PGRS TRACKIN'

Newsletter of the Piedmont Garden Railway Society.

March 2018

Editor: Scott Williams

Happy Trainfest Month!

From: Don Watson

Subject: **PGRS Annual Meeting and Trainfest Reminder**

Members,

This is a reminder of the upcoming PGRS Annual Meeting and Trainfest. This event is going to be *bigger and better than past versions of the combined Annual Meeting and Trainfest*. As was stated in the last Newsletter the event is scheduled to take place on Saturday, March 24, 2018.

The location will be the same as that of the Fall Trainfest:

Grace Lutheran Church, 1245 6th Ave. West., Hendersonville, NC 28791

The event will begin at 10:00 am and end somewhere around 3:00 pm.

The schedule is as follows:

Members begin arriving around 9:30. A table will be set up to collect dues, hand out coupons for the drawing, and give paid members their free gift.

10:00: Annual meeting will be called to order. Old and new business will be presented and elections will be held. If anyone is interested in running for office, please submit your name to Bill Hunteman at whunteman@gmail.com prior to the meeting. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor at the meeting.

11:00: How to Create Bottle Brush Trees. Presented by Terry Ketcham

11:30: Using Trailing Cars to Remotely Power Your Engines. Presented by Randy Theis.

12:00: Lunch, Visiting, Swap and Sell, and Show and Tell. Members may bring anything train related to sell or swap. Members are also encouraged to bring their favorite projects to show off their talents. There will be plenty of tables available.

1:00: Panel of So-Called Experts. Bill, Don, and some other expert (YTBD) will field questions from the members related to large scale RR. Randy Theis has agreed to act as moderator and gather questions, in advance and at the meeting. If you would like to pose a question, in advance, please send it to Randy: randytheis@aol.com

2:00 – 3:00 pm: Prize Drawing and Repeat Visiting, Swap and Sell, and Show and Tell.

3:00 Meeting ends.

Food: There will be coffee and doughnuts available in the morning and a cold lunch with refreshments will be served at noon.

Drawing: This year there will be many prizes for the drawing including a Bachmann engine and a large number of rolling stock including brand new ones.

Dues: You may begin sending your renewal dues any time to:

Don Watson
125 Mistletoe Trail
Hendersonville, NC 28791

Dues may also be paid at the door upon your arrival at the meeting.

If anyone is interested in donating prizes for the drawing, Pete Gendron and Fran Monahan will be collecting at the meeting.

Looking forward to seeing everyone and having a great time.

Don

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My first RailBoss install. by Terry Ketcham

The Apple Valley Model Railroad Club runs their G scale railroad every Wednesday and Saturday, weather permitting or course. With only a limited number of operators, I sometimes found myself the first G-scaler to arrive at the depot and sometimes we had visitors checking out the railroad before I ever arrived.

Getting a train running quickly was the main priority. Probably the easiest train to get running is the Thomas train but that involved unlocking the car barn, find a battery, find the RailBoss controller, back the Thomas train out of the car barn and onto the mainline.
It wasn't something that I could just throw on the track and get running quickly.

I saw an Aristo RailBus on eBay which I won and thought I could convert it to battery power. This way I'd keep the RailBus stored inside the depot and just carry it outside ready to be set on the rails. I could leave a charged battery inside the unit with a RailBoss controller all under the removable roof. I have always been impressed with the RailBoss equipment that I have seen in other member's locomotives I purchased a RailBoss 4, hand held controller and a MyLocoSound card. While waiting for the delivery, I decided to try to disassemble the RailBus and take a look at the existing wiring and electronic board installed in the engine. I was surprised at the amount of information I found about the Aristo RailBus on line, all sorts of tips

and help were available.

My first task was to try to find the wires from the rail pickups to the motor and disconnect them. Seems like every wire originates or terminates at the existing circuit board and it certainly wasn't very clear to me which wires were for what. I suppose that if I knew how to use a volt meter it would have made my install easier. (Perhaps a good topic for a future clinic). Someone had told me to just forget about the existing circuit board and wire the motor Leeds, lights, battery Leeds, directly to the RailBoss board. There we no instructions included with the RailBoss equipment but their website included well written instructions and wiring diagrams that even I could follow. Fortunately I had plenty of room inside the railbus for the RailBoss 4 Board and the MyLocoSound card and battery. All the terminals on both cards are clearly marked and are screw type terminals ,no soldering required.
I was very happy with the installation and encourage anyone who has ever thought about converting an analog engine to battery power to seriously look into these RailBoss products.

