

Whistle Stop



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

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Photographer Walter Scriptunas found CSRR Class 3-PC-13 Shay #2 steamed up on a snowy December day at Cass, WV, posed to head up Leatherbark Creek towards the timber at higher elevation. Such iron monsters once roamed the mountains of East Tennessee, most notably with Pittsburgh, Whiting and W.M. Ritter lumber companies. [Photo used with permission.]

February 22nd General Membership Meeting

Our next General Membership meeting will be held on Monday, February 22nd, 2021 at 6:30 pm at the Chuckey Depot / Railroad Museum, 110 South Second St. Jonesborough, TN (at the railroad crossing). Our program this month will feature the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad. Come out, bring a friend, and enjoy a great night of railroading with your friends.

Member Notes
By Edna Kay Carter

Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to the Tilley family for the recent loss of two family members in January, Mike's brother Pat on the 31st and Pat's wife Karen on the 15th. Please pray for them in their grief.

Keep George Ritchie, Nancy Ritchie, Sharon Slagle, Gary Price, Bob and Norma Hand and Billy Walker in your thoughts and prayers as they continue to deal with various health concerns. 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 have no new members to report at this time. If you have a friend or know of someone interested in railroads, please hand them a New Membership Brochure. We have the brochure available at the General Membership meetings.

Hope everyone will stay healthy and safe during this pandemic.

LAST NOTICE: UNPAID WATAUGA VALLEY DUES

Late dues notices were recently sent out to all members who have not renewed for 2021. 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 and delinquent names will be removed from the membership rolls at the end of February. **THIS WILL BE YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER IF DUES NOT PAID.**

PROGRAMS NEEDED FOR 2021

WVRHS&M program directors Howard Orfield and Brad McCroskey are looking for General Membership programs for 2021. Please call (423) 753-5797 if you have an interest in showing a program or let us know at the next General Membership Meeting. We are looking for speakers; also, someone who would come and present a railroad related program. And, as always, we're looking for DVD and slide programs.

WATAUGA VALLEY RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM FACEBOOK PAGE

You're encouraged to visit the WVRHS&M Facebook page and enjoy all the rail items you'll find there. Historian Gary Price does an excellent job in keeping the page up-to-date. The page offers a terrific opportunity to learn about special rail events; it also gives railfans a place to share photos and information. You can find us here: <https://tinyurl.com/33zjggyj>. And while you're there check out the wonderful "City of New Orleans" video. (If this link doesn't work, search on the Museum's name.)

2021 WVRHS&M Rail Excursions

MAY 2021 GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN EXCURSION

At press time, we are still confirming our May 2021 excursion on the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad in Bryson City, NC.

Mechanical Department Report

by Jim Magill and Art DeVoe

The Watauga Valley Mechanical Department 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, please call the office and leave message at (423) 753-5797, 24 hours a day.

Thanks to Art DeVoe, Gary Lombardi, and Jim Sutterlin for putting in long hours at the Spring Street Coach Yard recently.

ROLLING STOCK

All cars are at the Spring St Coach Yard in Jonesborough getting up grades.

“Powhatan Arrow” coach (WATX 539): receiving upgrades on wiring and also repair of some cracked windows.

“Moultrie” diner (WATX 400): receiving window repair and other upgrades.

“St Augustine” coach (WATX 500): all of its windows are being replaced.

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

“Clinchfield 100” office car (WATX 100): receiving some major upgrades including new gen set and air conditioning.

Chuckey Depot and Museum

Things are clicking at the Chuckey Depot Railroad Museum at Jonesborough even though the cold and rainy weather has been around during the last couple of months. Attendance at the museum continues to be good. The *Chocolate Fest* on February 12th, 13th, and 14th brought in a lot of visitors to the museum.

We now have 87 Watauga Valley members who are trained to volunteer at the Chuckey Depot. If you're interested in volunteering one day a month, please call Mike Tilley at (423) 753-5797 or email wataugavalley@embarqmail.com

Whistle Truck



The Whistle Truck is now available for lease to anyone or group that has a special event in which the Whistle Truck could actively participate. (Folk are encourage to blow the whistles.) Interested parties should call (423) 753-5797.

