

# Whistle Stop



Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum  
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[www.wataugavalleyrrhsm.org](http://www.wataugavalleyrrhsm.org)



Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage

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This is a great picture taken by Ron Flanary during the very short time when the Clinchfield leased ex-C&O 2-8-4 #2716. Several officials of the CRR got in trouble over the lease, resulting in Jacksonville deciding to ship all passenger equipment off the property. In this photo Ron captured CRR #800 and #200, #2716, caboose #1071 and CRR #100 crossing the mighty Copper Creek Bridge heading to Erwin, TN. #2716 looks like it is right at home with the Fs and CRR 100. It's very sad that the 2716 did not get to see any action on the Clinchfield due to its very short stay. Ed and George Hatcher were at the controls that day on the #200 and Mr. T. D. Moore and cook Gene Ryans were on the rear along with some other company officials. [Date unknown.]

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## *September 28<sup>th</sup> General Membership Meeting*

Our next General Membership meeting will be held on Monday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 6:30 pm at the Chuckey Depot / Railroad Museum, 110 South Second St. Jonesborough, TN (at the railroad crossing). The program will be on the Clinchfield Railroad from Spruce Pine, NC to Spartanburg, SC. Come join us, bring a friend out and enjoy an evening of railroading. This will be our third meeting in the depot during the pandemic; safety has been strictly followed and everything has worked out fine.

## *Member Notes*

### *By Edna Kay Carter*

Please continue to remember those who have lost loved ones. Keep the following in your thoughts and prayers as they deal with various health concerns. They are George Ritchie, Gary Price, Mike Dowdy and Billy Walker. As always, let us know of any member, friend or family to whom a might be sent or a phone call made. The office number is 423-753-5797 or call Edna Carter at 423-571-4612.

On a happy note, congratulations to Casey Price on his recent marriage.

We have no new members at this time but welcome anyone that would like to join our club.

Fall is in the air and we can enjoy the colors very soon.

## *2020 Rail Excursions*

### **GSMR Excursions**

The Great Smoky Mountain excursions were run as scheduled on September 12 and 13 and were a big success despite half capacity on both trains. Passengers were very happy even with the changes that were made as required by the State of North Carolina. We had 24 passenger cars on both of our trains and three locomotives. The Watauga Valley BoD will decide at their next meeting if we will operate the November 1<sup>st</sup> excursion.

### **HIWASSEE GORGE Trip Cancelled**

The Watauga Valley BoD has decided to cancel our Hiwassee Gorge trip in Delano, TN on October 13<sup>th</sup>. Coronavirus-related restrictions limited passengers numbers down to half capacity which financially prevented us from sponsoring the trip.

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### **WATAUGA VALLEY CHRISTMAS DINNER**

No decision on holding the annual Christmas Dinner event has been made yet. The Watauga Valley BoD will make a final decision at their next meeting.

### **LIBRARY DONATIONS**

Our library collection in Jonesborough continues to grow. We appreciate all the donations that have been made. Bring your railroad book donations to any membership meeting or call the office at (423) 753-5797. If you are finished reading or just want to donate, put your books to good use. We have plenty of room to add more books!

### **Volunteers Needed to Host the Chuckey Depot/Museum**

There have been ten training sessions conducted for host positions at the Chuckey Depot/Museum; every one of our members have enjoyed the class which is conducted by Heritage Alliance of Northeast Tennessee and by Mike Tilley, President, Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum. You will meet some fine people while promoting our railroad history. We are planning training sessions in the coming weeks; sure would like to have more volunteers help out at the museum a day or so a month. If interested, please call Mike Tilley (423) 335-1100 to be signed up for a class.

## *Mechanical Department Report*

*by Jim Magill*

Thanks to all the mechanical and cleaning committee, Jim Magill, Art Devoe, Richard Freeman, Don Findley, Jim Sutterlin, Cline Knowles, Jim Smallwood, Mike Tilley, David Denny, Jan Edwards, Gary Street, Jack Maloney, Bob & Norma Hand, , Edna Carter, Gloria Sims Jim Smallwood,, Megan Kegley, Rick Chinouth, and Frank Gricus (hope we did not forget someone) for all the work you have done over the past year on our passenger cars. If you would like to volunteer at the Jonesborough Coach yard, please call the WVRHS&M office at (423) 753-5797 and leave message; we will call you back.

### **ROLLING STOCK**

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

**“Crescent Harbor” sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351):** At the Spring St Coach yard in Jonesborough.

**“Clinchfield 100” office car (WATX 100):** At the Spring St coach Yard in Jonesborough having A/C installed; new rest room installed; overhead heat installed; and gen set replaced.

## *For Your Viewing Pleasure ....*



At NCTM's recently hosted night photo session, N&W Historical Society member Steve Hutchison took this beautiful shot of ex-N&W 4-8-4 #611 and ex-SOU FP7A #6133. [Photo used with permission.]

