

Whistle Stop



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

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RailPictures.Net - Image Copyright Mike Pierry, Jr.

Mike Pierry, Jr. captured GSMT 2-8-0 #1702 steaming towards the Nantahala Gorge last spring. This route will be explored this May (with diesel power, not steam) when Watauga Valley RHS&M opens its 2019 rail excursion season. [Photo copyright Mike Pierry, Jr.]

February 25th 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, February 25th, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. at the Johnson City Public Library, 100 West Millard St. This month's program features Dale and Becky Carlson of Bluemoonistic Images speaking about their railroad / railfan adventures. Photographing mountains and trains are their avid passion as is telling the stories of how railroad heritage still benefits many communities across the Appalachian Mountains! Don't miss this special treat!

Member Notes

by Edna Kay Carter, Membership Chairperson

Please keep the following in your thoughts and prayers as they deal with various health concerns. They are Nancy Jewel, Gary Price, Sharon Eaton, Terry Worley, Sharon Slagle, Bob Mushet, George Ritchie, George Holley 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 to new members John and Karen Wheeler, David and Marcella Crislip, George Skaff and Mary Washburn.

Soon we will see signs of the upcoming spring season to enjoy.

WVRHS&M News

WATAUGA VALLEY DUES NOTICES

Late dues notices were recently sent out to all members that have not renewed for 2019. Please act fast and get your dues mailed back to WVRHS&M, P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN, 37605-0432. Time is running out; your name will be removed from the membership list at the end of February.



WATAUGA VALLEY WHISTLE TRUCK IS AVAILABLE FOR LEASE

The Whistle Truck is now available for lease by any person or group that has a special event at which the Whistle Truck could add interest and excitement. Call (423) 753-5797 for details.

CHUCKEY WEB CAM MAKES *NRHS NEWS*

The February 2019 issue of *NRHS News* contains a nice article and accompanying photo of the web cam at the Chuckey Depot & Rail Museum.

WVRHS&M Rail Excursions

We are happy to announce that the March 30th and May 19th GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD excursions have sold out! These trips will travel the operating length of the railroad from Dillsboro, NC to the Nantahalla Gorge. We are still in need of hosts for the trips. Please email wataugavalley@gmail.com to sign up.

If you have already signed up for host training for the trip, please come to the Host Training Session to be conducted prior to the General Membership meeting on March 25th at 5:45 p.m.; we will be finished before the regular meeting at 6:30 p.m. It is very important that you attend this training as several things have changed since last year. Our next excursions are planned for September and November.

Mechanical Department Report

by Jim Magill

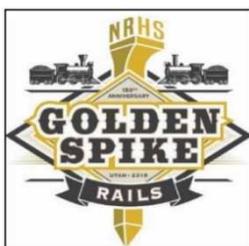
The Mechanical Department team is looking for volunteers on Tuesdays and Saturdays to help maintain our passenger cars. If your spouse wants you out of the house after a long winter – or you're suffering from "cabin fever" – here's a great opportunity to get active. Call the office and leave message at (423) 753-5797 (24 hours / day).

ROLLING STOCK

"Powhatan Arrow" coach (WATX 539): The "Powhatan Arrow" was in an accident in North Carolina in December. There was some body damage to the side of the car. It is presently in the shop in North Carolina getting repaired.

"Moultrie" diner (WATX 400), "St Augustine" coach (WATX 500), "Crescent Harbor" sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351): all three cars are in service at the North Carolina Transportation Museum.

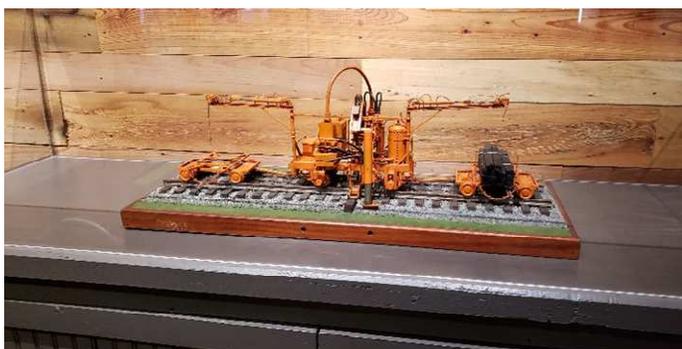
"Clinchfield 100" office car (WATX 100): At present, the only car at the Spring Street Coach Yard is "Clinchfield 100". The restoration project on the car is going great. All the bedrooms have been removed and work will continue on ceiling, walls and floor. A major electrical upgrade will continue in the upcoming months.



