

Whistle Stop



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

Volume 39 No. 2

February 2019



Megan Kegley took this late winter afternoon shot of NS train 799 heading west on the Appalachia District through Gate City, VA. At point is NS SD70ACU #7268 assisted by a UP lease.

January 28th General Membership Meeting

The Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society and Museum will conduct our monthly General Membership meeting at 6:30 pm on Monday, January 28th, 2019 at 6:30 pm at the Johnson City Public Library, 100 West Millard St. This month's program, a video provided by Howard Orfield, is called "Snow on the Run" and, in keeping with the season, showcases SOUTHERN PACIFIC's efforts in keeping the Donner Pass clear in the winter. You'll also get the latest scoop on our Spring Excursion; a Car Host sign-up form will be available as well. Bring a friend out for an enjoyable evening with your fellow railfans.

Member Notes

by Edna Kay Carter, Membership Chairperson

Please continue to remember all of those who lost loved ones in the past year.

Keep the following in your thoughts and prayers as they deal with various health concerns. They are Nancy Jewel, Gary Price, Bob Schubel, Gail Zimmerman, Tom Phelps. Sharon Eaton, Anita Worley, Sharon Slagle, Bob Mushet, George Ritchie, Lou Nelson and Gary Street. 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.

Welcome new members Lairy McCroskey and Jacob Hash.

Wishing all of you a very happy and blessed 2019.

WVRHS&M News

WEB SITE REDESIGN

Redesign of our museum's web site has completed. Look for a refreshing, improved new site that you'll not only be able to access from your desktop and laptop but also easier to navigate from your mobile devices. Check out <http://www.wataugavalleynrhs.org/>.

LATE DUES NOTICE FOR 2019

If you have not paid your dues as of press time, your membership expired December 31, 2018. Please send your 2019 dues to us ASAP so our membership chairman will not have to send you a LATE NOTICE. Dues (check only) are remitted to Membership Chairman Edna Carter, Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum, P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN. 37605. Dues are \$20.00 individual; add family members at \$5.00 each. If you have any questions, e-mail wataugavalley@gmail.com.

PROGRAMS NEEDED FOR 2019

Our Program Director, Megan Kegley, is looking for General Membership programs for 2019. Please call (423) 753-5797 or let us know at the next General Membership Meeting if you have an interest in showing a program this year. Programs usually take the form of showing a DVD or slide presentation. We are also looking for speakers who would present a railroad related program.

2019 Rail Excursion ...



MARCH 30, 2019: The Watauga Valley 2019 excursion season will begin on Saturday, March 30, 2019 on the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad. For complete description and information on how to order, visit our web site at <http://www.wataugavalleynrhs.org/excursions.php>.

Mechanical Team Report

by Jim Magill



The Watauga Valley Mechanical Team is looking for more volunteers. As most of you know the Mechanical Team is composed of volunteers, retired and still working, different experiences and backgrounds. We now have five operating passenger cars; 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 you do not have related experience. The team is a great bunch who enjoy 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 and we will get you scheduled. Don't hesitate - you can help as demonstrated by Bobby Hand at left.

ROLLING STOCK

“Powhatan Arrow” coach (WATX 539): Has been in excursion service at the North Carolina Transportation Museum over the past couple of months. The car was in an accident and is going to the shop for repairs.

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

“Crescent Harbor” sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351), “Moultrie” diner (WATX 400): Both cars have been in excursion service at the North Carolina Transportation Museum the past couple of months and will remain at NCTM for future trips.

“Clinchfield 100” office car (WATX 100): The Mechanical Team has put in many hours in preparing the interior of the car for the major upgrades coming soon.

Chuckey Depot & Rail Museum

Things at the Chuckey Railroad Depot Museum in Jonesborough are going great. We now have 763 volunteers trained to host in the Depot. Most volunteers are working approximately one day a month. We will have another host training session in late March. If you're interested in hosting, please email wataugavalley@gmail.com or call the office at (423) 753-5797. We will also be changing out displays in late January. If you have items related to area railroading that you would like to loan for display, please call (423) 753-5797 for information.

Visit us on our Facebook page for great photos and videos.

In the News ...

