

# PGRS TRACKIN'

**Newsletter of the Piedmont Garden Railway Society**

**December 2020**

**Editor: Scott Williams**

**Happy Holidays Club Members!!**



**What a memorably 'forgettable' year this has been!!**

2020 has been a year that we're ALL looking forward to soon seeing in the rear view from out the back of the Caboose!! We're all looking forward to 2021.

I hope everyone and their families have all managed to stay safe this year. Let's hope that things will get more 'back to normal' as 2021 unfolds.

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## Whale sculpture catches crashed Dutch metro train.



A train driver in the Netherlands has had a lucky escape thanks to a fortuitously placed art installation.

A metro train in Spijkenisse, near the city of Rotterdam, crashed through a barrier at the end of the tracks shortly before midnight on Sunday.

But rather than plummeting 10m (32ft) into the water below, the train was left suspended dramatically in the air.

It ended up being delicately balanced on the large sculpture of a whale's tail at the De Akkers metro station.

"We are trying to decide how we can bring the train down in a careful and controlled manner," one official told the Dutch national broadcaster NOS on Monday. The driver, who has not been named, was able to leave the empty train by himself. He was taken to hospital for a check-up and is not believed to have suffered any injuries.

The sculpture, titled Whale Tails, is the work of the architect and artist Maarten Struijs, and was erected in the water at the end of the tracks in 2002.

Mr Struijs told NOS that he was surprised the structure did not break.





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## **Ecusta Trail greenway connecting Brevard and Hendersonville land under contract**

Rebecca Walter, Hendersonville Times-News



*Hendersonville-Pisgah Forest unused rail line, as it crosses on a trestle over the Davidson River Road and the Davidson River northeast of Brevard, just upstream from the Davidson River-French Broad River confluence.*

More than a decade of grassroots efforts to create a 19-mile Ecusta Trail greenway in Henderson and Transylvania counties may finally pay off, as the land is under contract for purchase.

The milestone is in part thanks to the approval of a \$7 million bridge loan Wednesday from the Henderson County Board of Commissioners.

On Oct. 27, Conserving Carolina entered into the contract to buy the “TR Line” corridor from Blue Ridge Southern Railroad LLC, a division of WATCO Companies, Conserving Carolina said in a news release.

Conserving Carolina hopes to finalize the purchase in the next several months.

The purchase takes place under the terms of the federal railbanking process, which allows unused rail corridors to be converted to rail trails until such a time as the corridor is needed again for rail transportation.

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### **Model Railroad Hobbyist Magazine. Free Online Magazine.**

My brother Larry Williams recently shared with me a website that some of you may already know. I was totally unaware of it. It's an 'online' model railroad enthusiast web magazine. It's totally free. I recently signed up for it and I am finding it quite interesting. TONS of advertising so you'll have to 'wade' through all of that, BUT...lots of interesting articles:

<https://model-railroad-hobbyist.com/>

Check it out. All scales. Interesting articles.

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### **Eric Schade's Large Scale Live steam videos from up in Maine. Pretty Cool.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sdofihbJRO4>

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## The Kitbash Brothers on Facebook.

There's so many interesting railroad modeling webpages on Facebook these days. Here's another one I recently joined. You may enjoy it.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/442811076559970/about>

"**The KitBash Brothers**" have been scratch-building and kit-bashing in On30 and other scales for many years, a few of us for decades, and we've now decided to market those components that are essential to a good kit bash but very difficult to make at home. Bash your model using our components and make it unique by adding your own details."

An example of models you will find on the KitBash Brothers Facebook page:



"Bashed from two Big Haulers. LGB running gear."



A bashed (Bachmann boxcar) sawfiler's car on the Elkhorn Iron & Timber Co RR.  
Modeling and photography by Steve Austin.

Members were even kind enough to say nice things about my kitbashed Boxcab that I made from scrap HLW parts...





They also made favorable noises about my rare 7-ton Climax kitbash.



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#### MEMBER PHOTOS:

Doc Watson sends in a photo of the new headlamps for his Mogul project:

“My son completed printing the last parts for my mogul. Lamp and bracket. The lamp is the same as the brass one except it can now accept the Bachmann reflector.”



Installed and wired the headlamp and bracket. Very nice fit. Still needs painting. Time to move on to the tender.



The editor hasn't built anything in large scale lately but I've been real busy working on my new On30 stuff. I just finished building this **Mount Blue Model Co.**, laser cut wood, Bay Window caboose kit. Pretty happy with how it turned out. Great kits to build. Everything is so clean and fits precisely and I look forward to trying some of their model structure kits in the future.





