christmas Dinner on the Diner, December 6, 2008. Chapter Communications' Director Walter Byrd (right) was among the members who attended the dinner. Walter had undergone open-heart surgery in November, and it was good to see him and all the other folks who attended the annual event! Photos by Gary Price.

From Past Editions of the Whistle Stop

10 Years Ago: Editor James A. Goforth reminded members that donations of books were welcomed in the Chapter's section at the Washington County Library. Also, Norfolk Southern extended new sidings at Piney Flats and Rader, and attached new names to the east end of these sidings. The east end of Piney Flats was re-named "Curtis", while the east end of Rader was tabbed "Jones". The west end of these tracks were still called "Piney Flats" and "Rader". Finally, a spotter's report noted the East Tennessee Railway was doing tie work from the Inland Container plant to the top of the hill just past the Dairy Queen. **January 1999 Whistle Stop.**

5 Years Ago: The Mechanical Crew reported a lot of work had been completed on the Chapter's three coaches. Everything from replacing light bulbs to a complete brake job on the *Clinchfield* had been done in recent months. In addition, the O. Winston Link Museum opened on January 10, 2004, in the former Norfolk & Western Railway passenger depot in Roanoke, VA. The museum is devoted to the work of the 20th century's most acclaimed railroad photographer. **January 2004 Whistle Stop.**

The Whistle Stop

Published Monthly by the Watauga Valley Chapter
National Railroad Historical Society
P.O. Box 432
Johnson City, TN 37605-0432

Meetings are the fourth Monday, except December, 6:30 p.m.,

Johnson City Public Library, 100 West Millard Street, Johnson City, TN

Opinions or viewpoints are those of the writer and may not necessarily reflect those of the Chapter 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.

Clip Art Courtesy of Ken Houghton (KH).

Mike Jackson, editor, Duane and Harriet Swank, Printing and Circulation.

Mike Tilley, Nancy Jewell, Richard Freeman, Bob Yapple, Art DeVoe, Jim Pahris, Gary Price,

Nick White, Jeff Jones, and Betty Jackson, contributors

Send correspondence to ki4ojo michael@gmail.com

**Railway Historical Society
Watauga Valley Chapter
P.O. Box 432
Johnson City, TN 37605-0432**

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Johnson City, TN
Permit No. 61

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



The Triple-Crossing at Richmond, VA, is shown in this photograph of a post card from the collection of Gary Price. See his column inside the *Whistle Stop*.