

PGRS TRACKIN'



The Newsletter of the Piedmont Garden Railway Society

January 2023

Editor: Wayne Hamilton

Greetings

Happy New Year to all our club members. This cold time of year is perfect for bench projects. Please also remember to share information about your railway. 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. Send your materials to: railman1959@aol.com Special thanks to this month's contributors.

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Club Messages

The PGRS Board will be meeting again in January. Please give the board some feedback on the topics they shared with us in the last newsletter. As always, 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. Dues can be mailed to PGRS Secretary/Treasurer at:

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Railfanning - Prototypes to inspire a garden railway layout.

Alabama and Mississippi Train Travels

Part Two

By: Wayne Hamilton

During our last camping excursion into the deep south, we visited several historic depots in Alabama and Mississippi. This month I'll share our visit to Foley, Alabama. Foley is a small town south of Mobile, AL where you can visit the [Foley Railroad Museum – and Model Train Exhibit](#). Housed in the former Louisville and Nashville (L&N) Railroad Depot (ca. 1909), the museum includes several exhibits that include various artifacts and memorabilia related to the area's locomotive history, including a 1,440-square-foot model railroad. The museum is currently owned and operated by the City of Foley with a staff consisting primarily of volunteers from the local Caboose Club of railroad enthusiasts.



Location map

In 1901, Chicago businessman John Burton Foley learned of a large area in south Baldwin County available for purchase while traveling by train to the funeral of Pres. William McKinley. The following year, Foley traveled to the area and purchased as many as 50,000 acres of land before returning to Chicago and forming the Magnolia Land Company to sell off parcels of the land. Foley, needing people to populate the burgeoning town named for him, used his own personal funds to construct a railroad station there in 1905 and even purchased the crossties needed to finish the line. The Bay Minette-Fort Morgan Railway, a branch of the L&N, was the line on which the Foley Railroad Depot was placed. In 1908, the Foley Railroad Depot burned to the ground and was rebuilt the following year. The area was a center of agricultural production of potatoes, corn, gladiolas, and other types of produce, and the depot the hub of the city's vibrant shipping activity.

In 1971, the L&N Railroad discontinued its services to Foley and the depot was slated for demolition. John Snook, owner of the Gulf Telephone Company, bought the depot for one dollar and moved the whole building to the community of Magnolia Springs five miles west of Foley. There, it was used as a warehouse for the phone company. In 1995, the building was deeded back to the city of Foley and returned to its original location to be used as a museum and local archives.



The Foley Railroad Station Historic Depot Museum consists of three main sections: a museum, a model train exhibit, and the city's archives. The museum portion includes various exhibits that display model trains, artifacts, photographs, and memorabilia that tell the story of the train depot and the town's railroad history. Outside of the museum is a full-size train filled with period artifacts as well. In December 2005, the museum completed an annex to house the 24-foot by 60-foot model railroad donated by Alan Goldman of Montgomery, AL in 2004. Club members told us he originally offered his layout to his hometown which refused the donation. The "O"- gauge model railroad set was constructed by group of local railroad club, the "Caboose Club." In February 2007, the model train exhibit was opened to the public; it consists of a quarter mile of track, three operating double-track routes, 12 different trains, and several animated sites. It also includes a model of the town of Foley with houses, office buildings, factories, restaurants, and even a drive-in movie theater, all made to represent Foley in the 1950s. Some of these structures were part of the Goldman donation, but others were constructed by the Caboose Club either from kits or from scratch. The third section of the Foley Railroad Depot houses the city's archives.



Freight-house displays



Model Train layout entrance



O Scale Layout Views



Outside the depot there are several pieces of preserved rolling stock and a switcher SW-1 L & N locomotive.



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The Backshop – Modeling Tips and Projects

A Wildwood Railbus

By: Scott Williams

Doc Watson was so intrigued with the new Piko 35040 R/C Loco Receiver with the Pocket Remote controller that he decided to try one out for himself on his old Delton Doozie Railbus RC/Battery power. Just for s--ts and giggles.