Registration is now open for the 2019 annual NRHS convention, "Golden Spike Rails", scheduled for May 7-11 in Salt Lake City, Utah. The host hotel for the convention will be the Radisson Downtown hotel on South Temple. Complete details on the event may be found on the NRHS website <http://nrhs.com/content/2019-convention>. Included there are links to the registration booklet, mail-in registration forms, and the on-line registration form.

Chuckey Depot & Rail Museum

Despite the cold and rainy weather that has been around for the last couple of months things are ticking at the Chuckey Depot Railroad Museum at Jonesborough. Attendance at the museum has been good. On Thursday, February 7th, we had over 100 people who came through the museum for the grand showing of the new exhibits. We had seven hosts working that day to assist visitors that day. On February 10th we had over 200 visitors during Jonesborough's "Chocolate Fest". We now have 82 Watauga Valley members who are trained to host at the Chuckey Depot. If you're interested in volunteering one day a month, please call Mike Tilley at (423) 753-5797 or email him at wataugavalley@embarqmail.com.



For Your Viewing Enjoyment ...

 The award-winning CUMBRES & TOLTEC SCENIC RAILROAD (C&TS), that runs 64 miles from Chama, NM to Antonito, CO is the main subject in "THE RAILROADER", a new documentary short film premiering on National Geographic's "Short Film Showcase". "THE RAILROADER", the latest project by Brooklyn-based film production company From The Woods, explores the modern West, cultivated by a people unafraid of their differences. Through the lens of lifetime railroader John Bush, the film navigates the C&TS, built in 1880, and its commitment to survive in the twisting and remote mountains of New Mexico and Colorado while demystifying the lore of rugged individualism; and exposing a communal grit and spirit of togetherness that is America's true heritage. "THE RAILROADER" is available to watch at <https://tinyurl.com/y8dpcktm>.

 And for you Johnny Cash fans ... https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZiQ89_s67Q (but don't be too critical of the footage of foreign equipment).

In the News ...

Wabtec and GE Transportation Expect to Merge in 1st Quarter

[Railway Gazette] The US Department of Justice has closed its review of the pending merger of Wabtec [derived from Westinghouse Air Brake Technologies Corporation] and GE Transportation, the companies announced on January 15.

General Electric announced in November 2017 that its was looking to dispose of its Transportation business, and a definitive merger agreement with Wabtec was announced in May 2018. The transaction is now expected to close by the end of the first quarter of 2019, subject to satisfaction or waiver of customary closing conditions.

Wabtec said the combined company is expected to have ‘significantly expanded margins, a highly attractive profile based on an improved business mix, expanded global reach, and faster innovation in key growth areas’.

“The DOJ’s decision to close its review of the pending merger marks a significant milestone for our customers, employees, and shareholders”, said Wabtec President & CEO Raymond T. Betler. “By bringing together GE Transportation, a global digital industrial leader and supplier to the rail, mining, marine, stationary power and drilling industries, with Wabtec’s broad range of freight, transit and electronics solutions, we will have the capability and expertise to invent smarter ways to move and improve the world.”

July 4 Debut Planned for ex-C&O #1309

[Greg Larry, *Cumberland Times-News*, Jan 30, 2019 via “*The Automatic Block*”, Western Maryland NRHS] Western Maryland Scenic Railroad officials say the massive Baldwin steam locomotive No. 1309 will be back in service by Independence Day.

“We are getting excited that steam will be making its way up the hills to Frostburg again,” said

John Garner, WMSR general manager. “Over the next 10 weeks we hope to finish up (repairs to) the locomotive and we firmly believe it will be ready for revenue service by the first week of July,” said Garner. Revenue service, according to Garner, refers to excursions for which tickets are sold. “You might see Maryland Thunder before July 4th”, said Garner.

“Unlike an automobile, a train engine has to be broken in, so it will be ran prior to the July 4th holiday.”

Known as Maryland Thunder once in service, the locomotive will be the largest articulated steam engine operational East of the Mississippi River, according to Garner. He said all of the parts sent away for repairs are now back and at the WMSR shop in Ridgeley, WV.

“The majority of parts are back on (our) property—the journal boxes and the wheels,” said Garner. “Once we get our parts finished from being machined it will go back together. The (outer) jacket of the boiler is back on.”



The scenic railroad had much of the repair work done by Gary Bensman with Diversified Services of St Albans, WV. "They did a lot of work with our wheels," said Garner. "They were shipped back and arrived here before Christmas. We are getting excited about the return of steam." Garner said the impact on tourism in Allegany County will be significant.

