

PGRS TRACKIN'



Newsletter of the Piedmont Garden Railway Society – March 2016

Editor: Scott Williams

“March comes in like a Lion...and goes out like a Lamb.”

We've all heard this saying and we know it's true. We're all hibernating down in our workshops, working on our winter projects and waiting for Mother Nature to finally get winter out of her system. Soon we'll be venturing outdoors on those special warm days when Mother Nature is thinking ahead and gives us those wonderful, warm, sunny moments that allow us to fiddle with our gardens in preparation for this coming spring.

These are the days we get the chance to pick up some early sprouting weeds and debris or replace some of the ballast that winter wind and rain have wreaked havoc upon and look forward to our summer model train operations.

Maybe not the 'full on' repair for summer operations that we'll do in April and May but a few enjoyable hours spent fiddling about in our garden railroad layouts in assessment and preparation for our springtime projects. Garden railroading is a hobby that we can truly enjoy through all seasons.

******* Dues Reminder from the PGRS Treasurer. This will be your last newsletter unless your dues are paid for the 2016 year! So please make sure Doc has received your 20 dollars for this year to continue receiving news and upcoming event notices. Thanks!**

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** 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.

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**** WANTED:**

Anyone with 60 feet of good used Brass track to sell please contact Fran Monahan. 828-890-0891 or at: MargeMonahan2@gmail.com

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Wall Street Journal article:

Bob Van Wagner and Jon Bole both forwarded an article to me that appeared in the Feb. 11 edition of the Wall Street Journal which, at first glance, saddened me regarding the future of the Model Railroading hobby and I would like to propose a discussion about it amongst our members at the future Summer Train Fest and other meetings.

The article's title; "**As Model Trains Near Line's End, Aging Hobbyists Trundle On.**"

Subtitle: "Industry struggles to find new platforms for once popular pastime".

In the article it addresses the changing and aging demographics of model railroading. It quotes Charlie Getz, President of the NMRA as stating that the current average age of the organization's members is now around 64 and that in the 1970s the average age was closer to 39. It quotes other modelers as saying their children aren't interested in pursuing the hobby and that younger people are more apt to pursue hobbies such as videogames on their computers and handheld devices than pursue a craftsman hobby like railroad modeling which utilizes multiple skills such as carpentry, electronics, model making and painting and it predicts the demise/decline of our hobby. It also referenced the attempts by Lionel and other manufacturers to create more digital offerings to entice younger folks which are little more than train related videogames and not the traditional railroad modeling that we all participate in.

Is the model railroading hobby truly nearing the end of the line? Maybe, but maybe not, the article mentions something many of us have witnessed, that Thomas the Tank Engine still thrills youngsters in their early years. Is there a way to nurture that 'thrill' to the adolescent years and the next level of modeling railroads in miniature? Looking at our own club demographics we have 73 members and only a few are under 60. Is that an alarming statistic? Maybe, but maybe not, I bet many PGRS members didn't get involved in Large Scale trains until later in life when time, space and money became more available in their lives but I also bet many of them modeled smaller scales prior to that so maybe large scale is never going to be predominantly a younger person's scale to model. Maybe the way to introduce or reintroduce teens and young adults to the enjoyment that can be found modeling railroads is to encourage them to pursue less expensive and less space consuming scale modeling like N or HO and then when resources and space allow they too may take things to the next level of large scale modeling. Starter train sets in smaller scales are plentiful and make unique gifts along with the encouragement of sharing our experience and assistance with railroad modeling.

The attention grabbing headlines of the WSJ article may give us pause but I think it's premature to say our hobby is 'nearing the end of the line'. What it should do maybe is rally us to encourage future generations to consider the alternatives to 'virtual' hobbies and experience with us the enjoyment and satisfaction we feel when you build something yourself and share something real with your family, neighbors and friends. Nobody gives a hoot about your latest high score on a video game but invite your neighbors and their kids over to watch your trains run and they will remember that for years to come. A truly satisfying experience I think.

Trivia Question:

What does Train Order Operation mean?

