

# PGRS TRACKIN'



## The Newsletter of the Piedmont Garden Railway Society

**September 2025**

### **EDITOR'S GREETING**

It is tough to publish a monthly newsletter for a small club, so I am considering publishing a quarterly newsletter next year. We could post monthly or time sensitive info on our web site. Please try to encourage others to try our hobby and join the PGRS. This month we continue to showcase our members projects. I extend a special THANK YOU to this month's newsletter contributors.



### **OUR CLUB'S MISSION**

**Our 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.**

### **Society Officers**

**Bill Massey – President**  
[coachbillmassey@aol.com](mailto:coachbillmassey@aol.com)  
**Vacant – Vice President**

**Jim Redmond– Secretary / Treasurer**  
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## **CLUB NEWS**

The PGRS Board met at the Columbus Train Lovers Lunch on August 21st to discuss plans for the next TrainFest. While the final program has not been finalized, we did discuss these key points.

Trainfest will be October 18th at the Lutheridge Camp and Conference Center from 10am to 3pm. This will be open to members and their invited guests. Our annual membership dues will be collected at this meeting. There will be a Guest fee for non members of \$5.00 to cover the cost of lunch. Of course members eat free, so encourage your guests to join our club.

The program will be similar to the last one in that we'll have a key note speaker on local train history in WNC. There will be garden railroad tips, workshop clinics, and door prizes. Also, PGRS members are encouraged to bring any train related items they wish to sell. More details will follow.

The PGRS Board will be holding future planning meetings on September 18 at Sully's (The Columbus TTL) at noon and at the Asheville TTL in Hendersonville on October 2 at 11:30am. Members are encouraged to attend these lunch meetings to provide input or you can contact any board member with your ideas.

As a reminder, the position of Vice-President is open. If interested please contact President Bill Massey.

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:

**Jim Redmond**  
**PGRS Secretary/Treasurer**  
**14 Fountainview Terrace #202**  
**Greenville, SC 29607**



## **CLUB NEWS - Continued**

Fran Monahan wants to know if anyone has a pair of 1/2" drive wheels that can take traction tires. His number is 828-674-0707. He needs them for his duck train.



The first Thursday of each month is still the open house at Apple Valley Model RR and is available to all PGRS members. You are welcome to bring your trains to the Hendersonville Depot from 10 to 2 pm. Track power is available.

How many PGRS club members does it take open a box of trains?





## CLUB NEWS - Continued

Scott Williams ran a couple of his awesome creations.





**CLUB NEWS Continued**  
**2025 Train Show Calendar Links:**

NMRA [2025 Southeastern Region Convention](#) Sept 18-21 in Gatlinburg, TN

[Atlanta Train Show | Terminus Chapter TCA for Model Train Enthusiasts](#)



**RAILROAD TRIVIA QUESTION**

KarTrak, also known as ACI, was used to track railroad freight cars. What was it and how did it work? The answer is found later in this newsletter.

**RAIL-FANNING**  
**PROTOTYPES TO INSPIRE A GARDEN RAILWAY PROJECT**

Lionel Model Trains  
By: David Smith



Many model railroaders started in the hobby with a set of Lionel trains. This year Lionel celebrates their 125th year of existence. The company has been through a lot of ups and downs over the years but have bounced back time and time again to remain a major model company with both trains (O and HO) and Diecast cars. Many of the current Lionel trains are produced under licensing from major companies.



## **RAILFANNING— Continued**

To celebrate their 125th Anniversary Lionel Headquarters, located in Concord NC, opened their warehouse to public tours. These are a few of the photos taken.





## RAILFANNING— Continued





## RAILFANNING— Continued



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## **RAILFANNING— Continued**

The Family Garden Trains website has several articles on O gauge garden railroading. Here are the links:

[Introduction to O Gauge Outside](#)

[Planning an O Gauge Outside Railroad](#)

Below are a few example photos of O scale garden railways.



