

# Carolina Conductor



Volume 2, Number 2

Monthly Newsletter of the Carolina Railroad Heritage Association, Inc.

February 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 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Friday of the month.

## Motorcars on the Hartwell Railroad

**By: Bruce Gathman**

Photos by the author



Track on the HRT runs on the nape of the earth, so there are many hills and valleys.

The Hartwell Railroad Company was chartered in 1878, and its 10-mile line from Hartwell to Bowersville was completed in late 1879. In 1898, it was reorganized as the Hartwell Railway. Southern Railway gained control of the line in 1902 and converted it from 3-foot gauge to standard gauge in 1905. The Hartwell's narrow-gauge wood-burner Nancy Hart was then replaced with a larger coal-burning engine. In 1917, *Poor's Manual of the Railroads* reported that the Hartwell still only operated one locomotive and one passenger car. In 1924, Southern sold the line to a group of local businessmen.

In 1990 Bennie Ray Anderson purchased and still owns the line. In 1995 the name was changed and operates today under the name Hartwell Railroad Company. In addition to its original line, the Hartwell now operates the 48-mile former Norfolk Southern line between Toccoa and Elberton, Georgia.

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# Arrivals

## Volunteers Needed

The Hub City Railroad Museum and Southern Railway Caboose #X3115 needs **YOU!** Volunteers are needed to staff the museum and caboose every Wednesday and Saturday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. These facilities cannot remain to be open to the public without sufficient staffing. Pick one day a month to volunteer and contact Milton Ashley at mashley49@yahoo.com to schedule your day at the museum or Michael Saverino at saverinm@charter.net to schedule your day at the caboose.

Thank you,  
**CRHA and NRHS Board Members**

### 1. Volunteers live longer and are healthier.

Volunteers are happier and healthier than non-volunteers. In fact, during later life, volunteering is even more beneficial for one's health than exercising and eating well. Older people who volunteer remain physically functional longer, have more robust psychological well-being, and live longer.

### 2. Volunteering establishes strong relationships.

Despite all of the online connections that are available at our fingertips, people are lonelier now than ever before. Working alongside people who feel as strongly as you do about supporting a particular cause creates a path to developing strong relationships with others. It isn't just beneficial for making new friendships either. Children who volunteer with their parents are more likely to become adults who volunteer.

### 3. Volunteering is good for your career.

People who volunteer make more money, partially because the relationships people create while volunteering can be leveraged for financial benefit. These relationships are important because they provide access to new information and opportunities. People in your close network provide redundant information—they are already participating in the same kinds of activities and know the same people. Volunteering has long been viewed as a way to create new "weak tie" connections that lead to career opportunities.

### 4. Volunteering is good for society.

Almost all mission-driven organizations, are successful only if they maintain a strong volunteer workforce. In fact, places like museums, social service organizations, and faith-based organizations often rely on more volunteers than paid workers to meet their goals and fulfill their mission. By

volunteering for these organizations, you participate in helping our society meet the needs of people from all walks of life.

### 5. Volunteering gives you a sense of purpose.

Although it is not well-understood why volunteering provides such a profound health benefit, a key factor is assumed to be that volunteering serves to express and facilitate opportunities to carry out one's sense of purpose. The very nature of volunteering means choosing to work without being paid for it. As a result, people choose to spend their time on issues they feel strongly about.

If you aren't currently volunteering, and three in four of us aren't go directly to an organization that you support and ask them what you can do to help. You'll get more back than you ever imagined.

## One Man Crews

When American freight trains delivered cargo after World War II, the steam-belching beasts commonly had seven people aboard — an engineer, a conductor, up to four brakemen and a fireman.

Trains have since grown much longer, seemingly stretching to the horizon and often taking 20 minutes to pass through a crossing. And crews have been reduced in size — to five people in the 1970s and two in 1991. Now U.S. railroads want to put a single person in charge of today's huge locomotives, taking another step toward a future in which the nation's rail-cargo system increasingly could resemble toy train sets — highly mechanized networks run by computers or distant controllers.

