

# PGRS TRACKIN'



## Newsletter of the Piedmont Garden Railway Society

### Trainfest Edition

Editor: Scott Williams

#### Club News: **Trainfest!!!**

Well, I myself am still reeling from all the enlightening stuff we saw at this Spring's annual PGRS meeting and Trainfest today and had to come right home and write it down.

It was so enjoyable to congregate with all the PGRS members who made the pilgrimage to Greer SC. Once again, it was **great** getting together in the same room with members of the Piedmont Garden Railway Society and reinforce our fellowship, share ideas and get our model train juices flowing for the coming year.

**Society.** noun; An organization or club formed for a particular purpose or activity. And that's what we are, and our 'particular purpose/activity' would be our mutual admiration and enjoyment of trains, *specifically*; the Large Scale model variety and the hobby of modelling and running those trains.

Larry Williams, more than once, drove home the point during his Powering Trains Presentation and when he and Ian Pugliese debuted the **awesome** new PGRS website about the benefits of belonging to a Model Train Society that it's a '**brain trust**' where we get to share ideas about how each of us personally enjoy our hobby by sharing our successes **and** our failures about how we build and model our garden trains. If my 20 dollar membership helps me avoid making a BIG mistake in my modelling that could cost me many times that amount or helps me find a much more affordable/less complicated solution to something I've been pondering then...it's a bargain at twice the price. Sometimes, by networking we even discover things we didn't even know were possible...Priceless! By the simplest math we average about 60 members, let's say each member averages about 10 years experience modelling trains...that roughly equates to 600 years of model train experience. [I know, voodoo math BUT...still impressive, you get my point.] And that's why we continue to develop better ways to share our knowledge.

At this spring's Trainfest, we learned about all the ways you can power your model trains with an emphasis on how not to have to take out a second mortgage to do it. **Large Scale Trains don't have to be expensive to enjoy** and we discussed many ways to get out there and get trains running around your yard as affordably as possible. Larry presented most all the options, I did a posterboard presentation on how to build a cheap powerhouse of a train controller for 100 bucks and Jerry Bartle did a posterboard of a DIY RC train controller that costs way less than commercially available RC controllers. Ian Pugliese brought a diesel locomotive model he has

constructed **entirely with the latest 3D printing technology**. From CAD/scratch. Amazing what computer technology is opening up to model hobbyists!!

Bill Huntman in his State of Our Union address, [which is quite good by the way. As our Treasurer Don Watson said "**We got money**". So we're on solid footing as a club.] but Bill restated the Mantra that we need to get new blood in to Large Scale Train modelling.

I think too many people think Large Scale trains are only for people who have deep pockets and that's why they haven't gone from the planning stage...to the running stage.

Jon Bole said to me today that some of the best advice he got early on was "To get something down and running and enjoy operating trains, even if it's only a small loop of track in the yard." If your plans are too monumental, you may suffer from "Analysis Paralysis" and never get off the launch pad.

We discussed affordable power supplies at Trainfest to help dispel that notion.

The price of track also scares some folks off. Talking to Les Knoll today he and I discussed Aluminum Track which is much less expensive than brass. Aluminum track gets bad press but my research has shown it's possibly unfounded. One of the 'negatives' is "Oh, if someone steps on it you will 'kink' it and ruin that piece of track." Les uses Aluminum and he told me today during construction he wheeled loaded Wheelbarrows of dirt across his track. Les runs Live Steam but he said today he's thinking of electrifying his layout so other folks can run their 'sparkys' on his layout. Les can tell you his experience using Aluminum track and that might be a good presentation in the future.

I think a fun challenge to **ALL** PGRS club members in 2017 who have been viewing Garden Trains from the side lines so far might be: Get a loop of any kind of track down in your; backyard, side yard, driveway, basement, living room, spare bedroom, attic, garage, on your deck...get a basic power supply and run your large scale trains at your homes. As newsletter editor I want to see photos of those layouts to share with other PGRS members. Mighty Oaks from little Acorns grow...

We also received a great presentation from Operation Lifesaver on safety around real live 1:1 railroad tracks that was quite informative and gave those of us who share model trains with the general public lots of information we can weave in to our discussions with folks to remind them how not to get injured or killed at train crossings or trespassing along Railroad tracks. Good info.

Lots of GREAT door prizes this year too and **everyone** who did attend walked away with a handy 6 piece mini/jeweller's set of screw drivers so if you didn't attend this Trainfest, you might want make a point to attend future meetings to get some of the goodies PGRS provides.

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### **2017 Train Show Schedule from Pete Gendron:**

**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

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The **ORIGINAL** Big Hauler:

Many of us own at least one Bachmann 4-6-0 Big Hauler or Anniversary version thereof. It was my very first large scale model locomotive and I'm willing to bet this good looking, affordable, classic ten-wheeler model made by Bachmann has seduced hundreds or even thousands of people in to the hobby of Large Scale trains. Its origins go back to the late 1980's and the very first series was a battery powered version. Its scale has been debated back and forth but seems to be generally agreed upon as 1:22.3.

