Newsletter of the Piedmont Garden Railway Society

October 2018

Editor: Scott Williams

It's October and the days are starting to cool down a bit. The vegetable garden's production is winding down. Before long the leaves will be changing color at the highest elevations. What a perfect time to get out in the yard to do some of the heavy garden layout work you put off in the heat of the summer.

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Fall Trainfest:
Grace Lutheran Church
1255 6th Ave. West (Route 64)
Hendersonville, NC 288739

The event will run from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm. Coffee and doughnuts will be served in the morning and a hot lunch will be served around noon.

As before, there will be interesting presentations, door prizes for all, and a drawing for some great RR items.

There will be plenty of tables available for your items for sale or show and tell.

Presentations may include a history of G scale railroading, engine holder for maintenance, cleaning track, how to make reliable connections for track power, lubricating engines and rolling stock.

We are also looking for donations for the drawing. Last spring we had some great ones. Almost everyone went home with something. Pete Gendron will be coordinating this activity so please let him know. pete9134@gmail.com

You can start letting me know if you and a guest will be attending. Send me and email at: docwatson@morrisbb.net.

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A nice interview with club member Dick Nealon in the Mountain Breeze paper about his garden train project. Dick, we're looking forward to some photos when you're ready to share some.

Go to this link and choose the August edition:

http://mountainbreezenews.com/digital-edition/

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Tim Wagner's Open House

Tim Wagner will host an open house on November 3rd so you'll want to get that on your calendar. It is tentatively scheduled for 10-2, rain, snow or shine! Directions are attached.

Thanks, Tim

DIRECTIONS TO THE WAGNER'S HOME

If coming from Asheville on I-26 north toward Weaverville, take Exit 21 (New Stock Road). At light at end of ramp, turn left and travel back under I-26.

If coming from Weaverville north, take Exit 21 (New Stock Road) and turn right at STOP sign on to New Stock Road.

Remain on New Stock Road approximately ¼ mile. As you enter into a right bend, turn left on Fern Lane into New Stock Section of Woodland Hills.

At STOP sign, turn right on Woody Lane.

Take next left on to Acorn Road (big white house on left).

Continue straight at STOP sign.

Just past the house on right, you will see two mailboxes on right. The number you will see the number "37" on the first box. Turn right into the drive.

Proceed about 100 feet and turn left up the circular drive. There is a marker "43" on the left.

The home is brick on the lower level and green siding upper.

FOR EVENTS ONLY

As there is limited parking on the drive, please use drive to drop off only and return back to Acorn Road to park. PLEASE DO NOT PARK ON OUR NEIGHBORS YARD!

If you are physically limited and cannot be dropped off, you may park on the garage pad.

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Member Photos:

I recently made a stopover in Roanoke and while visiting I drove about 35 miles north to Clifton Forge VA and made a quick stop by the C&O Heritage Museum. It was pretty neat and wish I could have stayed longer.

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Trivia Question: Why don't you see turntables still in use much these days?

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44 ton switcher:

The **GE 44-ton switcher** is a 4-axle diesel-electric locomotive built by General Electric between 1940 and 1956. It was designed for industrial and light switching duties, often replacing steam locomotives that had previously been assigned these chores. This locomotive's specific 44-short ton weight was directly related to one of the efficiencies the new diesel locomotives offered compared to their steam counterparts: reduced labor intensity. In the 1940s, the steam to diesel transition was in its infancy in North America, and railroad unions were trying to protect the locomotive fireman jobs that were redundant with diesel units. One measure taken to this end

was the 1937 so-called "90,000 Pound Rule" :a stipulation that locomotives weighing 90,000 pounds (41,000 kg) – 45 short tons – or more required a fireman in addition to an engineer on common carrier railroads. Industrial and military railroads had no such stipulation. The 44-ton locomotive was born to skirt this requirement.

USA Trains made a nice model of the 44 ton diesel and Bachmann offered a 45 ton model.

