

Whistle Stop



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

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Your Editor took a double take at first of this Megan Kegley photo, thinking it was a well-formed model railroad layout. But it's not. It's a real-life photo taken during the recent "Railroad Day" at Natural Tunnel State Park, VA. Accompanying story found in this month's *Megan's Manifest*.

August 26th General Membership Meeting

The Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society and Museum will conduct our monthly General Membership meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, August 26th, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. at the Johnson City Public Library, 100 West Millard St. This month's program will be provided by Gary Street, who will dig into his treasure trove of videos and surprise everyone!

Member Notes

by Edna Kay Carter, Membership Chairperson

Keep the following in your thoughts and prayers as they deal with various health concerns. They are Nancy Jewel, George Ritchie, Gary Price, Sharon Eaton, Gary Street, Claudia Banner, Fred Phofl and wife, Ralph Clarke, Sharon Slagle and Bob Muchet. As always, let us know of any member, friend or family to whom a card might be sent or a phone call made. The office number is (423) 753-5797 or call Edna Carter at (423) 571-4612.

We welcome new member Kathy Sutterlin.

Continue to enjoy the summer weather.

WVRHS&M Rail Excursions

HIWASSEE GORGE EXCURSION

The October 13th Hiwassee Gorge Excursion train has **SOLD OUT**.

GSMR HOST TRAINING

All hosts who volunteered to help on the **SOLD OUT** GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD excursion trains at the last membership meeting will need to attend the GSMR Safety Meeting on August 26th at 5:45 pm at the Johnson City Public Library. Training will be conducted prior to our regular membership meeting.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

We will be taking nominations from the floor for officers and board members next month. If you would like to run for a position, please submit your name to our email at wataugavalley@gmail.com. Requirements are that you are a WVRHS&M member in good standing and that you are able to attend the board meetings held each month.

CHAPTER UNIFORMS AVAILABLE NOW

Order forms were available in the July Whistle Stop for official WATV uniforms. If you need a uniform or name badge, email wataugavalley@gmail.com.

MEMBERSHIP BROCHURES

If you know of someone who is interested in joining the Watauga Valley Railroad Museum, new brochures are available to provide them with information. Either go by the Chuckey Depot and pick up a copy or phone our office at (423) 753-5797.



If you haven't had a chance yet to do so, visit our WVRHS&M facebook page. We're close to a thousand friends now. Access is as simple as sending a friend request to be registered for viewing. Thanks to Gary Price for his terrific work in keeping information relevant and up-to-date.

Mechanical Department Report

by Jim Magill

If you would like to volunteer at the Spring St. Coach Yard on Tuesdays or Saturdays, please call (423) 753-5797 or email wataugavalley@gmail.com. There are projects for everyone; hope to hear from you.

ROLLING STOCK

“Powhatan Arrow” coach (WATX 539): is at the Coach Yard getting upgrades.

“Crescent Harbor” sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351): is at the Coach Yard getting upgrades.

“St Augustine” coach (WATX 500): is at the North Carolina Transportation Museum in service.

“Moultrie” diner (WATX 400): is at the Coach Yard getting upgrades.

“Clinchfield 100” office car (WATX 100): has come a long way with its ongoing restoration project. The bedrooms have been removed and the car now has a large lounge area. A new ceiling has been installed along with new wall paper, flooring and electrical upgrades. We hope to have the car finished in the coming weeks, ready to go back into service. Below we see that restoration work requires as much brawn as brain. More photos of this fine work can be found on our facebook page.



Chuckey Depot and Rail Museum

WVRHS&M members have been very busy with hosting activities at the Chuckey Depot, highlighted by the August 1st grand opening of the display of Clinchfield Railroad artifacts. On August 10th we held "Scoop Fest" at which over 400 people visited the depot and enjoyed scoops of ice cream. The monthly Classic Car Cruise-in was held on August 17th with a large crowd coming by and viewing some real gems.

We had over 200 volunteer hours at the depot last month with record crowds. The Chuckey Depot/Museum attendance is picking up each month. Thanks to all the Watauga Valley hosts who make all of these events possible.