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Please send any idea, project, photo, something you found surfing on the Internet, etc., no matter how great or small they may 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 viewing it.

Send your photos to: [srwavl@outlook.com](mailto:srwavl@outlook.com)

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**ALSO!! MEMBER PHOTOS for the WEBPAGE:**

PLEASE Send photos of your trains and layouts to Larry Williams so he can post them in our club "Gallery". I hope we can keep sharing our models and layouts with everyone.

Mail to: [ldweng@att.net](mailto:ldweng@att.net)

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**Trivia Question:** What did they mean by the term: "The Alphabet Route"?

## 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.

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## Train Lovers Luncheons:

...have been postponed until things get safer with the Coronavirus.

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**Trivia Answer: The Alphabet Route was a coalition of railroads connecting the Midwest United States with the Northeast, as a freight alternate to the four major systems: the Pennsylvania Railroad, New York Central Railroad, Erie Railroad and Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Named for the many-lettered initials of the participating railroads, it used the following systems from west to east:**

**New York, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad (NYC&StL/NKP) from Chicago, Illinois, and East St. Louis, Illinois, to Bellevue, Ohio**

**Wheeling and Lake Erie Railway (W&LE) from Toledo, Ohio, via Bellevue to Pittsburgh Junction, Ohio**

**Pittsburgh and West Virginia Railway (P&WV) from Pittsburgh Junction to Connellsville, Pennsylvania**

**Western Maryland Railway (WM) from Connellsville via Hagerstown, Maryland, to Baltimore, Maryland, and Shippensburg, Pennsylvania**

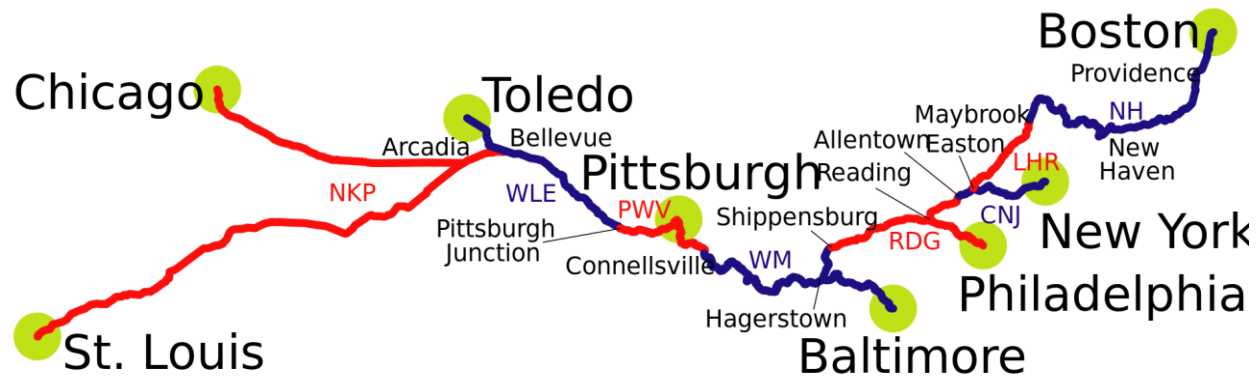
**Reading Company (RDG) from Shippensburg via Reading, Pennsylvania, to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Allentown, Pennsylvania**

**Central Railroad of New Jersey (CNJ) from Allentown via Easton, Pennsylvania, to Jersey City, New Jersey**



Lehigh and Hudson River Railway (**L&HR**) from Allentown via Easton (trackage rights on the CNJ) to Maybrook, New York

New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad (**NYNH&H**) from Maybrook via New Haven, Connecticut, and Providence, Rhode Island, to Boston, Massachusetts



Major yards on the line included:

The NYC&StL's Bellevue Yard was just east of the junction with the W&LE at Bellevue, Ohio. Freight cars were transferred here between the two lines, leaving the same way they came; a direct connection avoiding the yard was impossible due to the lack of a suitable connecting track.

The CNJ's Allentown Yard was just east of Allentown, Pennsylvania; the RDG and L&HR had trackage rights along the CNJ to the yard.

The RDG's Rutherford Yard just east of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; the RDG here combined traffic from Allentown (including L&HR traffic from New England via the NYNH&H through Maybrook), Jersey City and the New York / New Jersey metro area (via the CNJ to Allentown), and Philadelphia.

The WM's Jamison Yard in Hagerstown, MD, where traffic from the RDG via Rutherford Yard was combined with traffic from Baltimore on the WM.

