

PGRS TRACKIN'

Newsletter of the Piedmont Garden Railway Society – February 2017

Editor: Scott Williams

Happy February PGRS club members!

My New Year's resolution was to bite off more than I could chew and spread myself even thinner than I did in 2016 and...so far, it's going GREAT!! I hope you're all having as much success keeping your New Year's promises to yourselves as I am having.

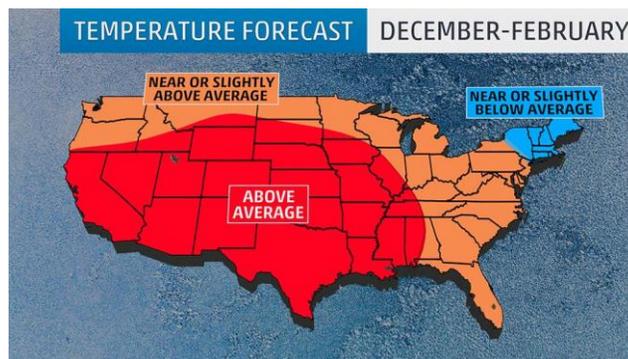
In spite of my personal goal to take on even more projects than I already have on my plate, I still managed to prepare a pretty good PGRS newsletter this month...with a whole lot of help from our friends. Thanks everyone who sent in contributions.

00-000-00

Winter Gardening notes in 2017:

The second and shortest month on the Calendar and in the Northern Hemisphere, the last full month of Winter with the Vernal Equinox about mid-March [Yay!!]

As we move from El Niño in to more neutral or weak La Niña conditions predictions say the reversal in Tropical forcing from the Pacific Ocean could lead to colder temps early in winter shifting to milder temps later in the winter for most of the country with the exception of the extreme northeast of the 48 states where winter may be colder than normal and lingering. So, don't go visit your friends in Maine until about July.



Things to do in February and early March around the garden:

From looking at the PGRS mailing list and comparing it to the USDA plant hardiness zones, our club members up high are in the 6a zone and further down in elevation move on up through 6b and 7a and some members may almost be in the 7b hardiness zone so when it comes to spring planting outdoors our club members may be weeks apart from each other but we can all do numerous things to prepare for spring in the month of February:

- Apply Lime to your yard, probably a slow release lime will work best for you.
- You might want to apply a LOW DOSAGE of Nitrogen only fertilizer this time of year. Fall fertilizing is considered best to avoid summer brown spots or adding too much nitrogen 'downstream' from your yard. A fertilizer like 10-10-10 is likely overkill on potassium and especially phosphorous this time of year for your lawn.
- Trim deciduous things, i.e.; trees/vines **except those plants/bushes that will bloom in spring** [azaleas, rhododendrons, laurels...]. Also, now's the time to move things around. Dig up that Azalea, etc. and move it to where you would rather see it.
- Mulch up the rest of those leaves laying around with your mulching mower to clean up the look of your yard and add fine bits of leaf matter to the soil.

****Proper pH [potential of hydrogen], balancing in the winter months, applied before growing season can also help you get more bang for your buck with most everything else you apply to your lawn the rest of the year! It prevents leaching of Phosphorous, increases absorption of Herbicides and the effectiveness of Nematicides when applied and many common "weed-grasses" want a more acidic pH than turfgrass does, closer to 5.5pH whereas most 'desirable' turfgrasses want 6.5 to 7. Adding Lime to your yard in this region is usually a pretty safe bet but proper soil testing first will tell you exactly what your individual lawn needs in the way of pH balancing and other mineral amendments. Too much lime can cause problems like any other imbalance, Calcium lime may be the best for you depending on whether or not your soil is deficient in Magnesium then Dolomite lime might be a better choice. Soil testing is the best route first if you can do it and will provide the best results most economically.**

- Mid- to late -February is the time to prune most trees, shrubs and woody ornamentals, except for those that bloom in spring. Prune those after they bloom. Trim back deciduous vines and groundcovers now.
- Survey trees and shrubs for breakage from winter weather and prune damaged areas.
- Don't let evergreens and young plants dry out in the arid winter weather on your garden layout.

Club News: January Planning Meeting for Annual PGRS Meeting/Trainfest in March:

Our goal this year is to get as many members as possible to attend the PGRS Annual Meeting. So, we are combining the Annual meeting with our Spring Trainfest. Yes, we said Spring Trainfest. Instead of one Summer event, we are hosting two Trainfests, Spring and Fall.

Besides the important stuff like electing our officers, we will have great food, interesting presentations, the opportunity for members to swap or sell their RR stuff, drawings for great door prizes, and gifts for everyone.

Please plan on attending. I'm sure you will have fun and find it worthwhile.

THE PGRS Annual Meeting and Spring Trainfest to be held March 18, 2017

The 2017 Annual Meeting/Spring Trainfest:

The meeting will be held on March 18, 2017 at the Brushy Creek facility in Greer, NC

The times for the event will be from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm.

Access to the facility will be from 8:00 am until 4:00 pm.

The **tentative** agenda will be:

9:30 am – 10:00: Collection of outstanding dues. Pass out tickets for door prizes.

10:00 – 11:00 Annual Business Meeting including Treasurer's Report, nominations for offices, elections, new business.

11:00 – 12:00 pm Presentations:

11:00-11:30 Methods of powering your Locomotives

11:30–12:00 Operation Lifesaver

12:00 – 3:00: Spring Trainfest:

Swap and Sell

Raffle/Drawing

Additional instructive poster presentations on things like paint and power supplies, etc.

