PGRS TRACKIN'

Newsletter of the Piedmont Garden Railway Society

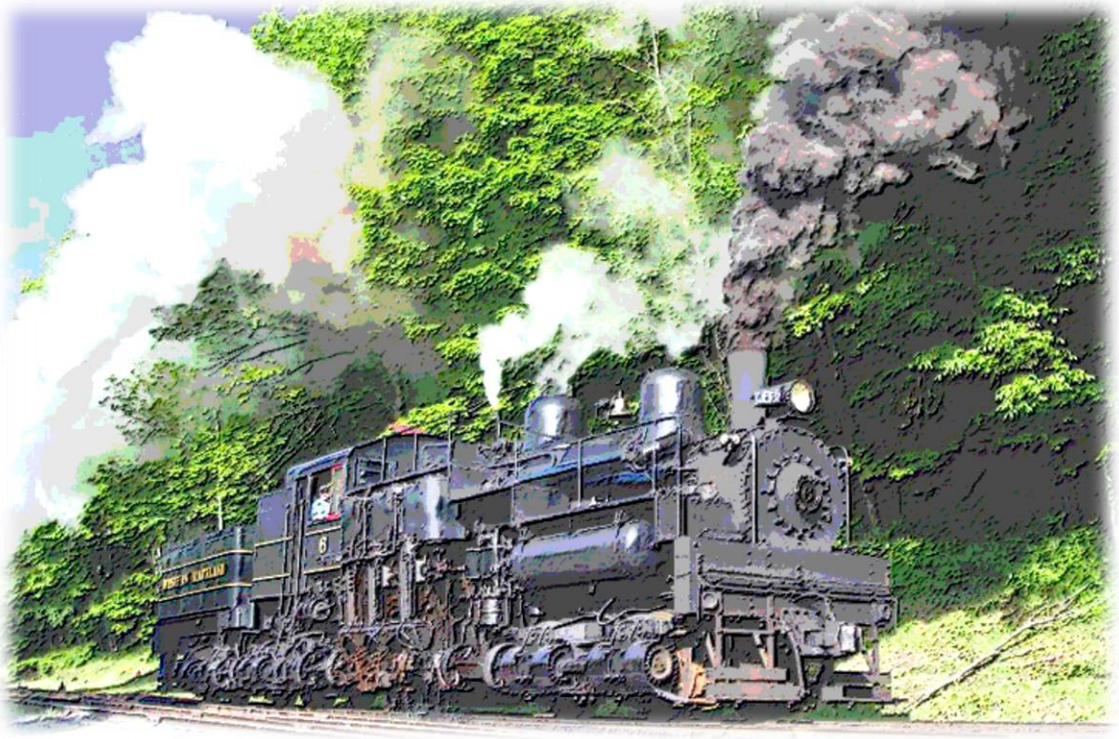
March 2021

Editor: Scott Williams

Greetings PGRS club members.

I am checking my email address database and want everyone who received this newsletter to reply to me if you are receiving them please. Send me a Reply please.

Well, it's a good time of year to take some of your locos out of the box/off the shelf and check the 'lubrication situation' as I like to call it. It's easy to forget when we last checked the grease on main gearbox drive gears or put a tiny bit of oil on drive rods and valve gear.



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Groundhog day. Terry Ketcham emailed me with some photos on the 2nd of February and I decided to add them right away. It is only 27 degrees outside as I type this so I'm working on indoor projects but I guess to shake off the cold Terry decided to get a head of steam up!

Terry includes this copy:

"Every now and then I like to take one of my live steam engines out to my back deck and fire it up. My latest steamer is a Roundhouse Davenport which comes with radio control factory installed and a hand held transmitter for direction and throttle control. There is a large sight glass to check the boilers water level and a pressure gauge on the fireman's side for easy viewing. The batteries to power the 2 servos are neatly stored under the cabs roof. After opening the fuel valve, you lite the burner by holding a lighter at the top of the smoke stack. It takes about 7 minutes for this engine to produce around 20 lbs of pressure at which time you can crack the throttle and watch the engine come to life. It seems to run about 25 minutes before I need to add more water to the boiler. On cold days the visible steam is impressive and enjoyable to watch. Can't wait to take it down to the club's layout and put some rolling stock behind it."


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EX7

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Doc sends a photo of the coal load on the Mogul Project he’s working on:

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Larry Williams sends a ‘heads-up’ on; **Operations on a Fn3 Layout**

“There is a nice article in **Model Railroad Hobbyist** this month on operations on a modest size Fn3 backyard layout. It’s a nice looking narrow gauge layout and it may give you some ideas on how to do some switching operations on your layout. The article is on pages 70-82 in the January, 2021 issue.

