

Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley NRHS
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Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

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Has Santa abandoned his sleigh for an F unit?

Not to worry. He's just posing for the CLINCHFIELD's 1964 corporate Christmas card, although that TOFC consist looks like it could handle a lot more toys than a sleigh. The engine is FP7A #200, built by EMD in February 1952. As its parent road changed names, so did its road number. It initially retained #200 with SEABOARD SYSTEMS in 1982 but then became SBD #118 in 1983; CSX #118 in 1987; and CSX #418 in 1998. Despite retirement from CSX, the locomotive survives, pulling tourist train duty as WEST VIRGINIA CENTRAL #67, although repainted in WESTERN MARYLAND livery. The photo location is MP 97, south of Kingsport, TN. While this scene has graced other issues of the Whistle Stop, it is presented here for the first time in color.

Chapter Notices

No December Meeting!

The Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society and Museum will not have a regular meeting this month due to Christmas. We will have our annual Christmas Dinner on Saturday, December 17, 2011 at 11:30 am at the Jonesborough Visitors Center. As a large crowd has already their reservations, we look forward to good fellowship and food. Our next regular membership meeting will be held Monday, January 23, 2012.

WATAUGA VALLEY ELECTIONS

The Nominating Committee has been working on a slate of Chapter Officers for the past several months and has presented the following names to be placed on the 2012 ballot. There were no nominations from the floor at the November meeting.

For Chapter Officer:

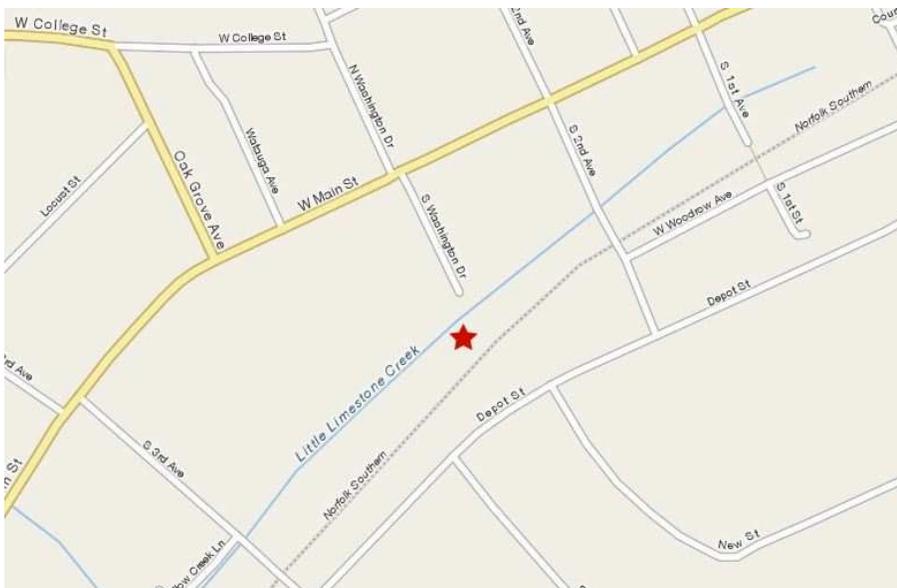
President: Mike Tilley	Vice President: Bob Schubel	Secretary: Jim Smallwood
Treasurer: Jeanie Walker	Historian: Gary Price	

For Board of Directors (three positions) with terms of three years:

Nick White	Penny May	Bob Yaple
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Ballots will be mailed out to Members in good standing during the week of December 12th. Ballots need to be returned to the Chapter no later than 12:01 am, January 1, 2012.

CHUCKEY DEPOT REPORT



The location of the Chucky Depot has been determined to be west of 2nd Avenue in Jonesborough along the railroad track, across from the site of the original depot. (See red star on map at left.) With bad weather around the corner, restoration will not start until sometime in March or April of next year. The Watauga Valley RSHM is looking forward in being a team player with the town of Jonesborough on the restoration work of the depot.

Member Notes

by Nancy Jewell

Congratulations to Wannetta "Nita" Johnson as she celebrated her 90th birthday on November 21st. We wish many more Happy Birthdays for Nita.

Please keep Harold Smitter and Walter Byrd in your thoughts as they deal with health issues. As always, you can help us keep in touch with Chapter members, families, and friends by calling the Chapter phone, (423) 753-5797, or Nancy Jewell at (423) 282-0918, and leave a message. Thanks.

As 2011 comes to a close, my wish for each of you is a Merry Christmas and a New Year filled with good health, peace, and much love.

Spring Street Coach Yard Mechanical Report

by Bob Yaple

General. Hours and hours of effort to clean up the box car and the yard are starting to be fruitful. The box car (workshop) is being re-organized to provide a larger work area with storage for the small equipment, parts and material that is used everyday. Yard clean up activity has been largely putting things back where they belong and a scrap drive.

