

# Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum  
P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN. 37605-0432  
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[www.wataugavalleyrrhsm.org](http://www.wataugavalleyrrhsm.org)



Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

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Countless hours of hard work and dedication have transformed our ex-CLINCHFIELD business car's interior into this sparkling beauty. Hats off to our mechanical team for their phenomenal restoration effort. To see just how far they've come, visit past issues of this newsletter or go online to our facebook page. [Mike Tilley photo.]

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## *September 23<sup>rd</sup> 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, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. at the Johnson City Public Library, 100 West Millard St. This month's program, presented by Megan Kegley and provided by Gary Street, showcases a DVD featuring train CSX-15, the "Clinchfield Autumn Spectacular". The 60-minute video highlights the trip from Shelby Yard, KY to Erwin, TN. You'll view beautiful autumn foliage as you dash through the Blue Ridge Mountains, see a variety of motive power hard at work, and catch a glimpse of the thoroughbred trains of Norfolk Southern. Bring a friend out for a relaxing evening with your fellow members.

## 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 Slagle, Sharon Eaton, Gary Street, Claudia Banner, Fred Phofl and wife, Ralph Clarke, 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 members Brenda Cox, Frank Caston and Robert F Hoss.

We can now look forward to the upcoming Fall season.

## WVRHS&M Rail Excursions

The October 13<sup>th</sup> Hiwassee Gorge and November 3<sup>rd</sup> GSMR excursion trains have **SOLD OUT**.

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### NOMINATING COMMITTEE

We will be taking nominations from the floor for officers and board members at this month's General Membership Meeting. If you would like to run for a position, please submit your name to our email at [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto: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 WVRHS&M uniforms. If you need a uniform or name badge, email [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto: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.



### ANNUAL CHRISTMAS GET TOGETHER

The date for our annual Christmas Get Together has been set for Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Details will be available soon.

### LIBRARY DONATIONS FOR RAILROAD SECTION

While our "Railroad Section" at the Jonesborough Library is growing every day, we have plenty of room to add more books. So, if you are finished reading or just want to donate, put your books to good use. Bring your railroad book donations to any membership meeting or call our office at (423) 753-5797.

## *Mechanical Department Report*

*by Jim Magill*

With our equipment getting ready to depart for excursion service, we need volunteers to help at the coach yard in various ways including cleaning. Please call the office at (423) 753-5797 and leave a message stating your interest. We will call you back.

### **ROLLING STOCK**

“**Powhatan Arrow**” coach (WATX 539), “**St Augustine**” coach (WATX 500), and “**Moultrie**” diner (WATX 400): All are in service at the North Carolina Transportation Museum.

“**Crescent Harbor**” sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351): At the Coach Yard.

“**Clinchfield 100**” office car (WATX 100): **CLINCHFIELD 100 RESTORATION WORK COMPLETE!!!** We are happy to report that Clinchfield 100, which has been under restoration work since December 2018, is now complete. Plans for the future of the car will be announced soon. In the photos below, Megan Kegley captures the outstanding job performed by our mechanical team.



## *Chuckey Depot and Rail Museum*

Activity has been bustling at the Chuckey Depot with record attendance during the month of September. We appreciate all the WVRHS&M volunteers who host and make the museum a pleasurable experience for visitors.

We're getting ready to schedule host training sessions for WVRHS&M members who are interested in hosting at the Chuckey Depot. If you would like to attend one of the host training sessions, please call our office at (423) 753-5797 or email [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com).

*From the Vaults ...*

At upper left we find ex-L&N 4-6-2 #152 steamed and being lubricated for its trip to Natural Tunnel, VA. To your editor's recollection, this June 1987 NS excursion was the only steam-powered trip we sponsored (then as an NRHS chapter) to originate from Johnson City. The photo at right shows the #152 in its current state of boiler and running gear restoration at the Kentucky Railway Museum, where the goal is to bring this historic locomotive back into service on the museum's rails. [Fred Waskiewicz photos.]

*In the News ...***👉** *WMSR Audit Raises Concerns*

[Greg Larry, Cumberland *Times-News* via "*The Automatic Block*", Western Maryland NRHS]

An operational audit released on the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad cited numerous problems with the attraction that could force its closure if not remedied. The 30-page audit was largely compiled in, but not limited to, the summer of 2018. The report's conclusion said, "there are a number of significant issues confronting the railroad on an operational level, several of which have the ability to impact ongoing operations to the point that the railroad would actually close." Issues included poor track condition, obscured views, delayed return of (the) steam locomotive, limited engine back-up options, financial limitations and problems with the overall rider experience.

The railroad continues to bank many of its hopes on the return of the 1949 Baldwin No. 1309 steam engine. Steam locomotives are one of the largest attractions in the scenic railroad industry. However, with nearly \$3 million invested in No. 1309 since it was purchased in 2014, there is still no timeline for its return to the rails. Past planned debuts of No. 1309 have been scuttled multiple times. In addition to the issues with the return of No. 1309, the audit raised concerns with the rider experience as a whole. "The concern is that the standard coach passenger experience is currently substandard compared to other excursion railroads and resulting in lower ridership, and it begins and ends with what happens in a coach seat. That is still where the majority of visitor time is spent.

For the complete story, go to <https://tinyurl.com/yya2vpum>.

## *Megan's Manifest*

*by Megan Kegley*

Megan is taking a well-deserved break this month but will be back next newsletter.

## *Railfan Event Calendar*

	<b>SEPT, OCT various dates:</b> N&W 611 visits Strasburg Railroad. See <a href="https://tinyurl.com/y4ba6nxj">https://tinyurl.com/y4ba6nxj</a>
	<b>OCT 13:</b> Hiwassee Gorge excursion sponsored by WVRHS&M. <b>SOLD OUT!</b>
	<b>OCTOBER various dates:</b> "Summerville Steam Special", TVRM, Chattanooga, TN. See <a href="https://www.tvrail.com/events-exhibits/rides/summerville-steam-special">https://www.tvrail.com/events-exhibits/rides/summerville-steam-special</a>
	<b>NOV 3:</b> GSMR excursion sponsored by WVRHS&M. <b>SOLD OUT!</b>

## *Autumn Rails 2019 Train Show*

The Autumn Rails 2019 Train Show will be held October 4<sup>th</sup>, 12 noon to 7pm, and October 5<sup>th</sup>, 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>.

## *2019 "Autumn Colors Express"*

As announced in last month's *Whistle Stop*, the 2019 "Autumn Colors Express" train trip will take place October 25, 26, and 27, 2019 between Huntington and Hinton, WV, offering travel on luxurious vintage railcars through the beautiful New River Gorge in amazing fall foliage.

Sponsors are expecting these trips to sell out quickly, especially in the highly sought-after premium seating, so book your tickets soon to ensure your preferred experience! To browse classes of service available and to take a look at the great cars on the train, go to <https://www.autumncolorexpresswv.com>. You can also call (844) 724-5399 for ticket orders.

## *CSX Santa Train*

The 2019 CSX Santa Train will operate November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019 from Pikeville, KY to Kingsport, TN. The complete schedule will be published in a future edition of the *Whistle Stop*

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## *Whistle Truck*

We are now taking reservations for the 2020 schedule of the WVRHS&M Whistle Truck. If you're interested in leasing, call (423) 753 5797.

***Whistle Stop***

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