If you are not familiar with **Model Railroad Hobbyist**, it is an e magazine at Model-Railroad-Hobbyist.com or mrhmag.com. **It is free**, although they want you to register. This gives proof to their advertisers how many people are viewing. It is monthly and although mostly for smaller scales, it does have occasional large-scale pieces, and *it is free*."

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Larry also forwards this message along:

Meet Eric Shade

Eric is a large scale modeler from Phippsburg, Maine. He is the owner and operator of the Winnegance & Quebec. It is a model of a Maine 2 foot railroad with radio controlled live steam engines. He is a talented individual who scratch-builds most of his cars and structures. He builds kayaks, so is an accomplished woodworker with a well equipped shop. He also builds his own people and most of his engines are commercial live steamers heavily modified to resemble Maine 2 footers.

Besides being talented, he certainly seems to stay busy. He volunteers at the Wiscasset & Waterville Ry museum, where he helps restore real live 2 foot equipment. (wwfry.org). But the main thing that I wanted to mention is that he produces videos of his railroad. Here is a link to a short one on plowing snow in January.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ynf0siuR05g

If you can't make a the link work, just go to youtube.com and search Winnegance & Quebec. He has been making them for years. There are dozens and dozens.

Larry Williams

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White River Productions is now doing a pre-sale price on a new annual publication:

Offer good through February 28, 2021. $22.00, Regular price $24.95, plus shipping.

“Large scale railroading outdoors is magical and our new Annual brings that to you, just in time for Spring. The debut issue is packed with building and how-to projects along with great layout tours and our Garden Gallery photo feature, filled with great shots from readers like you! Brimming with information on prototype trains to flights of fancy and whimsy; whatever your style, you’ll find the Garden Trains Annual is for you. Featuring:”

The Making of the Model: Accucraft Mason Bogie

In-Scale Ground Cover

Garden Live Steam Basics

New Life for an Old Bachmann

Build a Two-Foot Flatcar in 7/8"

The Cat Shed Turntable

Springtime Track Maintenance

And more.

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Pete Gendron saw this posted on Quora and thought this was interesting and wanted to share it:

Why are train engines not turned off? How long do train engines last?

Randy Topechka, Locomotive Mechanic at Canadian National Railway Company (2017-present)

“There are a few reasons why most locomotive engines aren't turned off. For one, locomotive engines do not use antifreeze additives in the cooling water: it's just regular water with a corrosion inhibitor in it that prevents rust and scale build up in the cooling system. If an engine was shut down in freezing temperatures, then the water would freeze causing catastrophic damage (or in almost all locomotives, there is a drain valve built in which drains all the water out of the cooling system if the unit shuts down in cold weather before it reaches freezing temps).

The second reason is to keep the air system charged in the locomotive and the train behind it. Without that air, a train can lose it brakes. This is why we set handbrakes in the train cars so it's fairly safe unless something goes wrong like what happened in Lac Megantic Quebec. But safety isn't the only factor: operation is too. With a train drained of air, it can take anywhere from 30 minutes to over an hour to fully charge the air system on a train. This is time that isn't spent moving which means it's lost productivity.

Speaking of lost productivity, this brings me to the third reason we don't shut off the engine: cold engines need time to warm up before they are put to work. All engines should be warmed up before you start pulling, but the older engines had no way of ensuring this actually happened and so we could take off running when still cold. The newer engines however have protections built into them that limit the amount of horsepower they will produce until they are warm. GE engines for example won't load to full horsepower until the oil temp has been above 140 degrees Fahrenheit for a period of 4 minutes. This also takes a long time, depending on ambient temperatures. If you’re sitting for an hour waiting for an engine to warm up, that's also time not spent productively.

Now to go off on a tangent, most locomotives do shut down the engines automatically for short periods. They have auto start/stop systems which monitor things like ambient

air temperature, coolant temperature, battery voltage, air system pressure, and other things. If all these parameters are within set limits, the computer will shut the locomotive off. If one or more parameters fall out of limits, the computer automatically restarts the unit. Also, it isn't uncommon for crews to shut down units in the yard which are not currently being used when weather is warm. These have to be manually started and warmed up before use or if freezing weather is predicted.

To answer to your second question, at my railway we replace the Diesel engines after 10 years and send them for full overhaul. However, some fail before that, and none will have all its original components still in it. Train engines are designed to be very modular. Individual Cylinder packs (called power assemblies) can be changed out fairly easily, and get done regularly. Camshafts, rocker arms, injectors, gaskets, turbochargers, water and oil pumps all get done on a routine or regular basis. Sometimes it's failure, other times, like with injectors and water pumps, it's part of a scheduled maintenance program. The only thing that isn't routinely repaired is the engine block itself, the crankshaft, the main bearings, and the engine accessory geartrains. I don't see these failures very often however meaning most engines make it to their 10-year overhaul day.

Hope this answers your questions."