Coffee and Doughnuts

Lunch sandwiches provided

Door Prizes

PGRS Club shirts for sale

*Also, if you have completed a project other club members might find useful this past year but maybe not long enough for a presentation or you don't care for public speaking, we encourage you to get a sheet of posterboard, glue on copy that explains the project along with several good photos of what/how you did it and bring it along to Trainfest. Any project you found interesting, helpful and enjoyable enough to do then several other members will quite likely find it interesting as well.

oo-000-oo

Reuters Children Clinic:

Tim Wagner and Bob VanWagner have worked diligently over the years to repair and maintain the G Gauge overhead railway at the Reuters Children Clinic in Asheville. Tim and Bob have put in countless hours of service to benefit the children staying there who love watching the trains which gives them some distraction from whatever illness they are fighting. If you ever visit this place, you can see the smiles and know why they dedicated themselves to this task. Due to physical difficulties and time schedules they have asked Fran Monaham and Pete Gendron to continue their work. Fran and Pete encourage anyone who is interested to come to one of the maintenance and repair sessions and help out. You will not only help these children, you also get to play with some trains. They will send out emails to anyone who is interested when a working session is scheduled.

oo-000-oo

Sky Mayo shares his latest project:

*“My Sweetie asked what I wanted for my birthday and I told her I wanted the Banta Modelworks ‘Forney Curley Roof Wooden Cab kit.’
I started working on it with several other projects still in the works...typical for me.
I've been waiting for a little warmer weather to do the varnishing in the garage before installing the window "glass" and putting the roof on.*

Sky”





“The inside has to be weathered with MicroMark ‘Age-It Easy’.
I will test some scrap with oak stains and varnish that I have on hand. The sealer I've used for PVC RR turns it slightly orange.”



Manufacturer's finished photo.

oo-000-oo

CONVERTING A BACHMANN ANNIE TO BATTERY USING A JUNIOR THROTTLE AND RECEIVER

By Doc Watson

INTRODUCTION:

The Bachmann “Anniversary” ten wheelers have been the least expensive and most popular selling engines in the history of large scale railroading and there have been many discussions on how to convert one to remote control battery operations. This is just one more. However, I think that I have a couple of tips that can make the conversion much simpler. If you haven’t considered moving to remote controlled battery operations, you might consider this engine as a first challenge. In addition, this article will include a review and installation of the Junior Throttle R/C controller.

THE ENGINE:

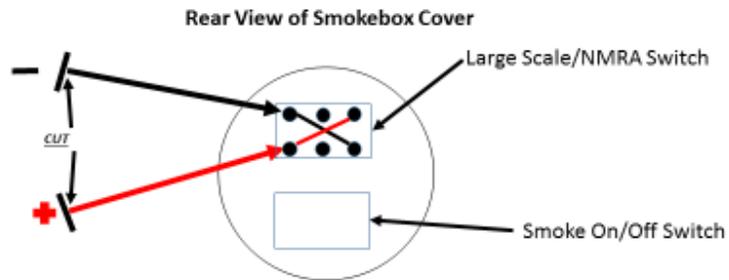
Usually one of the most difficult things to do is to eliminate the track power pickups so the engine does not put power back to the track and Vis versa. Isolating the engine will allow you to run another track-powered train on the same track.

The Annie offers one of the simplest ways to isolate the track pickups without having to remove the boiler or modify any of the internal wiring except that which is described below. All of the changes you need to make is located behind the smokebox cover. The changes you need to make are to the upper “DIRECTION” switch.

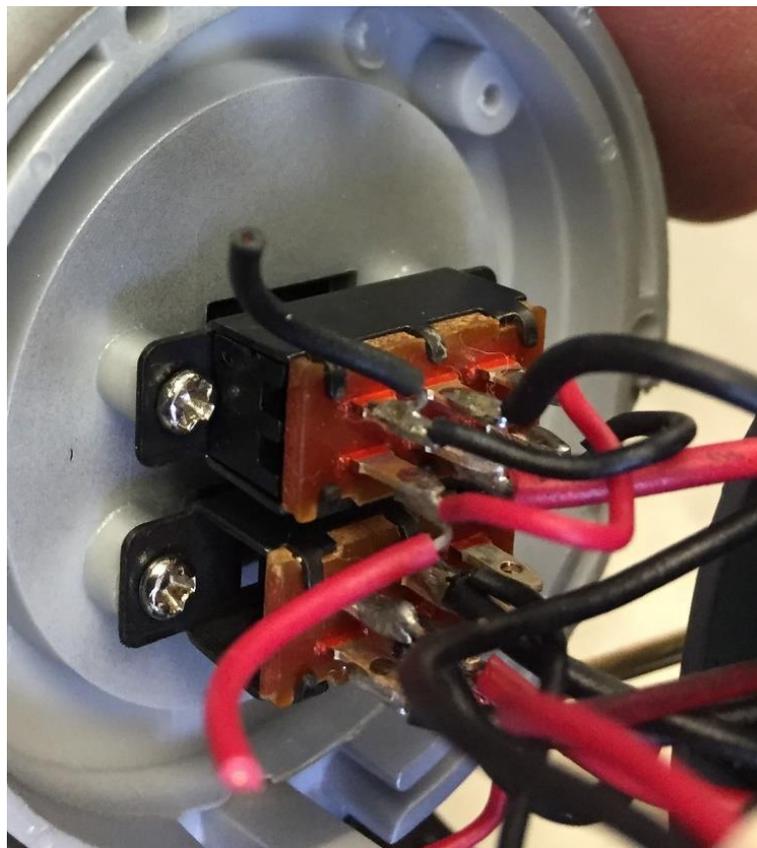
The smoke box cover is held on with tabs on the top and bottom. Carefully pry it off to expose the switch wiring.