NC&StL 4-8-4 #576 Restoration Update



NASHVILLE, CHATTANOOGA, & ST. LOUIS RAILWAY 4-8-4 No. 576 was planned to be moved for restoration on January 13. The locomotive has been on display in Nashville's Centennial Park since 1953. The Nashville Steam Preservation Society is coordinating the effort and has raised more than \$500,000 of the \$2 million that will be required for restoration and initial operating costs. The locomotive will be trucked out of the park about two miles to the NASHVILLE & WESTERN short line, towed across town by CSX on its own wheels, and then moved by the NASHVILLE & EASTERN RAILROAD to the restoration facility at the Tennessee Central Railway Museum. After it is overhauled, which will take multiple years, the locomotive will pull public excursions on the NASHVILLE & EASTERN RAILROAD between Nashville and easterly communities including Lebanon, Watertown, and Cookeville. The locomotive was built by the American

Locomotive Company (Alco) in 1942 to aid in the war effort, and it spent ten years hauling trains for the NC&StL Railway. (*Trains Magazine Newswire*)

CSX Donates Turntable to Tennessee Town

[*Trains Magazine Newswire*] CSX Transportation has donated a turntable to a small community in Tennessee that could eventually be used by NASHVILLE, CHATTANOOGA & ST. LOUIS RAILWAY 4-8-4 No. 576, under restoration in nearby Nashville. The turntable is currently located in Atlanta and will be disassembled for its move to Tennessee. The 110-foot turntable was used by the NC&StL for its J3 4-8-4 locomotives. The turntable will be installed in Watertown in 2019 where it will be used by the *Music City Star* commuter rail service, Tennessee Central Railway Museum, and eventually No. 576. The restoration of No. 576 is expected to begin in earnest in 2019. Once the locomotive is running, Nashville Steam Preservation Society hopes to run the locomotive between Nashville and Watertown, a 90 mile round trip.

AMTRAK Service Study to SW Virginia on Hold

Trains Magazine Newswire reports "A study to determine what is needed to bring Amtrak service to Christiansburg and the New River Valley has been placed on hold because NORFOLK SOUTHERN has halted its involvement. The Roanoke Times reports that the \$350,000 study has been put off indefinitely because NS wants to focus on other matters, according to officials with the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation," specifically problems in the NS freight network south of Virginia.

Cass-Durbin Connection on the Horizon for 2019



[trains.com] DURBIN & GREENBRIER VALLEY RAILROAD crews in West Virginia have only a couple hurdles before reconnecting the town of Cass with Durbin along the former CHESAPEAKE & OHIO Greenbrier Division. The two have not been connected since a 1985 flood washed away much of the line.

As the railroad wrapped up its 2018 track repair efforts with the arrival of winter weather, crews successfully repaired 11 major washouts – each one averaging about a third of a mile. DURBIN & GREENBRIER VALLEY President John Smith says each of these major washouts were instances where rocks and debris had eliminated the track alignment, sending rail and crossties over the river bank and alongside the Greenbrier River. Large rocks had also slipped down the hillside and were blocking parts of the original right-of-way, causing timely repairs as crews chiseled away at the boulders and re-built the alignment.

Crews have successfully repaired track as far as north as Milepost 89, which is a little more than 1 mile south of the southern terminus of the railroad's active line that hosts its Heisler-powered *Durbin Rocket*. Smith says there are no major washouts between Milepost 89 and Milepost 90.3, but the line needs additional crossties and fill support.

To date, the railroad has installed more than 16,000 crossties and 8,000 tons of rock and other fill to rebuild a stronger right-of-way. While a predominantly single-track railroad, railroad crews are installing sidings north of Cass and Hosterman for caboose stays, meets between trains, and general storage. There will be a total of four sidings between Cass and Durbin when the line reopens.

One of the last tasks before Cass and Durbin can be reconnected is the replacement of the Trout Run bridge, located near Milepost 86.5. The bridge was severely damaged during the flood of 1985, leaving the CASS SCENIC RAILROAD isolated until the track between Spruce and Old Spruce was re-laid. Smith says a bridge replacement is planned by May 2019.

In early spring while the Trout Run bridge is replaced, crews will work simultaneously on a major tamping and re-surfacing effort along the entire line. Track workers will improve the curvature of the track and add additional rock fill before the line reopens.

The railroad declined to provide an exact reopening date, pending the outcome of the few remaining projects, but did say it is actively developing a marketing plan and railroad officials are confident passengers will be riding on the reopened track segment in 2019.

Smith says it will be a joyous occasion and not only will passengers be able to ride along a rail line that hasn't seen trains since 1985, but they'll be able to do so while being pulled by a three-truck MIDDLE FORK Climax, hinting that the railroad might have more to offer in 2019 than just the track reopening. The locomotive is nearing completion in the Cass Shop.

AMTRAK to Acquire 75 New Siemens Charger Diesels



[RAILWAY AGE,
Stuart Chirls, Senior Editor]

AMTRAK will acquire 75 new Siemens *Charger* diesel locomotives for \$850 million to replace aging power in its *National Network* locomotive fleet. The initial order contract covers the Tier 4 locomotives and associated services, to be deployed principally in AMTRAK's long distance train

services, with options to purchase more for use on some state-supported routes and for future growth.