The engine it has been most notably modelled upon originally belonged to the East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad. A 3 foot gauge railroad that ran up in to the mountains from Johnson City, TN to the iron ore mine in Cranberry NC. That line later ran all the way to Boone, NC with the addition of the Linville River Railroad. The ET&WNC ran five Baldwin built locomotives; #9, #10, #11, #12 & #14.

Its employees called it; "The Railroad with a Heart" and your ticket was stamped with a heart shaped hole punch. Visitors often referred to it as "The Tweetsie" for how its whistle sounded up through the gorges it traversed. My favorite nickname though of the ET&WNC was bestowed upon it by the locals as; The "Eat Taters & Wear No Clothes". Of those original locomotives #12 still exists and runs today at the Tweetsie Railroad in Blowing Rock, NC. It made for a perfect prototype for the Big Hauler and was modelled closely for Bachmann's Big Hauler locomotives.

If you'd care to view what your Big Hauler looks and sounds like in 'real life', then you might enjoy this video from the Tweetsie Railroad in Blowing Rock, NC.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H4XJ2iOTIzs>

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Member Photos:

Jim Henley submits a new acquisition for review. He states that now with up to 20 cars to pull that a pair of Santa Fe, A and B EMD units, in his estimation, was simply no longer up to the task. From now on he will be applying **A-B-A** diesel power on his railroad. Thank you very much. Beautiful, classic diesel locos Jim, thanks for sharing. 4,500 horsepower of diesels should capably handle whatever rolling stock you decide to add on in the future.



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“A Blue Ridge Southern hi railer was passing the depot this morning and stopped when they saw the g scale railroad behind the depot. Larry gave them a tour. They said they were inspecting the mainline ties and expected to replace about 5 miles of ties.”

Terry Ketcham



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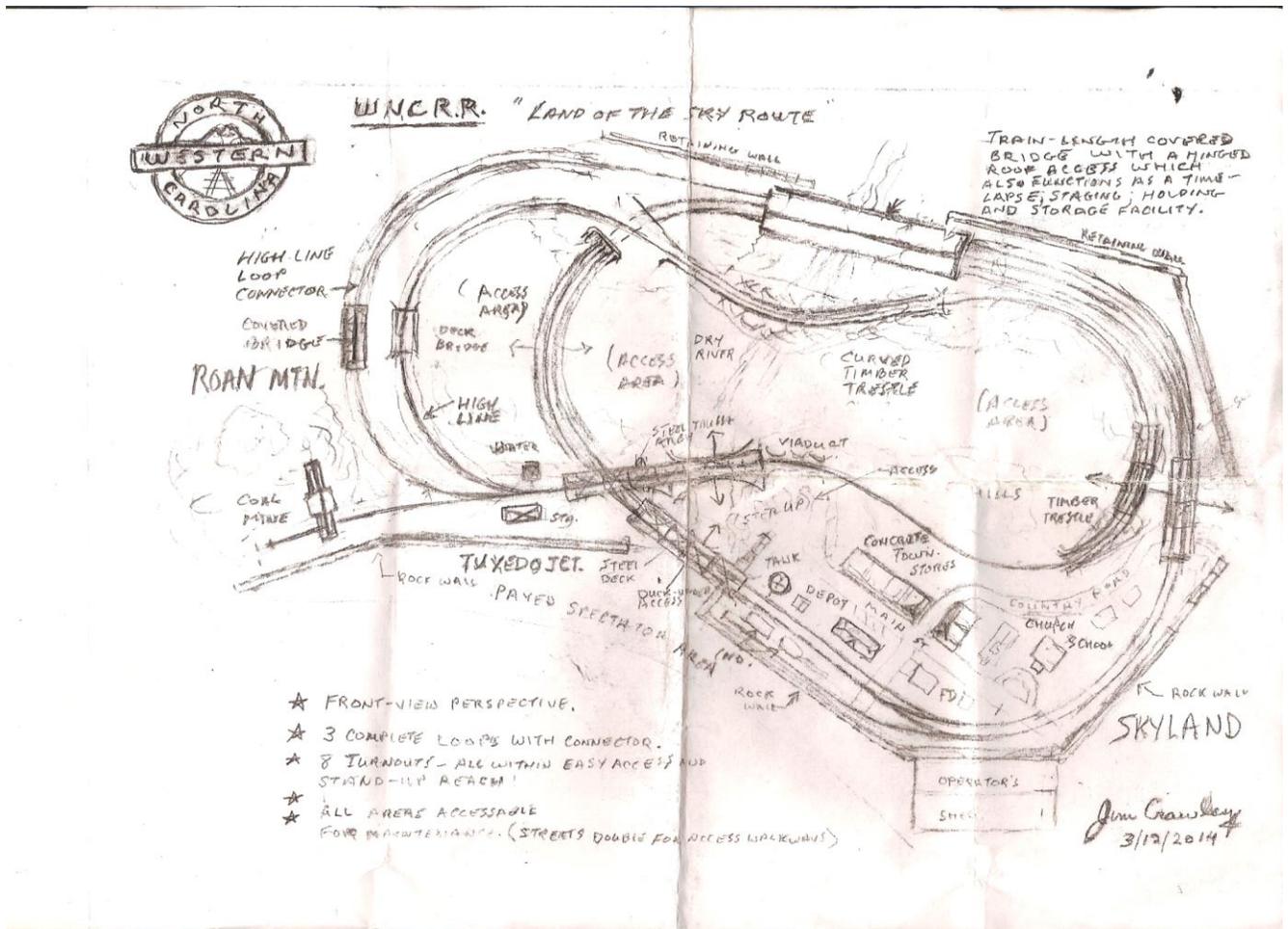
Sky Mayo sends this photo of a recently completed 'backwoods industrial site for the processing of corn in to medicinal spirits' at the PVC RR at Apple Valley.