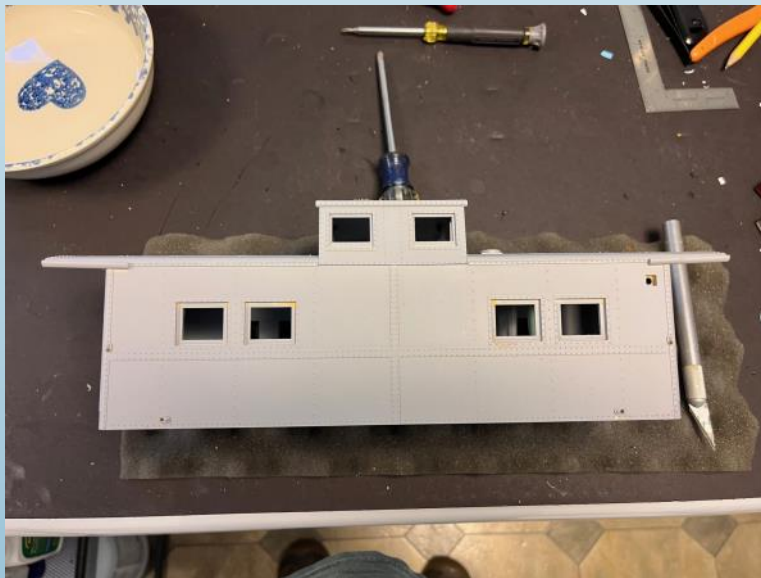


## **THE BACKSHOP**

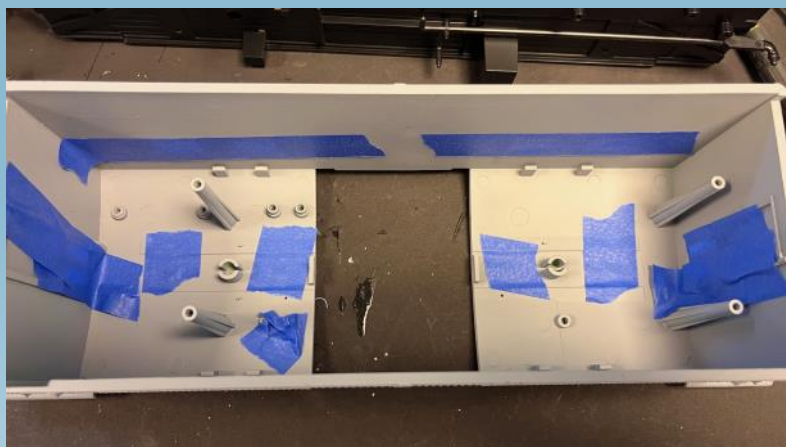
### **MODELING PROJECTS AND TIPS**

This month I'm working on the caboose project some more, plus a few more freight cars at the same time. The paint has been stripped off and we'll begin painting. I like to start with gray Tamiya Fine Surface Primer. This will also highlight defects which can be sanded or filled. I let this dry for a couple of days before applying a finish coat. I use rattle cans for most of my large scale projects. With a little practice they work well.

Here's the first primer coat. You may need several coats to cover the previous paint scheme.



Before applying an exterior finish coat you must seal all openings in the car body to avoid overspray into the car body. This applies to any through holes, no matter how small.



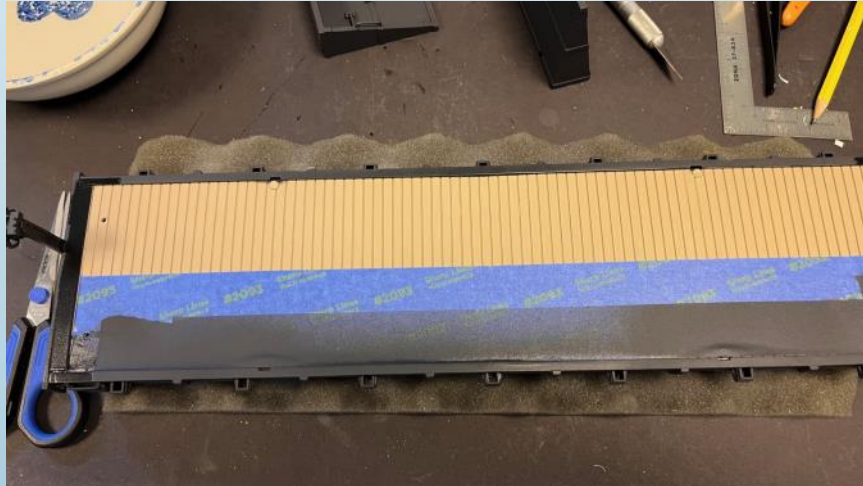


## **THE BACKSHOP**

### **MODELING PROJECTS AND TIPS**

#### **Continued**

Here's another example in masking. I masked this flat car deck after the tan color and these are the results as the tape starts coming off. After applying the blue painter's tape, you can seal the tape edges with a clear coat before applying a different color. This gives a clear edge when removing the tape.



I also tried a new type of paint. I usually used Tamiya lacquer paints designed for plastic models. I tried their polycarbonate paints for the caboose. These paints are designed for model RC cars, so are supposed to be more durable and flexible. The red finish coat so far seems really smooth.