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Trivia Answer: The turntable was a common, but very important, device that could be found in most terminals, large and small, during the steam era. During this time steam locomotives were operated most efficiently in the forward direction and thus had to be turned every time if, for instance, they were to make a return trip (or for a myriad of other reasons). In many cases a turntable was more practical to build than a wye, which took up much more ground. In any event, with the advent of the diesel locomotive the device fell out of favor as the new technology could be operated in either direction without necessarily needing to be turned. Today, turntables are rarely used by freight railroads.

However, they have not completely disappeared as several have found a second life turning the many restored steam locomotives still in service on railroad museums and tourist railroads. In nearly all terminals in which railroads constructed a turntable the structure was located next to or near a roundhouse, a semicircular building that was used to store steam locomotives and perform light maintenance on railroad equipment. The first roundhouse was constructed in Derby, England during 1839 by four different railroads. In the United States the roundhouse first appeared soon after during the 1840s. The idea of a turntable device to easily spin locomotives in the other direction followed, which not only offered a relatively simple way to turn equipment but also was conveniently located within the terminal and next to the roundhouse where the steamers were serviced (interestingly, turntables did not gain widespread favor in Europe during the steam era as many locomotives were designed to operate in either direction).

All early designs were known as "Armstrong" turntables due to the fact that they required a worker manually pushing the device in one direction or the other. Whether operated with brute force or mechanically the turntable was always a relatively simple, although very important, piece of equipment. A large, circular five to ten foot pit was dug out in which a standard steel span was placed (not unlike a bridge beam span). Around the edges of the pit a rail was placed and the support span usually had wheels attached to it at either end in which to track along it. Also, at the center of the pit the span was placed on some type of central anchor hinge. Finally, in later years as the structure became somewhat more sophisticated a small operators shack could be found on one end where a worker would be located to operate the device.

Not surprisingly, early turntables were very small, sometimes just six feet in circumference since nothing larger was needed with the relatively small locomotives and cars in use during much of the 19th century. However, this changed as equipment grew larger, heavier, and longer thanks to new technologies like the air-brake, more advanced steam locomotives, and a greater demand for rail service. During the 20th century most roundhouse terminals featured turntables

of at least 70 feet with some as large as 120 feet or more in circumference. According to the magazine *Trains*, most Class I railroads of the era found that turntables of between 80 and 100 feet often suited their needs. Additionally, with these larger tables manual "Armstrong" designs fell out of favor.

Powered tables usually featured either compressed air or pneumatics/hydraulics to turn them. Since turntables are no longer needed within today's industry you might not realize just how vital these devices once used to be. For instance, the above mentioned periodical, *Trains*, did a short piece from its January, 1945 issue which described how Baltimore & Ohio forces rebuilt its turntable in Chillicothe, Ohio where once a small terminal was located along its St. Louis main line. The railroad wished to make the table deeper and wider to support larger and heavier steam locomotives (although interestingly, by that time, steam was in steep decline as main line power on most lines). To make sure that the work did not severely interfere with passenger and freight train schedules it was timed down to the minute and all of the locomotives operating out of the terminal were moved outside the roundhouse to nearby ready tracks. The actual project began at 7 a.m. and is said to have been completed in just 10 hours! The purpose of the devices, however, was mostly made obsolete by the diesel. This new type of locomotive could be operated just as efficiently bidirectionally, which eliminated the need for turning them as often as steamers. When they did need to be turned a common wye (literally, a "Y"-shaped track setup) would suffice. Without the need for a turntable railroads also did not require the accompanying roundhouse, although many remained in use for decades as maintenance facilities. Today, turntables still have found a way to hang on as a need to turn steam locomotives, and some diesels, on excursion railroads and museums. They not only offer a practical way to turn the units without the need for a wye but also give a chance to allow the public to see how these interesting devices worked when they were regularly in use.

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