Clinchfield Passenger Car Roster

The following table lists the passenger car roster for the former Clinchfield Railroad. Photos are from the Ken Marsh and Mike Tilley collections; permission to use granted. Thanks to Mike for passing this information along. NOTE: After the Clinchfield Railroad excursion service was discontinued, several cars were donated by CSX Transportation to the Kentucky Railroad Museum and the Ross Rowland steam train excursions.

CCO 1	Photo not available.	Original office car. Retired in 1953 when CRR 100 took over duties. It was sold to several private parties and finally ended up near Boulder, CO where it was restored and transformed into living quarters.
CRR 50		Instruction Safety Car. An open platform observation, has all the markings of a former PRR Z-28 style shorty business car built by Altoona Shops. In private ownership in Jacksonville, FL.
CRR 100		General Managers Office Car. Built in 1911 as ex-ACL heavyweight coach, rebuilt in 1929 as diner <i>Orlando</i> , car wrecked in 1949 and purchased by the Clinchfield Railroad in 1951 and rebuilt in CRR shops. In 1953 served its first trip on the CRR <i>Santa Train</i> . Retired in 1983 and moved to CSX West Jacksonville Yard for disposition. Traded in 1984 to private ownership in Tampa, FL. Sold again in 1985 to private concern in Fernando Beach, FL. Moved in late 1980 to ACW Railroad in North Carolina and moved again to Lancaster, NC to L&C Railroad. Purchased by Watauga Valley Railroad Museum in 2012 and restored for operation in 2014.
CRR 101		56 seat coach. ex-L&N 2587, ex-L&N 1101, ex-NCSTL 1101. Modernized in 1947 as ex-Pullman Parlor <i>Kewanna</i> . Purchased by CRR in 1967. Purchased by Kentucky Railroad Museum and then Great Smoky Mountains Railroad; in operation today.
CRR 102	Photo not available.	56 seat coach. ex-L&N 2589, ex-L&N 1100, ex-NCSTL 1100. Modernized in 1947 as ex-Pullman Parlor <i>Londonville</i> . Purchased by CRR in 1967 then donated to Ross Rowland steam train excursions.
CRR 103	Photo not available.	74 seat coach, built 1926. ex-SCL 821, ex-SAL 821; donated to Kentucky Railroad Museum.
CRR 104	Photo not available.	64 seat coach ex-SCL 822, ex-SAL 822. Donated to Ross Rowland steam train excursions.

CRR 105



52 seat coach, ex-GA 75, ex-LV. Donated to Kentucky Railroad Museum.

CRR 106



52 seat coach, ex-GA 75, ex-LV. This was the concession car on the Ross Rowland steam train excursions. Purchased by Great Smoky Mountains Railroad, in operation today.

CRR 107



56 seat coach, ex-L&N 2585. Donated to the Ross Rowland steam train excursions. Purchased by Great Smoky Mountains Railroad, in operation today.

CRR 108



48 seat coach, ex-L&N 2554, built in 1925. Purchased by Kentucky Railroad Museum, in storage.

CRR 109

Photo not available.

48 seat coach ex-L&N 2572, built in 1927. Purchased by Kentucky Railroad Museum, in storage

CRR 110



48 seat coach ex- L&N 2576, ex-AC&F 1927. Donated to the Ross Rowland steam train excursions.

CRR 111

Photo not available.

56 seat coach ex-L&N 2586. Donated to the Ross Rowland steam train excursions. Purchased by Great Smoky Mountains Railroad, in operation today.

CRR 112



Tavern Lounge. ex-L&N Baggage Car 1416. Served as the bar car for the CRR. Currently in Duluth, GA at the Southeastern Railroad Museum on static display.

113

There wasn't a number 113 as it was thought to bring bad luck.

CRR 114



Built 1927. When the car came on CRR property, it was called the *White Oak* after Mr. Tom Moore's farm in South Carolina. When Mr. Moore left the company, it was renamed the *Blue Ridge*. Sold to the New Orleans Belt Line Railroad, which uses the car for entertainment of guests on their trains.

In the News



WESTERN MARYLAND SCENIC RAILROAD WOES

[Extracted from *Cumberland Times-News*, Greg Larry, staff writer, via Western Maryland NRHS “Automatic Block”]

WMSR 1309 engine not yet ready to run - County demands audit of scenic railroad

Allegany County officials are demanding a financial audit of the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad to examine the books of the tourist attraction. Two WMSR directors, Delegate Mike McKay, along with Frostburg Mayor Bob Flanigan, provided an update on the scenic railroad at Thursday’s meeting of the Allegany County Board of Commissioners on January 21.

