



Whistle Stop

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

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Baltimore NRHS member Jim Kleeman captured CRR 800 leading the 2017 CSX "Santa Train" through the tunnel at Hill, VA. [Photo used with permission.]

January 22nd General Membership Meeting

The Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society and Museum will have our regular meeting at 6:30 pm on Monday, January 22nd, 2018 at the Johnson City Public Library, 101 West Millard St., Johnson City, TN. Megan Kegley will present this month's program, a video entitled "*The Golden Twilight of Postwar Steam*" showcasing steam on the NORFOLK AND WESTERN RAILWAY from 1959-1960. Bring a friend out for a relaxing and entertaining evening with your fellow members.

Member Notes

by Edna Kay Carter

Let us continue to keep Tom Phelps and family in our thoughts and prayers in the recent loss of Kati. Tom and Kati have been members of WVRHSM for several years and have been car hosts on several of our excursions.

Please keep the following folk in your thoughts as they deal with various concerns. They are Bob Yapple, Gary Price and Nancy Jewel. As always, let us know of any member, friend or family to whom a card might be sent phone call made. The office phone number is (423) 753-5797 or call Edna Carter at (423) 571-3226.

Hope everyone is surviving the winter weather but I'm looking forward to spring.

LATE DUES NOTICE FOR 2018

If you have not paid your dues as of press time, your membership expired December 31, 2017. Dues are \$20.00 for individual membership and \$5.00 for each family member. An application form is included with this newsletter for your convenience. Remit your form and dues payment (check only) to Membership Chairman Edna Carter, Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum, P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN. 37605. Renew your membership ASAP so as not to miss future issues of the *Whistle Stop* and other membership advantages. Any questions e-mail wataugavalley@embarqmail.com.

PROGRAMS NEEDED FOR 2018

The WVRHS&M Program Committee is looking for General Membership Meeting programs for 2018. Please call (423) 753-5797 if you have an interest in showing a program or let us know at the next General Membership Meeting. We are looking for speakers; if you know someone that would come and present a railroad related program, please advise. And as always we're looking for DVD and slide shows.

JONESBOROUGH LIBRARY DONATIONS FOR RAILROAD SECTION

Please bring your railroad book donations to any membership meeting or call the office at (423) 753-5797. Our Railroad Section at the Jonesborough Library is growing every day. If you are finished reading or just want to donate, put your books to good work. We have plenty of room to add more books.

NEWSLETTER – ARE YOU MISSING OUT?

We are still asking members to switch over to the electronic version of the *Whistle Stop*. The electronic version is in living color and the quality is so much better than the printed copy. Please try it! Call the office (423) 753-5797 and give us your e-mail. You will not go back to the printed copy once you see what you are missing.

*"The thing about trains... it doesn't matter where they're going.
What matters is deciding to get on."* [from "The Polar Express"]

Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report

by Jim Magill

GENERAL

The Watauga Valley Mechanical Team is looking for more volunteers. As most of you know the WVRHS&M Mechanical Team is composed of volunteers with all kinds of different experiences. We now have five operating passenger cars and it takes a lot of manpower to keep the equipment up and running. We need volunteers to help with all kinds of projects, even if they do not have any experience. The WVRHS&M Mechanical Team is composed of all volunteers; many are retired and many still working. The team is a great bunch of guys enjoying working together to keep our equipment up and running on the rails. If you're interested, please call the Watauga Valley office at (423) 753-5797 and leave a message that you are interested in volunteering at the Jonesborough Coach Yard. Work days are Tuesdays 9 am to 5 pm and on Saturdays from 9 am to 12 noon. If you're tired of lying around the house during the winter months, please call and let us know of your interest; we will get you scheduled to help.

ROLLING STOCK

"Powhatan Arrow" coach (WATX 539): Has been in excursion service at the North Carolina Transportation Museum the past couple of months. As of press time the car is headed back to the Jonesborough Coach Yard.

"St Augustine" coach (WATX 500): Has been in excursion service at the North Carolina Transportation Museum the past couple of months. St Augustine will stay at the NCTM until mid-February.

"Moultrie" diner (WATX 400): Has been in excursion service at the North Carolina Transportation Museum the past couple of months. It will remain at the NCTM for future trips.

"Crescent Harbor" sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351): Received wheel damage in Middle Tennessee and is in Chattanooga getting the wheels turned. Should be returned to the Jonesborough Coach Yard in the near future.

CLINCHFIELD OFFICE CAR (WATX 100): The WVRHS&M Mechanical Team is putting plans together for possible upgrade.



C&O CABOOSE 903103: The caboose project is about finished. The exterior has been repainted and decals Handle with Care are back on the caboose. Work is on going on the interior with painting presently going on now.

CRR BOX CAR 5586: The project on this car is complete.

