

PGRS TRACKIN'



The Newsletter of the Piedmont Garden Railway Society

September 2024

EDITOR'S GREETING

Greetings from the upper peninsula of Michigan. As I starting preparing this edition we're still on the road enjoying the beautiful National Parks of our country. We have been able to ride a few more trains as well. As always, a special thank you to this month's contributors.



CLUB NEWS

Fall Train Fest will be upon us soon. We welcome ideas or presentations for this meeting. Please contact your club officers with any ideas, suggestions, or presentations you may wish to give.

There are a few things we also want you to consider in supporting the PGRS. Spring is election of club officers. It is time we had some different members step up and carry on with club duties.

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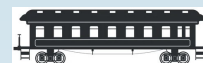
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CLUB NEWS Continued

Enough of that, back to Train Fest with a few more thoughts. The turn out for drag-n-brag was excellent last spring. It is proposed to expand this segment and ask that members include a short presentation about their model or subject presented to the entire group. We also ask members to consider a short talk about what they are doing in their personal garden railroad activities, sort of a round-table type discussion.

This fall's Train Fest will be at Lutheridge in Arden on Saturday, October 12th. More information will be sent out as details are finalized,

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:

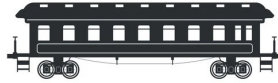
Don Watson
125 Mistletoe Trail
Hendersonville, NC 28791

Train Show Calendar reminders:

November 15-16: Asheville Train Show

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

Besides the 4-8-8-4 Big Boy, what other locomotive named class was considered a powerhouse as a 2-8-8-4? 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

The Lake Superior Railroad Museum is a railroad museum in Duluth, Minnesota, United States. Opened in 1973, the museum focuses on railroading in the Lake Superior region. It is housed in the restored Duluth Union Depot. The North Shore Scenic Railroad is a heritage railroad that operates between Duluth and Two Harbors, Minnesota, along 28 miles of the Lakefront Line, once part of the Duluth, Missabe and Iron Range Railroad. We were able to tour the museum and ride the train up to Two Harbors. This is a six hour trip that has a 2 hour layover at Two Harbors for lunch.



RAILFANNING— Continued



Our train car at the Two Harbors, MN depot and museum.

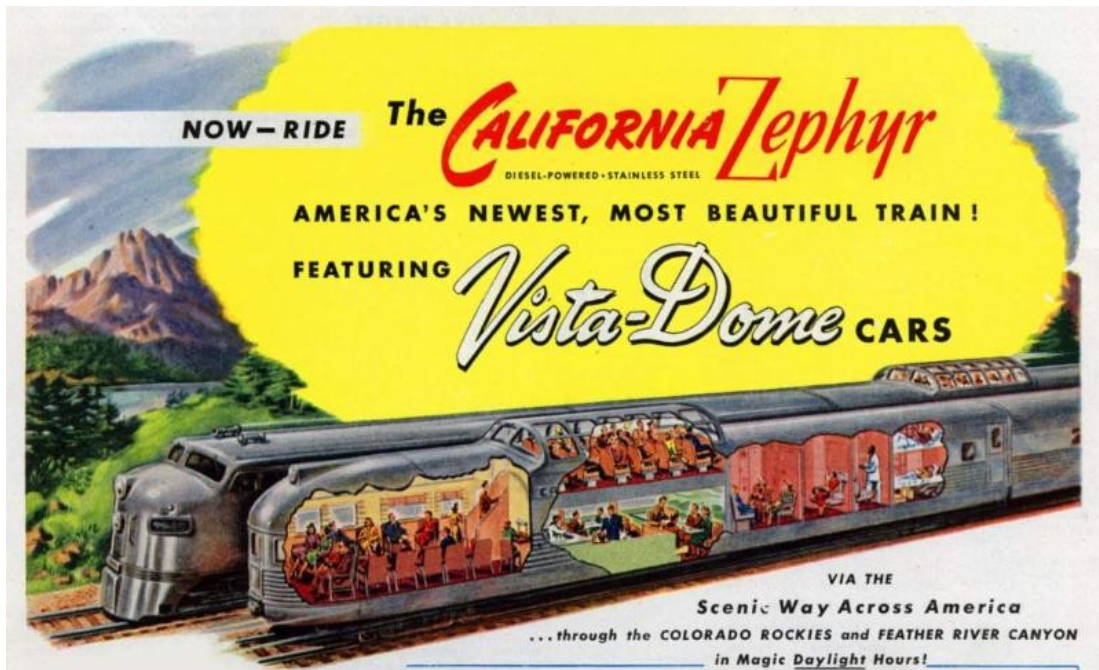
Our car interiors, everyone had gotten off for lunch.