If you have not seen the new displays of the Clinchfield Railroad artifacts that were installed on August 1st, please come by and visit. Hours are Sunday, Monday, Thursday and Friday, 1pm to 5pm; Saturday, 11am to 5pm.

We are planning to conduct another Chuckey Depot / Museum Host Training session; sessions last about 1 hour. If you would like to host at the Chuckey Depot one day a month, please email Mike Tilley at wataugavalley@gmail.com stating your interest and requesting a seat in the training session. When a date has been set, we will call you to confirm your attendance.

Visit the Virtual Rail Fan Cams at the Chuckey Depot, up and running 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Go to our home page at <http://www.wataugavalleynrhs.org/> and click on "LIVE WEBCAM".

From the Vaults ...



CRR 1 and 100 are being passed by a coal train at Kingsport, TN in this 1969 photo. [Photo used with permission from Mrs. David Devault.]

In the News ...

Autumn Colors Express Consist Will Include Plenty of Domes

[Trains.com, Chase Gunnoe] As the *Autumn Colors Express* rolls through southern West Virginia in late October 2019, the train's consist will largely resemble the previous *New River Train*; however, a few stark differences may pique the interest of local followers. The consist will feature three Amtrak diesel locomotives and 29 private cars. Similar to the *New River Train* in recent years, there will be no Amtrak cars. Various classes of service will be available, including coach, deluxe coach, lounge, private suites, dome cars, and chairman class cars.

Many of the privately owned cars that once made up the *New River* consist will return, but a few private cars will stand out with the 2019 consist. The Milwaukee Road *Cedar Rapids* will serve as an eastbound tail car, while the Pennsylvania Railroad *Frank Thompson* will serve as the westbound tail car. Both cars are chairman's class cars and have not operated on the *New River Train* in recent history.

Similarly, Northern Pacific No. 549, a Budd short dome, will make its excursion debut on the *Autumn Colors Express* consist in 2019 and the California Zephyr *Silver Palace* car is another new face joining the consist. There are a total of seven dome cars that will be made available for the three one-day trips this fall.

The most notable difference will be six Budd-built self-propelled vehicles, or SPVs, that were originally constructed with cabs and traction motors. These recently restored passenger cars resemble Amtrak's Amfleet-style cars and will be part of the coach class service. Originally used in Northeastern commuter rail service, the *Autumn Colors Express* will serve as their first introduction to excursion service as Amtrak-certified cars.

Autumn Colors Express excursions will depart from Huntington, WV on Oct. 25-27, 2019. Tickets went on sale on Monday, August 5th. More information is available online. <http://www.autumncolorexpresswv.com>.

FreightCar America to Layoff Workers at Roanoke

[Posted by Kelvin Whitehurst, wdbj7.com, Roanoke] FreightCar America Corporation, a freight car manufacturer, will officially close its Roanoke manufacturing location in November. According to an announcement from officials at FreightCar America, layoffs will begin the third week of September and will continue through November 11th when all employees at the Roanoke operation will be terminated. The layoffs are set to come in stages, depending on the need for workers as the company scales back and eventually closes, according to a statement from FreightCar America Corporation. "At this time, the plant closing should be considered permanent, and employees should not count on being recalled to employment with the Company," said David D. Benson, the Vice President of Human Resources at FreightCar America.

"Various factors including market conditions and pending orders may affect the sequence and timing of any layoffs and potential recalls from layoff during the period leading up to plant closure," Benson said in the statement. "[Employees] will be informed of any significant changes in these plans as additional information becomes available."

No Timeline for WMSR #1309 to Hit the Rails

[Cumberland Times-News, Thursday, August 1st, 2019, by Greg Larry, staff writer] Work is needed on the wheel assemblies of Baldwin Steam Engine No. 1309 to ready the massive locomotive for a return to the rails, according to Western Maryland Scenic Railroad officials.

Officials had hoped for a return to steam in July. However, hopes faded in late June, forcing John Garner, railroad general manager, to announce the debut would be postponed due to ongoing mechanical issues.