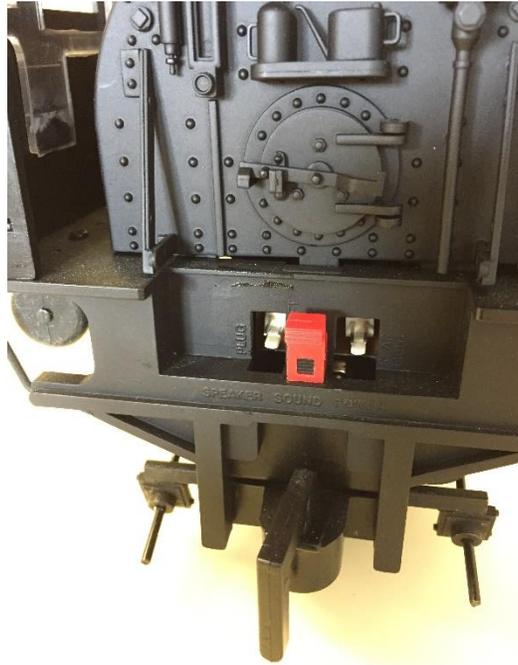
Below is a schematic of the changes you will be making. The upper (Direction) switch has a number of wires soldered to it. The left 2 terminals each have 2 wires soldered to them. The short wires that connect the left terminals to the right terminals are to be left alone. The longer, red and black wires are the ones that need to be cut. Cut the longer wires and cover each of them with shrink wrap.



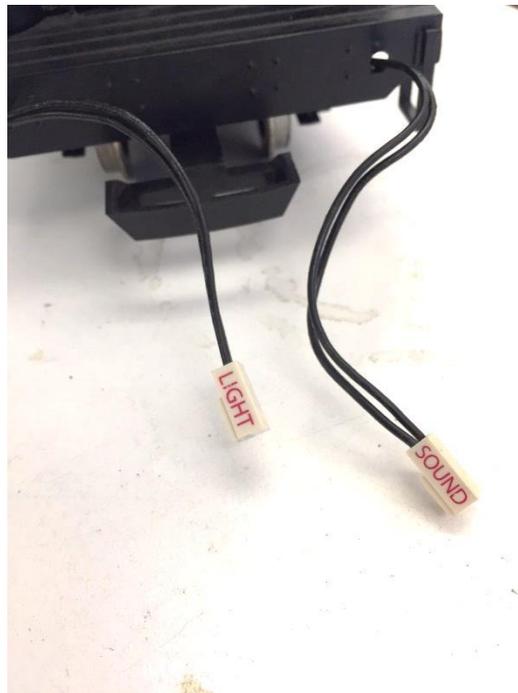
The picture below shows the cut wires. Push the smoke box cover back on and close the smokebox switch cover. You have now isolated the track pickup from the motor.



This is a photo of the rear of the Annie engine showing the plugs for sound (chuff) and lights (power). The chuff plug is on the left and the power plug is on the right.

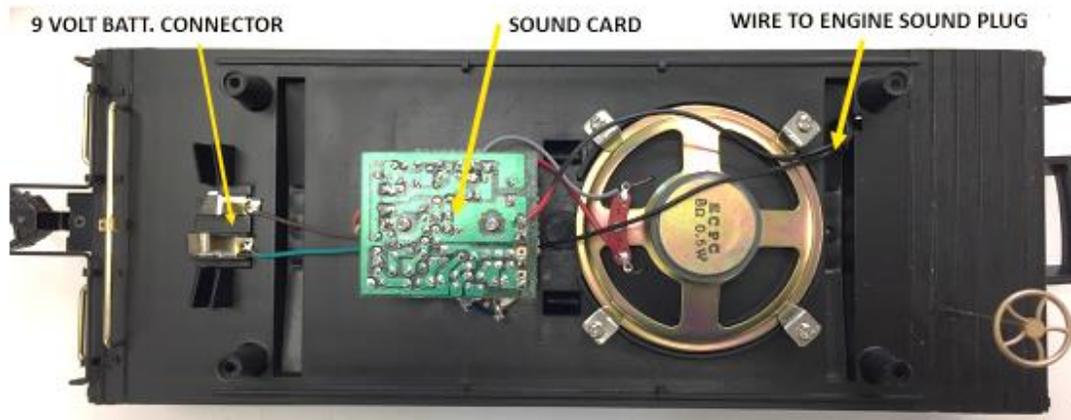


Below is a photo of the tender leads. They are already marked for you.