I was so impressed with it that...that I bought it from him, only to tear it all the Hell apart to build a Galloping Goose type railbus of my own design. I have long admired the Galloping Goose models and have wanted one for myself but have found the prices for them these days to be beyond what I was willing to pay.



SO, I decided to build one of my own. I took his 'Doozie' and chopped it all apart and I bought a Bachman Railtruck 'cab' from the Bach-Man parts website and built my own freight body from thin plywood and covered it with styrene sheets and built a new roof and wired a new headlamp with an LED.



My new railbus for my Wildwood Central Railroad is a mythical combination of the Rio Grande Southern Railbus, with a Mack Cab front end.

It runs GREAT and I'm very happy with the results.



The next step is to get lettering made for my 'Mack-Daddy' railbus in Wildwood Central livery. It was a fun project and I love making 'what-if' train models. I hope you like my results.

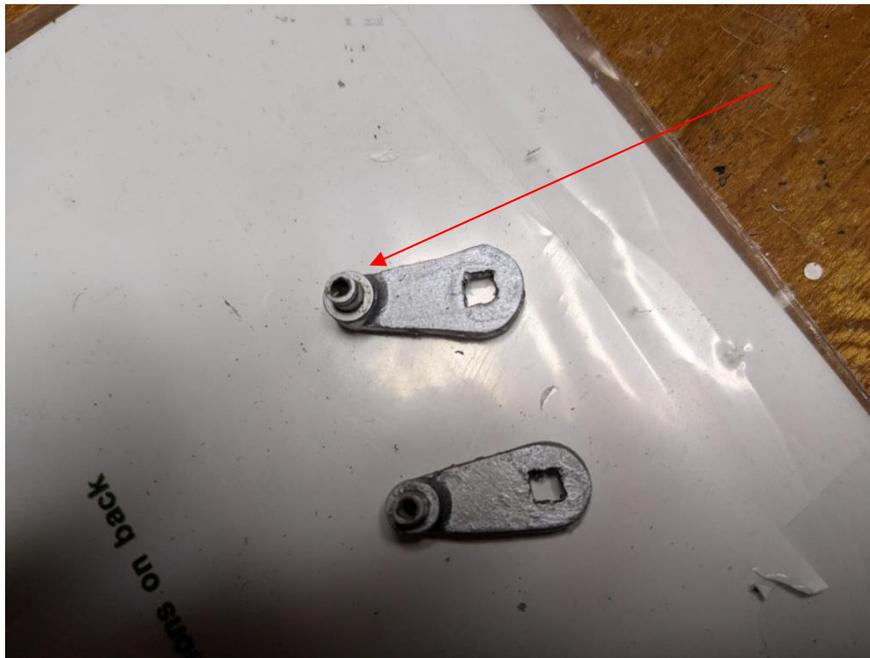
An Aristocraft Pacific Locomotive “Fix” By: Scott Williams

I currently have been restoring and converting an Aristocraft Southern Ps-4 locomotive I bought, accidentally, about 9 years ago. It was not in running condition and I was happy just to look at it on display as a “Shelf Queen”.

A recent fortuitous event occurred that provided me with a new rear axle from a donor locomotive that was left on the doorstep at the Apple Valley Model Railroad club with a pristine rear axle drive gear to replace the one that my model had that was all ground down. I installed a PIKO RC controller and battery and was VERY pleased to find that it ran quite smoothly and was restored to working condition. BONUS!! I thought. But my brother recently pointed out to me that a similar locomotive in the AVMRR collection had cracked valve gear pieces on both sides of the drive rods. If you own this locomotive, you may want to inspect your model. I looked, and ‘sigh’, both pieces had tiny cracks in them. It is destined to fail. The piece in question is, of course, unavailable to replace but I may have hit upon a solution. I removed the pieces and cleaned the oil off them and laminated a thin sheet of .005 styrene with epoxy on both sides of the cracked piece to reinforce the failing part. I don’t know yet if it will solve the problem but remain hopeful that it will prevent a catastrophic failure to an otherwise irreplaceable piece of valve gearing.



