

Carolina Conductor



Volume 2, Number 1

Monthly Newsletter of the Carolina Railroad Heritage Association, Inc.

January 2015

**Preserving the Past.
Active in the Present.
Planning for the Future.**

Meeting Site:

Woodmen of the World Bldg.
721 East Poinsett Street
Greer, SC 29651-6404
Third Friday of the Month at 7:00 pm

Hub City Railroad Museum and SOU Caboose #3115:

Magnolia Street Station
298 Magnolia Street
Spartanburg, SC 29301-2330

Officers:

President—Milton Ashley
864-504-5202
Vice-President—Terry Brelsford
864-320-6201
Secretary—Mike Saverino
814-242-0217
Treasurer—Jim Tewell
864-281-7667

Directors:

Bob Klempner—864-431-5409
Bruce Gathman—864-850-3642
Marv Havens—864-292-3852
Mac McMillin—864-624-9658
Dave Winans—864-430-6585

Mailing Address:

Suite #129
2123 Old Spartanburg Road
Greer, South Carolina 29650-2704

Editor:

Bruce Gathman—
shaygearhead@bellsouth.net
Newsletter submissions due by 2nd
Friday of the month.

NARCOA Rail-B-Que Run

Great Smoky Mountains Railroad

By: Mac McMillin

Photos by Bruce Gathman
June 7 & 8, 2014

For several years now Tom Falicon of Bryson City, NC has sponsored an overnight motor car run on the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad (GSMR). I have had the pleasure of running my Fairmont M19G two-cycle motor car on this run for the last three years.

The cars are set on in Andrews, NC, and use the first day to run to Dillsboro, NC, where the motor cars tie up for the night and the riders stay overnight in the



Motorcars set on and ready to depart at Andrews, NC.

trackside Best Western hotel. The second day is for returning to Andrews. This trip traverses the entire length of the Great Smoky Mountains Railway which is about 120 miles round trip. This year CRHA member Bruce Gathman went with me. The high light of

the trip is the unique Rail-B-Que car that a fellow from Virginia tows behind his Fairmont A4 gang car. The Rail-B-Que car is a custom-made flat car containing kitchen equipment for cooking a meal at a stop along the way.

Tom Falicon is the Track Supervisor for the GSMR as well as an Excursion Coordinator and former director of the North American Rail Car Operators Association (NARCOA). This run is very popular with NARCOA members all over the country and sells out as quickly as it is announced. The run is limited to 35 cars.

The GSMR is part of Southern Railway's Murphy Branch from Asheville to Murphy. The Murphy Branch was built as part of the Western North Carolina RR (WNCRR) in



Passing over one of many rural bridges on the GSMR.

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Arrivals

President's Message

Welcome to a New Year with the Carolina Railroad Heritage Association. Thanks to everyone who volunteered and helped make 2014 a successful year. Each week on Wednesdays and Saturdays, we opened the Hub City Railroad Museum and Caboose to an appreciative public audience. We have many volunteer opportunities open. As always, we need more volunteers at the Museum and Caboose in Spartanburg.

We had several fun and exciting activities last year. We would like to have picnics at both the Greenville & Western Railway and the Craggy Mountain Line sometime in the spring or summer. Plus other club sponsored activities.

In the coming year, let me encourage everyone, who can, to participate in the group's activities and meetings. Don't forget that the CRM&HA Train Show is again going to be in Easley on January 31st and February 1st. Which will need volunteers at our booth to promote the organization and its activities

Milton Ashley, President CRHA

GRLW Heavy Machinery

The Greenville & Western Railway has partnered with CSX Transportation, BNSF Railway, and BNSF Logistics to offer "a customizable turnkey solution for heavy machinery manufacturers and dealers to move their equipment door to door from origin point of import/manufacture in the Southeastern United States to destination point of export/domestic distribution anywhere on the North American rail network."

The facility also provides more than three acres of on-site storage/staging in a secure, well-lit environment not just for finished machinery, but also large components such as buckets, beds and other optional machinery implements and accessories.

"We are excited to offer the heavy machinery market a rail transportation solution that can provide a 25%-to-30% cost savings over truck," said Hawkins. "Opening this facility creates two immediate job opportunities for the



Williamston community."