RAILFANNING— Continued



All of the Western Pacific dome coaches were sold to the original Auto-Train where the car worked until service was discontinued in April 1981. "Silver Palace" passed through several owners, including the late country and western star Merle Haggard, and along the way was reconfigured into a lounge/private car .



RAILFANNING— Continued



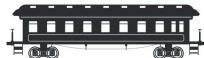
SD45 power for our trip. The caboose and boxcar provided power and a steam generator for the passenger cars.



RAILFANNING— Continued



The Duluth Depot and the main lobby interiors below. This is the street side view and you go downstairs to board trains. The Lake Superior Railroad Museum is also in this depot with inside and outside displays.



THE BACKSHOP

MODELING PROJECTS AND TIPS

This is an older article I came across and am reprinting here. It's by Paul Race titled Building the NEW New Boston and Donnels Creek Railroad.

I love running trains outside. I love gardening. But when we moved in late 2016, I knew something would have to change if I wanted to keep running trains outside for very much longer.

Maintaining our old 70'x16' retaining-wall-and-dirt railroad took too much work to keep up. Yes, it was lovely to look at, especially after I had just spent 30 hours or so weeding and clearing the right-of-way, much of it on my hands and knees.

But at least one reason for having a garden railroad is to run trains, and I spent far, far more time doing maintenance every summer than I ever did running trains. Not to mention that my back and knees aren't what they used to be.

I also got tired of telling visitors who dropped by unexpectedly to come back in a week if they wanted to see the trains running.

So, for the new place, I planned an entirely raised railroad, with an attached shed so I could have trains ready to go at a moment's notice.

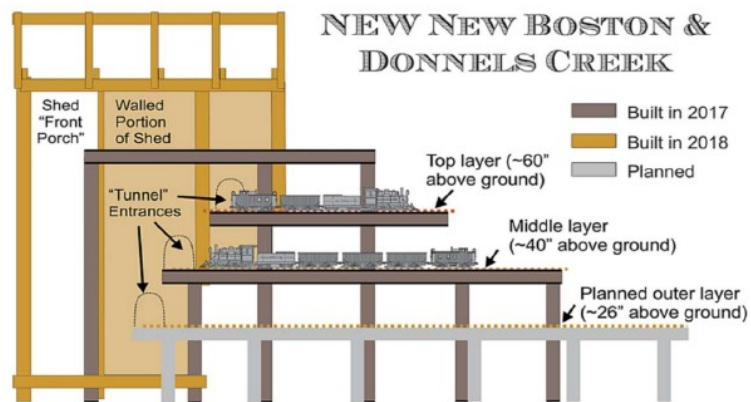
I revised my plans many times. The current version of the plan is shown to the right in a side view.

There would be three platforms, each holding one of three concentric loops of track. The whole thing would be attached to a train shed just large enough to protect the power supplies and keep short trains on the tracks ready run.

All three right-of-ways would cross over little ponds and in front of waterfalls for maximum visual interest.

In 2017, I sunk a bunch of 5' and 8' posts and built the top two platforms. I also started adding the water feature, though I didn't get the waterfall running until 2018

Early snows and bitterly cold weather kept me from working on the railroad past early November, though I did get trains on the tracks for Christmas.



THE BACKSHOP

MODELING PROJECTS AND TIPS

Continued

By July of 2018, I had "dirtscaped" the top two layers and gotten the upper levels of the waterfall working.

I worked on the waterfall before I finished the shed in part because I got tired of telling visitors "this is where the waterfall will be."

The photo to the right shows two of the Maccourt connecting pools I used. In this photo, they are emptying (temporarily) into a vinyl basin and utility tank.



The rest of the summer and most of the fall, I spent building the shed. The basic construction was like that of a pole barn – vertical posts sunk into the ground with plates and rafters on the top, and the siding eventually fastened to horizontal boards on the sides.

The photo below shows the frame from the end that the door would go on. I used ground-rated lumber for all of the framing and pressure-treated decking boards for the fascia and other trim.

I wanted it to resemble a Victorian country station.

To create a board-and-batten siding look, I purchased 5/8"x5.5"x8' pressure-treated fencing boards from Lowes. I like the rough-cut look. I also know from experience that they should last as long or longer than most T1-11 and LP Smartside installations. The battens (the skinny boards) are just fencing boards sliced in half.