## Chuckey Depot and Museum

Attendance at the Chuckey Depot/Museum has been good while meeting all the coronavirus requirements mandated by the State of Tennessee and Town of Jonesborough. Visitor numbers are higher than expected.

Chuckey Depot Artifact Sub Committee reports that it was decided that the next exhibit change over at the Chuckey Depot will be March, 2021.

## In the News

### *Historic Rail Car Finds New Home in Roanoke*

[WDBJ, ROANOKE] A rail car [passenger car] that holds an interesting place in the region's railroad history has a new home.



video above not active

The Norfolk and Western passenger car was built in 1927, and remained in service until the early '60s.

More recently, it was part of the Vickers Switch Restaurant at the old Holiday Inn Blacksburg.

With the restaurant building coming down, Empire Salvage and Demolition donated the car to the Roanoke Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. Lynchburg Crane transported the car in two pieces from Blacksburg to Roanoke.

“Even though it’s a very big project, as you can see, to put it back together, it’s a sole survivor of its class,” Gary Gray [Roanoke NRHS vice president and chief mechanical officer] told WDBJ7. “And it will be a good addition to our collection, because we have eight other N&W passenger cars, and three N&W locomotives.”

Gray said job one is to stabilize the passenger car, but he isn’t ruling out the possibility that one day it might roll again.

“We have hopes if we can find a suitable frame and running gear to someday make it into a rolling railroad car again,” Gray said. “It’s a big project, but we’ve taken on impossible projects before.”

### *Amtrak Tells Employees It Will Furlough 1,950 Workers*

[Trains News Wire, September 1, 2020] Amtrak will furlough approximately 1,950 of its unionized workers as part of cutbacks for fiscal 2021, according to a message sent to workers today and obtained by *Trains News Wire*. Additionally, approximately 100 managerial positions will be eliminated.

The largest portion of those, 698 employees, will come from on-board staff represented by the Amtrak Service Workers Council. Other planned cuts, by union:

— Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation, 509 employees

- Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, 390 employees
- Transportation Communications Union, 326 employees
- American Railway and Airway Supervisors Association, 27 employees.

The two locations which will take the largest hits are Los Angeles, where 236 workers — 203 of them in on-board services — will be laid off, and Chicago, where 171 employees will be furloughed. Of those, 165 are in on-board services. Seattle will lose 129 workers, 86 in on-board services.

Amtrak announced it would cut its workforce by as much as 20% earlier this year at the same time it announced its intention to end daily service on most long-distance routes [see “Amtrak asks Congress for more money, plans long-distance cuts, workforce reductions,” *Trains News Wire*, May 26, 2020.] Many of these cuts reflect the reduced staffing requirements resulting from less frequent service. Amtrak says the furloughs are subject to an increase or decrease of 2%. Those who are furloughed will have their medical benefits covered by Amtrak until they are recalled or until Sept. 30, 2021.

### *Steam Railroading Institute Cancels All 2020 Excursions*

[*Trains News Wire*] The Steam Railroading Institute in Owosso, Mich., has decided not to operate any excursions this year, meaning its annual Fall Colors Tours and North Pole Express trips are off for 2020. “The operation of excursion trains is identified among the highest risk activities associated with the spread of COVID-19, which includes bringing large groups of people together in enclosed spaces for extended periods of time,” the institute said in a statement announcing the decision. The institute, home of Pere Marquette 2-8-4 No. 1225, is seeking donations to help offset the revenue loss from its cancelled excursions. Visit its website for more information.

### *Emory Trust Makes \$50K Grant to Finish #1309*

[*Trains News Wire* via “*The Automatic Block*”, Western Maryland NRHS] The Emery Rail Heritage Trust and the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad are pleased to announce that the trust has issued a special mid-year grant of \$50,000 to help complete the restoration of 2-6-6-2 No. 1309 as part of the “Steam the Last Baldwin” fundraising campaign. The grant will go toward \$150,000 needed to finish the work on restoring No. 1309, the last Baldwin steam locomotive built for domestic service in 1949.

Western Maryland Scenic Railroad is working to finish the \$3.2 million restoration project without interruption this year. Contractor Diversified Rail Services recently worked with Hulcher Services, Inc. [a railroad contractor] to re-wheel the locomotive and steam-test it. Work is underway to complete the running gear, back head piping, coal stoker, and hundreds of other final details necessary to finish the restoration. Once in operation, the locomotive will be the world’s largest operating Mallet, an engine that uses its steam twice, and the largest articulated locomotive operating in the eastern United States.

The John H. Emery Rail Heritage Trust is the largest of its kind devoted to railway preservations. It was created by Chicago-native John Emery, who was a lover of the classic passenger trains of America. The trust was founded to demonstrate the love of the late John Emery for the Golden Age of railroading in the United States.

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