For the moment, freight trains generally have two people aboard - an engineer who drives the train and a conductor who oversees the long line of cars. Railroad executives want to reduce that to a lone engineer, saying advances in safety systems, including a new automatic braking system under development, could minimize risks.

But labor groups and people who live near rail lines are skeptical. "These trains are 7,000 tons going 50 mph. You have to have two people," said J.P. Wright, an engineer for CSX railroad in Louisville, Kentucky. "It's mindboggling to me that the railroads would go this far with it."

The mayor of the Chicago suburb of Barrington asks how one person could split a stopped train to allow traffic and first responders through in the event of an emergency. "There may be technology to compensate for some of it, but I would have questions," Karen Darch said.

The one-person crew idea is **Continued on Page 6.**

# Departures

## Durbin & Greenbrier Expanding Excursions



West Virginia tourist railroad Durbin & Greenbrier Valley has announced that it will offer new feature train excursions and an expanded operating season in 2015.

The Elkins, W.Va.-based railroad, which began operating the Cass Scenic Railroad as part of a lease agreement between the West Virginia Rail Authority and the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources on Jan. 1, will begin its season in April with excursions and activities at its Elkins, Durbin, and Cass operations this year.

On April 4, the railroad's season will kick off with an Easter "Cottontail Express" excursion at the Elkins Station. On April 25 in Durbin, the railroad's steam operations will begin with weekend excursions featuring former Moore & Keppel Climax No. 3.

On May 19, steam excursions at the railroad's Cass operation will begin with Tuesday-through-Sunday trips to Whittaker. Beginning May 22, weekend passenger excursions to Bald Knob will be offered through June 7, until a comprehensive and expanded summer schedule is announced.

The railroad is offering this year a new "Wild Heart of West Virginia Adventure Package" that allows passengers to ride behind steam and diesel powered trains on a two-day segment connecting Elkins and Cass.

From Elkins, passengers will ride to Old Spruce on the railroad's Cheat Mountain Salamander excursion, a 64-mile trip that follows the Shavers Fork of the Cheat River through High Falls, Cheat Bridge, into Spruce and on to Old Spruce.

Once at the Cass interchange in Old Spruce, passengers will switch over to Cass rails, riding behind a geared Shay locomotive to Bald Knob before descending into downtown Cass for an overnight stay. On the following day, passengers will return to Elkins via the same routing. Riders can choose to depart from Cass, too.

The new excursion service will be offered on Saturdays and Sundays, beginning Memorial Day weekend.

The railroad plans to use the connected rail lines for additional special excursions throughout this season. For more information, visit [www.Mtn-Rail.com](http://www.Mtn-Rail.com).

## Central of Georgia #509

The Central of Georgia Railroad #509 steam engine sits less than a quarter mile east from the tracks in Macon. The locomotive is one of the few remaining steam engines that traveled the rail lines in central Georgia. But the #509 is relic of a bygone era, long ago pushed aside when diesel power made steam locomotives obsolete. Exposed to the elements, the steam engine shows plenty of signs of rust and places where the paint has peeled. A



Central of Georgia #509 as seen in its better days.

tarp is draped over the engine itself, covering where asbestos removal was done. And yet the #509 is still an attraction.

In 2011, Macon government took a shot at restoring the steam engine. The agreed to lease the #509 to Hartwell Railroad Company in Northeast Georgia. The company would rebuild the #509 and run it as an excursion train. But they had three years to do the work - and all that was done was removing asbestos from the engine. Macon-Bibb Mayor Robert Reichert said the city had enough with the inaction and declared the company in default of the contract. "What we're back to now is square one," Reichert said. Macon-Bibb government lacks the money to make the improvements. But now a suitor has come along for the #509 - Savannah's Coastal Heritage Society. The society runs the Georgia State Railroad Museum in Savannah and sees the steam engine as a great addition. While museum has long had interest, only now do they have some money. An anonymous donor will pay \$70,000 to move the engine east to Savannah and begin restoration.

Restoration wouldn't mean slapping a

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#509 as it looks today.