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Scenes from the workshops:

Pete Gendron has some projects going and some stored for the future too:

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Terry Ketcham says: *“My workbench is basically used to store my small tools, parts, etc. I do all my building on the 40 year old Craftsman Radial Arm saw table. I have a nice stool to sit on, TV mounted on the wall to the right of the saw and a relaxing view out the sliding door behind the saw which I look at when I get frustrated with the On30 flat car kit I’m working on now.”*

Terry adds this conundrum many of us have encountered:

“I don’t know how this always happens. I start building a flat car kit on an empty 18”x 40” work surface and end up with a 6”x9” work space.”

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MEMBER PHOTOS:

He's not a PGRS member but Jeff Damerst who owns **Shawmut Car Shops** is making some new waterslide decals for my On30 railroad and he's a real nice guy and usually sends me some photos of some of his modelling. This is a diorama of a G scale house with a Z scale garden railroad that I thought was kind of cool:

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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

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Trivia Question: What was the significance of the St. Clair Tunnel?

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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
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docwatson@morrisbb.net

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Train Lovers Luncheons:

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

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Trivia Answer: The first underwater rail tunnel in North America was opened by the St. Clair Tunnel Company in 1891. The company was a subsidiary of the Grand Trunk Railway (GTR), which used the new route to connect with its subsidiary Chicago and Grand Trunk Railway, predecessor to the Grand Trunk Western Railroad (GTW). Before the tunnel's construction, Grand Trunk was forced to use time-consuming rail ferries to transfer cargo.

The tunnel was an engineering marvel in its day and designed by Joseph Hobson. The development of original techniques was achieved for excavating in a compressed air environment. The Beach tunneling shield, designed by Alfred Ely Beach, was used to assist workmen in removing material from the route of the tunnel and left a continuous iron tube nearly 7,000 feet long. Freight trains used the tunnel initially with the first passenger trains using it in 1892.

The tunnel measured 6,025 feet from portal to portal. The actual width of the St. Clair River at this crossing is only 2,290 feet. The tube had a diameter of 19 feet 10 inches and hosted a single standard gauge track. It was built at a cost of $2.7 million.

Steam locomotives were used in the early years to pull trains through the tunnel, and they were unique Baldwin Camelback decapods. [0-10-0]

Camelback tank locomotive number 598 was built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works, construction number 11586, in February of 1891, and with her three sisters, was assigned to move trains through the newly completed St. Clair Tunnel. In this photo, the brand new number 598 is posed with tiny 0-4-0 saddle-tank switcher number 1, the "W. J. Rainey." No doubt the idea was to showcase the range of sizes that Baldwin was capable of producing. The class was quickly equipped with tenders for added capacity, and in 1898 the side tanks were removed and the locomotives renumbered, the 598 becoming the 1301. Later the 1301 was fitted with a conventional cab as well. After electrification in 1907, the locomotives were transferred to other duties. Number 1301 was renumbered to 2650 in 1910, and was retired and scrapped in 1920.

The photo below shows # 1304 at the tunnel entrance:

Concerns about the potential dangers of suffocation should a train stall in the tunnel led to the installation of catenary wires for electric-powered locomotives by 1907. The first use of electric locomotives through the tunnel in regular service occurred on May 17, 1908. The locomotives were built by Baldwin-Westinghouse.

In 1923, the GTR was nationalized by Canada's federal government, which then merged the bankrupt railway into the recently formed Canadian National Railway. CN also assumed control of Grand Trunk Western as a subsidiary and the tunnel company and continued operations much as before.

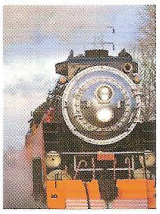
The electric-powered locomotives were retired in 1958 and scrapped in 1959 after CN retired and scrapped its last steam-powered locomotives on trains passing through the tunnel. New diesel-powered locomotives did not cause the same problems with air quality in this relatively short tunnel. By 1960 the dimensions of many newer types of freight cars had increased so that CN was forced to use railcar ferries. The tunnel was designated a Civil Engineering Landmark by both the Canadian and the American Societies of Civil Engineers in 1991.

With negotiations underway in 1992 for NAFTA, new CN president Paul Tellier foresaw that CN would increase its traffic in the Toronto–Chicago corridor. A second larger tunnel was bored and opened up in late 1994 and the original tunnel bore was sealed. In 2004 the new tunnel was dedicated in Mr. Tellier’s name.

**Incident

On June 28, 2019, train CN M383-28, hauling 100+ cars, had 40 cars derail in the tunnel, spilling 13,700 gallons of sulfuric acid and closing the tunnel for several days afterwards. The tunnel re-opened on July 10, 2019.

Businesses associated with our club:



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Email: jhh1218@att.net
Phone; (828) 891-7570
Fax: (828) 890-3346

** **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

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!

** 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.