
Whistle Stop



Volume 29 No. 4

April 2009

Mike Jackson, Editor

Duane and Harriet Swank, Printing and Circulation

Watauga Valley NRHS Chapter Meeting is April 27

General Membership Meeting

The next general membership meeting of the Watauga Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will be held April 27, 2009, at 6:30 p.m., at the Johnson City Public Library, 100 W. Millard St. The program will be on the famous Southern Railway Passenger Train "The Tennessean" which operated between Washington, DC, and Memphis, TN, traveling through our area. The following is a description of the program by Bob May of Jonesborough.

"My slide show will be a presentation of the May, 1941, demonstration run of The Tennessean, Southern Railway's first (and only) streamlined passenger train that operated between Washington, DC, and Memphis, TN, locally via Greeneville, Jonesboro, Johnson City, Bristol, etc. The original Kodachrome slides used in the presentation were taken by my dad, Robert M. May, who was a Local Counsel for the Southern and Mayor of Jonesboro at the time; and my mom, Caroline May, to whom Dad had been married only four months. Also included will be more recently made slides showing images of documents written by my dad and Mr. T. B. Martin, Southern Railway's Assistant General Passenger Agent in Knoxville. Some of the black and white images to be shown were reproduced from photographs taken by Southern Railway photographers.

"Southern began The Tennessean's demonstration run in Memphis, TN, on May 5, 1941. Along the route, the train stopped for inspection in smaller towns such as Grand Junction MS, and Loudon, TN, for an hour or less. Medium and larger sized towns such as Corinth, MS, Huntsville, AL, Greeneville, TN, Johnson City, TN, Roanoke, VA, and Lynchburg, VA, rated inspection stops lasting several hours. The Tennessean tied up for inspection in larger cities such as Chattanooga, TN, and Knoxville, TN, for an entire day each.

"The Tennessean pulled into Jonesboro at 1:45 PM on Sunday, May 11, and it was scheduled for a one hour stop. However, thanks in part to my dad's proclamation in Jonesboro's weekly "Herald and Tribune" that the hour stop was to be known as "Southern Railway Hour", so many people came to the Jonesboro station that the train stood for two hours to allow all of the assembled folks to tour the consist. That made the train late arriving in Johnson City for their scheduled 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM stop. Although not as large as Knoxville or Chattanooga, Bristol was one of the towns on the route that rated an entire day's inspection of the train, between 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM on Monday, May 12. After the train arrived in Washington, DC, at 7:00 PM on Friday, May 16, the train consist was prepped and made ready for revenue service.

"Southern wasn't the only railroad that handled The Tennessean. Between Bristol, VA, and Lynchburg (Monroe), VA, Norfolk and Western's beautiful J-class 4-8-4 streamlined steam locomotives pulled the stainless steel cars. Southern used a GM Electro Motive Corporation E6 AB diesel set to pull the train between Memphis and Bristol, TN. Southern also operated the train between Lynchburg (Monroe) and Washington, DC, using their one and only streamlined Otto Kuhler designed shrouded Ps-4 4-6-2 Pacific steamer for that portion of the run. Because N&W's rules didn't allow any engine not

powered by coal to operate over its lines, a diesel run-through was not permitted on N&W rails (until 1957). There's a lot of coal in N&W territory! Southern did not want to invest in another (expensive) streamlined diesel locomotive for the short run between Lynchburg [Monroe] and Washington, so they streamlined an existing Ps-4 for use there until they bought more diesel engines later.

"The slides show how Americans (especially Southerners/Tennesseans) celebrated progress during simpler times before America's entry into World War II, the arrival of baby boomers, the building of interstate highways, nationwide television networks, jet air travel and the internet. We'll never experience the mindset of that era again, but we can certainly appreciate the excitement of an event that happened during those times right here 68 years ago." **By Bob May.**

MAY MEETING IN BRISTOL

The May Chapter meeting will be held at the newly restored Bristol Train Station off of State St. in Bristol. The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m., in the meeting room of the station with a short business meeting. The program will be a complete tour of the station including the basement area. Some chapter members have already taken the tour several months ago, and you can be assured that the building is beautiful. You do not want to miss this meeting.

