

PGRS TRACKIN'



Newsletter of the Piedmont Garden Railway Society

January 2021

Editor: Scott Williams

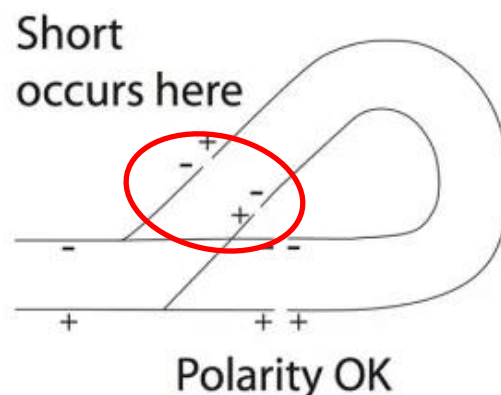
Happy New Year Club Members!!

Boy Howdy!!, 2020 was one for the record books wasn't it? Let's now look forward to a better 2021.

oo-000-oo

Pete Gendron sent me an interesting link that made me research something that I have been wondering about more now that I'm planning to build an On30 layout in my basement. It will be a DCC layout which is uncharted territory and a big, new learning curve for me but I've found that whether you run DC or DCC...similar rules apply if your layout plans include a...REVERSING LOOP.

What is a reversing loop or balloon loop? If you are planning on building a long layout but want trains to loop around at the ends and return on the same track you will run in to a polarity issue where the positive and negative rails of the track would reverse and short out.



Building insulated gaps between the rails of the mainline and the loop will isolate their polarity thus avoiding a short circuit when the train loops back around and incorporating a polarity reversing/switching device will allow the train to return to the main line at the proper polarity and solve this dilemma. A polarity switching device will flip the polarity of the main line while your train is still running in the reverse loop, thus allowing your train to continue running smoothly back along the mainline.

Witchcraft you say? Not really. The loop only has to be long enough for the engine and ALL of its rolling stock metal wheels to loop around between the former polarity to the now reversed polarity of the main line to avoid a short circuit.

Next question. What devices will allow this? Manually this operation can be done by wiring a dual pole, dual throw, center off switch and reversing the polarity to the mainline before the train leaves the insulated loop. There are also automated switches available from a lot of manufacturers. This is an example of one from Digitrax.

<https://www.digitrax.com/products/autoreversing/ar1/>



oo-000-oo

Roadside America, Pennsylvania's historic 'miniature village,' closes permanently due to COVID-19. Owners promise auction of display pieces after 'heartbreaking' decision.



BY MICHAEL TANENBAUM PhillyVoice Staff



After more than **85** years in business, the historic miniature village Roadside America will shut down due to the strain of the coronavirus pandemic, the owners announced Monday.

Located in Shartlesville, the hand-crafted indoor village has awed visitors for decades since creator Laurence Geringer first built it in 1935. The public display spans nearly 8,000 square feet, depicting a mountainous landscape with trains, bridges, buildings, farmland and more.

Roadside America initially closed in March when Pennsylvania ordered all non-essential businesses to shut down. With cases again surging to record highs across the state and the rest of the country, the owners made the difficult decision to close for good.

"There are no words to express how grateful we've been for every one of you, our valued customers and supporters. We truly feel blessed to have been part of your family traditions, memories and treasured moments," the owners wrote on Facebook. "It has been our honor to care for Laurence's meticulously handcrafted landscape, and to share our family's history with so many people. It was a blessing to remain a family-owned business for so many years. We hope you're all staying safe during this unprecedented time."

The future of the display had been uncertain long before the coronavirus pandemic hit.

In 2018, employees at the attraction launched a Kickstarter to purchase, renovate and relocate the "world's greatest miniature village." It had been placed for sale by the owners around that time. The project raised more than \$10,000, but fell far short of its longshot \$750,000 goal. Since then, the owners had continued to search for a buyer to take over the display, but multiple interested parties never committed to buying it.

"As months passed and the future of tourism remained uncertain, we ultimately made the difficult decision to do what is best for our family and pursue other options," the owners said Monday.

All display pieces — including buildings, bridges, figures and animations — will be part of an upcoming auction. Details for the event will be unveiled at Roadside America's Facebook page in the weeks to come.

"This decision was not made without extensive thought and consideration, and was ultimately the result of multiple factors and circumstances," the owners said. "We ask that you please be respectful and understanding of our choices during this difficult time, as this has been indescribably heartbreaking for our family."