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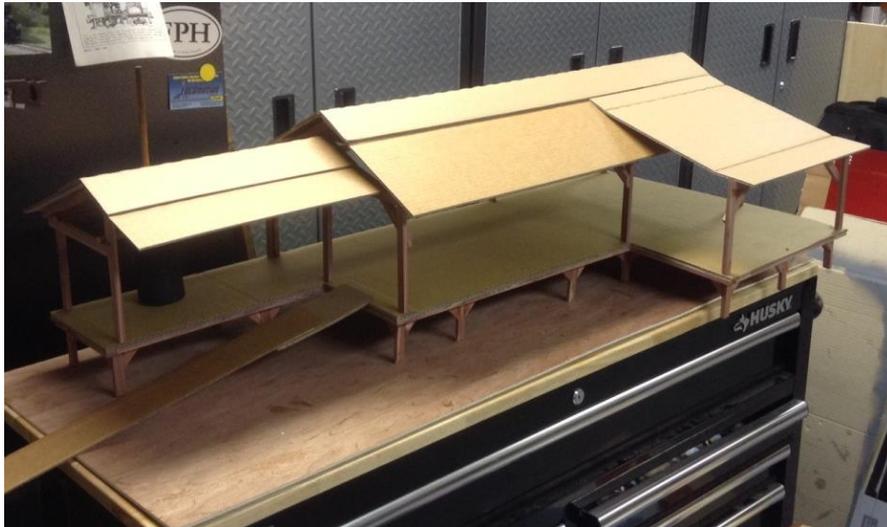
MEMBER PHOTOS;

“Ask and it shall be given to you”. I was coming up short this month with zero photos from PGRS club members. I sent out a request for photos and the club members delivered. Thanks!



Gabe Gerber sent me this photo of Large Scale Family Fun...Awesome! Thanks Gabe.

The apparently tireless Terry Ketcham sends this mock up of his design for the NC Arboretum for the future addition of a sawmill to the Rocky Cove Railroad:

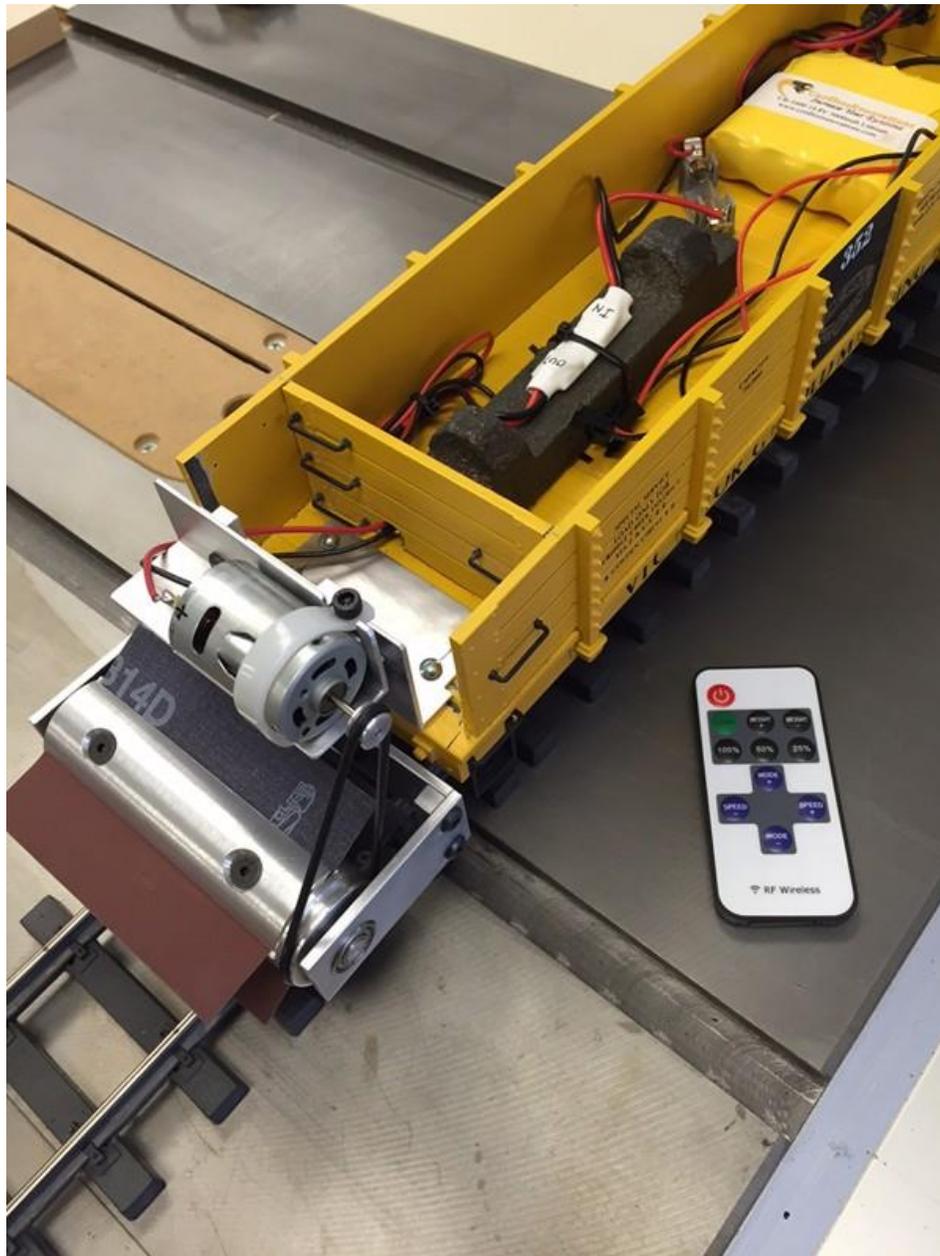


That's a mighty fine looking sawmill design Terry!