Rolling Stock. The *Powhattan Arrow* coach and the *Crescent Harbor* sleeper lounge (now a part of the rolling stock) are back in the yard. The *Clinchfield* coach and *Moultrie* diner remain in Service at the North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer, NC.

500 Clinchfield Coach. The main brake valve was damaged en route to Huntington, WV and was bad ordered at Russell. Thanks to the CP Huntington RR Historical Society who provided a replacement valve that was installed by CSX forces.

Crescent Harbor. The car did quite well on the Spencer Excursion but there were some exceptions. On the return trip back home to the Jonesborough Coach Yard, the A end floor plate was damaged by a shelf coupler which is not supposed to be coupled to passenger cars. One, possibly two, shock absorbers failed, and a set of bearing spacers fell off causing the wheel set to rub on the brake shoe bracket on right hand curves.

Work to complete the restoration continues. Included are fine tuning the interior trim, fixtures, etc.; plumbing for gallery, bathrooms water heater, wastewater pumps and drains; and more electrical wiring for the pumps, water raising compressor, water tank shroud heaters and hand brake warning lights. All four wheel sets show some abnormal wear. An investigation is in progress.

The Tennessean

Gary Price found a nostalgic composition of *The Tennessean* marketing material and photos on YouTube. Check out this wonderful video clip at <http://tinyurl.com/bu83a4e>.

Railroad Graffiti

by Gary Price

Throughout the ages there has been one form of artwork that has either preserved history for all eternity or scarred the landscape with unwanted creations of chaos and destruction. In caveman days a hunter would proudly sketch images of his latest kills for others to admire, not knowing that archaeologists would discover them millions of years later and piece together a lifestyle of primitive man. In Egyptian times, they used hieroglyphics to tell the stories of ancient Pharaohs' rule and lifestyles. These forms were locked away in the pyramids of old, waiting for the day that modern man would unlock their secrets. These forms of graffiti proved to be valuable to modern society to tell stories that the world needed to know.

Probably the most famous graffiti recorded in American history would be the big nosed little fellow peaking over a wall, accompanied by the words, "Kilroy Was Here", that American soldiers left behind during World War II. BUT of course this is a railroad article, so for now I will focus on this form or nuisance of artwork.

We see it everyday, on every train, "Graffiti", or as it is also known, "Tagging". Some of it is harmless and means nothing. Others are more gang related and violent. Some are vulgar, even x-rated, and others try to promote a political view. What started out innocent as hobos marking their territories has turned into full blown acts of vandalism and trespassing.



Often I have sat trackside and watched railcar after railcar roll by and have seen all forms of vandalism in all shapes and sizes. I jokingly asked a fellow co-worker one day, "I wonder how many kids, setting at a crossing, said their first dirty word by reading the vulgar artwork on the side of one of our cars?".

Aside from promoting vulgarity and gang violence, Graffiti causes thousands of dollars of damage each year to railroad equipment and structures. Important stencils on cars related to brake testing and load limits get painted over, and the cars have to be repainted and re-stenciled so



important information is not overlooked or confused. Bridge structures are a common target for Taggers as they are stationary and easily accessed at anytime; however, each bridge has an important tag that has



very crucial information regarding track height and the limit to which track can be raised by the engineering department. If this tag is read wrong, and the track is pulled too high, then we risk shaving off the top of a doublestack container and costly repairs to the bridge and track. Autorack cars present a two fold problem. If you have ever paid attention to a typical autorack car, you have noticed the hundreds of fifty-cent piece sized holes that line up in rows across

the side of each car. In addition to taggers spray painting the outside [continued on next page]

canvas of the cars, the spray also travels through the holes and leaves a nasty overspray on a brand new automobile or truck before it even makes it to the dealer. Tank cars are especially dangerous, because the vandal could come in contact with something deadly, or cover up important HAZMAT information. If you see graffiti or vandalism going on, do not hesitate to call the authorities, but do not approach them yourself.

Coal trains out of West Virginia normally don't see much graffiti, but there is this one fellow, we do not know if he is a railroad employee or a coal miner, who constantly sends out a message to a girlfriend or lover on the side of coal hoppers that state "Hello Bobby Sue Hensley". I hope she has got the message by now. Other railroad employees take their turns in expressing their views on their employer, some not so nice. During the Conrail takeover in 1999, we saw a lot of Nazi Southern exclamations on cars returning from the north. One of my favorite employee markings was that of a "Smoking Joe". He would sign his name and draw a cartoonish diesel locomotive emerging out of a cloud of smoke, but the unique thing about his markings was that he kept count of every car that he has tagged by writing the number in the cloud of smoke. The last one I recall seeing was well into 28,000 range.

I noticed right before I gave up on were starting to produce scale cars included. Although I cannot condone the society we live in, and modeling complete.



model railroading that manufacturers with actual graffiti markings already this, I realize that it is just a part of purists need it to make their world

Bottom line, railroad cars are for freight, not for free expression. If you have a talent to paint, use it wisely and for good, and maybe one day a future explorer will see your contribution to society.

