

# PGRS TRACKIN'



## The Newsletter of the Piedmont Garden Railway Society

**December 2024**

### **EDITOR'S GREETING**

Greetings. Another year is almost at an end. I hope everyone had a Happy Thanksgiving and I wish everyone a Merry Christmas. Hopefully Santa will bring you all the trains you want rather than what you need. I was fortunate to have a G scale flar car build article published in the 2024 Summer SER-NMRA magazine too. Check it out if you can.



### **CLUB NEWS**

The PGRS is initiating a new concept of a Train Lover's Luncheon (TLL) for the Asheville meetings. Up until now, we have been meeting at a restaurant to share our train-related knowledge and experiences. Attendance at these get togethers have left a lot to be desired. We hope that this new TLL concept will encourage better attendance. The club has been

### **Society Officers**

Bill Massey – President  
[coachbillmassey@aol.com](mailto:coachbillmassey@aol.com)  
Vacant – Vice President

Jim Redmond – Secretary / Treasurer  
[Jim.Redmond@Alumni.Duke.edu](mailto:Jim.Redmond@Alumni.Duke.edu)

#### **BOARD MEMBERS:**

Jon Bole  
[Jarabhill@windstream.net](mailto:Jarabhill@windstream.net)  
Fran Monahan  
[MargeMonahan2@gmail.com](mailto:MargeMonahan2@gmail.com)  
Jim Redmond  
[Jim.Redmond@Alumni.Duke.edu](mailto:Jim.Redmond@Alumni.Duke.edu)  
Scott Williams  
[srwavl@outlook.com](mailto:srwavl@outlook.com)  
Wayne Hamilton  
[railman1959@aol.com](mailto:railman1959@aol.com)

#### **WEB SITE ADMINISTRATORS**

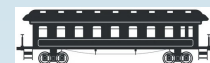
Larry Williams (Acting)  
[LDWeng55@gmail.com](mailto:LDWeng55@gmail.com)  
Dan Bails (Assistant)  
[DanBails339@gmail.com](mailto:DanBails339@gmail.com)

#### **NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

Wayne Hamilton  
[railman1959@aol.com](mailto:railman1959@aol.com)

#### **SOCIETY WEB PAGE**

[WWW.PIEDMONTGARDENRAILWAY.ORG](http://WWW.PIEDMONTGARDENRAILWAY.ORG)



## **CLUB NEWS Continued**

working with the Apple Valley RR club, located in the Hendersonville train depot, and has made an arrangement to hold our Asheville area TLL at their location. This has many advantages including a quiet place to meet and have lunch and, best of all, a chance to play with our trains, weather permitting. The depot is not open to the public during our allotted time. For those who are not familiar with the outdoor setup at the Hendersonville depot, they have two large oval mainlines and a couple of back and forth short lines. There is a large staging yard and one passing siding for equipment storage and setup. We have easily run at least 4 trains at the same time. Track power is also available.

We will be holding our TLL luncheons the FIRST Thursday of every month. There are several places, within walking distance, to get something to eat and bring it to the depot or you can bring something with you. There's plenty of parking around and next to the depot. So, the next TLL will be December 5th.

The depot will be open from 10:00 AM until 2:00 PM. Come and enjoy and bring your trains.

**Your PGRS Officers and Board are actively planning next spring's Train Fest. Since our Fall meeting was cancelled, we hope to make the next one better than ever. Please send in any ideas to your Officers or Board members.**

As always, consider sharing this newsletter with friends who might be interested in our club and if they wish to become members ask them to contact our PGRS Secretary/Treasurer for a membership form or download a form from our website. [Join Us – Piedmont Garden Railway Society](#) or contact:

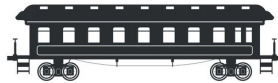
Jim Redmond  
PGRS Secretary/Treasurer  
112 Woodland Way  
Greenville, SC 29601

### **Train Show Calendar reminders:**

12/21/2024 Carolina Model Train Show in Fort Mill, SC @ Clarion Hotel Fort Mill; Near the Amusement Park

## **CLUB NEWS Continued**

**The Club's mission is to promote and to further the enjoyment of large scale model railroading among its members, their families and their guests as well as the public at large.**



## **RAILROAD TRIVIA QUESTION**

What was the Montana Centennial Train and its year of operation? The answer is found later in this newsletter.