I saw that there is a new MyLoco sound card from G Scale Graphics. Looks like they keep improving the sounds but they still stay affordably priced.

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Editor's Note; Indeed they do Terry. Here's their latest advertisement:

New MyLocoSound Blue

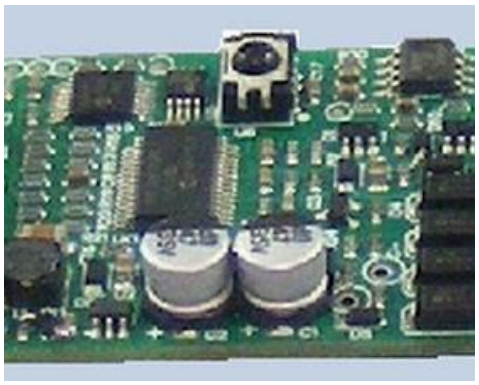
We've been working on a major upgrade to the MyLocoSound system, and it is now ready for you to enjoy!

What's New?

- Easier installation for track power - The Battery on/off switch has been eliminated.
- 16 steam whistles to choose from (North America, Europe, Australia)
- More automated sounds - Brake pump, Safety valve, Brake squeal
- Electric Inter-Urbans
- New Blue board to distinguish it from the older Green board.

Still Only $79

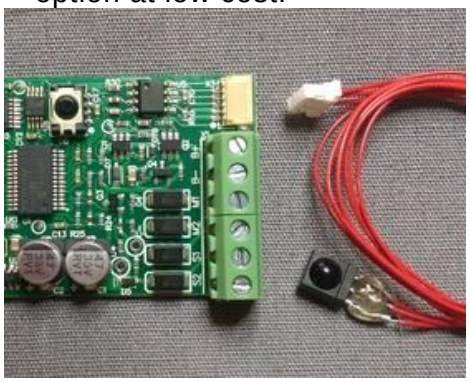
- Diesel, Steam, or Electric board - $79
- Optional IR Remote - $12
- Speakers available - $14
- Track Power Kit - $101 (Board, Remote, Battery)



MyLocoSound

Can I upgrade my Green board?

- While the Green boards **can't** be updated for all of the new features above, there have still been many improvements since your purchase. So this is still a great option at low cost!



MyLocoSound Firmware Update
$10.00

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Member Photos:

Jerry Bartle found this amusing photo and sent it along. **Sushi Train.**

Fran has decided, instead of going around his back porch…*he's going through it!*

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Trivia Question: Crummy, Clown Wagon, Waycar, Hack, Brain Box, Dog House, Go Cart, Glory Wagon, Monkey Wagon, Palace, Buggy, Van, Cabin, and other terms not fit for polite company.

What they Heck are all these terms talking about?

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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: Stolen from Trains magazine for your reading pleasure.

The Colorful Caboose

Once a fixture at the end of freight trains, the caboose played a critical role in railroad operations, until technology caught up

By John Kelly | May 1, 2006

A Conrail crewman with a hand-held radio rides the rear platform of a bay window caboose near Toledo, Ohio, in 1985. The 1980s were the last decade of mainline caboose operations, although they continue to be used in specialized switching jobs.

George Kleiber

For more than a century the caboose was a fixture at the end of every freight train in America. Like the red schoolhouse and the red barn, the red caboose became an American icon. Along with its vanished cousin the steam locomotive, the caboose evokes memories of the golden age of railroading.

There are conflicting versions of how the caboose got its name and where the word was first used. One popular story points to a Dutch derivation of the word "kabuis," meaning a little room or hut. The English word "caboose" was first used as a nautical term for a ship's galley.

More certain is the origin of the first railroad caboose, which can be traced to the 1840s. A conductor named Nat Williams on the Auburn & Syracuse, a short line in upstate New York, decided to use the empty wooden boxcar at the end of his train as his "rolling office." Williams sat on a wood box and used a barrel as his desk. He stored flags, lanterns, chains, and other work tools in this first caboose.

