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**The Newsletter of the  
Piedmont Garden Railway Society**

**March 2023**

**Editor: Wayne Hamilton**

**Greetings**

We are starting a monthly newsletter series on “So, You Want to Build a Garden Railroad?” with this issue. Thanks to Doc Watson for assisting in this series. If anyone else has thoughts to share on this idea, please contact me. We hope this series could take some folks from planning to construction, then operating. Please send any idea, project, photo, or 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](mailto:railman1959@aol.com) Special thanks to this month’s contributors.

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**Club Messages**

The next PGRS Trainfest will be held on March 11th, 2023, from 10am – 3pm. As required by our By-Laws, we will begin with our annual club meeting. The meeting will include a brief Treasurers report followed by the election/re-election of officers. We would greatly encourage any of you members to volunteer to serve as an officer. We will have the same room we used last year at Lutheridge at 2511 Hendersonville Road in Arden, NC. The room is also available at 8am-5pm for set-up and break-down needs. Our annual dues of \$20 will be collected at this meeting.

Coffee and donuts will be served in the morning and a cold lunch with beverages will also be provided. As before, a drawing will be held for some great door prizes.

We are looking for donations from the members to supplement those prizes purchased by the club. So far, we have two presentations scheduled:

*Track Work Basics:* Several knowledgeable members will present information on how to prepare and lay large scale track. This will include how to lay, connect and bend track using a railbender, the best methods for installing and operating turnouts/switches and what turnout numbers mean as far a radius is concerned. Suggestions will also be provided on how to wire and power your trains.

*How to hold a Gandy Dancer event:* Randy Theis will define and tell you how to hold a successful Gandy Dancer event.

Here are several Train Shows you can place on your calendar:

March 24-25: Savannah RPM                      Mar 31-Apr 1: Hickory Train Show  
June 2-3: Johnson City Train Show        Sept 14-17: SER Convention - Cartersville, GA  
April 14-15: East Coast Large Scale Train Show – Annapolis, MD  
July 1-8: 38th National Garden Railroad Convention – Santa Clara, CA  
Aug 30-Sept 2: 43<sup>rd</sup> National Narrow-Gauge Convention – Denver, CO



A happy Gary and Fran manning our PGRS table at the recent WNC Train Show

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:

Doc Watson  
125 Mistletoe Trail  
Hendersonville, NC 28791  
[docwatson@morrisbb.net](mailto:docwatson@morrisbb.net)

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**Railfanning - Prototypes to inspire a garden railway layout.**

**Mississippi and Louisiana Train Travels  
Part Four and the last part!  
By: Wayne Hamilton**

During our last camping excursion into the deep south, we visited several historic railroading sites in several states. This month I'll share our visit to Meridian, Mississippi and New Orleans, Louisiana.

The Meridian Railroad Museum is in the heart of downtown Meridian, Mississippi. The Meridian Railroad Museum is housed in the former freight station and Railway Express Agency building adjacent to the Meridian Union Station and the Norfolk Southern mainline. Built in 1906 in the Mission Revival style, the station and freight house served a variety of fallen flag passenger trains throughout the 20th century, including the Gulf, Mobile & Ohio, the Illinois Central, and the Southern Railway. The museum includes a trio of retired rolling stock, including a caboose from the nearby Meridian & Bigbee short line. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Meridian Rails Historical Society took possession of the building in November of 2021 when the Meridian City Council voted to donate the building to the society for usage of a permanent home for the railroad museum.



The Meridian Rails Historical Society announced plans for an even larger scale railroad museum along Front Street in Downtown Meridian, Mississippi. The design is shown below.



While this is very ambitious, the current museum location is very interesting.