## **RAIL-FANNING PROTOTYPES TO INSPIRE A GARDEN RAILWAY PROJECT**

The Lake Superior Railroad Museum and North Shore Scenic Railroad  
*Part Three*

The Lake Superior Railroad Museum in Duluth, Minnesota, has a host of unusual rolling stock. One is a McGiffert log loader. One of the more successful types of loaders in the pine woods of the Intermountain West was the McGiffert Loader. John R. McGiffert invented the McGiffert loader, and the machines were manufactured by the Clyde Iron Works of Duluth, Minnesota.

The McGiffert was a large, somewhat awkward looking machine. The boiler and spools were mounted on a platform that was elevated over the tracks. The entire machine sat on legs that rested on the ground on either side of the tracks. The McGiffert was self-propelled, as it had a chain-driven drive axles that moved the machine along the rails. The wheels were retracted up against the bottom of the platform when the machine was set up to load cars.

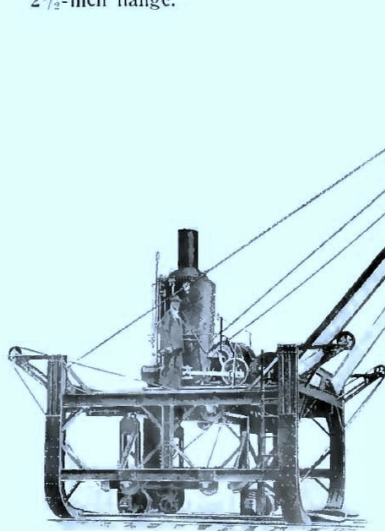
## RAILFANNING— Continued

When set up to load cars, the McGiffert straddled the tracks, and empty log cars were shoved underneath the loader. The log cars would then be rolled through the loader, with logs loaded onto the cars by a boom off of one side of the loader.

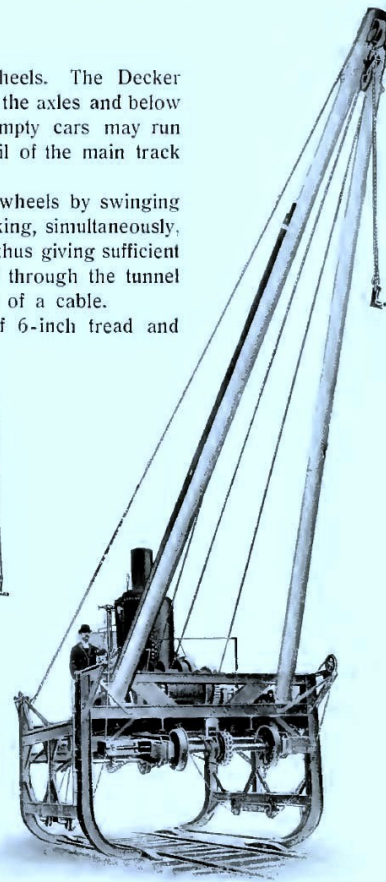
The machines are self-propelling donkey engines on wheels. The Decker (price \$4,500 to \$6,000) has a "sort of an open tunnel" above the axles and below the frame carrying the donkey, so wide and so high, that empty cars may run through the tunnel on steel rail, bridge-switched onto the rail of the main track at both sides of the tunnel.

The McGiffert (price \$4,500 to \$6,700) removes its own wheels by swinging them, pendulum fashion, against the top of the tunnel and by sinking, simultaneously, on steel footings resting on the ties outside of the steel rail, thus giving sufficient clearance to the passage of empties. The empties are pulled through the tunnel from behind to the front, ready to receive the load, by means of a cable.

For use on wooden rail, the machines have wheels of 6-inch tread and 2½-inch flange.



McGiffert log loader ready to move itself.  
Clyde Iron Works, Duluth, Minn.



McGiffert log loader ready for passage of empties.  
Clyde Iron Works, Duluth, Minn.

