

# PGRS TRACKIN'



## Newsletter of the Piedmont Garden Railway Society- August 2017

Editor: Scott Williams

### August greetings Club Members!!

Les and Ruth Knoll are having an open house on Saturday August 5<sup>th</sup> on Les's 72<sup>nd</sup> birthday. Start time is 11:00, probably go until 5:00.

Ruth and Les Knoll  
7656 Cottonwood Dr.  
Denver, NC 28037  
(704) 966-0349  
(704) 249-1960 (cell)

Trackage is 101' main line, 5' radius curves, aluminum track, NO electrification. All motive power is welcome as long as it is self-powered and can negotiate 5' curves. Les has #4 turnouts, but they are all set straight on the mainline so there is no issue there.

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Well, that's about it for this newsletter. Les's open house is the big news this month and I've been otherwise distracted having my right hip cut off and becoming a Bionic Man so,...been a bit distracted myself this month. Didn't get any submissions from club members this month so I guess [hope], everyone is off enjoying vacation and hope to hear about it all next month.

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Member Photos:

Marge Monahan sent me these photos today with this copy attached:

“Scott, today Randy brought Hunter Compton to our house. He's 11 and has Autism & Alternating Hemiplegia (AHC). **HE LOVES TRAINS** & spent 3 hours running our trains, plus Randy's Thomas. **They are raising funds for him & his family, plus his full time nurse to ride the Empire Builder from Chicago to Seattle.** If any club members would like to donate they can send it to Randy & he'll be sure the Compton's receive it.”



**Thanks guys. This absolutely makes my day. Bless you!!!**

We all love the hobby of model trains and each of us have our own personal self interest in the hobby, i.e. logging trains, steam trains, diesel trains, narrow gauge, live steam models... Our own personal favorite facets of modelling railroads that thrill us individually.

But THIS is the biggest thrill of all isn't it? When we share our hobby with a child, with or without special needs.



If you feel like contributing a few bucks to help purchase tickets for Hunter and his family to get a chance to ride the Empire Builder then please do, it all adds up for a dream train ride for this young railfan. Send a check to Randy Theis now before you forget.

Randy Theis, 456 Costigan Rd. Brevard, NC 28712, email: [RandyTheis@aol.com](mailto:RandyTheis@aol.com)

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I've been researching and building a DoodleBug while I'm laid up from surgery and was inspired by the article in Garden Railways this past month on the "Dunkley Northern Railroad" where the author shares numerous intriguing ideas for building Doozies and Doodlebugs. In my research I discovered this photo. Thought it was pretty unique:



Found this image on line but have yet to find any details about it. VW Microbus makes for an attractive railmotor don't you think?

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#### **Videos of interest:**

[A trip around the Outer Loop.](#) A nice little video of the 1:20.3, Choctaw Coal & Railway Company's line.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j1XKBQE05xM>

Pete Gendron forwarded this YouTube video. It's about an hour long but very GOOD if you're a fan of Southern Railroad and restored steam locomotives. The 4501 Mikado in particular:

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

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#### **Trivia Question:**

What rail vehicle developed in 1904, almost more nautical or airship-like in appearance, first appeared, who developed it and how was it employed by the railroads?

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**\*\*** The **Apple Valley Model RR Club** in Hendersonville openly invites all PGRS members to bring their large scale trains to run on their Outdoor Large Scale train layout the Last Saturday of every month from 10-2 pm. **TAKE ADVANTAGE** of this generous offer to come run your locos on a beautiful garden layout. Track power, battery power, and PGRS members have even brought their Live Steam locos to run on this attractive layout on the passenger platform of the historic Hendersonville Railroad station

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Trivia Answer:

The McKean Railmotor. One of the more recognizable designs of a class of rail vehicles referred to as Railmotors, Railcars, Doodlebugs...



The *McKean Motor Car Company* of Omaha, Nebraska formed in 1904 when Edward H. Harriman, head of Union Pacific, encouraged his superintendent of motive power and machinery, one William R. McKean, to develop a way to handle small trains that could not be run profitably with a steam loco and crew and associated maintenance costs.

The result is seen above. A rather radical, knife-nosed, "windsplitting" shape and the large nautical style porthole windows gave a preview of streamliners to come. The original was powered by a 200+ HP in-line 6 cyl. Gasoline engine mounted transversely on the front truck and driving the wheels via a chain through a 2 speed gear box. This ultimately proved to be a weakness in both power and reliability. Most subsequent and more successful railmotor designs featured an internally mounted gasoline engine isolated from the pounding of the rails and joints, driving a generator to power electric traction motors on the wheels. These were often later swapped out for more robust and reliable diesel engines. That powerplant/transmission design is essentially the blueprint for all diesel locomotives to come later.

