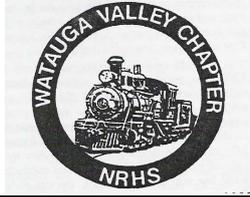

Whistle Stop



Volume 29 No. 3

March 2009

Mike Jackson, Editor

Duane and Harriet Swank, Printing and Circulation

Watauga Valley NRHS Chapter Meeting is Mar. 23

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The next General Membership Meeting of the Watauga Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will be held March 23, 2009, at 6:30 p.m., at the Johnson City Public Library, 100 W. Millard St. The program will be on the Norfolk Southern Office Car Train. In February 2008 Norfolk Southern officials, including NS CEO Wick Moorman, visited the North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer, NC. The NS office train, consisting of the newly refurbished NS A-B-A F-unit consist and 4 NS office cars, are viewed touring the museum grounds and seen highballing to and around Charlotte, NC. Ralph Teaster of Kannapolis N.C. captured this rare move on DVD.

If you are interested in the consist shown in the March program, it is as follows:

Motive Power:

NS 4270-F9A

NS 4275-F7B

NS 4271-F9A

Office Cars:

NS-7 Pennsylvania

NS-18 General William Mahone

NS-21 West Virginia

NS-23 Buena Vista

The DVD is approximately 30 minutes long.

Chapter Historian Gary Price will present this program.

Bring a guest and come out and enjoy a great night of railroading.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

If you have not paid your 2009 membership dues, please bring your check to the March 23 chapter meeting or mail to Membership Chairman, Watauga Valley NRHS, PO Box 432, Johnson City, TN, 37605. Please get your dues in so a reminder dues notice will not have to be sent out. If you have questions about your dues, please call the chapter phone at 423-753-5797 and leave a message. I want to welcome two new members: **William (Bill) and Myra Hensley** of Sevierville, TN.

CHAPTER'S SPRING TRAIN EXCURSION TO NORTH CAROLINA

The Spring 2009 Excursion of the Watauga Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will be a ride on the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad on March 28. As of press time we are about sold out with 7 loaded buses going on the trip this year. We will have about all the train this year.

The excursion will feature a ride through the Smoky Mountains and spring countryside of Western North Carolina. The route is the former Southern Railway's Murphy Branch Line

established in 1891 with its five percent grade. It features many bridges as well as the whitewater Nantahala Gorge.

The trip will begin in downtown Johnson City at 6:30 a.m., where passengers will board a motor coach to Bryson City, N.C. Passengers will board the excursion train at 10:30 a.m. This 4.5-hour excursion covers 44 miles to the Nantahala Gorge and back to Bryson City. Expected arrival back to Johnson City will be 6:30 p.m.

Ticket prices for adult coach seats are \$79 and \$58 for child (2 to 12 years) coach seats. Adult crown coach seats are \$89 and \$68 for children (2 to 12 years). First class service Club Car seats are \$112 for anyone 21 years and older.

For questions about the trip, email: wataugavalley@wireco.net or write: Watauga Valley NRHS, P.O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN, 37605-0432. Those interested in the trip can also visit the chapter at www.wataugavalleynrhs.org for a printable order

CLINCHFIELD RAILROAD TOUR

We are planning our Clinchfield Railroad Spring South End Tour for Saturday April 4, 2009. Plans are to start out in Johnson City and travel the complete South End of the former Clinchfield to Erwin, Poplar, Green Mountain, Spruce Pine, Alta Pass, The Loops, Thermal, Bostic, Chesnee, Spartanburg. To end the day, we will eat at the very popular Wades Restaurant in Spartanburg, which is a favorite of CSX train crews. As of press time, we have 25 signed up for the trip. Complete details of this popular trip will be available at the next chapter meeting. There is still time to sign up if you want to go. You can either sign up at the March chapter meeting or call the chapter office at 423-753-5797. We need volunteers to drive their vehicle, and we need everyone who goes on the tour to pitch in a few dollars to cover the fuel expenses of each driver.

CSX DEFECT DETECTOR

A CSX defect detector, located at MP 90.0 north of Kingsport where the railroad crosses West Stone Drive (U.S. 11-W), can be heard by local railfans as trains leave or approach Kingsport. The detector is checked in Jacksonville (FL) South Point. It has an impact detector on it to determine a flat wheel. Railfans can hear the detector on 160.305 MHz, but train crews cannot hear it. Other defect detectors north and south of Kingsport are located at Winegar (MP 85.3) and at Hemlock (MP 99.3) and are heard on 160.230 MHz.