The NYNH&H's Maybrook Yard was just east of the junction with the L&HR. Cars were transferred between the two lines.

The NYNH&H's Cedar Hill Yard was in New Haven, Connecticut. Through trains continued on to Providence and Boston, while some freight was transferred to other NYNH&H lines at Cedar Hill.

The freight trains along the middle section of the route were known as **Alpha Jets**. The WM, P&WV and NKP (and later WM and Norfolk & Western, after merger of latter two lines into N&W in 1964) generally operated two daily "run-through" freight trains each way via their connection in Connellsville, Pennsylvania. The

westbound trains were variously symbolled AJ-1 (Alpha Jet 1) and Advance AJ-1, 1st AJ-1 and 2nd AJ-1, then later PAJ-1 and WAJ-1. The eastbound runs were usually called AJ-2 and AJ-12, with an Advanced AJ-12 sometimes also running. These runs originated or terminated in either the RDG's Rutherford Yard near Harrisburg, PA or in the WM yard at Hagerstown, MD, and ran to or from Toledo, OH and Detroit, MI. The Advanced sections usually originated or terminated in Bellevue, OH. For a time during the 1970s, the RDG also symbolled its high-priority connection run from Philadelphia to Rutherford, PA as an Alpha Jet.

Three major sources of traffic for these trains were:

automobile manufacturing parts and supplies going from eastern factories to the Detroit and Toledo automotive manufacturing regions, and autos and manufactured items moving from these cities to the north eastern region;

high-priority boxcar loads (often from freight consolidation and forwarding companies such as Acme Fast Freight) moving to and from New England, the New York City area, Philadelphia and Baltimore to Detroit, Cleveland, Chicago and St. Louis via other trains connecting with the Alpha Jet schedules; and

trailer-on-flatcar (TOFC) service, especially to and from Philadelphia but also from the New York area via the CNJ, going to or from one of the above mid-western cities.



In the 1960s and early 1970s, the Alphabet Route partners promoted Alpha Jet service as an alternative to the TOFC service offered by the Pennsylvania Railroad (and then the Penn Central, after the Pennsylvania-New York Central merger in 1968) between Philadelphia and Chicago. The Pennsylvania offered 23-hour service between these points with its Truck Train runs, while the Alphabet Route partners offered 34-hour service (depending upon a prompt connection at Bellevue to the BC-1 priority freight to Chicago). Although this did not seem competitive, much of the 11-hour difference was due to departures and arrivals around midnight for the Pennsylvania service, whereas many shippers did not send and receive shipments during the night and thus could accept a mid-evening departure and a mid-morning arrival, as the Alpha Jet service could provide. Alpha Jet service was de-emphasized in the late 1970s and eventually ended by the early 1980s as the WM was fully integrated into the Chessie System (B&O and C&O), later to become CSX, which was and remains a major competitor of the N&W, later Norfolk Southern.

The route was formed on February 11, 1931, with the completion of the P&WV to Connellsville, Pennsylvania, on the WM. It was an outgrowth of George J. Gould's attempts to create a transcontinental railroad and later proposals made to the Interstate Commerce Commission for a "Fifth System" to supplement the four major systems; the consolidations planned to form those systems were stopped by the Great Depression.



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**Businesses associated with our club:**

 <p><b>Peggy Keyes</b> Owner / Chief Conductor RightTrackTrainMuseum@gmail.com 828.625-5551</p> <p><b>The Right Track Toy Train Museum</b> A non-profit museum to benefit Pancreatic Cancer research 2414 Memorial Hwy (Rte 64/74) Lake Lure, NC 28746 Find us on Facebook!</p>	 <p><b>Jim's Train Sales</b> O &amp; G Gauge New &amp; Used Trains <b>Jim Hendley</b> Etowah, North Carolina 28729 Lionel, MTH, USA Trains, PIKO, LGB Bridgeworks Power Supplies, Bachmann Split-Jaw Rail Clamps, O &amp; G Gauge Track</p> <p>Email: jhh1218@att.net Phone: (828) 891-7570 Fax: (828) 890-3346</p> <p><i>Garden Railroad Design Old Trains Wanted</i></p>
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**\*\* Jim Hendley has moved.** To reach him use the following number:

**828-333-2523** and if the email above does not work try [hendleyjim4@gmail.com](mailto:hendleyjim4@gmail.com)

**\*\* Peggy Keyes announced on Facebook that due to Covid the museum will be closed until further notice. Check The Right Track Facebook page for further developments.**