The costly overhaul of the massive steam engine has been delayed multiple times since the 1949 locomotive was purchased five years ago.

"The locomotive needs to be re-wheeled," Garner said Wednesday. "But before we put it on its wheels, a piece of brass needs to be remanufactured. Once that is done and it is fitted back into the assembly, it will be set on the wheels."

Garner said a crane lift has been donated to help lift the engine and place it back on its wheels once the repairs are complete.

"You actually pick the locomotive up with a crane and put on the wheels ... six axles are placed underneath," he said.

Although some timeframes for the engine's return had been put in place in the past, Garner avoided committing to a timeline.

"I'll see steam when you see steam," he said. "We hope to get it back in a couple weeks. Then you have 8-10 weeks to get it ready for inspection by the Federal Railroad Administration."

The Baldwin No. 1309 has been christened "Maryland Thunder". Garner said once the wheels are functional, "Maryland Thunder" must put in 300 miles on the rails before the required FRA inspection can be performed.

"You have to put in 300 miles to work out the bugs and the kinks," he said. "Then it will be 'blue carded.' Just like when you have your registration in your glove box when you drive your car, the engine must have its blue card aboard when in use."

Gary Bensman of Diversified Rail Services of Saint Albans, WV, is overseeing the work. Although much of the work is being paid for by donations, Garner said he expects to have the funds to complete the work, which has cost more than \$2 million to date.






"It will be a huge boost to the railroad when it's running," Garner said. "It's all about time and money. If the money is not there, I won't put the railroad at jeopardy over this. But I think we will have the funds to complete it. The object of the game is to keep WMSR rolling along to put heads in beds here. It is our hope to be doing that with steam power as soon as we can." The WMSR is currently running using diesel powered engines. The 14 miles of rail lines from Cumberland to the Frostburg Depot are also receiving an upgrade. Crews are replacing more than 1,200 railroad ties, spikes and plates on the lines.

In addition, the railroad crossing at Baltimore Street in Cumberland, beside the concourse of the Western Maryland Railway station, is being upgraded. Garner said the crossing will become "a smoother and nicer" experience and will meet all current safety standards.

Whistle Truck

If you have a event at which you want the WVRHS&M "Whistle Truck" to perform, please call (423) 753-5797.

Railfan Event Calendar

	AUG 24-25: Tweetsie Railroad's "Railroad Heritage Weekend". See https://tweetsie.com/special-events/railroad-heritage-weekend/
	SEPT 15: GSMR excursion sponsored by WVRHS&M. SOLD OUT!
	SEPT, OCT various dates: N&W 611 visits Strasburg Railroad. See https://tinyurl.com/y4ba6nxj
	OCT. 13: Hiwassee Gorge excursion sponsored by WVRHS&M. SOLD OUT!
	NOV 3: GSMR excursion sponsored by WVRHS&M. SOLD OUT!

Autumn Rails 2019 Train Show

The Autumn Rails 2019 Train Show will be held October 4th, 12 noon to 7pm, and October 5th, 10am to 4pm, at the WNC Agricultural Center, Boylston Hwy (NC 280), Gate 5, Expo Building 785, Fletcher, NC, near the Asheville Airport. Admission is \$6. For more information, visit <http://www.wncagcenter.org/events/2019/autumn-rails-train-show>.



Above is an example of garden railroading at its finest. If you look carefully past the orchids, you'll see a large-scale passenger train plying its way through the flora. In the background is a remarkable fully-botanical-constructed model of the Biltmore House. This and five other trains are running on 800 feet of track in the Biltmore Estate's Conservatory through September 29th. A smaller but no less entertaining layout can be found at the Estate's Antler Hill Village.