To get Victorian-looking windows, I purchased one arched window-frame from Hobby Lobby and two at a flea-market.

The door is a kitchen door we took off the old house when the windows got too fogged up to see through. Yes, I plan to paint it eventually.

To be honest, if I had known it would come out this nice, I would have made it bigger.

One reason I rushed to finish the shed by November, 2018 was that I wanted to be able to have a Christmas-themed open railroad like we used to have at the other house.



Once the shed was in the condition shown above right, I tried out Christmas trains, hooked up Christmas music and lights, and prepped the popcorn popper.

THE BACKSHOP MODELING PROJECTS AND TIPS Continued

The first open railroad on the NEW New Boston and Donnels Creek was a resounding success, if the amount of visitors, delighted children, visitor questions, and popcorn consumed were any indication.

After two seasons of construction, I had also proven to myself that garden trains are a lot more fun when you can run them any time the weather permits just by walking down to the railroad and cranking up the controls.

The building season of 2019 almost got away from me when a "day job" contract kept me away from home seventy hours a week for all of the spring and most of the summer. When the contract ran out, I got very busy.

First, I finished the waterfall, installing a new, lower platform to hold one more Maccourt connecting pool, then digging a hole for a 2'-deep Maccourt "Grand Cayman" pond.

In the photo to the right, you can see that the sedums I planted in 2017 are filling out enough to give the top two platforms a more natural look. Eventually, the rock-and-dirt piles on the other levels should green up, too.

I then started on the third, lowest platform (the one shown in gray in the drawing on the first page). I knew I wouldn't get the whole thing completed, but I started it with the hope of getting at least part of it framed out and decked by our next Christmas-themed open railroad.

I did manage to get a 6'x11" section ready (you can see it on the next page).



THE BACKSHOP

MODELING PROJECTS AND TIPS

Continued

The new addition was big enough to hold two small, temporary loops of track. For 2019's Christmas-themed open railroad, I placed a small track-powered unit on the inner loop. On the outer loop, I placed a battery-powered Hogwarts Express train that visiting children could run.

For fun, I added a castle and a "Platform 9 ¾" sign. They're not permanent fixtures, but they may come out again next fall.

When the rest of the lower platform is completed, it will be big enough to run longer equipment and longer trains, as well as having room for towns, industries, and operations.

The photo below shows the existing platforms as of December, 2019.



Once the infrastructure is complete, we will have time to work more on the "garden" aspect, adding more shrubs, groundcovers, and other scenic features. But being able to run trains whenever the weather permits, without performing hours or days of maintenance first will always be our priority.

You can follow our progress on the New Boston and Donnels Creek blog part of the Family Garden Trains web page. The actual construction of the railroad begins at the following URL:

https://familygardentrains.com/newbost/17_07_digging/breaking_ground.htm

Feel free to use the contact link on any page of the FamilyGardenTrains.com web site to ask questions or share your experiences. In the meantime, enjoy your trains, and especially enjoy any time you can spend with your family in the coming days!

Paul Race, Family Garden Trains



RAILROAD TRIVIA ANSWER

A 2-8-8-4 steam locomotive was generally named the Yellowstone, a name given it by the first owner, the Northern Pacific Railway, whose lines ran near Yellowstone National Park. Seventy-two Yellowstone-type locomotives were built for four U.S. railroads.

The Duluth, Missabe and Iron Range Railway hauled iron ore in Minnesota. Iron ore is heavy and the DM&IR operated long trains of ore cars, requiring maximum power. These locomotives were based upon ten 2-8-8-2s that Baldwin had built in the 1930s for the Western Pacific Railroad. The need for a larger, coal-burning firebox and a longer, all-weather cab led to the use of a four-wheel trailing truck, giving them the "Yellowstone" wheel arrangement. They were the most powerful Yellowstones built, producing 140,000 lbf (620 kN) of tractive effort, and had the most weight on drivers so that they were less prone to slipping

Eight locomotives (class M-3) were built by Baldwin in 1941. The Yellowstones met or exceeded the DM&IR specifications, so 10 more were ordered (class M-4). The second batch was completed in late 1943 after the Missabe's seasonal downturn in ore traffic, so some of the new M-4s were leased to and delivered directly to the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad.