In the News



CHUCKEY DEPOT / MUSEUM AT JONESBOROUGH

Things at the Chuckey Railroad Depot Museum in Jonesborough are going great. We now have 43 volunteers trained to host in the Depot. Most volunteers are working around one day a month. We will have another training session for host in late January. If you're interested in volunteering, please e-mail wataugavalley@embarqmail.com or call the office at (423) 753-5797. We will also be changing out displays soon. If you have items that you would like to donate for display in regard to area railroading, please call (423) 753-5797 for information.

ADVANCE TRAIN CONTROL SYSTEM AT CHUCKEY RAILROAD DEPOT

We are happy to announce that the Advance Train Control System is up and running at the Chuckey Depot / Museum. If you're out railfanning some day and you do not want to just sit trackside waiting for a train, come by the Chuckey Depot / Museum at Jonesborough for train updates and locations.



WVRHS&M Excursion Ticketing Goes Digital

Responding to customer demand, ticketing and food purchases for our March excursion will go digital. Passengers now have the opportunity to use computers and mobile devices to make their seating and lunch choices and purchases online. In addition (and again, responding to customer demand), purchases can be made using credit cards. The service we're using, TicketTailor, also provides an array of statistics to track sales progress. It is hoped this new service will alleviate the tedious – and outdated – process of filling paper orders and handling checks.



CSX CEO Hunter Harrison Death

[Will Robinson, "Jacksonville Business Journal"] "It is with great sadness that we announce that E. Hunter Harrison, President and Chief Executive Officer of CSX, died today [Dec. 16] in Wellington, Fla., due to unexpectedly severe complications from a recent illness," a CSX statement reads. "The entire CSX family mourns this loss. On behalf of our Board of Directors, management team and employees, we extend our deepest sympathies to Hunter's family. Hunter was a larger-than-life figure who brought his remarkable passion, experience and energy in railroading to CSX."

The 73-year-old railroad veteran took an unexpected medical leave Dec. 14 due to complications related to a recent illness. CSX has not released further details.

James Foote, who joined CSX as chief operating officer in October, was named acting CEO when Harrison took leave. Harrison had implied that Foote would be his successor during a Nov. 29 Credit Suisse conference, saying, "One of the steps in the succession was to bring Jim on."

While expressing confidence in Foote, CSX Board Chairman Edward J. Kelly III noted the loss of Harrison was significant. [Continued on next page.]

"With the passing of Hunter Harrison, CSX has suffered a major loss," he said. "Notwithstanding that loss, the Board is confident that Jim Foote, as acting Chief Executive Officer, and the rest of the CSX team will capitalize on the changes that Hunter has made. The Board will continue to consider in a deliberative way how best to maximize CSX's performance over the long term."

Foote told investors he will continue Harrison's plan to transition the Jacksonville-based railroad to a more efficient operating model called precision scheduled railroading. Foote worked alongside Harrison at CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAY, where the two implemented the same operating model.

"There is absolutely no change in plan here, no change in focus," Foote told investors during a conference call Dec. 15. "We're not slowing down... There's going to be no slacking off, and we're not going to take a step back from what we think we can execute."

However, rail expert James Mourafetis told the *Business Journal*, CSX is more likely to see a hybrid than the full transition to precision schedule railroading. Mourafetis is senior vice president and asset management leader at Argo Consulting. He served as a consultant for CSX from 2010 to 2016 and assisted the railroad make operations more efficient prior to Harrison's arrival.

"Since the new operating model and culture are not fully settled in yet, there is a high risk that the precision operating model will not be fully realized," Mourafetis said by email. "Hunter's implementation approach has been to personally create a mega disruption in a railroad's culture and then later follow with replacing top management with his own disciples. That has not fully happened. And Hunter is Hunter, there is no other."

After news of Harrison's medical leave, an Edward Jones analyst told the *Business Journal* that he still recommended buying CSX stock.

"When Hunter left CANADIAN NATIONAL and CANADIAN PACIFIC, the processes and people that he put in place stayed," said Dan Sherman. "Those railroads improved after he left... Harrison was not finished with the transformation at CSX yet, but we're confident the railroad will continue to get more efficient."

Harrison joined CSX in March. Born in Memphis, Harrison worked in railroads since he was 19. He started as a carman-oiler for the ST. LOUIS-SAN FRANCISCO RAILWAY, he worked his way up the ladder to CEO of ILLINOIS CENTRAL, where he began with precision scheduled railroading. CN acquired that railroad in 1998, and Harrison brought his operating philosophy as the Canadian railroad's chief operating officer and later CEO. He later implemented the operating model at CP as well. Both Canadian lines are among the most efficient in North America and are investor favorites.

Foote Permanently Appointed CEO

[Railway Age] CSX Corp. on Dec. 22 named James Foote as President and Chief Executive Officer, effective immediately. Formerly Chief Operating Officer, Foote had been acting CEO since Dec. 14 after E. Hunter Harrison was placed on medical leave. Harrison died Dec. 16. Foote will also join the CSX Board of Directors. [Continued on next page.]