For those of you unfamiliar with Roadside America, it was basically the 'first' Entertainment Junction-type attraction. We visited once or twice when I was a kid back in the 60's and then about 15 or so years ago I drove by and visited again as an adult. What a time capsule and I enjoyed it as much as an adult, maybe even more, than I did as a child!! The layout was built in 1:32 scale with O scale trains and an incredible amount of lights, motorized displays and real water features.

Here's the Wikipedia entry about it:

Roadside America was an indoor miniature village and railway covering 8,000 square feet, created by Laurence Gieringer in 1935. It was first displayed to the public in the home of Mr Laurence Gieringer in Hamburg, Pennsylvania. Word got out about the exciting miniature village after a story was published in the local newspapers, and due to its popularity, Mr. Gieringer moved the display to a recently closed local amusement park called Carsonia Park, where more people could come to see his spectacular miniature village. The display stayed there for a very short time, from 1938 to about 1940 when Mr. Gieringer purchased land at the current site of Roadside America to build a larger display in order to accommodate the growing interest. In 1953 [1] the exhibit reopened at the current location, a former dance hall in Shartlesville, Pennsylvania, Exit 23 on Interstate 78, approximately 20 miles west of the Lehigh Valley.

The 3/8 inch to one foot scale display contains:

- A 7,450 square foot, fully landscaped village diorama displaying over 300 miniature structures
- Up to 18 "O" gauge trains, trolleys and cable cars running throughout the display

- 10,000 hand-made trees
- 4,000 miniature people engaged in everyday daily pursuits
- Many rivers, streams and waterways
- Interactive animations such as a circus parade, construction workers, saw mill workers and more that can be activated by visitors
- 600 miniature light bulbs

The display is constructed with:

- 21,500 feet of electrical wiring
- 17,700 board feet of lumber
- 6,000 feet of building paper
- 4,000 feet of sheet metal under the plaster work
- 2,250 feet of railroad track
- 648 feet of canvas for waterproofing
- 450 feet of pipe
- 18,000 pounds of plaster
- 4,000 pounds of sheet iron
- 900 pounds of nails
- 600 pounds of rubber roofing material
- 75 pounds of dry paint
- 75 gallons of liquid paint
- 225 bushels of moss
- 25 bags of cement
- Three barrels of screened sawdust
- Three barrels of tar

Roadside America remained unchanged since Gieringer died in 1963.



A photo of part of the display and Mr. Gieringer's granddaughter beside one of the models.