CSX in South Carolina

CSX Operations in South Carolina

- Operates and maintains nearly 1,800 miles of track
- Maintains more than 3,100 public and private grade crossings
- Handled more than 924,000 carloads of freight on the state's rail network
- CSX employed more than 1,000 people
- CSX reported more than \$88.1 million in compensation for employees
- CSX invested more than \$60.7 million in its South Carolina network. In addition, the company invested more than \$578 million in freight cars and other rolling assets to serve customers through its rail system.

CSX carries a variety of commodities important to our economy and way of life, including consumer products, automobiles, food and agriculture products, coal and chemicals. Major commodities produced or consumed within the state include containerized consumer goods, coal, iron and steel scrap, textile chemicals and plastics.

CSX Facilities in South Carolina

- Major rail yards in Charleston and Florence
- Intermodal terminal in Charleston
- TRANSFLO terminals in Charleston, Greenville (two), and Spartanburg
- Automotive distribution center in West Columbia
- Dispatch center in Florence

Division headquarters is located in Florence.

Falling Oil Prices

The stunning collapse in oil prices over the past several months won't derail the railroads' profit engine even if it does slow the tremendous growth in crude shipments seen in recent years.

Carloads of crude oil spiked well over 4000 percent between 2008 and last year ? from 9,500 carloads to 435,560 ? as production boomed and the cost for a barrel of oil soared into the triple digits.

Go to: <http://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory/low-oil-prices-hurt-railroads-27961586> for the complete story.

Departures

611 Restoration Tours

Presented by the N.C. Transportation Museum and Fire Up 611!



Tours will be led by Preston Claytor, Chairman of the Fire Up 611! Committee or Cheri George, volunteer fireman for the Class J 611. Both are experts in the history and restoration of this locomotive icon.

THE ONE HOUR TOUR INCLUDES:

- Brief power-point presentation of the history and restoration of the Class J 611 Locomotive
- A walking visit the Class J 611 in the Roundhouse restoration area for an up close look at the progress made to Fire Up 611!

Tours happen Friday, Saturday, Sunday at 1:30 p.m. each day. Tours are limited to 30 people.

Adults: \$5, Seniors, Children (3-12), Active Military: \$4
(Tour cost is in addition to regular museum admission)



Magnolia Signal

The recent ATCS upgrades by the Norfolk Southern to their signal system through our area made all the old signals scrap. The club was able to obtain one of the four head signals that



sat at Magnolia—just across the street from our caboose. Jim Hopkins and Bruce Gathman recently moved the signal to Jim’s home for restoration and temporary storage. The plan is to eventually place the reconditioned signal next to the caboose and have the lights working.

Danny Russell and his company JBR Construction were the ones responsible for the caboose restoration. When the signals became available they were moved to the JBR yard for temporary storage. We would like to thank JBR for all the help on this project.

NS GP33ECO



The first emissions-friendly locomotives funded by the federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program have been released for road testing by Norfolk Southern from its Juniata Locomotive Shop in Altoona, Pa.

The first two GP33ECO switching locomotives – of a total 25 partially funded by CMAQ for production by Norfolk Southern – sport a distinctive paint scheme that reflects their environmentally friendly mission. After in-service testing in the Altoona area, they will be permanently assigned to their respective grant award areas of Chicago and Atlanta.