THE TENDER:

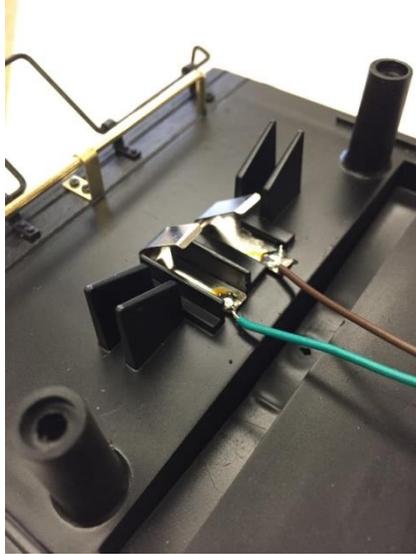
Now it's on to the tender where most of the work will be done. To begin, turn the tender over. There are 4 screws located near the front and rear truck bolsters. Remove these and carefully pull the tender shell apart from the frame. If your Annie has a backup light, this will be the only connection between the shell and frame. Here's a view of a tender bottom that has yet to be altered. If your Annie has a backup light, there will be another wire pair running from the rear light through the tender floor opposite the sound plug wire. The sound plug wires will provide a mechanical chuff signal to your sound card. The rear light plug wires will be the method of providing power to the motor from your speed controller.



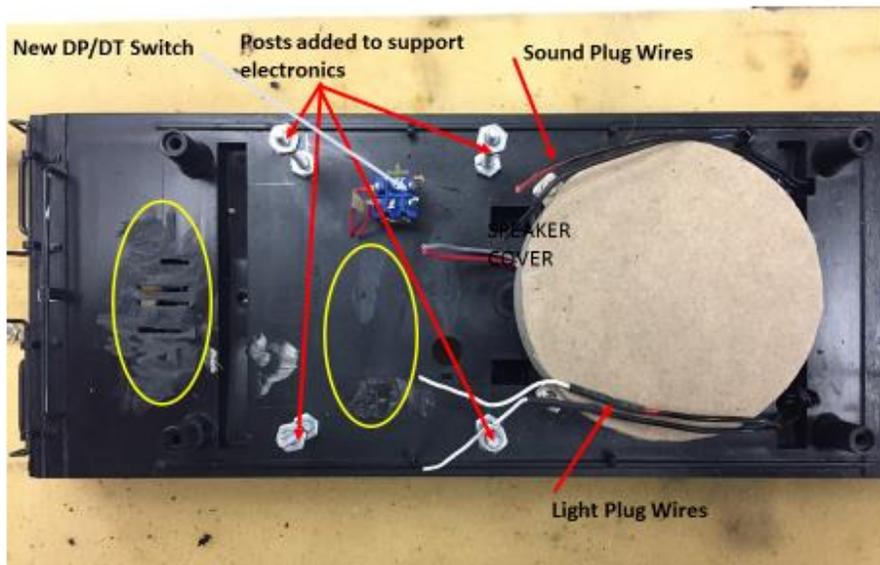
Here are the steps necessary to prepare the tender for the R/C installation. First, remove the 2 screws that attach the sound card to the posts on the frame. Next, pull out the metal tabs used for the 9 volt battery connection then cut the speaker leads close to the card as possible. Mark the leads for the sound plug and cut them near the card. Turn the chassis over and remove the nut that holds the volume control knob. Remove the card. Finally, cut the rear light wires about midway between the rear light and the point where the wires exit the frame. That completes the electronic parts removal.

The next step is to clear the top of the chassis of unnecessary plastic mounts, etc. to make room for the battery and electronics. The Bachmann speaker is adequate for the job and is even better if you enclose it as I did with a simple piece of cardboard tubing with a top.

Take a Dremel with a cutting disc or a razor saw and cut off the 2 posts used for the old sound card. Next grind off all the plastic tabs and stuff used to hold the 9 volt battery and metal tabs. The photo below shows the plastic pieces that need to be removed.



The yellow ovals in the photo below show the areas I cleared.



I did add metal standoff posts to hold the new electronics above my battery but you could attach the battery to the chassis using double sided tape and then attach the electronics to the top of the battery the same way. You could also place one of the components on top of the speaker enclosure. I tend to stay away from that practice because of the potential for magnetic interference.

As you can see in the previous photo I installed a new DP/DT center off switch. I did not use the existing hole that previously held the old volume control. You could certainly use that hole. I get back to this later.

The tender is now ready for the R/C component installation.

THE R/C INSTALLATION:

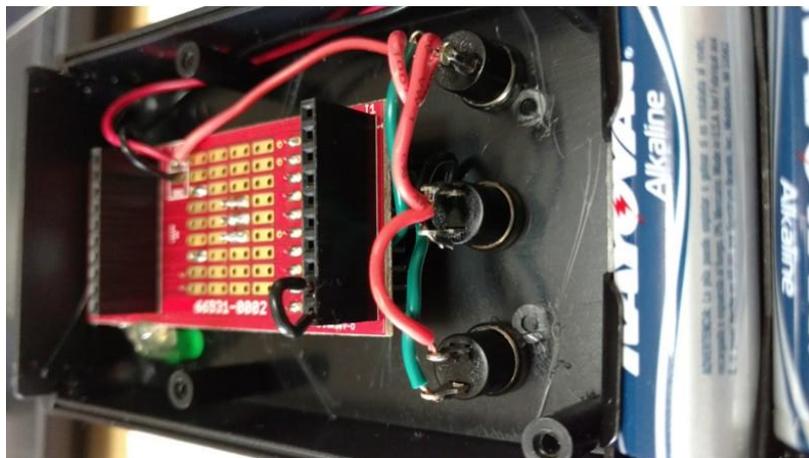
For this installation I chose the Junior Throttle. The construction of this DIY system was described in several issues of Garden Railroader. (April, June and August, 2014)

A member of the PGRS has taken it upon himself to build and sell these. (I will provide that information later). There are 3 basic advantages to this system. The first is its low price, second is the small size of the receiver, and third is the simplicity of its handheld transmitter.