One of the original goals of the NC Arboretum as I understand it was to display the industry that the railroad helped to bring to western North Carolina. This sawmill will be a fine representation of that. Fantastic Terry! This will be a fantastic addition to the Rocky Cove Railroad display.

Terry states that the legs of the mill will be plastic square tubing since the mill will be sitting on the bare ground. The rest of the structure will be made of cedar and given several coats of wood preservative.

Don, aka 'Doc' Watson, also an ever tireless modeler, has embarked on yet another project. He shares this photo of a new track cleaning car which can be copied by other members to use to clear the way and shine the rails for garden train operations.



He adds this copy to the above photo:

“I recently read a review of a new kind of track cleaner that not only polishes the railhead but also can be used to remove debris from the track. It is called Rail-Kleen and is sold by Reindeer Pass. The unit comes in various packages. <http://www.reindeerpass.com/rail-kleen-1.aspx>

I bought the one that is pre-wired with a switch and charging jack for about \$140.00. It is a solidly built unit that can be mounted on the front of a number of cars, most common of which is a flat. It

has very fine grit sanding cloths attached to the rotating cylinder. The grit is fine enough so as not to scratch the railhead.

I slightly modified an old gondola by carefully cutting off the front end and re-gluing it a little ways back. I drilled 4 holes in the Rail-Kleen mounting bracket and gondola bottom to attach the unit to the gondola. I also added an engine weight from an old Big Hauler. This should help keep the gondola from bouncing around too much while cleaning. I'm currently powering the unit with a NiMH 14v. 3000 mAh battery. In addition, I'm testing out an inexpensive remote speed controller built to control LED lights. It appears to work so far. I added this so the cleaner can be started after it begins to move. Don't want to grind a flat spot on the track.

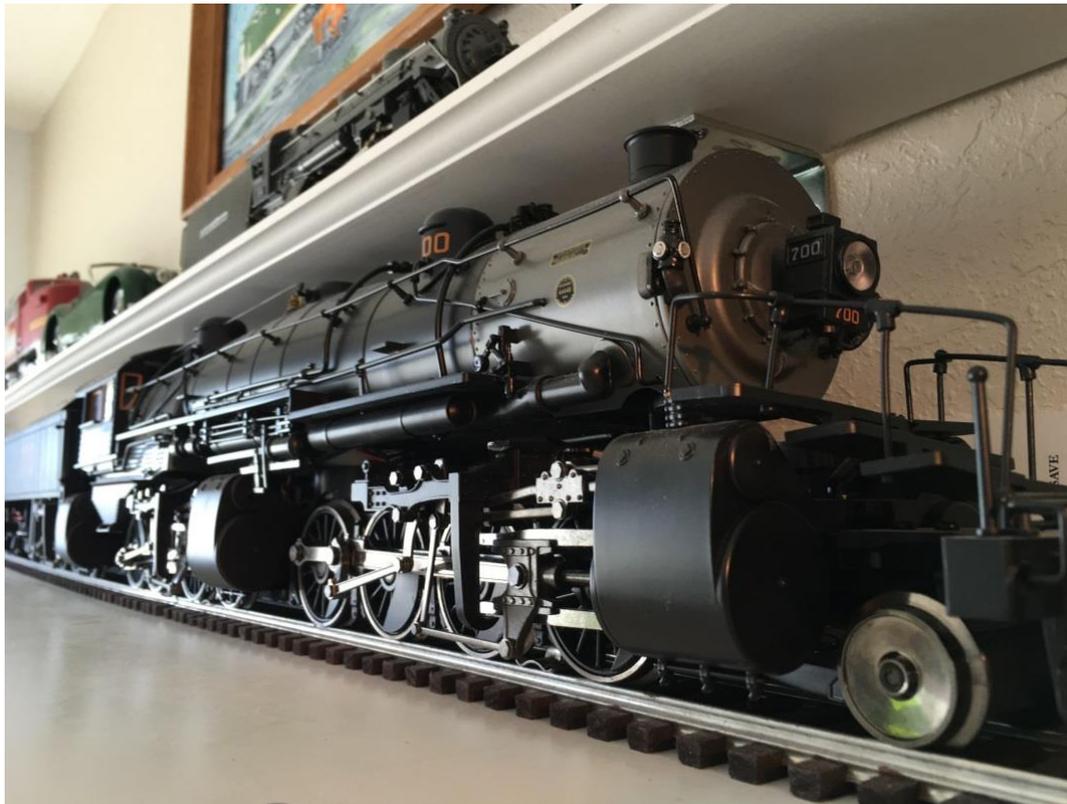
I haven't been able to test this on my track yet but it did a great job on a short piece of test track.