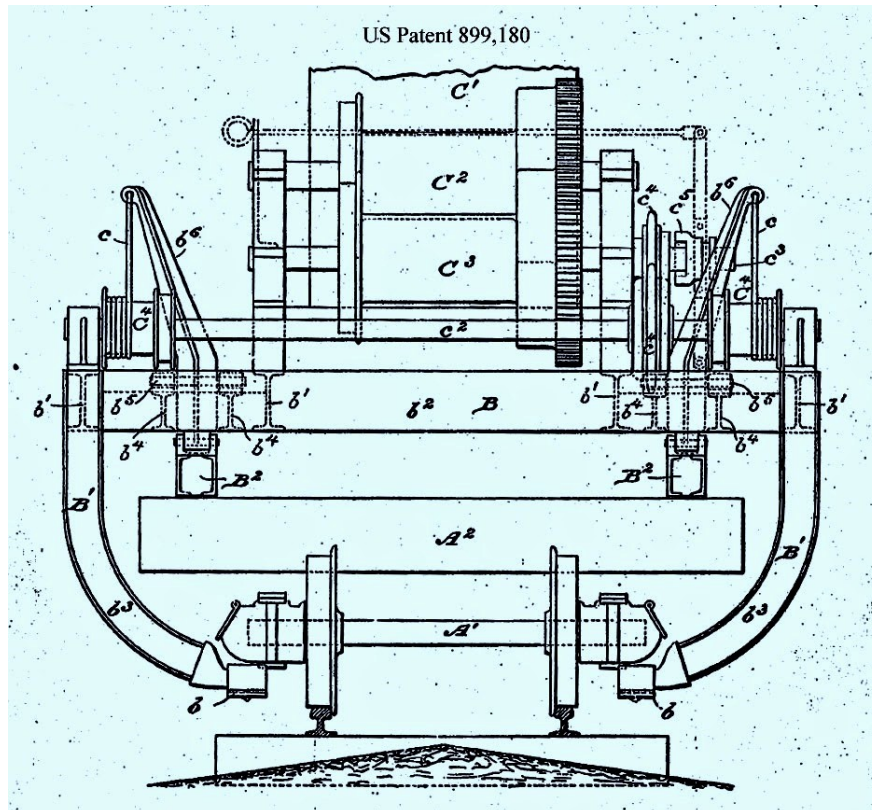
The first McGifferts appeared in the woods around 1902. Nearly a thousand of these machines would be built between then and around 1930, when production ceased. The McCloud River Lumber Company owned at least six of these McGiffert loaders.

The McGiffert loader on display in Duluth does have a McCloud connection. Clyde built it on 1/6/1923 as its construction number 1260 for the Weed Lumber Company in nearby Weed, and it spent almost its entire career in the woods north and east of Mt. Shasta working for Weed and its corporate successor Long-Bell. In 1956 Long-Bell sent the loader to McCloud to load



## RAILFANNING— Continued

logs the company harvested from the Hearst Estate properties southeast of McCloud, and it remained in McCloud after that job ended until 1978 when Long-Bell successor International Paper donated it to the Lake Superior Railroad Museum.