# Rare Mileage

## Southern Railway Locomotives in Asheville circa 1940s

As steel cars became more numerous on Southern Railway passenger trains between Washington, DC and Atlanta, GA, the 4-6-2 "Pacific's" were unable to maintain running times. In need of more power the Southern bought 23 "Mountains" from the Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1917.



As freights became longer and heavier Southern Railway needed larger locomotives—especially on Saluda grade. They bought class "Santa Fe" type locomotives to accomplish this.



# Manifest

Continued from Page 1 *Motorcars*



The Hartwell Railway's line is operated by the



Club motorcar riders—Mary Rose Gathman and guests, Charles and Linda Mote from Atlanta.

cleared nicely and warmed up rather fast for the run north to Toccoa. The motorcars were turned to go back south for a lunch stop in Elberton. After a great lunch the motorcars then ran southward toward Bowersville. But they

never made it all the way to the end of the line due to a rather severe track misalignment.

Gathman says, "If you haven't ridden either the club's motorcar or one of our member-owned motorcars you are missing out on enjoying a segment of railroading's history."



Great Walton Railroad, based in Social Circle, GA, which also operates the Athens Line in the Jackson County community of Center, GA. An interesting tradition is carried on by the railroad in that many of the locomotives remain in the original owners paint schemes. Also the railroad derives a great deal of income by storing excess railroad equipment on any available track.



Cruising the Hartwell Railroad through the rural agricultural landscape.



On November 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014 the CRHA/NRHS club A-4 motorcar under the expert operational control of member Jim Hopkins participated in a trip on the Hartwell Railroad. It was a rather crisp 20 degree day at the start in Elberton. The weather



Railroad personnel flagging one of the busy highway crossings.

# Marker Lights



## Continued from Page 2 *One Man Crews*

being pitched at a time when railroads are working to increase train length because delivering more cars usually is more profitable, and they're working to expand capacity to handle even more freight as the economy improves.

Federal regulators have pushed back against the proposal, saying they may require two-person crews. The Association of American Railroads trade group says accident data does not support requiring two-person crews. It has opposed any effort by the government to prohibit one-person trains.

Labor groups and regulators argue single-person crews, even with the new braking system called "positive train control," would make trains more prone to accidents.

The system is aimed at preventing human error by using GPS, wireless radio and computers to monitor train position and speed. It can stop trains from colliding, derailling because of excessive speed, entering track under maintenance or traveling the wrong direction because of switching mistakes. Congress set a 2015 deadline for having the system in place, but it won't be ready by then.

The major railroads appear committed to making one-person crews a reality. They declared in 2004 that they wanted to negotiate a nationwide pact for one-person crews, but courts ruled each railroad had to negotiate individually with its unions.

The BNSF railroad tried and failed earlier this fall to get one-person crews approved by one of its unions. The proposal is getting more attention now because of BNSF's effort and a recent string of fiery rail crashes.

The Federal Railroad Administration has promised to propose a rule next year requiring at least two people to operate a train. "We believe safety is greatly enhanced with

the use of a multiple-person crew," administration spokesman Kevin Thompson said.

However, railroad companies argue having a second person in the locomotive does not dramatically improve safety. "In many cases, that second crew member will be redundant," said Frank Wilner, who has written six books on the rail industry and previously worked for the Association of American Railroads, the federal Surface Transportation Board and one of the major rail unions.

If railroads can successfully implement the braking system and stop trains remotely, the advances might open the door to one day operating trains entirely by remote control or with robots. Existing remote-control systems are limited to use in rail yards.

## Continued from page 3 *Central of Georgia #509*

coat of paint on the locomotive but restoring all the working parts of the #509. Koller says museum curators use the engine's inner workings to teach kids about how simple machines work. But this restoration won't be easy.

Operational parts in the engine's cab were removed using a blowtorch and then shrink-wrapped together in what looked like a metal mass.

"Nothing is labelled. Everything is torched apart," Koller said. "It's going to be a jigsaw puzzle to put it back together." The total job is estimated to cost \$250,000. Macon-Bibb commissioners on the Economic Development Committee gave their blessing to start negotiations to loan the #509 to the Savannah organization.



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CAROLINA CONDUCTOR



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