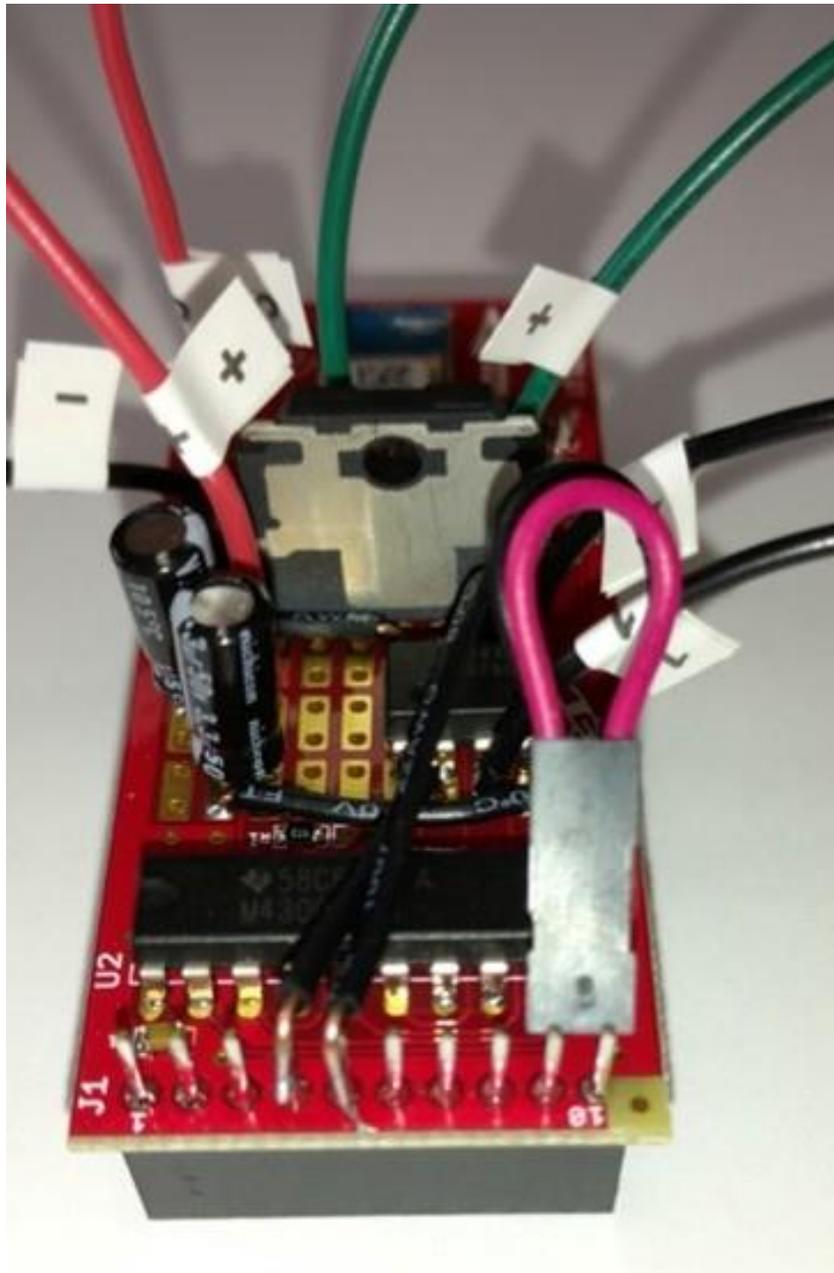


The throttle is a very simple and easy to use device. It has a center-off speed control. Rotate counterclockwise and you get reverse. Rotate clockwise and you get forward motion with small increments in speed. There are 3 momentary switches. Number one is on/off pulse whistle. Number 2 rings the bell. Number 3 is currently unused.