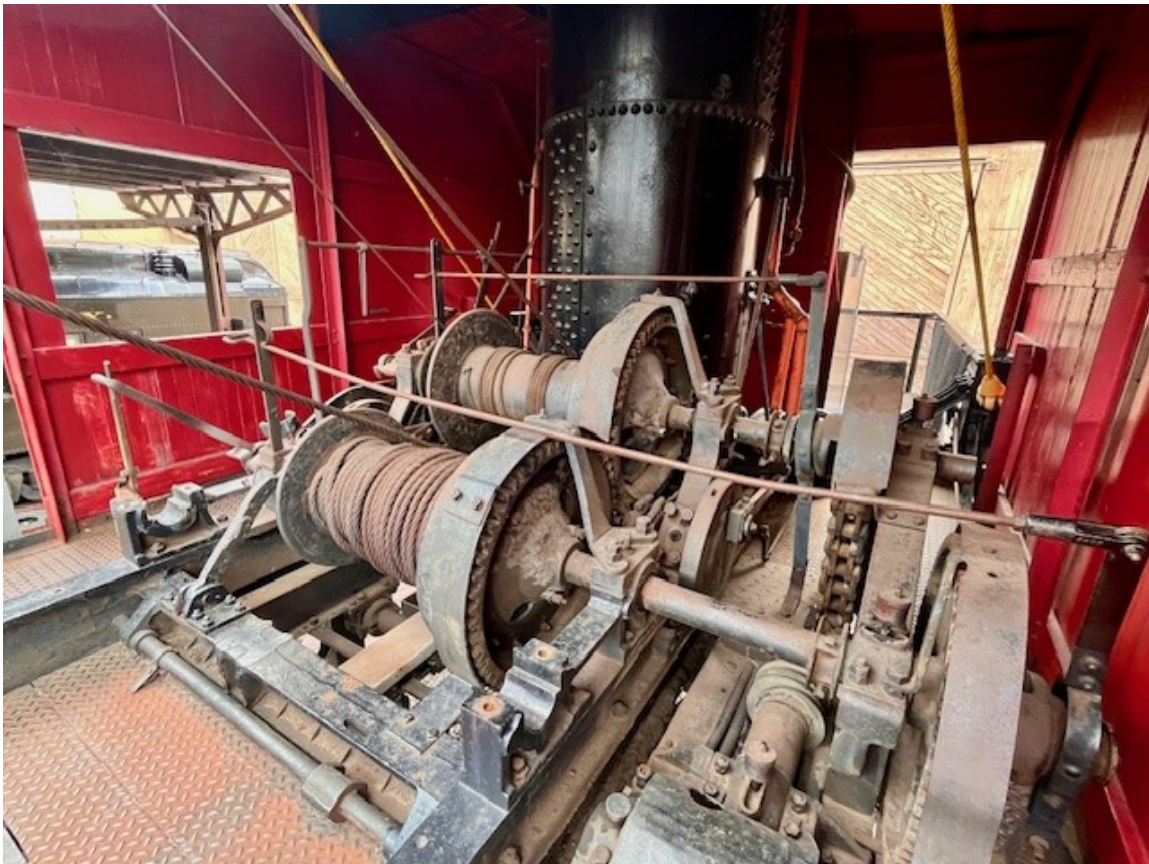


## RAILFANNING— Continued



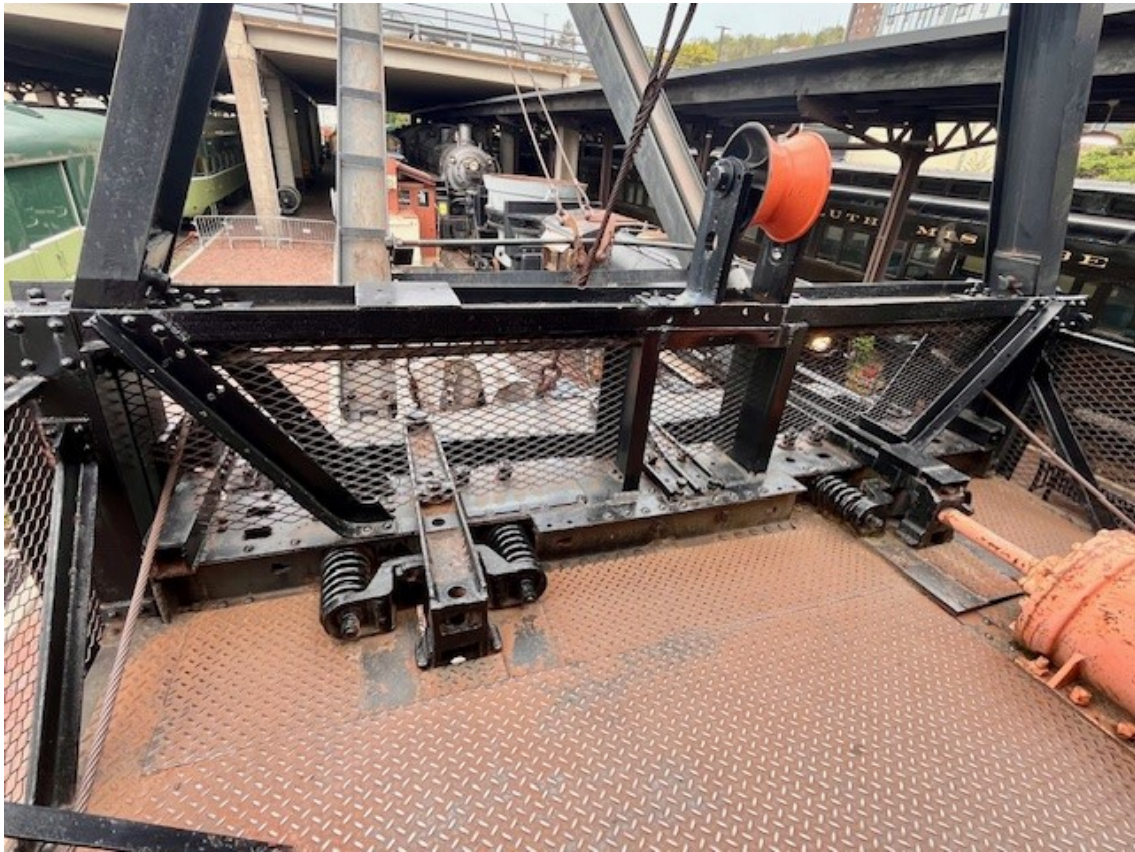