It was also learned that fans of the highly anticipated debut of Engine No. 1309 Maryland Thunder will have to wait as the steam locomotive is still not operational despite millions of dollars and six years of restoration work. WMSR officials said the massive Baldwin steam engine is still unfinished, while issues with the condition of railroad tracks also remain a problem.

McKay, who recently joined the WMSR board, offered some good news when he announced that Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan had awarded the scenic railroad a \$500,000 grant through federal CARES Act funding. “We thank Gov. Hogan for that,” said McKay. “The railroad is (a) leader in tourism for the region. We know the importance the railroad brings to the county.”

WMSR ordered to replace railroad ties - Cost to fix all 50,000 will be \$2M says FRA

The Federal Railroad Administration has ordered the replacement of all railroad ties between Cumberland and Frostburg before the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad can resume excursion train trips. The railroad administration made the determination following an inspection, and the estimated cost for replacement of the 50,000 ties, according to the FRA, is \$2 million.

“The FRA report said the defects must be repaired before we can run,” John Garner, the scenic railroad’s general manager, said during an interview last week. WMSR officials said some of the railroad ties are nearly fifty years old.

Following a strong *Polar Express* train ride season in 2019, the railroad was shut down by the pandemic contagion, which resulted in a loss of its primary source of revenue, train ticket sales. Now railroad officials are faced with raising the funds to repair the ties along some fourteen miles of track.

Allegany County government oversees the track right-of-way. County Commissioner Creade Brodie said he had not seen the FRA report yet and will have to review it. “There was talk of ties being replaced,” said Brodie. “I didn’t know the whole thing needed replaced. I’m not sure where they will get the money to replace them. That is a lot of money.”

Frostburg Mayor Bob Flanigan, who serves on the scenic railroad’s board of directors, said a contractor reviewed the entire line of track, and concurred that the cost would be roughly \$2 million. “We reached out to a (business) concern in Frederick,” said Flanigan. “They did a verification of what the FRA had to say. That is the number (\$2 million) we are going off of. They would bring in the machinery and will get the ties in. It is a lot of ties.”

 *Time for Passenger Rail Advocates to Think Big*

[Roanoke Times Editorial, forwarded by Jeff Hensley]

It's time to think big, folks.

Gov. Ralph Northam has proposed spending \$50 million to extend passenger rail to the New River Valley — and get a second train on that route.

That's definitely thinking big, especially considering that until 2017 we didn't have any passenger rail service in Virginia west of Lynchburg. Now that extension to Roanoke has proved surprisingly popular (well, maybe not surprising to people around here, but to government officials in Richmond and Washington). That route now has the best ridership of any state-supported Amtrak route in Virginia with more than 223,000 passengers in 2019. Also, this happy note for the fiscal conservatives among us: Revenue on the Roanoke extension has exceeded operating costs.

Extending the route to the New River Valley — home of two major universities — and putting two trains on the route are estimated to add 70,000 new riders.

Let's give credit to Northam for trying to make this a reality. But we need to think even bigger.

Bristol has been pushing to get passenger rail extended there. If we can get Amtrak over Christiansburg Mountain, then an extension to Bristol is the next logical step. That's 114 miles beyond Christiansburg, so many years — and many millions — away but not impossible. Any passenger rail is ultimately dependent on the good graces of Norfolk Southern — the trains would use the company's tracks — but those good graces are subject to financial inducements. The \$50 million Northam is proposing would go toward building new tracks to fix bottlenecks along the current route so that Norfolk Southern's freight trains aren't slowed down by passenger trains. Presumably the state won't be plunking down that cash unless it's certain that Norfolk Southern will allow some extra passenger trains. We're told by some passenger rail advocates that the route from Christiansburg to Bristol may actually be straighter and less complicated than getting passenger rail through the Roanoke yards and over the mountain to the New River Valley. In any case, there's already been one study on the potential ridership: It found extending the train to Bristol might add 75,400 to 99,300 passengers per year — even more than the extension to the New River Valley.

But thinking about getting passenger rail to Bristol isn't big enough, either. So what should be our long-term goal? Atlanta. Or at least Chattanooga.