"These new locomotives will offer increased reliability, more hauling power, improved safety features and lower emissions," said AMTRAK President and Chief Executive Richard Anderson.

"Siemens Mobility is honored and grateful for this opportunity to assist AMTRAK in their mission to provide safe, world-class, environmentally-conscious technology for their long-distance services," said Michael Cahill, president of Siemens Mobility's North America rolling stock business.

The new locomotives generate 4,400-horsepower through a 16-cylinder Cummins QSK95 diesel engine, and are geared for a top speed of 125 mph. The Alternating Current electrical propulsion system is paired with the latest Tier 4 emissions technology, reducing nitrogen oxide by over 89% and particulate matter by 95%, and providing an average of 10% savings in diesel fuel consumption. The units will come equipped with Positive Train Control safety technology.

The Chargers are set to displace GE Transportation Genesis P40 and P42 locomotives on the AMTRAK roster, some up to 25 years old. A total of 321 units were built for AMTRAK, METRO-NORTH RAILROAD, and VIA RAIL of Canada.



Delivery will begin in summer 2021, with revenue passenger service beginning in fall 2021, powering the *AutoTrain*, *California Zephyr*, *Capitol Limited*, *Cardinal*, *City of New Orleans*, *Coast Starlight*, *Crescent*, *Empire Builder*, *Lake Shore Limited*, *Palmetto*, *Silver Meteor*, *Silver Star*, *Southwest Chief*, *Sunset Limited*, and *Texas Eagle*. All locomotives are expected to be in service by 2024.

Maintenance activities across the network will be supported by a supplemental multiyear Technical Support Spares Supply Agreement (TSSSA).

AMTRAK said it is paying for the new locomotives through available funds and will comply with Buy American provisions. The fleet will be built at Siemens Mobility's manufacturing plant in Sacramento, CA.

Chargers are currently operating in several state-supported AMTRAK routes in California, Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri, Michigan, and Washington. A version of the Charger also is pulling trains for the former *Brightline*, now *Virgin*, the private operator in South Florida.

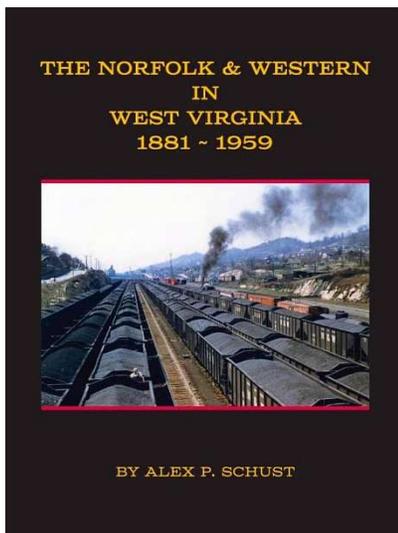
AMTRAK, which has sparked recent criticism of downgrades to its long distance network, in the announcement noted that the Chargers "are part of AMTRAK's long-term planned series of improvements for fleet, infrastructure and stations. Other modern equipment includes new *Acela* trainsets arriving in 2021 and ongoing improvements continue at New York Penn Station and new construction at Moynihan Train Hall in New York, in addition to expanded development of the major stations at Chicago, Washington, D.C., Baltimore and Philadelphia."

For Your Reading Enjoyment ...



The Greeneville Sun published an entertaining historical piece entitled "The Day The Railroad Came To Greeneville", a story of the arrival of the EAST TENNESSE & VIRGINIA RAILROAD. The story can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/yb4nleny>

HOT OFF THE PRESS!



This hard-cover, 9 X 12 book uses 496 black/white pages, 120 maps, 300 pictures and sketches, 100 N&W drawings and plans, and 75 charts and tables to tell the story of the 201 miles of main line railroad operating from near Glen Lyn, Virginia to Kenova, West Virginia, and the approximate 150 smaller branch lines and spurs off of that main line. The book actually starts in 1872 with the New River Railroad, Mining and Manufacturing Company and its plans to reach the Flat-Top Coalfield and goes to 1959, just prior to the N&W-VIRGINIAN merger.

The book uses multiple sources to tell the who, why, what, when, where and how of the construction of the railroad from Glen Lyn to Kenova by both the Big Sandy and Twelve Pole routes. It also tells about the reconstruction of the railroad from a curvy, low-speed mountain railroad into a double tracked, high speed, low curvature main line. It discusses decisions made and not made and the reasons for the decisions. It discusses the building of the Bluefield, Eckman, Vivian, Williamson and Kenova Yards. It also discusses how the N&W became one of the biggest coal land owners in West Virginia. The book includes charts on mile post locations, surveys, bridge types and locations and constructions costs. It also includes the coal companies found in the Pocahontas, Tug River, Thacker and Kenova Coalfields that were served by the N&W. \$60.00. For more information and to order, order, go to <https://tinyurl.com/y7nwe9by>.