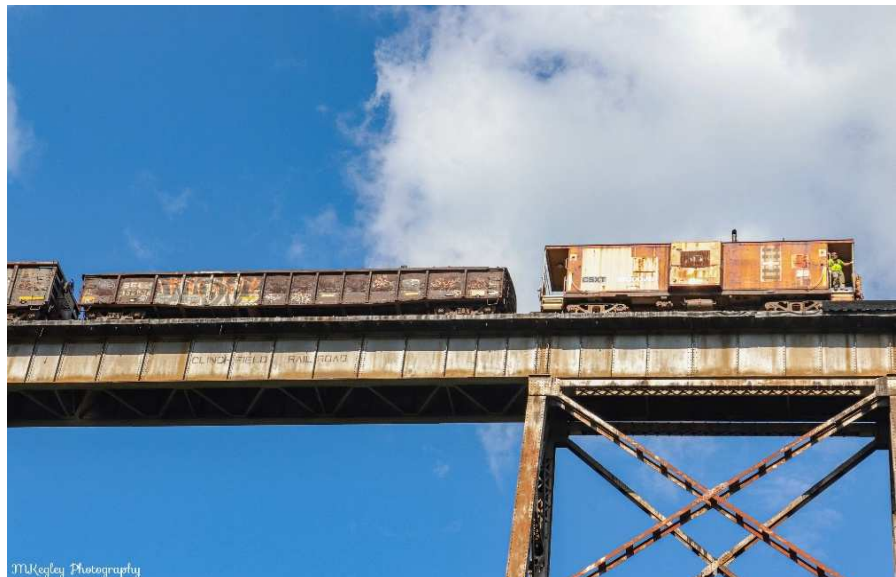
Megan's Manifest
by Megan Kegley

To start off this month's *Manifest*, we have a photo on the front page that I took at the NS Railroad Day event at Natural Tunnel State Park. I go to this event every year, regardless of what power they bring! I usually go by myself; however, this year, my two good friends AJ Gray and Jarrett Prince decided to tag along with me since they had never been to the tunnel before. The two of them were shocked when they saw the tunnel for their first time! No matter how many times I have walked through the tunnel, I am still amazed each time! If you have never seen it in person... I suggest going to Natural Tunnel!!



Pictured at left is Watco's Blue Ridge Southern T31 (Blu T31) heading eastbound just a little east of Canton, NC. I had actually planned on catching Blu T59 that was heading for Little Evergreen and then on to Waynesville, NC but the timing did

not work out as they had already reached Little Evergreen to start their work there. Once I found T59 at Little Evergreen, I headed back towards Canton to wait on T31 to leave since it was about time for it to depart Canton. Although I had a very busy day planned with my dance team, I still managed to go railfanning with my friends John Nagy and Eric Lemerise that morning before my crazy day got started. I don't really railfan with many people, so whenever I get the chance to go out and see something with my friends that is exactly what I do. Sometimes it is just not fun to railfan alone, then again sometimes it is. Even though my day was packed with events, I am still happy I was able to at least get this photo.



[At right] On July 24 after I got off from work, I went to visit my friend Dave in Duffield, VA. Somehow

every time I visit him there is some sort of train moving around the area, whether it is on the NS Appalachia District or the Clinchfield. As soon as I got there, we went to Copper Creek to see what a Southbound was that was lit up from the north end of Starnes signal to the Kingsport hold out signal on the ATCS. I know I have shot a hundred different trains at Copper Creek over the last few years along with numerous other folks, but it just never gets old. I have absolutely no idea what the ID of this work train was. A GEVO [GE Evolution series] shoving a work train back south across Copper Creek was pretty neat to see, especially since it had a caboose! This was not a “typical” train to catch on the Copper Creek Trestle, that is for sure. Overall, I am pleased!



To finish this month's *Manifest*, at left is a west bound NS 201 with two EMD's leading by a very familiar location to most of us! If you are guessing the Chuckey Depot, you are absolutely correct! This 201 came by the Depot the day that the new Clinchfield Exhibits became available for the public to view!

I am very pleased to say that one of my photos is in the Depot now! Thank you to everyone that made a reality! I never thought I would have any of my photos in a museum. Y'all just have no idea how proud I am of it and how great it looks with Rick Chinouth's G Scale CRR F unit.



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