SOUTHWEST TOUR OF THE CLINCHFIELD RAILROAD

After 2 years of trying to plan the Clinchfield Tour, we finally got it off the ground on Saturday, April 4 with an unforgettable day. Twenty Chapter members loaded up at 7:30 a.m., and departed from the Johnson City Cherry St. parking lot for a breakfast stop at Hardee's in Erwin. Everyone got a quick bite before the trip over the mountain to Poplar, NC. Chapter member and CSX engineer Tony King was going to be the tour guide but at the last minute, Tony was called on a run out of Bostic, NC, and was not able to take the ride over the mountain and guide the tour. As our group arrived at Poplar and headed to the parking area, a big surprise greeted us: CSX Engine 229 arrived at the same time with Tony King pulling up to the parking lot greeting our Chapter members. Tony's train was waiting for a southbound coal train to arrive Poplar before he could depart on to Erwin. Pictures were taken of Tony's hopper train along with the southbound coal train that passed through Poplar. Everyone took photos of Tony waving as he stood on the locomotive's platform before he departed from Poplar.

The next stop was Pigeon Roost Creek Bridge where Chapter members lined up for a photo shot of CSXT Q699 which is a new Hamlet, NC, to Cincinnati, OH, time freight. Our group headed to Green Mountain, NC, but there were no trains at this location. We next went to Spruce Pine to see the old Clinchfield Railroad Freight Station that was damaged by fire last year. After a lunch break in Spruce Pine, we headed down to Mitchell Lumber Company to take photos of the old Waycross Derrick Crane. The crane created a lot of interest to all the members on the trip that day. Then we headed to Toe River Passing Track and on to Alta Pass for photos of the old CC&O caboose.

Our group headed to the Blue Ridge Parkway where we saw an extra north heading up the mountain. We also took in several over looks of the loops from the Parkway. We decided to chase the extra north back to Alta Pass where we also got a good shot of another CSX coal train heading south through the Vance Tunnel. Next, we went back down the mountain to the Clinchfield Loops and to Camp Two and took more pictures of an extra south which was meeting Q697 at Rocky.

Then it was on down the mountain to North Cove where we caught another coal train and Q692 meeting at Sevier. We heard several more trains on the scanner coming north from Marion, so we drove to Lake James where we hoped to get several shots of the trains crossing the Catawba River Bridge, but we got there too late, yet everyone still enjoyed seeing the bridge. By this time it was around 3:30 p.m., so we decided to head back home but not before going back toward Asheville to get some NS shots. We stopped at Old Fort, NC, to visit the Old Fort Train Station Museum and the Old Fort Hobby Shop. After 30 minutes in Old Fort, we had to shorten our stay since the signal on the NS (S) Line turned red. We headed up the mountain to the famous Andrews Geyser to watch NS train 134 come down the Old Fort Loops with a short train. After watching that train and touring the Geyser, we headed up Mill Creek road alongside the Old Fort Loops to the top of the mountain to Ridgecrest, NC. At this point we decided that everyone was getting hungry so we drove on to Asheville for dinner at the J&S Restaurant.

We all arrived back in Johnson City around 6:30 p.m. with loads of pictures and memories of the old Clinchfield Railroad and the old Southern Railway Loops. We could not have asked for a nicer day. Members are already asking when the north end Clinchfield Tour will be held.

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN TRIP

The March 28 bus-train excursion on the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad was a tremendous success! We had seven buses with 385 passengers from our group who rode the 19-car train. I want to thank the following hosts for their great work: Bob Schubel and George Ritchie, Richard Freeman and Art DeVoe, Harold and Margaret Pruett, Jim and Helen Calhoun, Nick White and Penny May, Duane and Harriet Swank, and Mike and Betty Jackson. Also, Duane and Harriet did an excellent job in filling ticket orders, while Nick White handled publicity very well!

NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

Please contact Duane and Harriet Swank and let them know if you can receive the newsletter by email. Printing and mailing costs continue to rise, and we believe we can save money by sending the newsletter to members by email. If you have email access and have not contacted Duane and Harriet, please do so. We will continue to send the newsletter by U.S. mail to members without email access.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

If you have not paid your 2009 membership dues, your membership expired on March 31. Please get your dues in ASAP so there will be no lapse of your membership. Mail to Membership Chairman, Watauga Valley NRHS, P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN, 37605. . If you have questions about your dues, please call the chapter phone at and leave message. **By Mike Tilley**

Member Notes – April Whistle Stop

Sympathy is extended to Kay and Paul Haynes in the death of Kay's Mother, Lucy Hankins of Elizabethton, on Friday, March 13th in Johnson City Medical Center Hospital.

Sympathy is also extended to Louis and Patricia Nelson in the death of George B. Lowe, Patricia's Father, on Sunday, March 15th at his home in Gray, Tennessee.

WELCOME to our new members, William and Myra Hensley of Sevierville, TN, Daniel L. McLeod, Sr., and his wife Charlene, of Headtown Road, Jonesborough, TN, and Jeffrey A. Jones of Powell, TN. We hope they all will enjoy the Chapter meetings and activities.

Patrick Jackson, son of members Mike and Betty Jackson, wants to thank everyone for their prayers and thoughts since his accident in January. Patrick appreciates the cards and kind words from our Chapter members.

Please let us know of friends, family, or other members who could use a card or call. Call the Chapter phone at 423-753-5797 or Nancy Jewell at 423-282-0918. We do want to make a difference. Thanks. **By Nancy Jewell**

Watauga Valley Chapter NRHS Minutes for the March 23, 2009, Meeting

The Watauga Valley Chapter NRHS met Monday, March 23, 2009, at the Johnson City (TN) Public Library with 38 members and guests in attendance. Chapter President Mike Tilley presided. After Jack Maloney moved and Paul Haynes seconded to dispense with the reading of the minutes for the February meeting, Mike had everyone introduce themselves. Then the following business was covered:

1. **Great Smoky Mountain Railroad Excursion.** Mike reported that seven buses will take around 385 passengers to the GSMRR for the March 28th excursion. The trip is a sell-out, Mike added. Communications director Walter Byrd will test new radios during the excursion.
2. **AMTRAK Excursion in the Fall.** The trips are scheduled for October 31 and November 1. Mike said 40 to 50 volunteers will be needed to work the excursion. In order to save money, the Chapter will lease passenger vans and not a bus to transport the volunteers from Jonesborough to Spencer, NC, and back.
3. **Clinchfield South End Trip.** The Chapter will car pool any members who want to see the south end of the Clinchfield line on Saturday April 4th and will need drivers to furnish transportation. Anyone can go on the trip which will give a unique opportunity to see several CSX trains in scenic western North Carolina. Mike asked those who want to go on this trip to donate money to cover fuel costs.
4. **Library Donations.** Mike introduced a new feature at the monthly meetings—an opportunity for anyone to donate a book to the Chapter's railroad section at the

Jonesborough-Washington County Library. Chapter Librarian Harold Smitter, who was appointed to the position by the Chapter president in February, will place the books in the library, keep a record of the collection, and inform members via the newsletter every other month on materials available. The first donation was made by Chapter member Paul Marcum of Kingsport who presented a book on CSX locomotives. After the presentation, the book was passed around so everyone could see it. **[Editor's Note: A bi-monthly column by the library director was to begin this month. As published in a previous newsletter and announced at the February Chapter meeting, the first column was scheduled to be included in the April *Whistle Stop*. Unfortunately, the column was not received by press time].**

5. **Newsletter by Email.** Mike asked everyone at the meeting to send their email address to Duane and Harriet Swank so plans could be made to begin sending the newsletter by email as a way to save money on printing and mailing. He stressed that members without email access will still receive their newsletter by U.S. mail.
6. **New Board of Directors Member Appointed.** Mike announced that BOD member Carol May had resigned her position, and the BOD appointed Penny May (no relation) to take her place and complete the three-year term. The nominating committee will soon look at the 2009 elections, and Mike urged anyone interested in running for a position to contact the committee.
7. **Programs.** The April program will be presented by Bob May on the 1941 Southern passenger train, the *Tennessean*. The Chapter will meet at the recently renovated Bristol (TN-VA) train station in May. After the business was completed, Mike introduced the program for the evening, a video presentation on the Norfolk Southern F units.