WECX 800

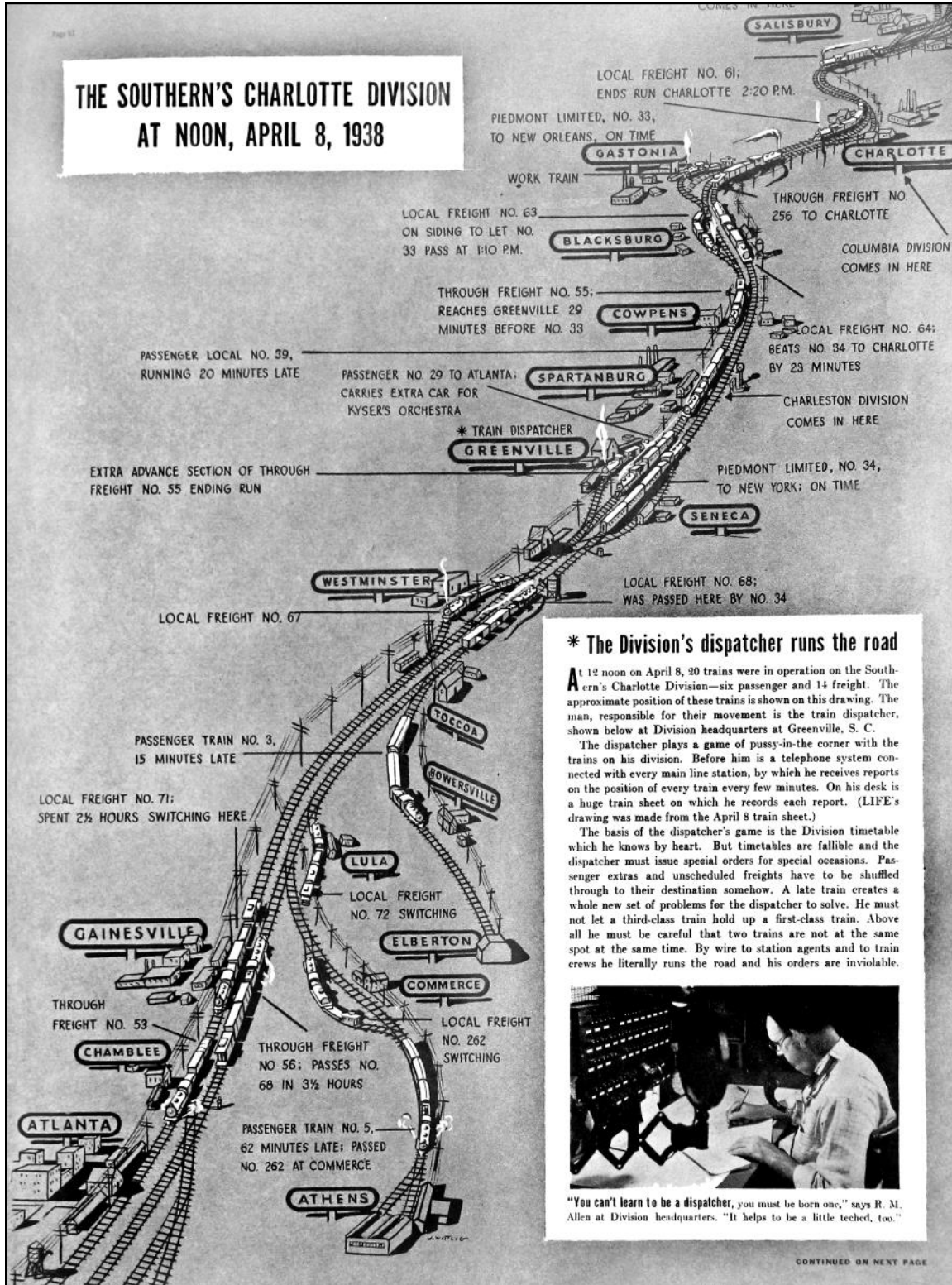
The high and wide reactor vessel load is about to enter the Summers Nuclear Station near Columbia recently. This



thirty six axle car is owned by Westinghouse. This is the largest Schnabel car, and the largest freight car ever built.