Adjacent Amtrak Station



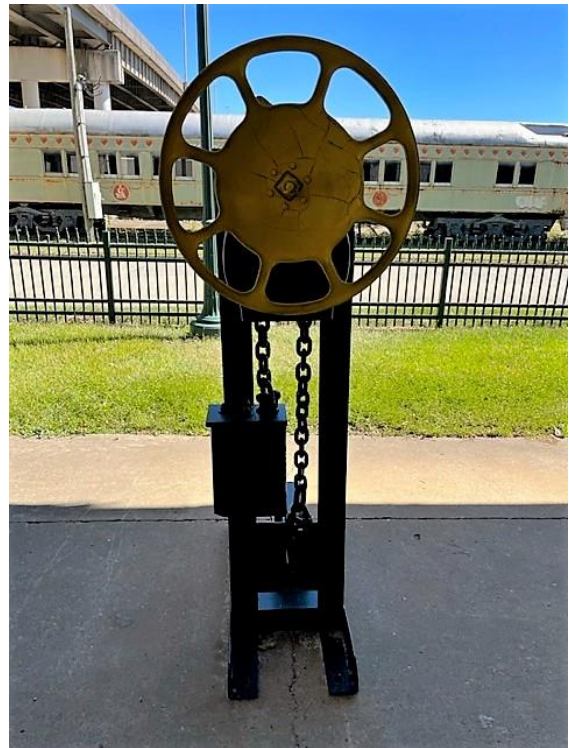
Plain area for passengers to board



Museum Interiors



Civil War Displays



Other outdoor displays



REA Historical marker



Rolling stock



L & N Coach

While in New Orleans, we got to see the **New Orleans Public Belt Railroad** in operation. The New Orleans Public Belt Railroad (reporting mark NOPB) is a Class III railroad, and a subsidiary of the Port of New Orleans. It connects with six Class I railroads serving the city, and provides switching and haulage service. It is estimated that one-third of the United States' east-west rail freight crosses the Mississippi on the Huey P. Long Bridge segment of the railroad.

Connections and interchanges are made with the following railroads:

BNSF Railway      CSX Transportation      Canadian National/Illinois Central  
Kansas City Southern      Norfolk Southern      Union Pacific      Amtrak



The railroad is managed by the Public Belt Railroad Commission, which also owns and maintains the Huey P. Long Bridge. NOPB covers over 100 miles of track with ten locomotives. No funding is received from the city; operating and capital expenses are covered by operating revenues.





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## **The Backshop – Modeling Tips and Projects**

### **So, You Want to Build a Garden Railroad?**

This newsletter series will attempt to cover many aspects of starting a garden railway over the next few months. We intent to cover planning concepts, inside or outside layout design, trackwork, power and wiring, structures, helpful tools, and operational schemes to name a few. I hope most of our members can attend Train Fest this month. Our presenters will cover a lot of the same topics this series will address and hopefully inspire you to get building on the railroad that you had only been dreaming of. We'll start this month off with planning concepts.

There is no really correct and perfect garden RR. You must decide what you are trying to achieve and for how long. Someone may decide they want to lay some temporary track down for a party or Christmas time. A simple oval 10-foot track on the lawn may work. Others may want a more permanent layout. What do you want to achieve? Perhaps a complicated layout housing many trains with lots of switches and bridges and computerized technology. Others may want a miniature scaled town, or replication of a famous landmark. Another popular choice is replicating

nature with canyons, mountains, forests, etc. Maybe it's truly a "garden RR" and you simply wish to make your garden more beautiful, fun, and interactive.

Everything you do in your construction will be a compromise with scale, performance, quality, and visual impact. You need to have a clear direction of what you are trying to achieve. Hopefully, this series will save you time and money so you will make an informed decisions about the dos and don'ts about building your own garden RR correct the first time.

**The size and scope** of your garden RR should be your first thought. What do you want to achieve? How much are you willing to spend to achieve this? Property size and how much of it are you (and your partner) willing to dedicate to this train layout? A well thought out design works and possibly adds value to your property. A poor design could devalue your home value.



**Reality check:** I've been collecting and involved with trains my entire life. However, their value rarely goes up at resale. This hobby is for you and your family's enjoyment. Be realistic, this project like most hobbies, are seldom a money-maker or wise monetary investment.

**Enjoyment:** My reality check here is good. The people that tend to gravitate to this hobby are typically very friendly, helpful, interesting people. Most are more than willing to share knowledge, expertise, time, and maybe even physically help you build your layout. It's always fun to share your RR accomplishments with like-minded people. I have honestly found that although participating in the hobby may not be for all people, almost everyone loves trains (from the very young to the very old). Most people love to see a well-designed train layout.