Mike Tilley, Chapter President

Watauga Valley Chapter (NRHS) Chapter Meeting Minutes for February 23, 2009

The general membership meeting of the Watauga Valley Chapter (NRHS) was held February 23, 2009, at the Johnson City Public Library, 100 West Millard Street, Johnson City, TN, 37604. There were 35 names on the attendance sheet. Chapter President Mike Tilley presided and called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. **Minutes** – There was a motion by Jack Maloney not to read the January minutes. Helen Calhoun second, passed.
2. **Membership** – Mike reminded members to pay dues as soon as possible. They can be paid to Nancy Jewell, substituting for Harriet Swank, who is out of town. Anyone who wants an application for membership, please see Mike after the meeting.
3. **Other 2009 Excursions.** The ticket sales for the March 28th trip on the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad are going well. **Mike said the plans for the Fall AMTRAK excursion continue.** The fall excursion will be called the Halloween Special and will be on October 31 and November 1. **The CSX South End tour for chapter members will be in April.** More details will be forthcoming.
4. **Programs** – The April program will be given by Bob May on the 1941 Southern Railroad train, the *Tennessean*. The May meeting will be on Memorial Day and will be held at the Bristol Train Station. The June program will be presented by Richard Baker, and July's will be on the Rebuilding of the 2816 Canadian Pacific Railroad Locomotive, supplied by Bob Yapple.

5. **New Business.** Mike reported that the chapter will be involved in the Jonesborough Days on July 3 & 4 and also with the Bristol Train Station Grand Opening during the same days. The *Moultrie* dining car will be used in Bristol for special meals during this time.
 6. **Chapter Librarian** – Mike announced that Harold Smitter is the new Chapter Librarian. He will be in charge of making an inventory of the items at the Jonesborough Library section for our Chapter. The section has expanded, and Harold will be letting everyone know all the books, magazines, etc. that will be available for viewing. If anyone has anything they would like to donate, they may do so and give these items to Harold. He will write an article for the newsletter every other month.
 7. **Bylaws** – The Chapter's Bylaws need revision because they have not been revised since 2002. Any members wishing to help on this committee contact Mike Tilley.
 8. **Mechanical Report** – Bob Yaple reported that shelving for storage has been added to the white trailer. The trucks for the *Crescent Harbor* are being restored. As soon as the weather warms, the yard crew will start to work not only on Tuesday and Saturday, but also on Wednesday. Much help is needed, and if you can help contact Bob. Mike encouraged the members to support the mechanical crew. The full mechanical report can be found each month in the *Whistle Stop*.
 9. **Program.** At the conclusion of the business meeting, Jim Pahr introduced the evening's program: "Triple Tank Steam Fest on Niles Canyon Railway".
- After the program, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Betty Jackson, Secretary, Mike Tilley, President

Membership Recruitment and Publicity Chair's Report

Dear Chapter members:

As you all are well aware, there has been the declining numbers of the membership in the surrounding NRHS chapters as well as our own, creating the adverse effects that follow.

Recently, I have been appointed to serve in the position of Membership Recruitment and Publicity for the chapter. Therefore, I believe it is time for all of us to be proactive in reversing this problem and start promoting our chapter. Also, I have found that many people do not know that our chapter exists which was my case until I met Walter Byrd at a service station.

I will be active in showcasing our chapter in local events as much as I can, but I cannot do it alone. I challenge each member this year to go out and promote the chapter and find at least one person who is interested in helping us preserve railroading for future generations. I feel this would be a tremendous start for reversing this unfortunate trend. Thanks for your help and support.

Nick White

Board Of Directors, Membership Recruitment and Publicity

Mechanical Report by Bob Yaple

GENERAL: Heating in the boxcar has been proven to be a great asset. Much work has been accomplished that otherwise would have been postponed for better weather.

Locks have been replaced on the front gate and the caboose. Prudent purchasing by Richard Freeman on eBay resulted in new keys and 5 pin high security master locks for around \$30.00. An ample supply of keys brought the total cost at \$75.00. The railroad gate was also fitted with one of the new locks.

Twenty-four linear feet of light duty shelving has been prefabricated, delivered and installed in the storage trailer. It is two feet wide and four shelves high (including the floor) for a total of 192 square feet of storage space. Cost of the project is \$100.00. The shelves were installed in late February.

ROLLING STOCK: The starter motor on the genset of the *539 Powhatan Arrow coach* was removed, professionally rebuilt, and re-installed. This is the second occurrence of this type

(the *Moultrie* diner was the other), and points out the value of constantly checking the performance of our equipment. A repair as this when the car was on the road would have been very expensive!

The trucks for the *Crescent Harbor* have been disassembled to the required level, cleaned and inspected. This work included removal of all brake parts, shock absorbers and wheel sets including bearing boxes so it's pretty well stripped down. Inspection by our AMTRAK inspector was scheduled for late February. We found a small crack in the "A" end truck, and our member and master welder Johnny Jones worked on the repair. We have removed around thirty hardened steel bushings from the brake parts that will be replaced with new parts. About eleven pins will also be replaced. Mike and Jim Magill have found sources for the parts and Jim placed an order for them. Nearly all the brake parts have been cleaned, repaired and painted. We are working with the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum to secure some brake parts that are not reparable.

Installation of the Head End Power (HEP) wiring has started and parts for the twenty seven-pin communication system are being repaired and painted. All this equipment in the area of the trucks will be installed before they are put back under the car. Rewiring of the entire car is nearing completion including the rework of light fixtures that are not going to be replaced. Rewiring of the low voltage porter call system will be next, and the blinds are almost completed.