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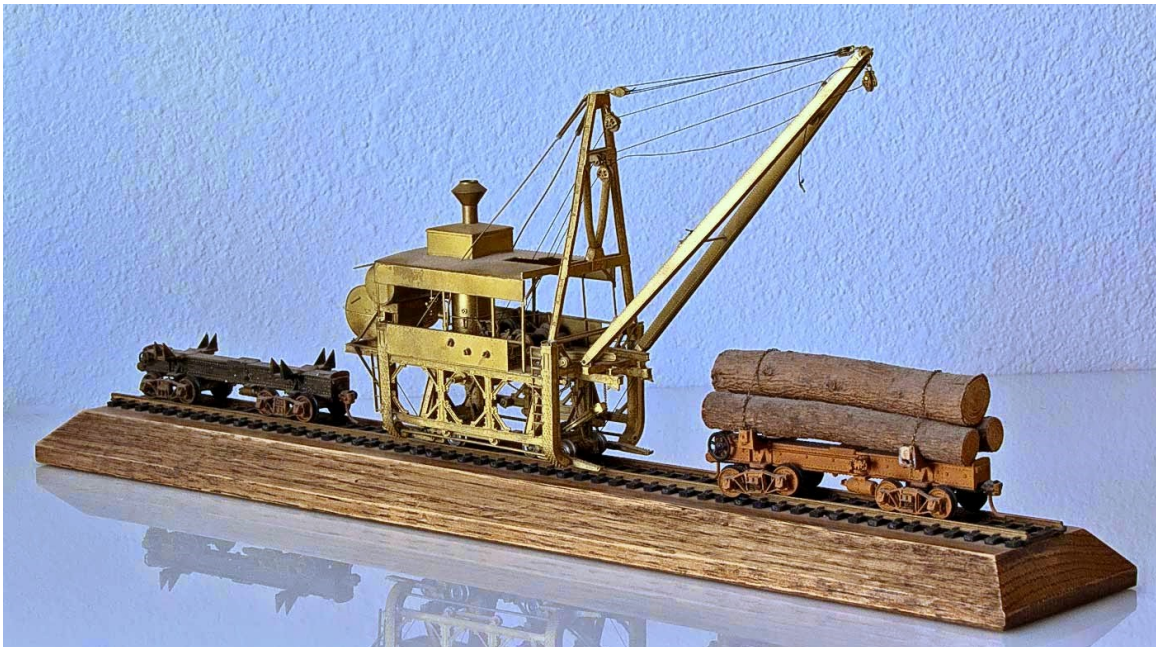