oo-000-oo

oo-000-oo

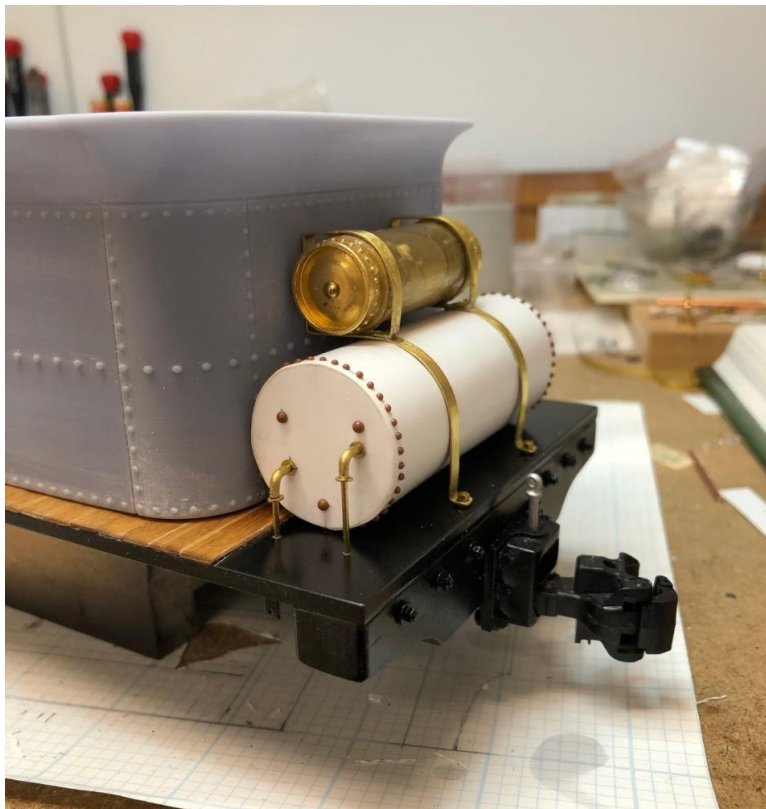
Easley show postponed

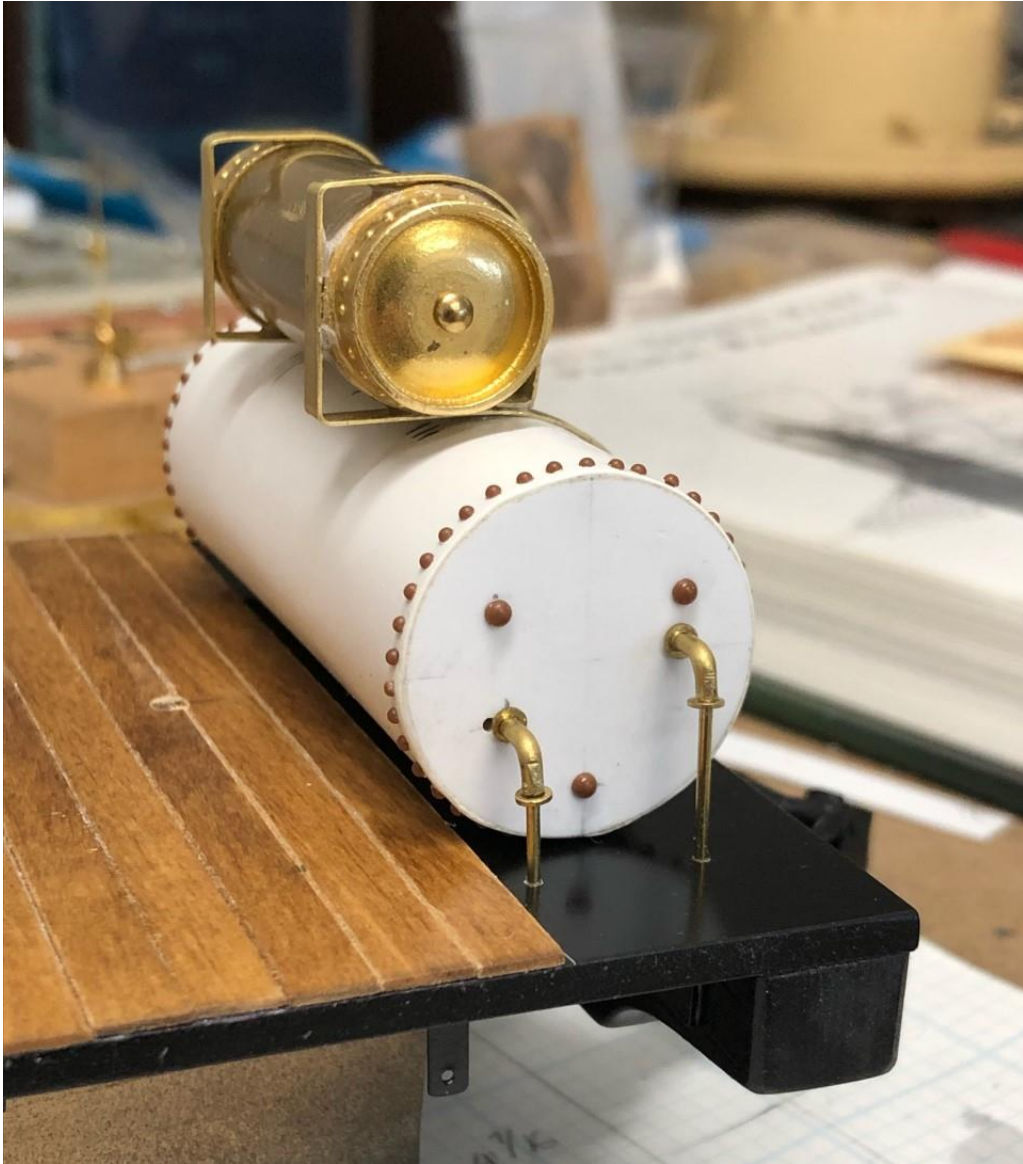
The Central Railway Museum & Historical Association had been aiming to try and have their train show in Easley SC in February. They have now pushed it back until May 14th & 15th...Hopefully.