Strange Weather and the Circus Train

Winter is always a difficult time for us railroaders. You never know what to expect and we always have to be prepared for just about anything. Sunday the 1st of March really came in like a lion, (and I am not talking about on the circus train either) as Eastern Virginia was blanketed with a freak snowstorm. When I arrived in Lynchburg and went to bed on Sunday evening, there was only around a inch of snow on the ground. When I awoke on Monday morning there was a whopping 10 inches of wet snow covering Kinney Yard. In our morning safety meeting, our supervisor informed us that it was even worse the farther east one went, and we had trains snowed in on the main lines due to hundreds of trees that had fallen across the railroad tracks. The snow storm had turned into an ice storm just east of Crewe, VA, and had everything including the railroad virtually shut down. Train #236 had trees fallen in front of and behind of it, and the train could not be moved in either direction until crews arrived with chainsaws to free the train from its wintry prison. Around ten of my fellow employees became snowbound on their way to work and had to find shelter in hotels.

Due to the extreme amount of snow, tie replacement was cancelled on Monday, and we were issued brooms and shovels for switch duty--we had to clean the snow out of all 42 switches located in Lynchburg's Kinney Yard so the switches could be thrown with ease by transportation employees. On Tuesday, enough snow had melted and we returned to re-placing ties. There was still a few inches of snow left on the ground there when I left for home.

Once a year is all that I normally get to see the Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey (RBBB) circus train due to their meticulous schedule, but seeing it visit our area three weeks in a row is virtually unheard of. On Monday, February 16, the RBBB Red Train rolled east thru Greensboro and Lynchburg en-route to Richmond for a weekend performance, then on the following Monday, February 23, the circus train headed West down the ole N&W thru Roanoke, Bristol and points south en-route to weekend shows in Alabama. But wait there's more In the wee hours of the morning on Tuesday, March 2, the Circus sneaked its way quietly thru Bristol, Marion, and arrived in Roanoke yard shortly after 6 a.m. for a 4-hour layover to service the train and to feed and water the animals. Shortly after noon, the Red Train turned north and made a historic run up the former N&W Shenandoah Line to Hagerstown, MD, on its way to New Jersey. No one can remember any time recently when the circus train has taken the Shenandoah line route. I wonder what the elephants thought about all the snow?

Gary Price,

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

ATTENTION RAILFANS!

In addition to their regular passenger runs, the Big South Fork Scenic Railway will hold a K & T Railfan day on Saturday, April 25, 2009 in Stearns, KY. Check out the brochure at <http://www.bsfsry.com/download/KandTRailfan3.PDF>
The Big South Fork Scenic Railway runs out of Stearns, KY.
See www.bsfsry.com for more information.



Left Photo--Watauga Valley NRHS Member Paul Haynes is also a member of the Mountain Empire Model Railroad Club. On the club's HO-scale layout at the George L. Carter Museum on the campus of East Tennessee State University, Paul has built a model of a sawmill adjacent to the HO mainline.

On another section of the MEMRR Club's HO layout, is a well-crafted module built by Watauga Valley Members Duane and Harriet Swank shown at right. The museum is open to the public every Saturday from 10:00 a.m., to 3:00 p.m. Photos by Betty Jackson.



Additions to Paul Marcum's story on his O-scale Model Railroad in the February 2009 *Whistle Stop*:
Add to credits: Wayne and Freda Burke, Dave Stevins, Walter Byrd, Gerald and Phyllis Cardwell, Mike and Betty Jackson, and my family.
Our apologies to Paul for losing these credits.

The Whistle Stop

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

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A 1998 photo of the NS F-units at Roanoke. The photo is by Gary Mullis and was submitted by Gary Price. We have full permission from him to use it in the *March Whistle Stop*. Attend the March meeting and see Gary's program on the NS Office Train.

Want to Receive Your *Whistle Stop* by E-mail?

Because of the rising costs of printing and mailing the monthly newsletter, the Watauga Valley NRHS Newsletter Committee (Mike Jackson, editor, Duane and Harriet Swank, printing and circulation) is studying a plan to send the monthly *Whistle Stop* to those members who have email. If the investigation into this plan shows enough interest, the committee will ask the Chapter's board to formally adopt the plan.

The committee believes the Chapter will save a significant amount on printing supplies and mailing costs if the *Whistle Stop* can be sent by email to most of our members. For members without email access, please don't be alarmed: We will continue to mail the monthly newsletter to you.

Do you want to receive the *Whistle Stop* by email or regular mail?

By email _____

By regular mail _____

We hope every member who has an email address will request to receive his/her copy this way. Again, please note we will continue to send the newsletter by U.S. mail to members who do not have internet access. Please return this form to the chapter meeting or mail to Duane and Harriet Swank, Watauga Valley NRHS, P.O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN, 37605-0432. Thank You! Mike Jackson, and Duane and Harriet Swank.