## RAILFANNING— Continued

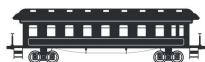
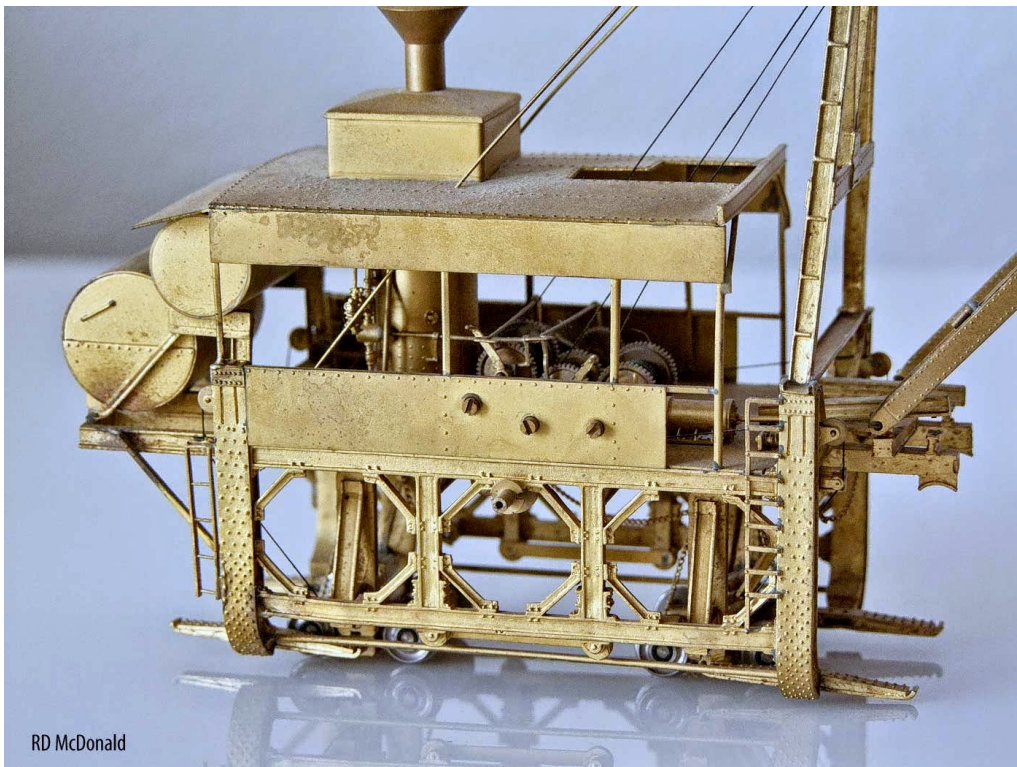
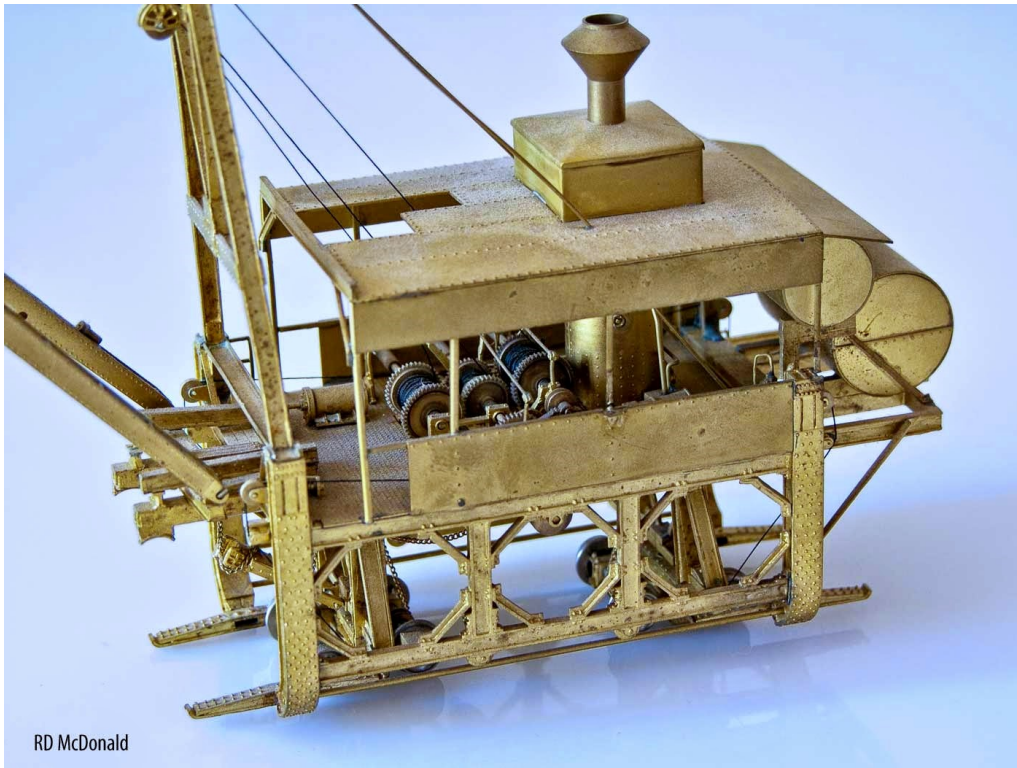


A HO scale brass model of a loader shown below and on the next page to show additional details.