DM&IRs were the only Yellowstones to have a high-capacity pedestal or centipede tender, and had roller bearings on all axles. Some of the locomotives had a cylindrical Elesco feedwater heater ahead of the smoke stack, while others had a Worthington unit with its rectangular box in the same location.


Only one Yellowstone was retired before dieselization took place on the Missabe; No. 237 was sold for scrap after a wreck. The rest of the 2-8-8-4s were retired between 1958 and 1963 as diesel locomotives took over.

Of the eighteen built, three survive and are on display in Minnesota: No. 225 at Proctor, No. 227 at the Lake Superior Railroad Museum in Duluth and No. 229 at Two Harbors. We got to see 227 and 229 during our trip to MN.

RAILROAD TRIVIA ANSWER

Continued


DULUTH MISSABE & IRON RANGE



Only 72 Yellowstone locomotives were ever built in the U.S. They were operated by the Baltimore & Ohio, Northern Pacific, Southern Pacific, and Duluth Missabe & Iron Range.


The DM&IR M-4 Yellowstones were 128 feet long and weighed in at over 400 tons with no coal or water. Filling the tender took 28 tons of coal and 25,000 gallons of water. Altogether the working weight was almost a million pounds. Steam pressure was 240 pounds per square inch creating a tractive effort of 140,000 pounds.

Often compared to the Union Pacific's Big Boy locomotive, the DM&IR Mallet's had smaller drive wheels giving them incredible power at slower speeds. The speed limit for one train was 45 mph. Yellowstones were capable of pulling trains that would require four diesel locomotives today.



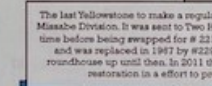
The DM&IR is a "left handed" railroad.

The 229 at the water tower in Two Harbors




Please join the: Minnabie Railroad Historical Society / Brown Mines Collection, The Lake Superior Museum of Transportation / Frank King Collection and the Lake County Historical Society

The 221 being put on display in Two Harbors. This photo demonstrates the operation of the Mallet locomotive.



The last Yellowstone to make a regular one run was # 222 on July 5, 1960 on the Missabe Division. It was sent to Two Harbors and put on display for a very short time before being swapped for # 221. This engine deteriorated in the weather and was replaced in 1977 by #223, which had been stored in the Proctor roundhouse up until then. In 2011 the #223 underwent a complete cosmetic restoration in an effort to preserve it for future generations.



The 3 Spot and Yellowstone Mallet #229 represent the first and the last in the evolution of steam locomotives in Two Harbors and on the Minnesota Iron Range.

The Lake County Historical Society would like to thank Dr. Mark S. Wiles for his contribution to this project.

DULUTH MISSABE & IRON RANGE

DM&IR Yellowstone Mallet # 229, which is displayed opposite the venerable Duluth & Iron Range Railroad 3 Spot, was one of eighteen locomotives of this type. They came in two separate contracts of eight locomotives in 1941 and an additional ten locomotives in 1943. All were built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works at their Eddystone plant in Pennsylvania.



World War II was raging and America's iron ore resource was absolutely vital to the war effort for building ships, tanks, and other military equipment. As one might expect, steel for military hardware took precedence over all nonmilitary use of steel. These Mallets however were so important when it came to moving the iron ore that they were assigned the A-1-A precedence rating for the materials needed for construction. In other words the Yellowstones were a higher priority than military steel for tanks and ships. It is little wonder that they are characterized as "The locomotives that defeated Hitler."

Interior of the 222 Cab



A favorite of train crews was the "Three Deuces"

Yellowstone # 229 was the second locomotive in the second group of Mallets (228-237) that were built in 1943. The 229 was completed and test run on January 5, 1943 and afterward scheduled to depart the Baldwin plant on January 9th. This was mid-winter and the ore season was closed in Minnesota. Rather than going to Duluth or Two Harbors, # 229 was sent to Denver, Colorado to be leased to the Denver Rio Grande & Western Railroad until the opening of the next ore shipping season. During that winter 229 pulled long freight trains over the Rocky Mountains and Continental Divide. Other Yellowstone units assisted on the Great Northern and Northern Pacific as well as the Denver & Rio Grande Western each year.

When the 229 returned from Colorado in 1943, it was sent directly to Two Harbors to begin working on the Iron Range Division.



WEB BITS

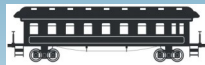


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WEB BITS— Continued

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[Rail Bikes - Blue Ridge Scenic Railway - Blue Ridge, GA \(brscenic.com\)](http://brscenic.com)



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Or....(828) 333-2523

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.