Merry Christmas from the Price Family

Mr. & Mrs. Claus Ride the Greenville & Western Railroad Santa Train

by Kati Phelps



For the third year in a row, Mr. & Mrs. Claus [aka Chapter members Tom & Kati Phelps] rode the GREENVILLE & WESTERN RAILROAD Santa Train through the towns of Honea Path, Belton, Cheddar, Williamston and Pelzer, South Carolina on December 10, 2011.

We first met Stephen Hawkins, owner of the railroad, when he was a teenager and helped us with excursions running out of Asheville, NC through the NORFOLK SOUTHERN Steam Program. At that time, he was editor of the Greenville Chapter NRHS newsletter, although he was too young to be a member! Steve's dream was to work for the railroad even then. Now, years later, he has accomplished that goal and more! The railroad is now celebrating its 5th year and its fifth Santa train.

The Santa Train first ran with about 12 volunteers and gave away 3 gifts at each stop along the way. Now in its fifth year, 24 gifts were given at each stop. More than [continued on next page]

1000 people walked through the caboose, stopping at the bay window to sit on Santa's lap and have their picture made. They then told Santa their heart's desires for Christmas gifts. Afterward, they were given candy canes, chocolate bars, Operation Lifesaver coloring books, Frisbees and key rings. Adults were given cups and pens emblazoned with the company's name and logo.

Mrs. Santa was along for the trip. Often folks took her picture as well. After each group of children finished going through the caboose, Mr. & Mrs. Santa got off the train and pulled tickets randomly to award the gifts ranging from stuffed animals, books, puzzles, movies to 2 large model train sets.

The train was loaded by 7:45 a.m. and after a wonderful day of making lots of folks happy, the 45 - 50 volunteers departed the train about 9:00 p.m. The railroad had provided the volunteers with 3 meals for the day, and lots of memories to share until next year. Steve & Cheryl Hawkins, along with sons Harrison & Spencer were aboard making sure everything went well. A successful day!

New Model Train Exhibit in Johnson City

[Information extracted from an article by Jim Conrad at WCYB.com]

Johnson City now boasts two model train exhibits. The newest attraction is the Southeast Regional Train Center, located at 110 West Market Street in downtown Johnson City.

Unlike the Carter Railroad Museum at East Tennessee State, this museum will feature model gauges larger than HO and toy trains that were popular in the mid 20th century. Its founder, Gary Cameron, originally housed the collections in Oak Ridge but moved to Johnson City when he moved back recently. It contains some very large collections, boasting the largest S gauge (American Flyer) collection in the entire Southeast and the largest Lionel exhibit in Tennessee. Of special interest is a layout of the ET&WNC RR. According to Cameron, "It was a donation by the Allison family. Built by George Allison, he created this layout to resemble what he remembered of the railroad. George's dad was an engineer with the ET&WNC."

A remarkable collection of vintage model trains, all are invited to enjoy this step back in time. Admission is free.

Restoration of ex-N&W Rural Retreat Station

An effort has been initiated to restore the ex-N&W station at Rural Retreat, VA. A non-profit organization, the Rural Retreat Depot Foundation, now holds the deed to the property and is seeking public support in restoring the historic fixture. Besides the \$90,000 needed to purchase the building from its current owner, it is estimated that an additional \$200,000 to \$700,000 will be needed to renovate the building. Improvements will include re-wiring and installation of a heating and air-conditioning system. Norfolk Southern, owner of the 0.3 acres on which the depot is located, has given that property to the town.

For more information, go to <http://www.ruralretreatdepot.org/>. [Thanks to **The Rail** (Winston-Salem NRHS) for the tip.]



Photo Section



Yes, Virginia, there are passenger trains in America.



Your Editor is offering this photo as proof that you can still find some interesting passenger train action in the U.S. The photo (shot through glass) was taken recently in Albany, NY. Train #48, the eastbound *Lake Shore Limited*, has just arrived 30 minutes late from Chicago. The two lead engines and following four cars will break off to become #448, the Boston section. (Two engines are needed to cross the Berkshires.) Barely seen in the upper left corner is the motive power that will take #48 on to its final destination of New York's Penn Station. This engine is waiting for #448 to clear. #448, in turn, must wait for Train #283, northbound *Empire Service* to Niagara Falls, to clear Track 1. Once boarding on Track 1 is completed, #448 will head east over the former BOSTON & ALBANY line (upper left in photo). Also delayed is Train #244, *Empire Service* to NYC, waiting for #448 to clear and creating a station full of agitated New Yorkers in the process. Not bad for action, eh?

*Don't forget – there is no December Chapter Meeting.
Have a safe, enjoyable and happy New Year!
We'll see you in January.*

Whistle Stop

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Fred Waskiewicz, Editor



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