oo-000-oo

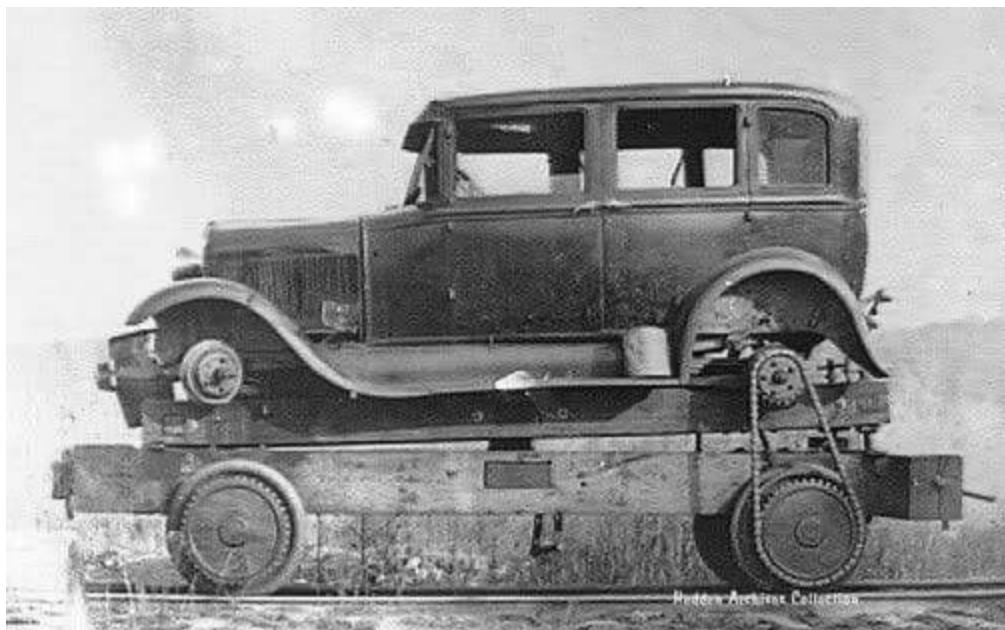
MEMBER PHOTOS:

Doc has finished installing his air tanks on his Mogul.





Bill Huntman sends this photo along of a flashy rail car. He does not know its origin but suspects a logging company may have been involved.



oo-000-oo

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

oo-000-oo

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

oo-000-oo

Trivia Question: Chicago IL emerged as the major meat processing hub in the mid 19th century. The first consignment of dressed beef left the Chicago stock yards in 1857 in ordinary boxcars retrofitted with bins filled with ice. Placing meat directly against ice resulted in discoloration and affected the taste, proving to be impractical. During the same period Gustavas Swift experimented by moving cut meat using a string of ten boxcars with their doors removed, and made a few test shipments to New York during

the winter months which proved to be an impractical method until a Detroit man named William Davis patented what?

+++++

BONUS Trivia Question: Have you ever seen one of these? What was it used for?



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

oo-000-oo

Train Lovers Luncheons:

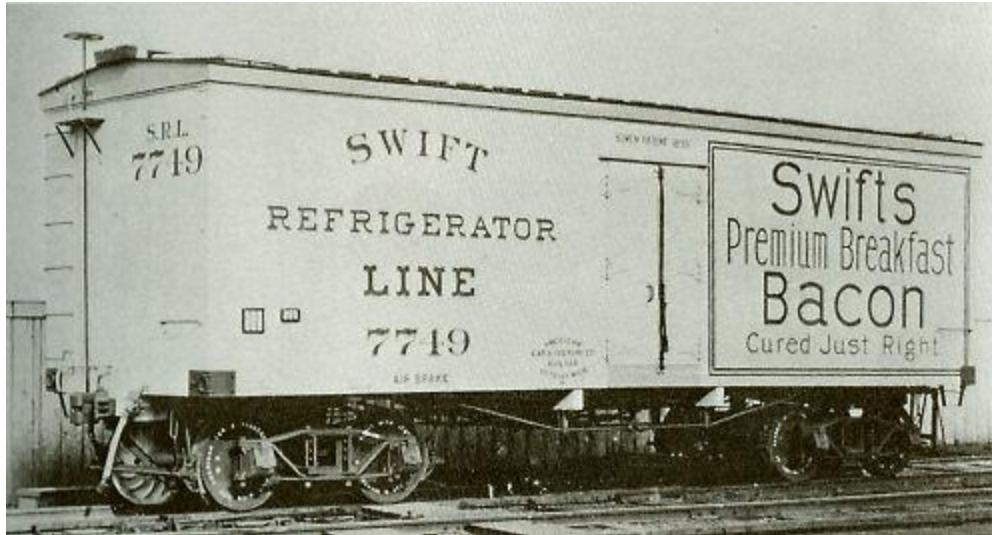
...have been postponed until things get safer with the Coronavirus.