The genesis of the unique cupola located atop the caboose is credited to T. B. Watson, a Chicago & North Western conductor. In 1863, when Watson's regular caboose was reassigned, he used a wooden boxcar at the end of the train for a caboose. The boxcar had a hole in the roof, which prompted Watson to sit on a stack of boxes with his head and shoulders protruding through the hole, giving him an excellent view of his train as it journeyed from Cedar Rapids to Clinton, Iowa. Back at the home terminal, Watson relayed his positive experience to a master mechanic at the railroad's Clinton shops. He suggested that a "crows nest" be added to the new waycars the North Western was building there. Thus, C&NW may have been the first railroad to have cabooses with cupolas.

A train crew's home away from home

In February 1957, brakeman Orville M. Baptist and conductor Edward J. Kearney share a meal inside a Wabash caboose while working a freight train from Bluffs, Ill., to Keokuk, Iowa. Baptist grilled a steak on the caboose's propane stove.

Wayne Leeman

The primary purpose of the cupola was to give the rear train crew - which consisted of a conductor, brakeman, and flagman - a place to observe their train in motion. They would look for overheated wheel journals (hotboxes), dragging equipment, and shifted freight loads.

As the crew member in charge of the train, the conductor needed space to check car waybills, wheel reports, and switchlists, and manage the train's operation.

Before George Westinghouse invented the automatic air brake in 1869, it was the rear brakeman's job to walk forward and turn a wheel that applied the handbrakes on each freight car, on cue from the engineer's whistle to stop the train. The head brakeman, who rode in the engine, walked toward the rear of the train performing the same task.

After the widespread introduction of air brakes, brakemen still had the responsibility of throwing switches and coupling cars, as well as keeping an eye on the train's consist while it was in motion.

Prior to the introduction of automatic block signals, invented by Westinghouse in 1881, it was the flagman's job to walk a safe distance behind the stopped caboose carrying a lantern, flags, and fusees, used to signal approaching trains that his train had stopped on the main line.

Frisco brakeman Earl Gibson balances the springs that will become part of a bed similar to the one in front of him, used by his conductor. The crew was working Frisco train No. 437 from Tulsa, Okla., to Floyada, Texas, in April 1954.

Wayne Leeman

In addition to the conductor's work area, cabooses often had bunks for sleeping, stoves for cooking, and toilets (initially, the straight-dump kind, then later, chemical toilets).

The caboose was also used as a storehouse for tools and supplies, including spare coupler knuckles and pins, chains, jacks and re-railing frogs, fusees, flags, lanterns, and first-aid kits. Beginning in the 1950s, axle-driven generators that supplied lighting and electricity were added, which led to the installation of electric heaters, refrigerators, and two-way radios.

Despite its charm, the caboose's location at the end of a train made it a dangerous place to work. The inevitable slack, incurred whenever a train started, stopped, or changed speed, rippled back to the caboose. The ensuing jolt could be so severe that it would send crew members falling to the floor, pitching into a wall, stove, or desk corner, or even tumbling from the cupola, any of which could cause serious injury.

A toppled lantern could start a fire. Derailments, picked switches, break-aparts, or emergency brake applications could also injure an unknowing crew member. A rear-end collision could be fatal to the occupants of a wooden caboose.

Conductor Glenn Voyles grabs holds of a monkey bar while talking to the head-end crew on the radio telephone. This modern caboose sports vertical safety bars and an oil-burning stove. At the right is an air pressure gauge, and below it, a conductor's valve that can be used to stop the train.

Wayne Leeman

Crews instinctively learned to grasp the metal handrail running the length of the car near the ceiling at the slightest indication of trouble.

Safety was a shared concern among railroad employees, particularly brakemen, so much so that the first rail labor union, the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, was formed inside a caboose, Delaware & Hudson Canal Co. No. 10, on September 13, 1883. That caboose is on display in Oneonta, N.Y.

Caboose construction, design, and paint

Before cabooses, the rear train crew would often ride in a coach or empty boxcar at the back of the train. The earliest cabooses were, in fact, second-hand freight cars built of wood - flatcars outfitted with a crude shelter, or converted boxcars with windows, a stove, and a desk.

Metal bracing reinforced the exterior of this wooden Rock Island caboose, seen in 1961. The cupola was made of steel.