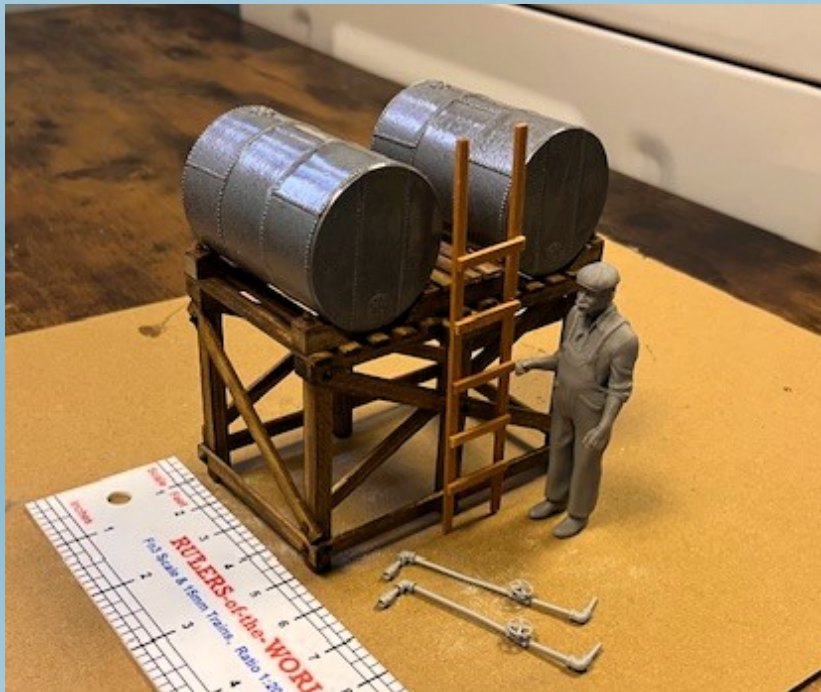
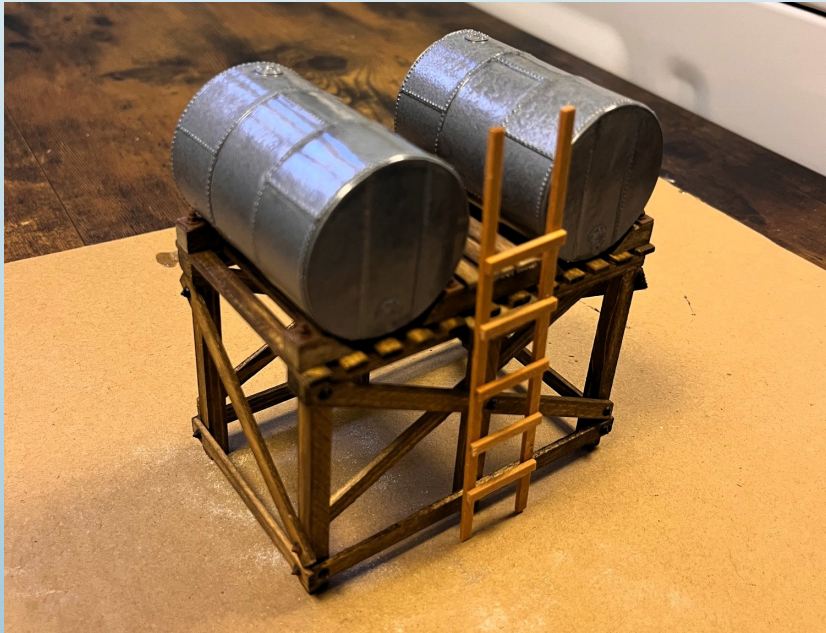
## RAILFANNING— Continued



## **THE BACKSHOP**

### **MODELING PROJECTS AND TIPS**

Last month I promised some more progress photos of the fuel rack craftsman kit I was working on. This is for a Fn3 logging diorama I've been working on. The only issue I have with these kits is where do you stop with additional details or weathering. It still needs some additional details such as the fill pipes and lettering for the contents.





**THE BACKSHOP**  
**MODELING PROJECTS AND TIPS**  
**Continued**

**CRAFTSMAN KITS TIPS**  
**Part Two**

**WHAT KIND OF GLUE?**

The traditional combination is white wood glue (such as Elmer's) or yellow carpenter's glue (aliphatic resin, also available from Elmer's) for the wood-to-wood joints and CA (super glue) for the wood-to-metal or wood-to-plastic joints. I recommend yellow carpenter's glue for its much greater strength and because, once it dries, it is no longer water soluble. For joints where you might need extreme strength, 5-minute epoxy works well. The kit I assembled required no epoxy. It's also unnecessary for most other craftsman kits.

No matter how careful you are, virtually all glues will seep out of a joint. All four glues I listed above share one potential drawback: They dry hard and shiny, so any visible excess will detract from the realistic finish you have tried to create with stains and paints.

**OTHER TRICKS**

The most important thing to remember is read the instructions first. They often provide the answer to that seemingly insoluble problem or will help you avoid a potential disastrous error. Next most important? Take your time. Most craftsman kits are far more time consuming than difficult. Mistakes occur when we rush.

**THE BACKSHOP**  
**MODELING PROJECTS AND TIPS**  
**Continued**

Also, use a machinist's or modeler's square for right-angle joints. Even a draftsman's triangle will do. I used a carpenter's speed square with some clamps along with my modeler's squares. Few of us can estimate right-angles as accurately as a tool.



Here I used a combination of squares and clamps to make a square glue up. After you get far enough along, you can use the kit as your square.



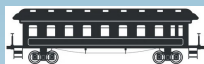
**THE BACKSHOP**  
**MODELING PROJECTS AND TIPS**  
**Continued**

One slightly time consuming but necessary trick involves sanding or filing nearly every piece whether wood, metal, or plastic. Plastic and metal parts often have tiny burrs or bits of flash. At the very least they will detract from your model's appearance; at worst they'll prevent a part from fitting. A flat bastard file works well for larger areas. Jeweler's files, such as those from X-acto, are good for small pieces and tight corners. 400 or 600 grit wet or dry finishing sandpaper helps to augment that clean appearance. It also tends to give a more subtle appearance to the pre-stained and distressed wood parts.