If you have any questions, please contact me at: docwatson@morrisbb.net I can also forward you a short video of this thing working."

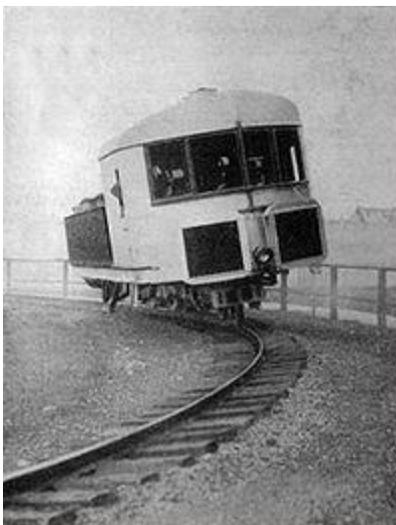
Thanks Doc! I wonder if that could be modified to refinish hardwood floors?



Bob Thompson reports that he is currently working on an extensive layout that will model the Rio Grande division of the John Gault line and when the weather breaks he will pursue the outdoor construction of his layout.



Sam Hopkins sends this photo of an awesome MTH Virginia Triplex with sound and tender smoke that he is offering up for sale at 800 bucks. Interested parties can contact him for details at: 828-246-0036 or csamh1@charter.net



A Gyro Monorail? Sure enough. Randy Theis sent us this unusual contribution:

http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/Gyro_Monorail

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LOCOmotion Works has been sold to Neal Madden of Marshall, NC. I am going to retire and spend my time working on my own trains, which I haven't had a chance to do for many years. Everything will remain the same as it was, and I will be helping Neal for the next few months to assure all my fine customers a smooth transition. Thank You ALL for your support and feel free to contact me anytime.

Also we have room for 2 people to ride with Neal and me to the York, PA train show on March 24th. We share expenses 4 ways, so motel and gas is less than \$150.00 each.

Thanks

Gary L. Poague 828-712-3429c

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Upcoming Events:

26th Annual Asheville Model Train Show.

Friday March 4th, Noon to 7 PM Saturday March 5th, 9 AM to 5 PM
Western NC Agricultural Center. Fletcher NC. Adjacent to Asheville Airport, I-26, Exit 40

<http://www.wncmrr.org/index/trainshow.htm>

Columbia SC Trainshow. March 12th, 9 – 3 PM, National Guard Armory, 1225 Bluff Rd.
Columbia SC

<http://www.southcarolinatradeshow.com/model-train-shows.html>

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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

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 Gary Poague 828-712-3429
gpoague@windstream.net

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 currently being planned by Hank Paulson and Dave Smith.

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Trivia Answer:

Before radio and centralized traffic control, railroads in North America used a system of conveying operation orders to trains in operation when communication from dispatchers was limited or non-existent. Trains would follow their timetables unless they received orders along their route by local intermediaries. This system would determine which trains had the Right of Way as schedules and operations changed at points along the line. A train which had the right of way was called the "Superior Train" as determined by the dispatcher. Passenger trains usually had the highest priority, Freight trains were secondary and 'Extras' behind them in priority. This determined, especially on single track lines, when trains would meet or pass. The 'inferior' train would be required to clear the track for the 'superior' train. Normally the timetable was to be strictly adhered to but delays and other occurrences would cause variances in daily operations.

Changes would be sent to 'Block Operators' and these orders would override the established timetable operations. Protective train orders were of the highest priority as they ensured a collision would not occur. Authority orders could be issued only after Priority orders had been established to move a train over to allow another train, such as an 'Extra' to pass.

This was the method of train routing used after the previous 'line of sight' operations and before the development of telegraph service in the 1840's, which was first used by the Erie RR in 1851 and adopted by nearly every railroad by the time of the Civil War and enabled the single dispatcher system which was then ultimately replaced by telephone service. By the 1970's this system was replaced by radio communication.

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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
Bridgeworks Power Supplies, Bachmann
Split-Jaw Rail Clamps, O & G Gauge Track

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

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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

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