Merk Hobson

Following World War I, the all-steel construction of cabooses began. The newly constructed cabooses had steel center-sills and underframes. This advanced caboose design better protected the rear end crew against the train's slack action.

Some of the companies who manufactured cabooses for the railroads were the International Car Company, St. Louis Car Company, and American Car & Foundry. At various times, the railroads themselves would also build cabooses.

By the late 1920s, newly constructed freight cars were taller than most cupolas. This prompted the invention of the bay window caboose, pioneered by the Milwaukee Road and the Baltimore & Ohio. Built with one set of windows on each side, projecting out from the side wall to form a

viewing alcove, the bay window caboose allowed the conductor and brakeman to view each side of their moving train. This type of caboose was cheaper to build than the cupola, and also helped solve tunnel clearance problems faced by many eastern railroads.

The Milwaukee Road is also credited with building the "rib-side" caboose. For added strength, narrow steel ribs were welded to the car's side panels. Between 1939 and 1951, the railroad's Milwaukee Shops built 315 rib-side cabooses.

Spacious front and rear platforms, and smaller enclosed areas were hallmarks of transfer cabooses. This one was photographed at Green Bay, Wis., in September 1992.

John Kelly

In large rail terminals and urban cities, transfer cabooses were often used. They were similar in design to the early wood, shanty-type caboose, and were very plain inside, with only a desk for paperwork. The large, outside storage platforms were used to haul work material, spare couplers and tools. The transfer caboose usually did not travel far from its home terminal, and was popular with big-city belt and terminal railroads.

Railroaders affectionately called their cabooses by many nicknames, including cabin, crummy, buggy, doghouse, waycar, shack, and hack. On the Pennsylvania Railroad, the caboose was a cabin or "cabin car." The Burlington, C&NW, and other roads used the term waycar. Canadian cabooses were called "vans," a word similar to "brake van," used in England to describe railroad cars that performed a similar function to a caboose.

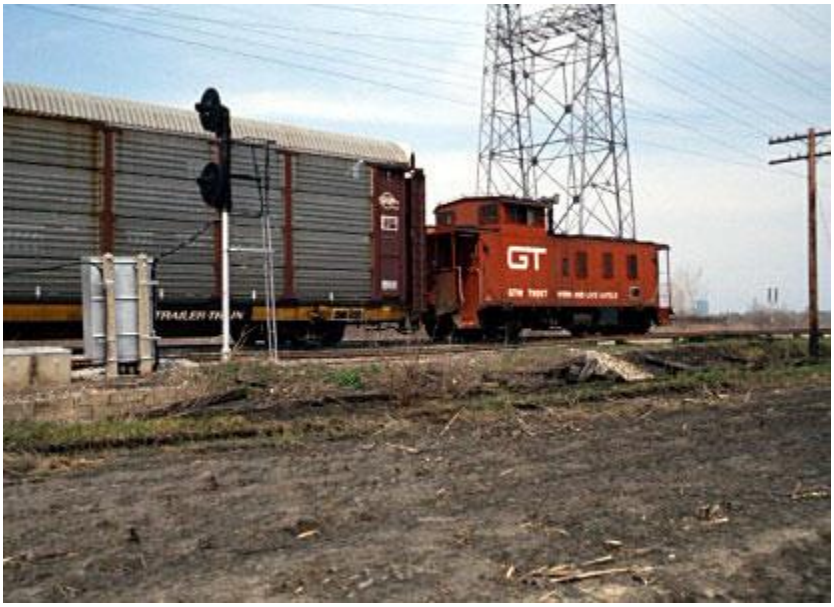
Most railroads painted their cabooses "boxcar red" for high visibility. However, after World War II, the "little red caboose" showed up in many different colors, typically associated with the paint

schemes found on the railroads' new diesel locomotives. The colorful caboose with its railroad's logo and paint scheme presented a rolling image for everyone to see.

Denver & Rio Grande Western had cabooses of silver and gold, while Milwaukee Road's were orange and black. Pennsylvania Railroad cabooses were painted "tuscan red," and Southern Pacific's were reddish brown. Chesapeake & Ohio liked to paint their cabooses yellow and blue, and Boston & Maine chose black and blue. Chicago & North Western waycars were various shades of yellow and green, while Burlington Route's all-steel waycars were painted silver. A popular color for cabooses was green, some shade of which could be found on roads such as the New York Central and successor Penn Central, Northern Pacific, Lehigh Valley, Indiana Harbor Belt, Reading, Rutland, and Missouri-Kansas-Texas.