Betty Jackson, Secretary

Rail News from Jeff Jones

JACKSONVILLE, FL - CSX Transportation (CSXT) announced in early April the winners of its annual Chemical Safety Excellence Award (CSEA) - an award that reflects each winning company's commitment to rail car maintenance and safety as well as continuous safe tank car loading. Among the companies honored is Eastman Chemical Company of Kingsport, TN. For 2008, CSXT is recognizing 64 shippers. To be eligible for the award, each company must ship 600 or more railcars per year on CSXT and have no non-accidental releases during the entire year. Shippers include companies from the Chemicals, Fertilizer, Emerging Markets, Agriculture and Metals Merchandise commodity markets. One hundred CSX shippers are eligible to receive the award.

"Throughout the challenging economic environment these CSEA winners have remained focused on the safe loading and unloading of their fleet, and maintaining their fleet in safe working condition. Recent legislation and regulations mean more scrutiny on chemical shipments than ever before," said Dean Piacente, vice president-Chemicals & Fertilizer. "Our employees and customers know that Safety is a Way of Life at CSX, and the CSEA winners continue to display their industry leadership and unwavering commitment to safety as demonstrated by a year free of releases." **From CSX News**

NEW YORK - If you had money invested in the stock market in 2008, you may have lost a bundle. If you had money invested in a savings account in 2008, the return was below 5 percent. Corporate bankruptcies were numerous, and corporations reporting significant losses were even more numerous as the economic recession savaged sales, revenue and profits. Then there were railroads.

The Surface Transportation Board on March 19 reported the following earnings for major railroads in 2008:

* For the Class I (or largest) railroads as a whole, their return on net investment was 11.2 percent in 2008, up from 10.1 percent in 2007. For Norfolk Southern, their return on net investment was 15.2 percent in 2008, up from 13.4 percent in 2007. For BNSF, their return on net investment was 11.1 percent in 2008, up from 10.5 percent in 2007. For Union Pacific, their return on net investment was 10.6 percent in 2008, up from 8.8 percent in 2007. For CSX, their return on net investment was 9.6 percent in 2008, up from 7.8 percent in 2007.

The STB report indicates that even as railroads were losing business because of the recession, they were raising rates because of their market power. For 2008, Class I railroads increased their operating revenues to \$61.2 billion, compared with \$54.3 billion in 2007. **Contributed by Jeff Jones**



Recent Watauga Valley NRHS Chapter Activities—in the left picture, some of the 385 passengers who rode the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad excursion on March 28, 2009, leave the train after their scenic ride to the Nantahala Gorge. The Chapter hosted seven bus loads of passengers that day. **Below**, Watauga Valley Chapter member and CSX engineer Tony King on board his northbound empty hopper train at Poplar, NC, during the Chapter's tour of the south end of the former Clinchfield line on Saturday, April 4. Mike Jackson took the top photo, and Nick White contributed the photo below.



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 Yaple, Art DeVoe, Jim Pahr, Gary Price,
Nick White, Jeff Jones, and Betty Jackson, contributors
Send correspondence to ki4ojomichael@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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

The live Crescent Limited live steamer is on display at the George L. Carter Railroad Museum on the campus of East Tennessee State University. The Mountain Empire Model Railroaders operates the museum which is open to the public every Saturday from 10:00 a.m., to 3:00 p.m. Visitors are welcomed to see the club's operating model railroad layouts and the exhibits on display. Photo by Betty Jackson.