oo-000-oo

oo-000-oo

Trivia Answer: William Davis patented a refrigerator car that employed metal racks to suspend the carcasses above a frozen mixture of ice and salt. In 1868, he sold the design to George H. Hammond, a Detroit meat packer, who built a set of cars to transport his products to Boston using ice from the Great Lakes for cooling. The load had the tendency of swinging to one side when the car entered a curve at high speed, and use of the units was discontinued after several derailments. In 1878 Swift hired engineer Andrew Chase to design a ventilated car that was well insulated, and positioned the ice in a compartment at the top of the car, allowing the chilled air to flow naturally downward. The meat was packed tightly at the bottom of the car to keep the center of gravity low and to prevent the cargo from shifting. Chase's design proved to be a practical solution, providing temperature-controlled carriage of dressed meats. This allowed Swift and Company to ship their products across the United States and internationally.

Swift's attempts to sell Chase's design to major railroads were rebuffed, as the companies feared that they would jeopardize their considerable investments in stock cars, animal pens, and feedlots if refrigerated meat transport gained wide acceptance over transporting live animals which causes damage to the animals and also is less efficient as a large percentage of the animals is non-edible and is more wasteful than central processing and shipping the butchered meats to retailers. In response, Swift financed the initial production run on his own, then — when the American roads refused his business — he contracted with the GTR (a railroad that derived little income from transporting live cattle) to haul the cars into Michigan and then eastward through Canada. In 1880 the Peninsular Car Company (subsequently purchased by ACF) delivered the first of these units to Swift, and the Swift Refrigerator Line (SRL) was created. Within a year, the Line's roster had risen to nearly 200 units, and Swift was transporting an average of 3,000 carcasses a week to Boston, Massachusetts. Competing firms such as Armour and Company quickly followed suit. By 1920, the SRL owned and operated 7,000 of the ice-cooled rail cars. The General American Transportation Corporation would assume ownership of the line in 1930.



oo-000-oo

BONUS Trivia Question:



An 'Iron Pot' Coal Hopper car.

Name: B&O No.23001

Railroad of Record: Baltimore & Ohio Railroad

Type of Car: Iron Pot Hopper

Class: B&O Class Q

Manufactured by: B&O

Date Built: c. 1883

Car Weight: 8 tons

Load Capacity: 20 tons

In 1842, the B&O reached the base of the Alleghenies which increased the railroad's coal shipments east. In order to keep up with the increasing traffic, the B&O created a circular hopper made of iron.

Most railroads used wooden gondolas to haul coal. The new iron hopper was a large pot that tapered at the bottom, so it could dump coal on an open trestle. These hoppers were built of a thin iron plate and could handle the harshness of the coal.

When the B&O received their first iron pot hoppers in 1844, they were four-wheeled cars that carried seven tons in one pot. Over the years, the B&O developed larger versions of the original car. The No. 23001 was built around 1883 and was considered one of the largest and heaviest of the pot hoppers. The No.23001 was capable of carrying 20 tons and featured link and pin couplers and hand brakes. The eventual downfall of the pot hoppers was attributed to the fact that the cars could not be re-fitted with new equipment. The No. 23001 and its sister No. 23002 were displayed at the B&O's 1927 Fair of the Iron Horse.

Businesses associated with our club:

	<p>Jim's Train Sales O & G Gauge New & Used Trains Jim Hendley Etowah, North Carolina 28729 <i>Lionel, MTH, USA Trains, PIKO, LGB Bridgwerks Power Supplies, Bachmann Split-Jaw Rail Clamps, O & G Gauge Track</i></p>
<p><i>Garden Railroad Design Old Trains Wanted</i></p>	<p>Email: jhh1218@att.net Phone: (828) 891-7570 Fax: (828) 890-3346</p>

**** 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

	<p>Peggy Keyes Owner / Chief Conductor RightTrackTrainMuseum@gmail.com 828/625-5551</p>
<p>The Right Track Toy Train Museum A non-profit museum to benefit Pancreatic Cancer research 2414 Memorial Hwy (Rte 64/74) Lake Lure, NC 28746 Find us on Facebook!</p>	

**** 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.**