We're not the first to broach the Atlanta idea. Making the case for a Lynchburg to Roanoke to Christiansburg to Bristol to Atlanta train (or, more realistically a Northeast Corridor train that goes on that route) is complicated by two things. First, there's already a train that goes through Virginia on its way to (and from) Atlanta. That's the Amtrak Crescent, which runs from New York to New Orleans and makes stops in Alexandria, Manassas, Culpeper, Charlottesville, Lynchburg and Danville. (Bonus track: The train was immortalized in the song "Amtrak Crescent" by the Augusta County-based singer/songwriter Scott Miller.) If there's one thing we understand all too painfully, it's the politics of Virginia. We can already hear politicians in the eastern part of the state saying "why do you need another train to Atlanta? You've already got one." Second, there's been talk about creating a Southeast high-speed rail corridor that would go from Washington through Richmond and then on to Atlanta. Our case for a second or even third train to Atlanta might make very good sense west of the Blue Ridge — nobody in Bristol is going to drive to Lynchburg to

catch a train to Atlanta when they could already be three-fourths of the way there — but it might be a hard sell to the General Assembly.

That's why Chattanooga is a more politically saleable (if somewhat less glamorous) goal. The same rail lines that run from Roanoke to Bristol run straight on to Knoxville and Chattanooga. Now here's where things become more interesting. Some in Tennessee have already been talking about a Nashville-to-Atlanta passenger rail route. It's a long way off — all of this is "Rome wasn't built in a day" thinking — but it's been talked about enough that it's considered a serious idea. It would also go through, yes, Chattanooga. Get a passenger train from Roanoke to Bristol to Chattanooga and we might indirectly already have a rail connection to Atlanta.

We would need Tennessee's help to get a train to Knoxville and Chattanooga. Here's a place where Virginia gets to brag. We're a lot further ahead than Tennessee is. A proposal last year to study passenger rail — simply study it — didn't even get through the Tennessee state legislature. Here in Virginia we already have six state-sponsored trains on four different routes and a track record (no pun intended) of strong ridership. We're on track (again, no pun intended) to have even more.

One obstacle to more passenger rail in Virginia hasn't been political, it's been engineering. All passenger rail into Washington has been limited by the so-called Long Bridge over the Potomac River. It's an aging bridge owned by CSX that's big enough for two tracks — and has been operating at 98% capacity. In 2019, Northam announced a plan to build a second, rail bridge across the Potomac — a \$1.9 billion piece of infrastructure necessary if we want any additional passenger rail service going north. There were some other aspects of that deal that didn't get much attention at the time but should. The state's long-term goal is to set up nearly hour Amtrak service between Washington and Richmond. The state also acquired from CSX an abandoned line between Petersburg and North Carolina — which someday could become part of that Southeast high-speed corridor. Of greater interest to us in this part of Virginia, the state also acquired from CSX the 186-mile line that runs from Doswell north of Richmond to Clifton Forge. The state's official goal there was to preserve that line "for future east-west passenger service," setting up the prospect that someday we may see passenger trains from Hampton Roads to Richmond to Charlottesville to Waynesboro to Staunton and, potentially, on to Clifton Forge.

We now have a president who once commuted from Delaware to D.C. on Amtrak; Joe Biden has been called the "rider-in-chief." Congress willing, we might also see a push for the kind of infrastructure spending that Donald Trump promised but never acted on. Now would be a good time for passenger rail advocates in Virginia to think big — to Bristol, and beyond.

As you can see from this picture, we're meeting safely while still having an enjoyable evening of railfanning. Come out and join us on February 22nd.



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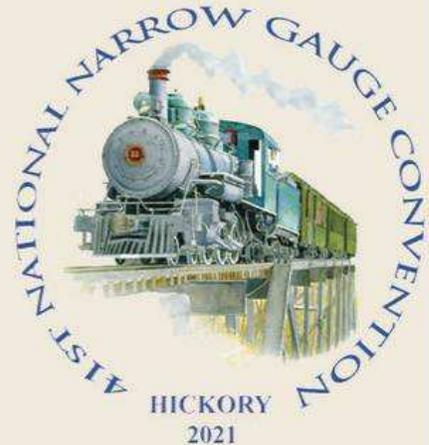
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