Foote, a senior executive with more than 40 years of railroad industry experience in finance, operations and sales and marketing, was named Executive Vice President and COO of CSX in October 2017. Prior to joining CSX, He was President and CEO of Bright Rail Energy, a technology company formed in 2012 to design, develop and sell products that allow railroads to convert locomotives to natural gas power. Before heading Bright Rail, Foote was Executive Vice President of Sales and Marketing with CN, which he joined in 1995 as Vice President of Investor Relations to assist the company's privatization. He also served as Vice President of Sales and Marketing-Merchandise. Foote began his career in the railroad industry in 1972 as a laborer in the mechanical department with the SOO LINE RAILROAD in Superior, Wisc. For nine years, he worked union operating positions with SOO LINE and CHICAGO & NORTH WESTERN full time while earning his undergraduate and law degrees.

AMTRAK Reports Roanoke's First Month Ridership

[Jeff Sturgeon, "The Roanoke Times"] AMTRAK said 2,770 people boarded in Roanoke during the first 30 days after the passenger railroad resumed running trains here, from Oct. 31 through Nov. 30. That equated to 92 riders a day. The ridership forecast is for 38,000 riders during the first year, according to AMTRAK. That would equate to 104 riders a day.

AMTRAK officials said they anticipate ridership to shift with the seasons. For example, ridership on the system usually goes up around Thanksgiving and spring break and drops in January and February, AMTRAK spokeswoman Kimberly Woods said.

AMTRAK passenger trains bypassed Roanoke between 1979 and this [past] Halloween. That's when AMTRAK, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation and NORFOLK SOUTHERN agreed the service would resume.

AMTRAK provides a single outbound and inbound train seven days a week. The boarding platform stands beside Norfolk Avenue.

Fatal AMTRAK "Cascades" Accident

As there has been so much national coverage of the fatal December 18th wreck of AMTRAK's "Cascades" and there have been no new developments, your editor has chosen not to repeat the story here. That said, our thoughts and prayers remain with the victims.

City to Fine CSX for Trains Blocking Roadways

The Keyser, WV City Council plans to send a certified letter to CSX stating that the railroad transportation system will be fined \$100 for every additional 15 minutes it leaves a train sitting on the tracks blocking roadways. A city ordinance stipulates that a train cannot rest for longer than 15 minutes and it's also against federal law. Council members agreed to look up that ordinance and include it in the letter.

Last month, a train sat on the railroad tracks for an hour and 20 minutes, blocking two crossings and cutting off residents. Earlier a train was on the tracks for 45 minutes. Some homes may only be reached by crossing the tracks. "It was ridiculous - if somebody has a heart attack across those tracks by the time they get that Humvee across that water somebody is going to die," said a councilwoman during a council meeting on Wednesday. "That's unacceptable. Let us fine them and then we'll see where we go from there." ["Cumberland Times-News" via Western Maryland NRHS "Automatic Block"]

Important 2018 Dates ...



MARCH 24: GSMR excursion sponsored by WVRHS&M.



MAY 17-20: N&W Historical Society Convention, NCTM, Spencer, NC.



AUGUST 7-12: NRHS Convention, Cumberland, MD.



AUGUST 5-12: NMRA National Convention, Kansas City, MO. Info: <http://www.nmra.org>



SEPTEMBER 5-8: National Narrow Gauge Convention, Bloomington, MN. Info: <https://nngc-2018.com/>

For Your Viewing Enjoyment ...



Gary Price posted a link on our facebook page to this fun-filled video. Some terrific footage along the ROW and insightful interviews. To view, go to <http://ekbtv.com/santa-train-75-years-an-ekb-news-special-presentation/>



Trains Presents: Nashville Steam Update

Work continues on NASHVILLE, CHATTANOOGA & ST. LOUIS No. 576! Restoration of this fabled 4-8-4 continues in Nashville's Centennial Park while organizers raise money to relocate the engine to a shop. A matching challenge grant through the end of 2017 will boost the project. Organizer Shane Meador explains the latest developments for "the stripe." To view, go to: <https://tinyurl.com/y8tmxas6>.



Steam at 100 MPH

Watch the British (ex-LNER) 4-6-2 steam locomotive "Tornado" reach 100 mph. in this BBC film clip: <https://tinyurl.com/y8ay7hws>

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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

TIME VALUE MATERIAL



WATAUGA VALLEY RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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E-mail _____

How do you wish to receive our newsletter? _____ email (preferred) _____ paper copy via U S Mail

MEMBERSHIPS AVAILABLE

WATAUGA VALLEY RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

Individual Membership \$ 20.00 \$ _____

Family Membership. \$ 5.00 per each family member \$ _____

Donation to Watauga Valley RHS&M \$ _____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED (check only, please) \$ _____

PLEASE NOTE: If you want to join or renew with the Railroad Heritage Alliance or National Railway Historical Society, you must submit through those organizations.

Watauga Valley RHS&M does not process membership to those two organizations.

Signature _____ Date _____

Please send check (no cash, please) payable to WVRHS&M and remit to:

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