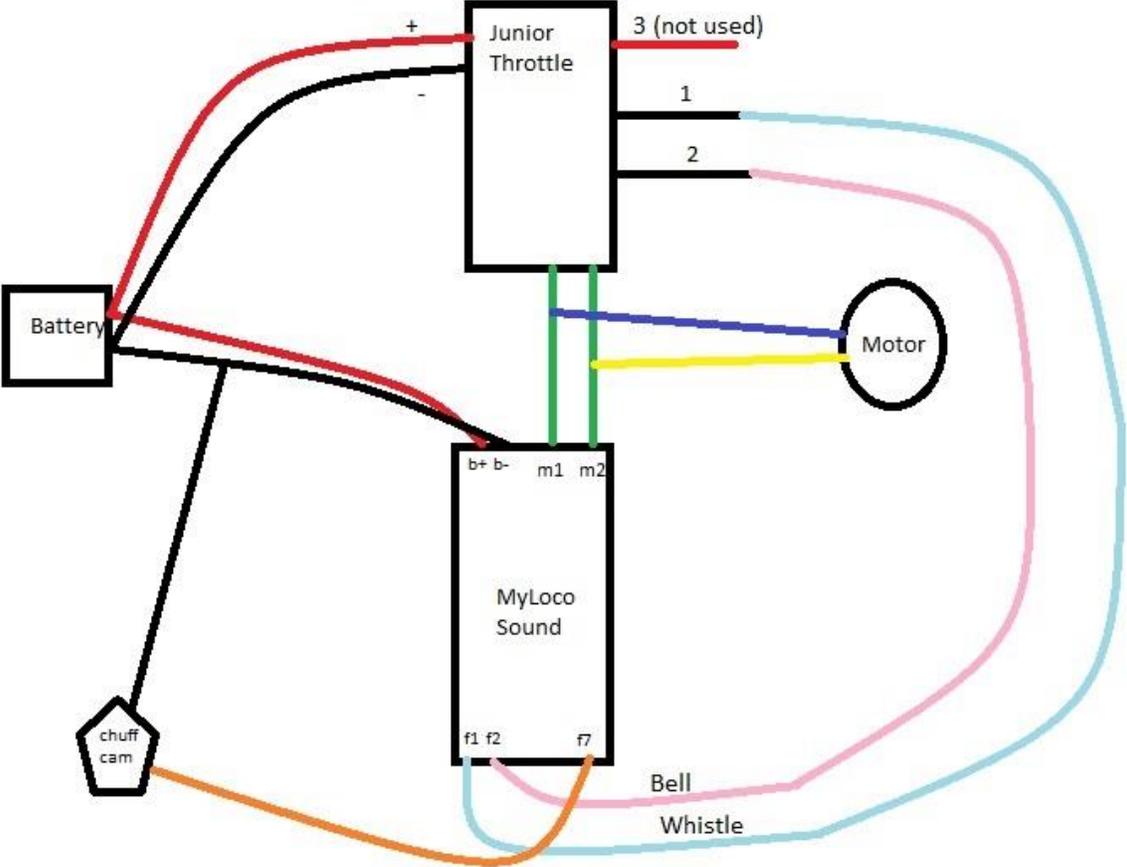
Below is a photo that shows the interior of the throttle powered by 2 AA batteries.



Below is a picture of the receiver. It is only $2\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{8}$ ". As it comes, all the output and input wires are labeled. Instructions are provided for setting the frequency which involves using the provided jumper wire (pink) shown on the lower right of the picture.

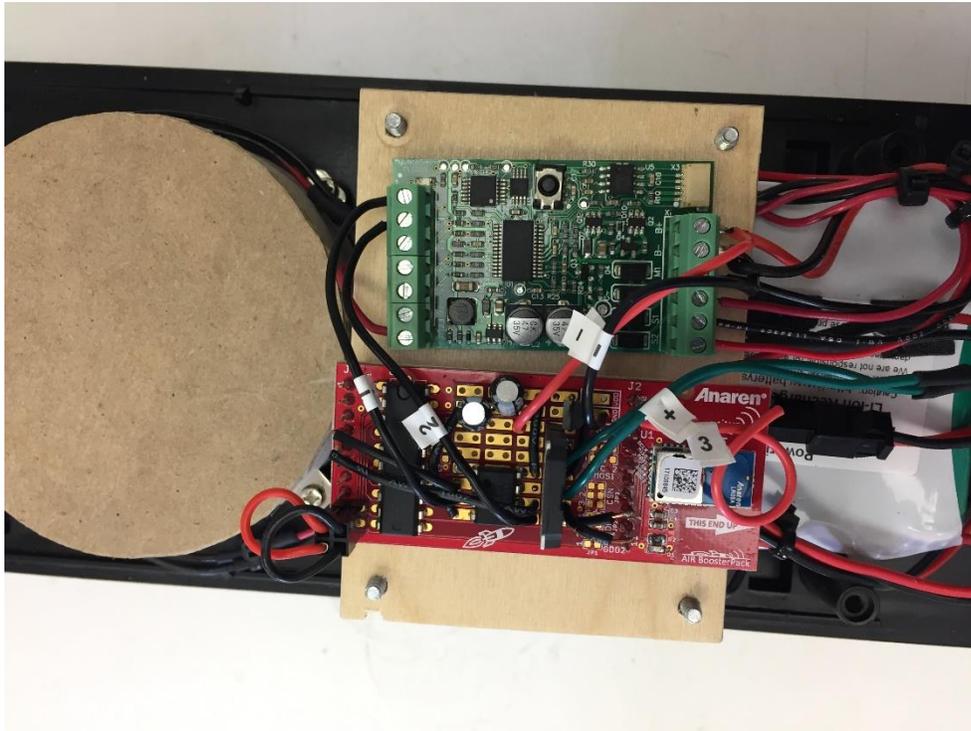


For the sound on this project, I used the relatively inexpensive MyLocoSound system from G Scale Graphics. The schematic below illustrates how simple the wiring is.