Now the final tip: Start with a simple project. A simple structure, log car, and flatcar have relatively few pieces, require only the most basic tools, and are very easy to visualize and assemble. Even if you work very slowly, you'll probably complete the entire project in only a few hours, including painting and weathering. At the same time, you'll learn the names of the various parts of a freight car; after all, you'll be building one almost board by board. Once you understand the basics of wooden car construction it will be much easier to move on to more complicated projects.

**IS THAT ALL?**

For the most part, assembling craftsman kits involves nothing more than gluing one piece to another in the right order. It's hardly more difficult than adding those grab irons to the plastic reefer except you must drill your own holes and make sure the pieces of wood line up squarely. Staining takes most of the guesswork out of coloring cars and structures. The rest is just a matter of spending time, exercising patience, and wanting a model realistic enough to deserve a prominent place on your layout, even if you can't leave it outside all the time.



## RAILROAD TRIVIA ANSWER

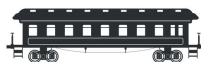
**The Montana Centennial Train** began with an outdoorsman's notion that Montana should tell the world more about itself and its treasures. When the idea got to rancher Howard Kelsey he took it straight to the Montana Territorial Centennial Commission - who promptly made him chairman of the effort. The 1964-1965 Montana Centennial Train billed as "From God's Country to the Atlantic" for the title of the train's biography.

For two World's Fair seasons the Montana Centennial Train took Big Sky Country to the Big Apple - and everywhere in between.

The Montana Centennial Train took shape with the purchase of the former West Virginia Centennial Special that had toured that state in 1963. The purchase instantly gave Montana nine railcars to configure as needed. To the Montana Centennial Train that meant a power car, three exhibit cars, three converted to carry horses, a vehicle car to carry a Conestoga wagon (among other vehicles) and a dormitory car. The exhibit cars would feature exhibits from state agencies, as well as the famous Don C. Foote collection of western art and artifacts. Also aboard would be over \$1,000,000 in gold and some \$800,000 in western paintings and sculptures.



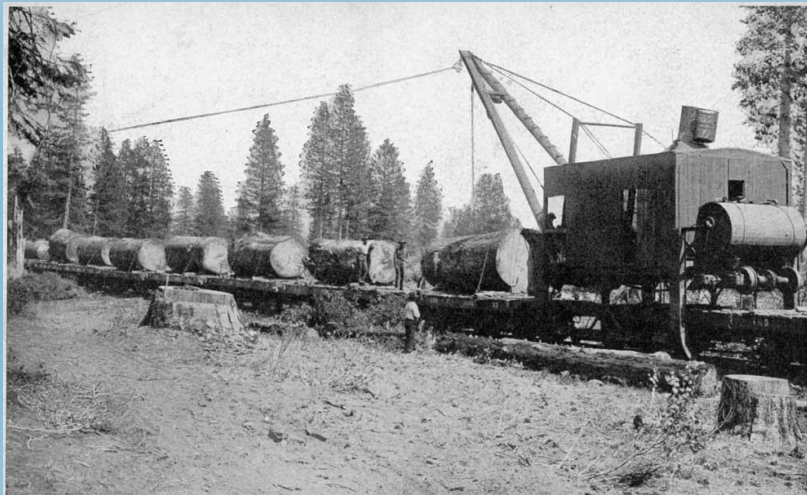
There are two surviving cars known, one at West Yellowstone, ID and one in Hardin, MT. We saw both during our trip out west this past summer. Neither remain in original paint. [The 1964-1965 Montana Centennial Train](#)





## WEB BITS

Good to see people have a basic understanding of how railroads work....  
*(Let me know when you stop laughing!)*



No. 22—Train Load of Sugar Pine Logs.

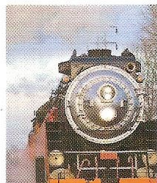
[McCloud River Lumber Company](#)

## SOMETHING DIFFERENT



Randy Theis has a new track inspector for his Garden Railway.

## BUSINESSES ASSOCIATED WITH OUR CLUB



### 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  
Split-Jaw Rail Clamps, O & G Gauge Track

Garden Railroad Design, New and Used Track

You can now reach Jim at: [hendleyjim4@gmail.com](mailto:hendleyjim4@gmail.com)

Or....(828) 333-2523

### A reminder to all our members of the Train Lovers Luncheons:

The **Asheville Train Lovers Luncheon** will be the first Thursday every month from 10am to 2pm at the Hendersonville Depot. Bring trains to run.

The **Greater Greenville Train Lovers Luncheons** are on the first Tuesday of every month at the A&P Restaurant in Greer starting at 11:30 AM.

The **Columbus Luncheons** are held at 12:00 on the Third Thursday of each month. A new meeting location will be announced soon.