**Budget?** I think the first thing you need to consider is how hard are you willing to work? Are you capable of doing the necessary building, digging, earth moving? Do you realistically have the talent to construct things? Know your limitations. Are you lacking in the strength, time, talent, knowledge, craftsmanship, or money? Your deficit in certain areas doesn't mean it can't be done. You just may have to hire or obtain help from others. Is this in your budget? Your limitations should be a factor in the scope of your layout.

**Be sure about what you are trying to accomplish.** I think this is the biggest single issue with the garden RR project. Many have the goal of beautifying their backyard. This is often, not the case. You may see a really cool expensive train running in your backyard. Your non-RR guests may see something completely different. They may wonder why in the world you removed that beautiful flower garden to put in a pile of dirt and a train. Your goal should be to have a working-fun RR that actually works

with and beautifies your backyard. If you just want to have fun running your trains in a big dirt flat field. That's okay, just know what you want.

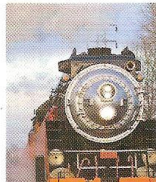
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### Railroad Trivia

Last month we saw a short railroad found in the U.S. What is the shortest railway in Canada? The answer is found later in this newsletter.

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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](mailto: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. Also, when I do open for this year I could use some help, particularly with running the trains. Since everything in the museum must be sold, I could not handle the sales and the trains. I plan to open on April 14 with it being open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 1PM to 5PM and would love some help. Everything that is for sale is 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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### **Member Stories By: Scott Williams**

I had been thinking of downsizing my train collection the last few years and last year I sold off all of my Southern RR heavyweight passenger cars and matching EMD F3 diesel locomotives at the PGRS Trainfest to gain much needed space in my train room and was very happy that they were going to great new home.

BUT, recently, Jon Bole, also decided to downsize too. Jon just happened to own a locomotive I have long 'LUSTED' after and he offered it to me at a price I simply could not resist.



So much for downsizing. I now have to find room in my train room for this 4-foot-long BEHEMOTH!!

AND, to do this locomotive justice I probably now need to buy about 20 coal hopper cars. [Laugh!]

My train room is already full and I now need to re-arrange things just to build a new shelf for this 2-8-8-2 beast. [SIGH]



And speaking of Jon Bole, he shares this: After a long history in garden railroading I am downsizing drastically. I am holding an open house on March 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> with a rain date the next weekend. I have about 500 ft of track and around 40 buildings and many small items such as little people. There will be no rolling stock; that is already gone. My prices will be most reasonable. Please come.

Jon Bole  
900 Club Rd.  
Tryon N.C.  
828-894-5003

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## Railroad Trivia Answer

The Bayside Canadian Railway is an extremely short railway in Bayside, New Brunswick, Canada. The railway consists of a single track of about 220 ft, two flatbed rail cars, one FTD Trackmobile railcar mover and a loading ramp. A video on YouTube shows the entire return trip to take about 45 seconds. Its apparent sole purpose is to perform as a Canadian railway, to take advantage of a loophole in the Jones Act that would normally forbid the use of foreign-flagged vessels in shipping between two U.S. ports. The American Seafoods Group ship frozen pollock from Dutch Harbor, Alaska), via the Panama Canal to the Eastern United States. The Jones Act requires the use of U.S.-flagged vessels when shipping between two U.S. ports, but there is an exemption when part of the route is over Canadian rail lines. American Seafoods has been using foreign-flagged shipping "for years", and, until 2012, they used a 30-mile long route of shipping by the New Brunswick Southern Railway.



However, in 2012, this practice had changed such that the fish was transferred to trucks in Bayside, the truck driving up a loading ramp onto one of two flatbed railcars. Then a tiny shunter locomotive pulled the cars to the other end of the railroad track, reversed and pushed the train back to the loading ramp, after which the truck would drive off the ramp and then enter the US via Calais, Maine.