Cumberland is not going to know what hit it," said

Garner. "From what we can tell, and what we hear, folks will be coming to see this locomotive.

The (economic) spillover for restaurants, gas stations, shops, hotels... It will be a big boost for the area. It will help make Cumberland the tourist destination it should be."

Dee Dee Ritchie, executive director of Canal Place, said the train is and important part of the overall attractions coming online downtown. "I think it will create a great economic impact and bring thousands of people to Cumberland, and that helps all the local businesses," said Ritchie. "I would think it could bring 20,000 people to the area. There is a lot of interest in trains out there.

"You have the steam train, the (Dig Deep) craft brewery in the Footer building, the renovations to the downtown mall and the (proposed) River Park (at Canal Place), it all is coming together and will have a big economic impact. I'm looking forward to it." The scenic railroad excursions leave from the Western Maryland Railway station in Cumberland and arrive at The Depot in Frostburg. Although the 100-foot Baldwin No. 1309 is too large to be rotated on the turntable at Frostburg, it can push the train back to Cumberland, allowing passengers seated in the back to return to Cumberland in the front. Officials say it's not uncommon for railroads to utilize engines in forward and reverse. The Strasburg Scenic Railroad in Pennsylvania is operated in that manner. Garner said 2019 is the 70th anniversary of the Baldwin locomotive No. 1309 and the 30th anniversary of steam engine operations at the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad. "We are thankful to the community, our local officials and the District 1 (legislative) delegation," said Garner. "They've all been a big help."

Garner said the repairs, over two years in process, have been expensive. Donations for the project can be made through the WMSR website. "We are still trying to raise the funds needed to complete the locomotive," said Garner. "We also need to construct a coal loading facility and an ash removal pit to meet West Virginia environmental standards."

 *More Big Steam in the News*

[UNION PACIFIC's *Inside Track*] The Union Pacific Steam Team recently hoisted the Big Boy's more than 250-ton boiler and rear engine into the air with two massive cranes and reconnected it to its front engine. Getting to that connection moment was a complicated endeavor.

Articulated steam locomotives have two sets of drivers – or complete engine units – with eight wheel sets total. The front set of driving wheels, referred to as the front engine, can move independently from the locomotive's permanently attached boiler and rear engine. This allows the locomotive to better negotiate curves.

Big Boys are referred to as simple articulated locomotives because the live steam is used only once before it's exhausted out the stack. This type of locomotive creates a very characteristic sound because the two engines work independently from each other and exhaust steam independently, creating a unique "chuff" cadence.

The heaviest of the Big Boy's wheel sets are called the main drivers. Weighing in at more 16,000 pounds each, these wheel sets are connected to the locomotive's four main rods. The rods connect to the Big Boy's four pistons.

High pressure steam powers these massive wheel assemblies via a complex network of large pipes connected by huge moveable ball joints. The joints connect the front engine's throttle and superheater header. The header is the large manifold – or casting arrangement – that connects the Big Boy's network of small pipes, called super heaters, to the front engine's steam chest. The Steam Team had to meticulously restore and reassemble these parts before the reconnection project could begin.

"This is very heavy work," said Ed Dickens, head of the Union Pacific Steam Team. "It requires diligent workmanship and close machining tolerances to achieve the results we are delivering. The last time Union Pacific had an articulated locomotive disassembled for this level of repair was in the 1950s."

The articulation joint is the main attachment point connecting the two engines. Between the front engine and smoke box are two exhaust ball joint castings that together weigh more than a ton.

"We picked up the Big Boy's front engine with heavy side boom cranes and a large cable sling – a heavy steel cable connected to the two cranes – underneath the smoke box, just like they would have done decades ago," Dickens said. "We hoisted the boiler and rear engine up, and carefully connected the two back together. We then lowered it down very incrementally until all the heavy components fit together."

When all was said and done, the Big Boy's rear engine pushes down with about 14,000 pounds of force on the front engine's articulation tongue joint. The articulation tongue joint is the connection point between the two engine frames.

"It was a very exciting moment," Dickens said. "We just looked at it all together and posed for a group photo before getting back to work. We're making very rapid progress, and it's another milestone checked off the list."