Rare Mileage

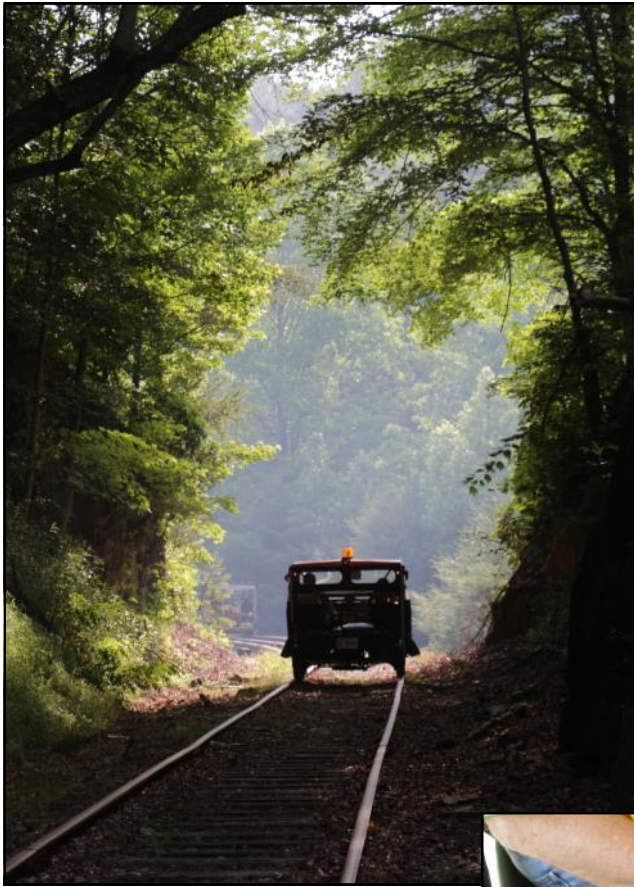
Southern Railway Magazine Map from 1938



Manifest

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the late 1800s. Original plans called for the railroad to be built



Climbing Red Marble Gap grade.

alongside the Hiwassee River from Murphy towards Knoxville, TN. At Knoxville the railroad would connect to the railroads to the Midwest. The WNCRR never made it beyond Murphy as a competing road; the Marietta & North Georgia (M&NG) completed their line to Knoxville first thus rendering a second route unnecessary. In fact the M&NG built their line on some of the route surveyed for the WNCRR along the Hiwassee River. However the WNCRR connected in Murphy with a branch of the M&NG from Murphy to

Blue Ridge, GA. The WNCRR became part of the Southern Railway after the Southern's formation in 1894.

The highest point on the GSMR is Topton, NC. From either side of Topton is downhill. The grade from Andrews east to Topton is not nearly as steep as the grade west from Nantahala to Topton. From Nantahala to Topton the grade averages around 5% for a three-mile stretch with some portions approaching 6% where the



Approaching one of two tunnels on the line.

track has settled in spots. This grade is known as Red Marble Gap grade. It is steeper than the 4.7% Saluda grade but it is a branch line grade, not a main line grade as is (was) Saluda.



Riding along Fontana Lake with a hand continually on the throttle or brake.

On June 7 going east down Red Marble Grade, I followed Fairmont's published recommendation to let the single-cylinder engine serve as a brake. The ignition was off and the throttle barely cracked to supply engine lubrication (remember this is a two-cycle engine and its lubrication comes from the oil mixed with the gasoline). Occasionally I would briefly turn on the ignition to burn off the accumulated fuel in the crankcase. Even with the engine serving as a brake I still had to use the brakes quite often to keep the car from reaching a dangerous speed. The gear driven cars with four-cycle engines came down the grade in low gear to use their engines as brakes.

On our return trip westbound the next day, all two-cycle cars had to be assisted by hooking up to a gear driven car for the trip up Red Marble grade. Several years ago Tom Falicon let all two-cycle cars try to go up this grade unassisted. My car made it OK but was under a tremendous strain. The two-cycle car is belt

Marker Lights



The GSMR passenger train arrives at the Nantahala Outdoor Center. Kayaking the rapids.



Mugs Falicon prepares some of the food on the Rail-B-Que car as seen below.



driven with no transmission, so it is in effect in high gear all the time. The trick to successfully traverse the grade with a two-cycle car is to get your speed up going into the grade and not let it drop. If the speed drops, the car will stall and it is impossible to get going again without a push. After I found that my car was capable of making it up the grade without assistance, I elected to not try that again due to the tremendous strain on an antique (1967) vehicle.

After we checked in the hotel in Dillsboro, a delicious evening meal was cooked for us by the Rail-B-Que crew. Returning to Andrews the following day, the same folks cooked lunch for us while we were in the siding at the Nantahala Outdoor Center awaiting the GSMR passenger train to clear the track on its way back to Bryson City. After the train cleared we headed for Andrews for the conclusion of our run.

If Jim Hopkins elects to take the chapter A4 motorcar on this run I highly recommend that you go with him.



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