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Jim Crawley handed me this 'Peach' of a track layout plan today at Trainfest that he drew up 'old school', pen on paper, back in 2014. As I studied it I thought "This design packs a lot of interesting layout in to a reasonably compact area." I scanned it when I got home to paste it into the newsletter to share with PGRS club members.

I've been trying to come up with a ground level 1:29 layout for my backyard that will run around my 8 foot x 14 foot vegetable garden and so far all I have come up with is a basic loop design with some turnouts that, well, sucks wind...beyond boring. The yard slopes gently downhill and Jim's plan switched a lightbulb on in my head about opening the center of this plan to go around the garden and take advantage of the slope for a more interesting 'over and under', loop over a loop that would pack much more interesting viewing in to the same space. Thanks Jim!!



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### "Dave's Garden Railroad:

This video is of a Garden Railroad created by a guy supposedly named "Dave" who lives near Picton Ontario. It has taken 10 years to get to this stage."

If you dig some serious trestle work, here's a video for you...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPv4r9wtBdY>

and...

**The Cranberry & Linville River Railroad.** A really nicely done ET&WNC garden layout:

<http://cranberrylinville.com/media-2/video/>

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Trivia Question:

In the early days of railroading just getting the engine to reliably move forward was a daunting enough technological problem.

Once that hurdle had been surpassed however the reverse problem became more apparent. Stopping a train whilst in motion. Initially, brakes on the locomotive were the only braking force. Later on, brakes on the rolling stock were also installed and required a person to set the brakes mechanically on each of those cars. This proved to be physically demanding, problematic, and often, disastrous.

Numerous designs were proposed and put in to application but what individual, whose name later became a household word in America associated with all types of appliances would design the basic braking system that has evolved and endures to this day?

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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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Trivia Answer:

George Westinghouse.

Westinghouse developed an air braking system that would be 'fail safe'. Rather than relying on air pressure to apply the brakes, his system would rely on air pressure to keep the brakes from applying. This was done by using a reduction of air pressure to apply the brakes. Each piece of rolling stock was supplied with its own reservoir of air in a tank and a triple valve control system to keep the brakes from being applied while rolling in operation.

The triple valve as described in his patents as being so named performs three functions:

Charging air into an air tank ready to be used, applying the brakes, and releasing them. In so doing, it supports certain other actions (i.e. it 'holds' or maintains the application and it permits the exhaust of brake cylinder pressure and the recharging of the reservoir during the release).

- If the pressure in the train line is lower than that of the reservoir, the brake cylinder exhaust portal is closed and air from the car's reservoir is fed into the brake cylinder. Pressure increases in the cylinder, applying the brakes, while decreasing in the reservoir. This action continues until equilibrium between the brake pipe pressure and reservoir pressure is achieved. At that point, the airflow from the reservoir to the brake cylinder is lapped off and the cylinder is maintained at a constant pressure.

- If the pressure in the train line is higher than that of the reservoir, the triple valve connects the train line to the reservoir feed, causing the air pressure in the reservoir to increase. The triple valve also causes the brake cylinder to be exhausted to the atmosphere, releasing the brakes.
- As the pressure in the train line and that of the reservoir equalize, the triple valve closes, causing the air in the reservoir to be sealed in and the brake cylinder is not pressurized.

When the engine operator applies the brake by operating the locomotive brake valve, the train line vents to atmosphere at a controlled rate, reducing the train line pressure and in turn triggering the triple valve on each car to feed air into its brake cylinder.

When the engine operator releases the brake, the locomotive brake valve portal to atmosphere is closed, allowing the train line to be recharged by the compressor of the locomotive. The subsequent increase of train line pressure causes the triple valves on each car to discharge the contents of the brake cylinder to the atmosphere, releasing the brakes and recharging the reservoirs.

The Westinghouse system is thus fail safe—any failure in the train line, including a separation ("break-in-two") of the train, will cause a loss of train line pressure, causing the brakes to be applied and bringing the train to a stop, thus preventing a runaway train.

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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](mailto:docwatson@morrisbb.net)

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### **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.

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**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](mailto:srwavl@outlook.com)

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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  
Bridgwerks Power Supplies, Bachmann  
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