Two latter-day caboose colors were Burlington Northern "cascade green" and Conrail blue.

Technology catches up



Increasingly taller freight cars such as autoracks and hi-cube boxcars towered over caboose cupolas, blocking the rear end crew's view of the train. Bay window cabooses solved the visibility problem, but the non-revenue cars were still expensive to operate and maintain.

George Kleiber

In railroad jargon, the caboose was classified as "non-revenue" equipment.

Cabooses were expensive to build and maintain, unlike regular freight cars, which earned their keep. Extra switching moves were needed to add or uncouple a caboose at the end of a train, and they required caboose tracks at major yards, as well as carmen and laborers to work on

them and service them.

In 1980, the cost of operating a caboose was 92 cents per mile. One terminal superintendent on the Cotton Belt estimated his railroad spent $300 a day in crew time switching out cabooses at terminals. To many railroad accountants the caboose was "just along for the ride."

As railroad technology advanced, the caboose's function became less important. The introduction of remote switches thrown by dispatchers at CTC consoles meant that a rear brakeman wasn't needed to close a switch behind a train. Increasingly taller freight cars blocked the view from the cupola.

Many railroaders believe the final nail in the caboose's coffin was the "End-of-Train" telemetry device. This small metal box was first used by the Florida East Coast Railroad in 1969. The EOT fits over the rear coupler of the last car on the train, and is connected to the train's air brake line. Powered by battery, the EOT sends a periodic signal to the locomotive indicating the brake pressure at the rear of the train, whether or not the last car of the train is moving, and in which direction. EOTs are also equipped with a flashing red light, activated at night by a sensor, which serves as the train's rear marker.

New labor agreements cut train crew sizes to two or three, eliminating the need for the extra crew space provided by a caboose.

Charles B. Castnef

By 1972, Florida East Coast had replaced all of its cabooses with EOTs, and other railroad soon began to follow suit. In 1985, Robert Claytor, then chairman of Norfolk Southern, summed up the reasons for doing so in an address to the Railroad Public Relations Association.

"Today's caboose costs about $80,000 - more than the cost of most freight cars - and weighs about 25 tons. It can be replaced with a box that costs about $4000 and weighs 35 pounds. The end-of-train monitor doesn't have to be switched through terminals and doesn't require expensive maintenance….The fact of the matter is that the caboose is certainly the most dangerous place to ride."

By the mid 1980s new labor agreements reduced the hours of service for train crews, eliminating the need for a caboose to provide overnight housing. The labor agreements also cut crew size from five to four, and finally two - an engineer and conductor, both of whom could ride

comfortably in the locomotive cab. Included in the agreements were provisions for the removal of cabooses from the rear of freight trains.

Union Pacific's Armour yellow paint was applied to cabooses as well as locomotives. UP also added safety and advertising slogans to the sides of its cabooses, such as this one at Kansas City proclaiming "Have train, will travel."

Jim Hediger

One by one throughout the 1980s, individual states repealed age-old laws that required the use of cabooses in train operation. The last state to do so was Virginia, which relented on July 1, 1988. Not long before, in December 1987, the Canadian government approved the cabooseless operation of freight trains provided a two-way EOT system was used in its place.

In the mid 1920s there were approximately 34,000 cabooses operating on U.S. railroads. Today, only a few hundred cabooses remain, used in transfer work, and on yard jobs, work trains, and trains that require backup moves.

The colorful caboose that generations once looked for at the end of every freight train is now a thing of the past, replaced by modern technology.

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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

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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 11:30. Meeting at the A&P Restaurant on Rte 14 in Greer. 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.

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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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. 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

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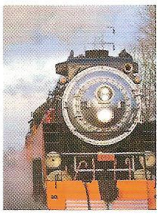
Business Related to Our Hobby
Any Member who has a business related to our hobby is welcome to submit an entry for inclusion in PGRS Trackin' each month.



Garden Railroad Design
Old Trains Wanted

Jim's Train Sales

O & G Gauge New & Used Trains

Jim Hendley

Etowah, North Carolina 28729

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