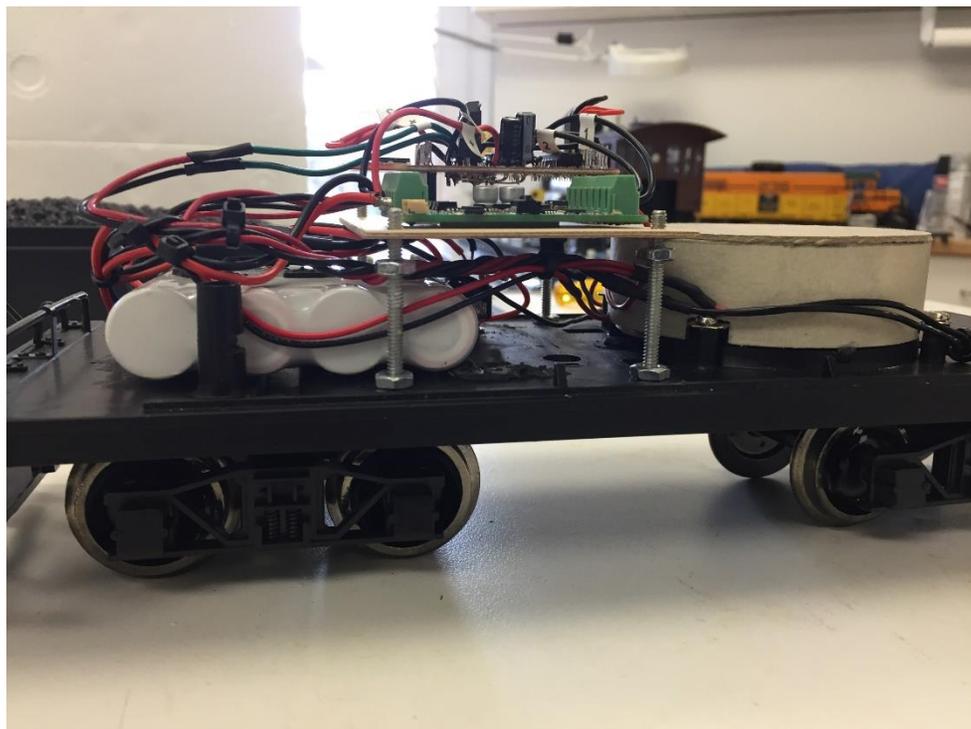


If you decide to use another R/C system and/or different sound card, the basics are the same. Just follow the manufacturer's directions.

Below are a couple of pictures of my installation. Both cards are mounted to a piece of thin plywood attached to the 4 mounting posts. The Junior Receiver is on the top and the MyLocoSound card is below that. You can see the battery sticking out below the boards.



The next picture is a side view.



oo-000-oo

2017 Train Show Schedule from Pete Gendron:

Central Railway Model Assoc.

Friday, 02/10/17 from 12 AM to 8 PM
Saturday, 02/11/17 from 10 AM to 4 PM

Rock Springs Church Impact Center 207 Rock Springs Road, Easley, SC 29642
Signed up 8/1/16 Will ask for space in January.

Asheville Model Train Show

03/03/17 Friday 12 AM to 7 PM
03/04/17 Saturday 9 AM to 5 PM

WNC Ag Center Fletcher

Hickory Train Show....April 2017 Dates to be advised Contact in January

North Carolina Model Train Show....Should be in Charlotte Contact in January

Autumn Rails Train Show....10/06/17 10/07/17 WNC Ag Center Fletcher Contact in January

oo-000-oo

Member Photos:

“Here are a few pictures from our Chama trip in Sept/Oct 2016 We spent nine days in and around Chama NM and Antonito CO. Rode Amtrak out of Salisbury and rented a car in El Paso TX. “

Bob Thompson





oo-000-oo

Apple Valley Model RR garden scale turntable progress:

Progress on PVC turn table. Photo #1, turn table mounted on wire and landscape paper...to allow rain to drain.



Photo # 2. Gravel covering bottom of pit.



Surface around pit covered awaiting snickering. Pit wall will be finished to look like timber cribbing.



oo-000-00

Like your Microbrews with a Railroad theme?

Then you might want to look up the **Whistle Hop Brewery** along rte.74 in Fairview NC. The brewpub is built in a former Norfolk and Western caboose. Additional space is coming soon in the form of a 10' x 50' boxcar. The Father of the Brewer told me that he is a Lionel train guy and just digs trains in general. His son brews the beer and he takes care of the rest.



<https://whistlehop.com/>



oo-000-00

oo-000-oo

Trivia Question:

What Railroad, completed in 1857, that you've probably never heard of before first linked the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River? It was of huge strategic importance during the Civil War and later became part of the Southern Railroad line.

oo-000-oo

** A reminder from Terry Ketcham that PGRS club members are invited to come by the Apple Valley Model Railroad Club in Hendersonville the last Saturday of each month to run their large scale trains on the club layout from 10 – 2 pm.

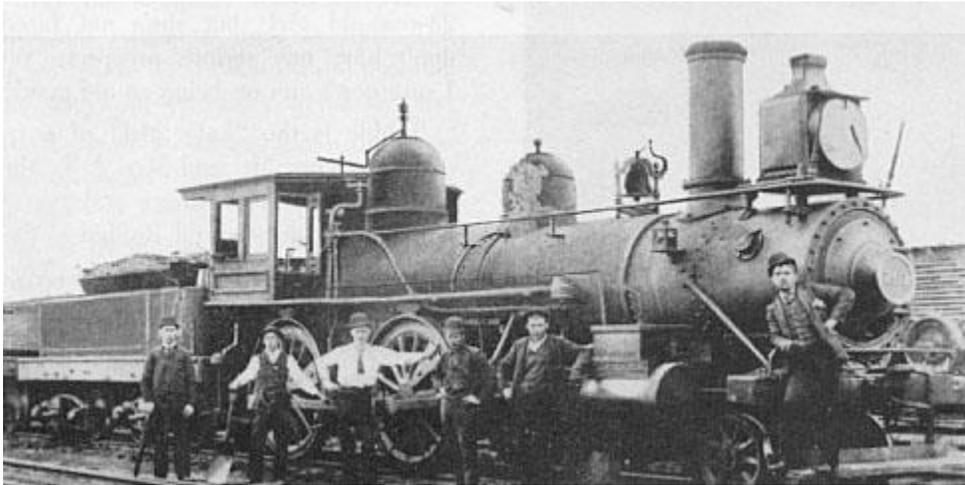
oo-000-oo

*** Think you might have an idea for a topic to share at the next Trainfest? We are **always** looking for presenters. This should include examples you have built on a topic and/or accompanying slides to show at the Trainfest.