If you own this model, I welcome any advice from your experience to restore it to running condition.



The arrow points to the main crack but the piece also had other tiny cracks in it.

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Railroad Trivia

Last month's trivia question didn't produce a response from our readers for the answer for the mystery caboose in Vicksburg, MS. After some internet research, the best guess is this an Illinois Central caboose. That "side door" on the IC cabooses is for crewmen to use when picking up orders/messages. That the person was safely inside the caboose, instead of hanging off the caboose steps, with only one hand holding on while the other arm was used to "hoop the orders".

Here's this month's question. While in Dodge City, Kansas we saw toward the east end of the platform at the Santa Fe railroad station two large sundials. One is set to show the time in the Central Time Zone and the other is set to show the time in the Mountain Time Zone. Amtrak still stops at the station twice each day. Ironically the train bound for Chicago arrives about 12:15 a.m. while the train going to Los Angeles is scheduled to arrive shortly before 6:00 a.m. Seldom do Amtrak passengers see the sundials "at work." **In what year did these time zones become effective?**



The original time zone line ran between the two sundials.

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Some Odd Photos for Modeling Dreams

These were also taken while we were in Dodge City, KS.





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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
 Or....(828) 333-2523



Peggy Keyes
 Owner / Chief Conductor
 RightTrackTrainMuseum@gmail.com
 828.625-5551

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!

<https://www.facebook.com/The-Right-Track-Toy-Train-Museum-141291999274246/>

I am planning to close the Right Track Toy Train Museum at the end of 2023. Hours for both years are Fri., Sat., Sun 1- 5 PM. **2023** - everything that is for sale in the - 50% off.

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

The Asheville Train Lovers Luncheons are on every 2nd Thursday of the month at the Post 25 restaurant in Arden, NC at 11:30.

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

The Columbus Luncheons at Rural Seed are held at 12:00 on the Third Thursday of each month.

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Railroad Trivia Answer

U.S. and Canadian railroads implemented a system of hourly standard time zones proposed by William F. Allen, the editor of the *Traveler's Official Railway Guide*. The borders of its time zones ran through railroad stations, often in major cities. It was inaugurated on Sunday, **November 18, 1883**, also called "The Day of Two Noons", when each railroad station clock was reset as standard-time noon was reached within each time zone.



The Dodge City marker at the 100th meridian west between time zones.

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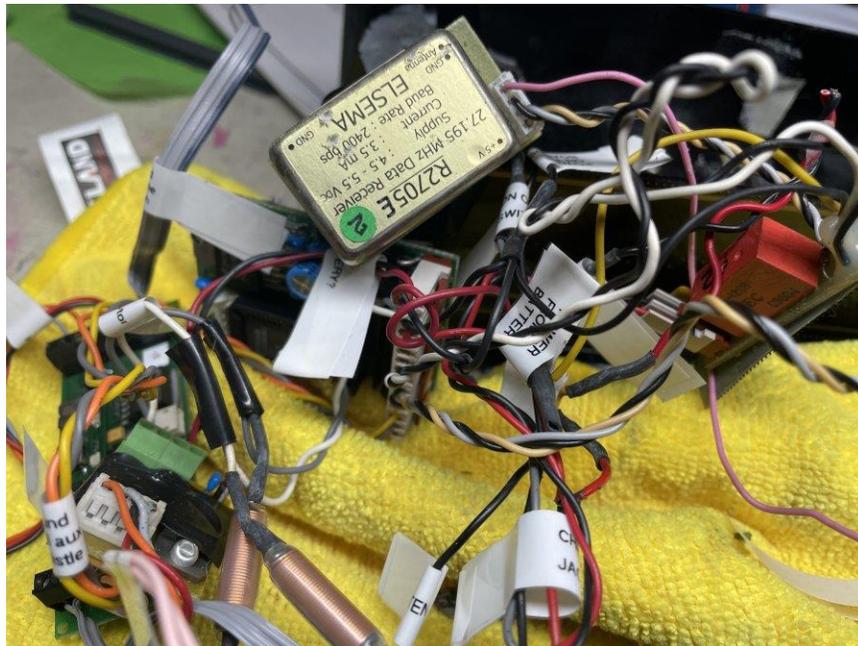
Web Bits

What is a Blunami?