On August 16, 2021, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) gave American Seafoods notice of \$350 million in penalties for alleged violations of the Jones Act. CBP claimed that the Bayside Canadian Railway is not a "through route" and that the proviso in the Jones Act therefore does not apply. The company sued in federal court, arguing the penalties prevented them from delivering their product, interfering with the affordable supply of pollock for school lunches. A judge allowed the current practice to continue awaiting litigation.

Check out these videos on this strange railway.

[Rapido TOFC Flatcars...and the World's Smallest Railway???](#) - YouTube

[Canada's 100-Foot Freight Railway To Nowhere](#) - YouTube

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**Web Bits**

**From The N.C. Transportation Museum:  
Steam Over Spencer: A Live Model Train Event!**

**March 2-4, 2023, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

[Steam Over Spencer: A Live Steam Model Train Event | NC Transportation Museum](#)

Join us March 2-4 for “Steam Over Spencer: A Live Steam Model Train Event.” The North Carolina Transportation Museum’s Back Shop will be home to several large operating model train layouts featuring scale model locomotives that are powered by live steam! Locomotives and railroad cars in a variety of scales will be featured during this event, which is included in regular museum admission pricing. These locomotives produce their own power from a variety of fuel sources rather than being powered by an electric current through the track, making them different from conventional electric trains. Owners of these fascinating models are expected to come from across the country to share their detailed collections with other hobbyists and museum visitors.

Kids and adults alike will enjoy watching these model trains in action. While you’re here, be sure to check out the museum’s full sized steam locomotives on display in the Bob Julian Roundhouse, ride the museum’s train (Saturday only), and tour the Museum That Moves You!

**Included in General Admission**

**Adults: \$6**

**Seniors/Military: \$5**

**Children 3-12: \$4**

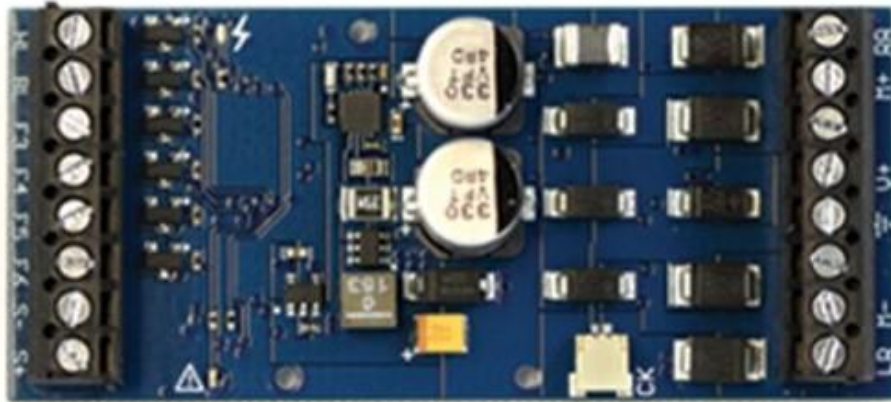
**Members and Children Under 3: FREE**



**Admission + Train Ride**  
**Adults: \$12**  
**Seniors/Military: \$10**  
**Children 3-12: \$8**  
**Members and Children Under 3: FREE**

### **The Blunami BLU-4408**

A few months ago, Soundtraxx announced a new decoder for large scale. We previewed it in an issue of this newsletter. They are now being sold as pre-orders on many web sites. The BLU-4408 is designed to wirelessly operate models with higher stall currents such as some S, O, and large-scale locomotives; this decoder features easy-to-use terminal blocks for no-fault wiring and a higher audio amplifier for awesome volume, indoors or out. Blunami decoders can be operated in three different ways: DC, DCC and Wireless mode. Using the Blunami app (iOS versions 8 or later), you can operate your locomotive with incredible ease of use. It has features that Tsunami2 has to offer including Reactive Dynamic Digital Exhaust, Functioning locomotive and train brakes, injectors, power reverse, and firebox flicker. They also offer a large selection of selectable sound effects including: exhaust chuffs(10), prime movers (up to 12), bells (12), Whistles (90), airhorns (40+), couplers, dynamos and more! The retail price is estimated to be between \$195.00 to \$205.00.



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**See you at Train Fest!**