Megan's Manifest

by Megan Kegley

First off, I want to say Happy New Year to everyone! My first train of 2019 in the books was a northbound NS 55E coming onto the Clinchfield at Waycross. I decided to spend the entire first part of my day railfanning and kind of playing the waiting game since the Southern Heritage unit was on its way up from Asheville. As I pulled in at Waycross, I noticed I had some company there, my good friend Chris Calton had come out to see everything moving and in hopes of getting the Southern Heritage unit too. We stood around and chatted for a while about different railroad subjects and then we heard them call out "NS 55E permission to head north on CSX at the connection at Frisco," Chris and I looked at each other kind of funny and said "NS 55E? that's a new one." This is the first Norfolk Southern grain train I have ever photographed. I have photographed several of the CSX grain trains but never a Norfolk Southern. This was a new one on me! The 55E is an ID for an Empty Grain train that comes out of Georgia, and usually goes up the CNO&TP. For sure, something we don't see every day here. I will take it for the first train of 2019!

Not long after the 55E showed up, we had a Southbound NS 726 coming off the Clinchfield and heading down towards Bulls Gap. This is the first 726 ID that I have photographed, and it had an SD60E leading so I was pretty happy. I have always liked the SD60E's looks. Before we shot photos of this train Chris and I cleared some brush out of the way to achieve a good angle. After this train came, I went home to get ready for work then I came back out and went after the NS 745 with the Southern Heritage unit. Three trains in a day, I am pleased!



After returning home and getting ready for work, I met with Chris Calton once again to see the 745 that was coming from Bulls Gap, TN with the 8099 in the lead. I decided to go to Mt. Caramel, TN to catch the 745 because it was the shortest drive for me to work from there. I was getting crunched on time to get this and get to work, but I got it and made it to work on time! I feel pretty proud of myself for getting all three of these trains before I went to work!

I decided to make a trip to Bulls Gap Railroad Museum for the day on 1/4/19. I stayed at the museum for a while and talked to my good friends Bill and Chester Haskins for a while, and I went to look at the ATCS and seen the NS 165 closing in on Bulls Gap. So, I asked Bill where I could go to in order to get a shot of the train. I am not really familiar with the area so that's why I had to ask. I ended up going down to Mohawk, TN completely unaware that this 165 had the Lehigh Valley Heritage Unit second and an Operation Lifesaver Dash 9 third out. I ended up getting with a couple friends after



I caught this down at Mohawk and we watched the crew drop off some cars in the yard at

Bulls Gap, then we all proceeded out to Kite when he got permission to make his moves. At this point I am up to two heritage units for the year.



Now we are on to the third Heritage unit of the year (“N&W” #8103 behind PR43C AC traction conversion #4000 in “Sonic Bonnet” paint scheme). This is NS U47 in Appalachia, VA after loading from the Wentz Mine on up past the Andover Yard. I knew about this train early in the morning and I went looking for it before I went back over to Kingsport to meet some friend for lunch. After I went to eat in Kingsport at the Chop House, I decided to make my way back to Appalachia to get this train. I

was not about to let this one slip away from me. As I got to Appalachia I met up with my friend and fellow railroad buff Pete Aistrop and we shot this coming out of the Andover Yard. As this train was making its moves and waiting on the Pusher set to come from Carbo to assist the train going towards Norton, I started running into several railfans around town. One railfan that I ended up running into was our very own, Mike Noonkester! Kevin Gilliam decided to join us too, but over the phone. LOL! It is nice to run into people you know that enjoy the same hobby. I do not know how many people I have had come over to me and ask me what exactly I am doing over the years of being a railfan.

As I was typing this today on 1/11/19, I overheard on the radio feed that NS 741 was coming my way from Bulls Gap and was to meet NS 76M at Boone on the Appalachia District. I got to Yuma and got the local T80 first going into the Yuma yard to do some switching, then here came the 741. As the 741 neared I had no idea that the Penn Central Heritage unit was second out in the consist until about 45 seconds before it got to me. Another Railfan from Bristol pulled in and yelled “The Penn Central unit is second on this one!” Sure, enough he rounded the curve to come under the signals and there it was. I guess I can just consider myself lucky to have already gotten 4 heritage units and 2 special painted units in 11 days around the region!



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After a full day of exploring and finding “hidden gems” across southwest Virginia, the page 1 photo of 799 cruising through Gate City was a great way to end the day. Next month I will throw in some of the story about our “hidden gems” exploring. As I said before I hope everyone is having a great start to the new year, and happy railfanning y’all!

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Published Monthly by the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum
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