By: Dave Smith

The upcoming large scale Soundtraxx Blunami, in my opinion, will be a game changer. The smaller scale hobbyists are already buying and using their smaller decoders and I hope that Bluetooth will revolutionize large scale as well.

When I first began putting battery power, sound enabled, radio control into my large-scale locomotives, an installation required a radio receiver and a separate sound card as well as a separate handheld transmitter. The first photo shows an RCS system installed over twenty years ago and recently removed from a Bachmann 4-6-0 Spectrum. It consists of a half dozen separate modules and this photo doesn't include the sound card.



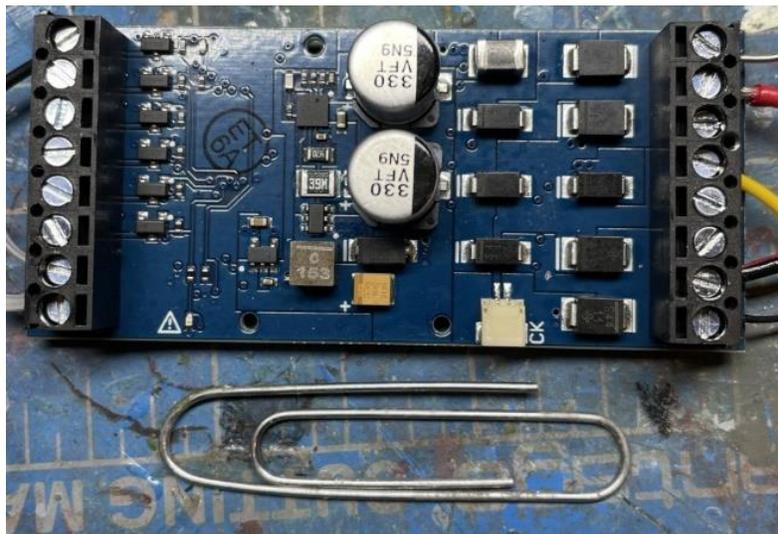
Along came Digital Command Control (DCC) and provided a receiver and sound all in one "decoder". One still needed to buy a DCC throttle or a wireless transmitter and base station. Soundtraxx produced a large scale DCC sound decoder, the TSU-4400, which provided multiple whistles/horns, bells, chuffs and other sounds. This seemed like the ultimate package but still needed a separately purchased transmitter which might or might not communicate well with the installed decoder.

Along comes Blunami by Sountraxx. “Blu” for Bluetooth and “Nami” from their widely used Tsunami DCC decoders.

Using a Bluetooth enabled I-phone (Android app is being developed) one will be able to use an iPhone to send Bluetooth signals directly to a Blunami equipped locomotive and control all the bells, whistles, chuffs and locomotive sounds that existed in the DCC unit. I have enclosed a photo of the 4400 which, I’m told, is the same size as the forthcoming large scale Blunami.

Expected delivery is the first quarter of 2023. There is no price on the Blunami Sound Decoder announced yet, but I recently purchased the DCC 4400 for \$152. This may seem expensive until you remember that, in the “old days”, one needed to buy a radio receiver, a sound card and a transmitter to do less than the forthcoming Blunami. Unlike the decoders in the smaller scale, the large scale Blunami will have wire taps for easier installation of battery power, motor, and speaker connections as well as lighting and chuff connection. Very little or perhaps no soldering of miniscule wires.

We have come from the multi component r/c systems to a Bluetooth enabled system similar in size to the TSU-4400 shown below. Size is approximately. 70mm by 36mm by 14.mm.



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See you next month!