A striking design, even viewed now from the 21<sup>st</sup> century wouldn't you agree?

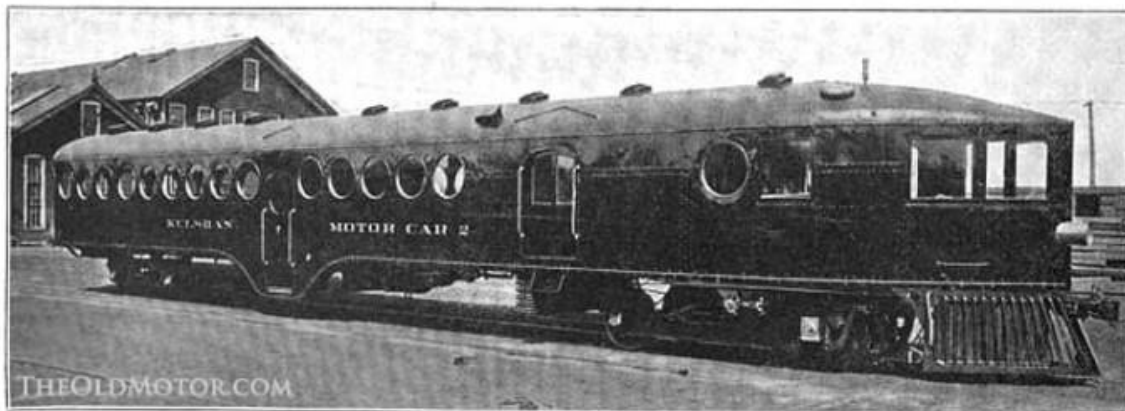
The following cut and paste is from a 1909 issue of Railroad World. If the scan is a little fuzzy try enlarging the image a tiny bit on your computer and it should be easier to view:

## THE McKEEN GASOLINE RAILWAY MOTOR CAR

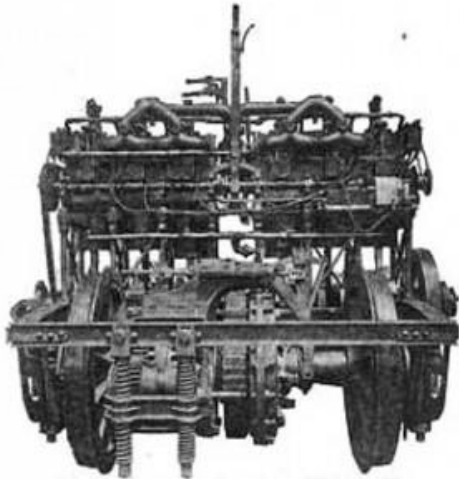
**T**HE gasoline railway motor car shown in the accompanying illustration is a 70-foot car, representing the latest development of the standard product of the McKeen Motor Car Company, of Omaha, Neb., and serving as an example of a type of car which has come into considerable favor on Western roads. The railroads for the past few years have been interested in the development of the self-propelled motor car and considerable study has been given to the adaptability of this type of car for branch and feeder lines. The first car of the pattern now known as McKeen motor cars was built in April, 1905, under the supervision of W. R. McKeen, Jr., then superintendent of motive power and machinery of the Union Pacific Railroad Company, and was put into service on a branch line of that railroad. Several more cars were built for the Union Pacific, and as a result of their operation on that road, a demand was created from other roads. To meet that demand a separate and distinct company, known as the McKeen Motor Car

Company was formed. The number of McKeen cars in daily revenue service is now 59, on 21 different railroad and interurban lines. In the West, and especially on the Pacific Coast, they have been installed for branch and feeder lines, as adjuncts to the steam service out of main terminals and for interurban service.

The standard McKeen motor cars are built in two sizes, 55 feet and 70 feet in length. The cars are all-steel construction, the front being wedge-shaped, and the rear round like the stern of a boat. Experience has led the makers to conclude that this form of car body is most efficient, as observations indicate that it can run one mile farther per gallon of gasoline than a car of the ordinary shape, with square front, and upper deck lights. The roof is semi-elliptic and the windows in the side of the car are round. While the roof is lower than in the standard coach, the car is well ventilated, fresh air being delivered at the floor of the car and the foul air exhausted at the roof by means of suction ventilators. The round win-



THE 70-FOOT McKEEN GASOLINE RAILWAY MOTOR CAR.