Megan's Manifest

by Megan Kegley



To kick this month's *Manifest* of mine off, I will start with showing you the iconic NS 745 lash up that was very colorful as you can see. I and so many railfans went after these particular locomotives more than once. The first time these engines showed up was on a U47 (which was mentioned in last month's *Manifest*) out of the Wentz coal mine that is above the NS Andover Yard. Then the units bounced back to the Carolinas on a NS 741 with the JERSEY CENTRAL LINES heritage

unit on the rear of the train as a DPU. After the units had been floating around for a few days, several of us railfans in the region found all 3 specially painted units (N&W Heritage, "bonnet" and a barely visible JERSEY Heritage in the photo above) were on the front of a NS 745 and they were coming our way. After staying up almost all night the night before watching the lunar eclipse, I was pretty tired the next day when I got up and left my house to chase this train up the NS Appalachia District. A lunar eclipse less than 24 hours beforehand and now this insane consist? I will absolutely take it! As I left the house and began driving up route 23 towards Wise County Virginia, I told myself that I was going to get all 4 units in one picture. I managed to do just that at Big Stone Gap, Virginia. I am really happy that I was able to photograph such an iconic consist. It is not a normal thing to be able to photograph two heritage units and a Sonic Bonnet in the same consist. I am beyond proud of this one!

We will tone things down just a little bit, but with something that is still neat nonetheless. This is one of NORFOLK SOUTHERN's newest rebuilds in their fleet, the EMD SD70ACC. (The SD70ACC is a rebuild of the SD70 Standard Cab units.) I ended up catching this unit on a NS U40 in Appalachia, Va. The U40 was reversing out of Andover Yard and picking up cars off the Paragon track to be brought back to Andover yard. As I sat and watched the crew pick up their cars at Paragon, I could not help but notice how quiet these locomotives are. I also could not believe how clean this unit was! Compared to how most of these engines look, this one was for sure sleek! I know this is not as cool as the heritage units, but this is still neat considering this is the first SD70ACC I have yet to photograph. There are not very many units currently active due to the fact that they are still rebuilding several of the old SD70s.



Next item on the list for this month is catching the Loram Rail Grinder on the lower trestle at Copper Creek heading east. I had already heard that this was coming west up the Appalachia District and grinding the rails as it was coming west. I had some things to do before I left my other house up in Big Stone Gap, so I knew I was not going to be able to catch it actually grinding the rails. I did however catch it eastbound across Copper Creek. It was very cold

the day I went after this shot - about 10 degrees out - but I took photos anyway. I know Copper Creek is probably one of the most over shot places out there for railfans, but being able to photograph the Loram running across it was pretty neat as I do not know of many photos like this - another neat one in the books for me!



On February 2nd, I got up super early and went to the Bulls Gap Railroad Museum. Bill Haskins (who is the president of the Bulls Gap Railroad Museum) and his

brother Chester had invited me to come down and have breakfast with them in Whitesburg, TN and to spend the day with them at the museum. As we were on our way to Whitesburg, we already saw NS 162 and NS 165 dropping their cars off at the yard in Bulls Gap. That



makes 2 out of 6 trains viewed that day. After arriving back at the museum, I then went after a NS 744 that was bound for the Carolinas on the BL line with our member Wayne Manning, who showed up at the museum while I was there. After Wayne and I returned to the museum, my good friends Wade White and AJ Gray showed up at the museum to spend the day. We had received word that a NS 25M (pictured above) was coming out of Bristol and heading our way with one of our mutual friends onboard as the conductor. We were looking at the ATCS screen and saw this train was near. Wade, AJ,

and I jumped in the car and went out to Kite to shoot photos of this 25M. As we were out at Kite getting photos of this train, Mike Tilley came by us on his way down to Morristown. I was not paying attention that he had passed us until my phone started ringing and Mike says "I just seen you!" LOL! Overall, it was a great day at the Bulls Gap Railroad Museum. It is one of my favorite places to visit! Bill and Chester are some of the best people on the planet, and if you have never been to the Bulls Gap Railroad Museum, I highly suggest going and checking it out!

I can mark off another heritage unit for this year as I ended up catching the PENNSYLVANIA Heritage unit (NS 8102) at the Bulls Gap Railroad Museum on a NS 202 (train 5 out of 6 for the day). This came by just before the sun went down on February 2nd. This was the second to last train of the day that I had photographed while I was at the Bulls Gap Railroad Museum. This is not the first time I have seen the PENNSYLVANIA unit. I saw it in 2015 coming through Horseshoe Curve in Altoona, PA with the SOUTHERN Heritage unit beside it on the other mainline. Unfortunately, the SOUTHERN got blocked so getting both trains in the photo with heritage units leading side by side did not happen. One can dream right?! LOL



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