This summer we are also hoping to display Posters of projects if you think your project is something others would like to learn about but maybe not large enough for a 'Clinic' that you could display photos and documents on poster boards.

oo-000-oo

Trivia Answer: The Memphis and Charleston Railroad.



When the Civil War broke out in 1861, this railroad became of strategic importance as the only east-west railroad running through the Confederacy. On the morning of April 11, 1862, Union troops led by General Mitchell captured Huntsville, cutting off this railroad's use for the Confederacy.

The Memphis & Charleston Railroad was unique in many ways.

- 1) It was the first railroad to offer sleeper cars.
- 2) It was the only railroad to run east-west in what was to become the Confederacy.
- 3) It made more money from its passenger service than from its freight service.
- 4) It was not conceived and operated as a local branch railroad, but as a long-haul route. Direct routes to the east coast and the northeast were enabled by the decision of Memphis and Charleston planners and management to adopt a standard rail gauge and to lease usage rights from adjoining rail lines.
- 5) It ran parallel a major river--the Tennessee--rather than merely feeding into the river traffic infrastructure. This parallel route was the result of the Tennessee River having defeated every attempt at establishing regular freight transport over its main channel from Paducah to Knoxville. Passage was disrupted at Muscle Shoals and at a bend in the river just upstream of South Pittsburg where several geological structures--the suck, the skillet, and the boiling pot--made navigation difficult under the best of conditions and even impossible much of the year. The Tennessee was thus never reliably useful as a means of transportation. The Memphis and Charleston Railroad was a substitute for the river, not a complement to it.

The railroad and its route through Corinth, Mississippi was a significant factor in the Battle of Shiloh in 1862.

While the railroad briefly survived the American Civil War, the effect of the war on the railroad was devastating and led to its merger into other railroads of the same fate and eventually to become part of the Southern Railway system. It was taken over by the Southern Railway in 1897 when it was designated "the Memphis division."

oo-000-oo

Membership:

Please consider sharing this newsletter with friends who might be interested and if they wish to become members ask them to contact our PGRS Secretary/Treasurer for a membership form.

Don Watson
125 Mistletoe Trail
Hendersonville, NC 28791

docwatson@morrisbb.net

oo-000-oo

Train Lover Luncheons:

The current luncheons are:

Columbus Area: Meets every Third Thursday of every month at Larkins Carolina Grill, 155 West Mills Street in Columbus, NC 28722. @ 1:00 PM. Contact Pete Gendron: 954-812-6270

Greater Greenville Area: Meeting the first Tuesday of every month - at 12 noon. It has been moved to Mutts in Greer as it is more centrally located for the greater Greenville area. Contact Ken Majchrzak at: kemajchrzak@gmail.com or call Ken at: 864-385-4951

Asheville Area: Meets the 4th Thursday each month. We meet at 11:30 AM at Gondolier Italian Restaurant and Pizza located at 1360 Tunnel Road, Asheville 28805. Contact Tim Wagner timwagner2012@gmail.com

The location is on the east end near the VA hospital, so it is recommended that you access Tunnel Road from I-40, exit 55. Take a left at the first light after you exit and a left at the next light. The venue will be on the right a few hundred yards from the intersection.

Winston Salem luncheons are currently being planned by Tony Potter and J.R. Snider.

Charlotte luncheons are meeting at Bubba's BBQ 4400 Sunset Rd. (exit 16, rte. I-77).
at 11:30am on the third Tuesday of each month.

oo-000-oo

Thanks, and please help make our newsletters interesting!!!

Send any idea, project, photo, something you found surfing on the Internet, etc., no matter how great or small you may think them to be to your newsletter editor. I will use them right away or log them away on my hard drive for future use. Our newsletters will be as interesting as you can help make them. We all love trains so...if it's about trains, and you've got it on your computer, chances are you won't be the only person who might enjoy reading about it.

Send your input to: srwavl@outlook.com

Business Related to Our Hobby

Any Member who has a business related to our hobby is welcome to submit an entry for inclusion in PGRS Trackin' each month.



Garden Railroad Design
Old Trains Wanted

Jim's Train Sales

O & G Gauge New & Used Trains

Jim Hendley

Etowah, North Carolina 28729

Lionel, MTH, USA Trains, PIKO, LGB
Bridgwerks Power Supplies, Bachmann
Split-Jaw Rail Clamps, O & G Gauge Track

Email: jhh1218@att.net
Phone: (828) 891-7570
Fax: (828) 890-3346

Expert Sales, Service and Installation
for ALL Brands

G-Scale

P.O. Box 2, 150 Rollins Rd.
Marshall, NC 28753

Neal Madden 828-279-7766
www.locomotionworks.com



Peggy Keyes
Owner / Chief Conductor
RightTrackTrainMuseum@gmail.com
828/625-5551

The Right Track Toy Train Museum

A non-profit museum to benefit Pancreatic Cancer
research
2414 Memorial Hwy (Rte 64/74)
Lake Lure, NC 28746
Find us on Facebook!