ENGINE TRUCK, McKEEN MOTOR CAR.

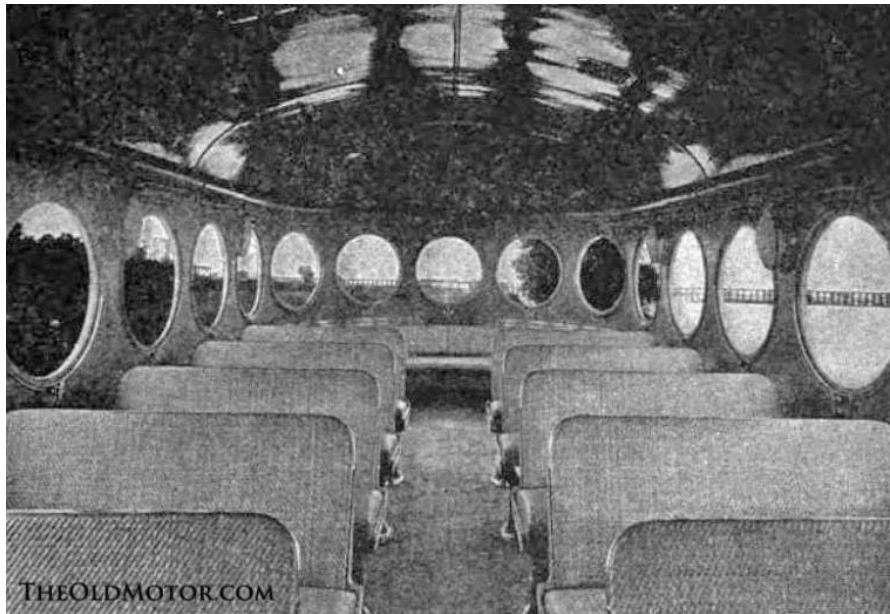
dows are dust, wind and water tight and are considered to give the passengers a better view than the ordinary car window. The center entrance permits of a stronger car form than end entrances and does away with the accumulation of ice and snow on the car steps. The center entrance also permits the use of a semi-circular seat at the rear end, which increases the seating capacity of the car and provides an attractive observation end. The steel sides of the car are utilized as a combination plate and truss girder to increase the strength of the construction. The car is fireproof and practically indestructible.

The forward end of the car is utilized for an engine room, which is 12 feet long. The remainder of the car is divided variously into compartments for mail, baggage, express and passengers, depending upon the service. In a 70-foot car now building for the Norfolk and Southern

Railway the car will carry mail, baggage and express matter and is divided for white and colored passengers and the section for white passengers is still further divided by the setting off of a smoking compartment. The combined seating accommodations for white passengers number 50 and for colored passengers, 10. The car shown in the illustration is of special interest, as it weighs but 67,000 pounds and is planned to do the whole service of an entire train weighing approximately 500,000 pounds. The dead weight per passenger carried is one of the most important items given consideration in economical operation of railroads, and the self-contained car of this weight is offered as the lightest weight medium of transportation per passenger carried in service at the present day.

The cars are propelled by a six-cylinder variable speed gasoline engine, designed and built by the McKean Motor Car Company. The engine is shown in the smaller illustration. It is rated at 200 horse power, but develops 265 horse power on the testing floor. It is air starting and reversible and is mounted on the front truck, independent of the car body, in order to eliminate all vibration to the car. The transmission is direct to the main driving axle by means of a Morse silent chain. Two speeds are provided and the cars can be operated 50 to 60 miles per hour in either direction. A speed of 75 miles per hour has been attained.

Under ordinary conditions one gallon of gasoline will run the McKean car three miles. The cost of fuel per car-mile is therefore approximately three cents, repairs and maintenance cost from three to five cents per mile; cleaning and terminal attention expense per car-mile is approximately .005 cents, motorman's wages average from \$80.00 to \$120.00 per month, and conductor's wages from \$70.00 to \$100.00 per month. The total expense on a car-mile basis varies according to the mileage made per day. It necessarily follows that a car making 250 miles per day would operate at a less cost per mile than a car making only 120 miles per day.



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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)



### 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

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**Jim Hendley**

Etowah, North Carolina 28729

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