## **THE BACKSHOP**

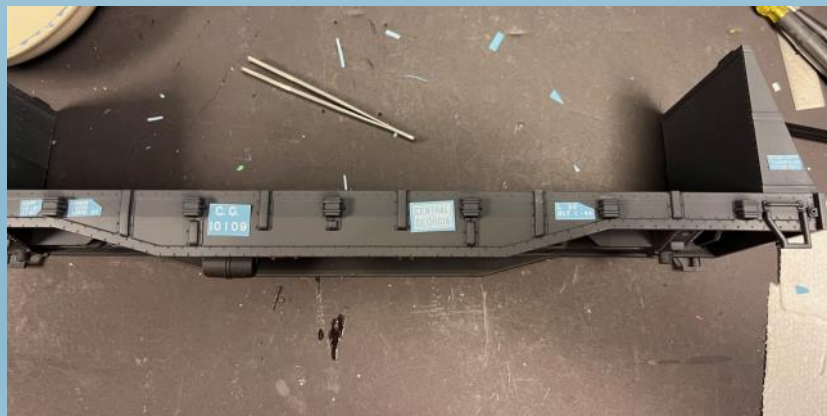
### **MODELING PROJECTS AND TIPS**

#### **Continued**

I am waiting on more paint to arrive, so the finished caboose will be in next month's newsletter. Since this caboose has the Southern Railway yellow belly paint scheme, I mocked up my decal locations so I can measure out the paint masking needed. These are on copy paper, in this case O scale decals.



As you see below, I plan out my decals on all my models. This flat car below is a mix of HO and G scale decals. You can get creative on these as I have found a lot of G scale decals are too large and not really to the specific scale they claim. I used some S scale decals on a box car project and they look great.



More on all these projects next month.

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## **THE BACKSHOP**

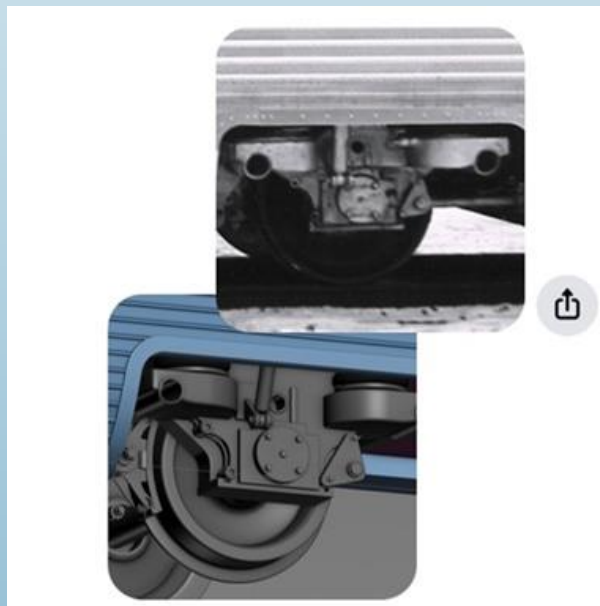
### **MODELING PROJECTS AND TIPS**

#### **Continued**

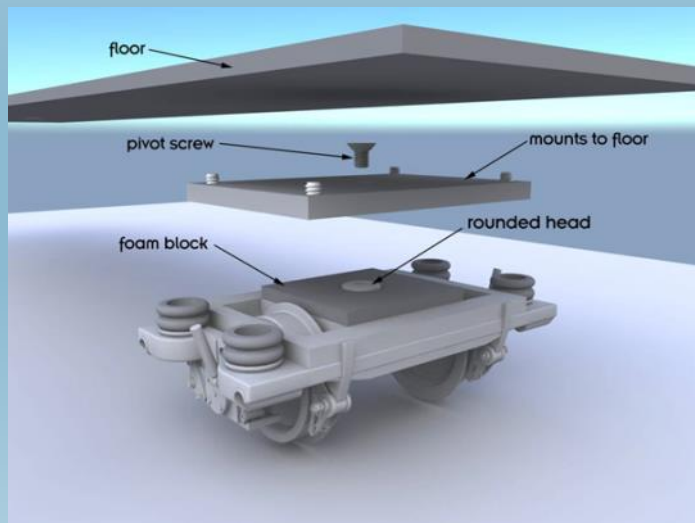
### **THE GM AEROTRAIN PROJECT**

#### **PART II by Don Watson**

In Part I, I described the beginning of this project. In this part, I will bring you up to date on the progress. So far we've been able to complete the trucks for the coaches. This proved to be a challenge since the trucks are composed of only one axle and, as in the rear axle of the engine, it was a job to make them stable and functional. The top photo, below, shows the actual coach truck and the lower photo shows my son's 3D rendition.



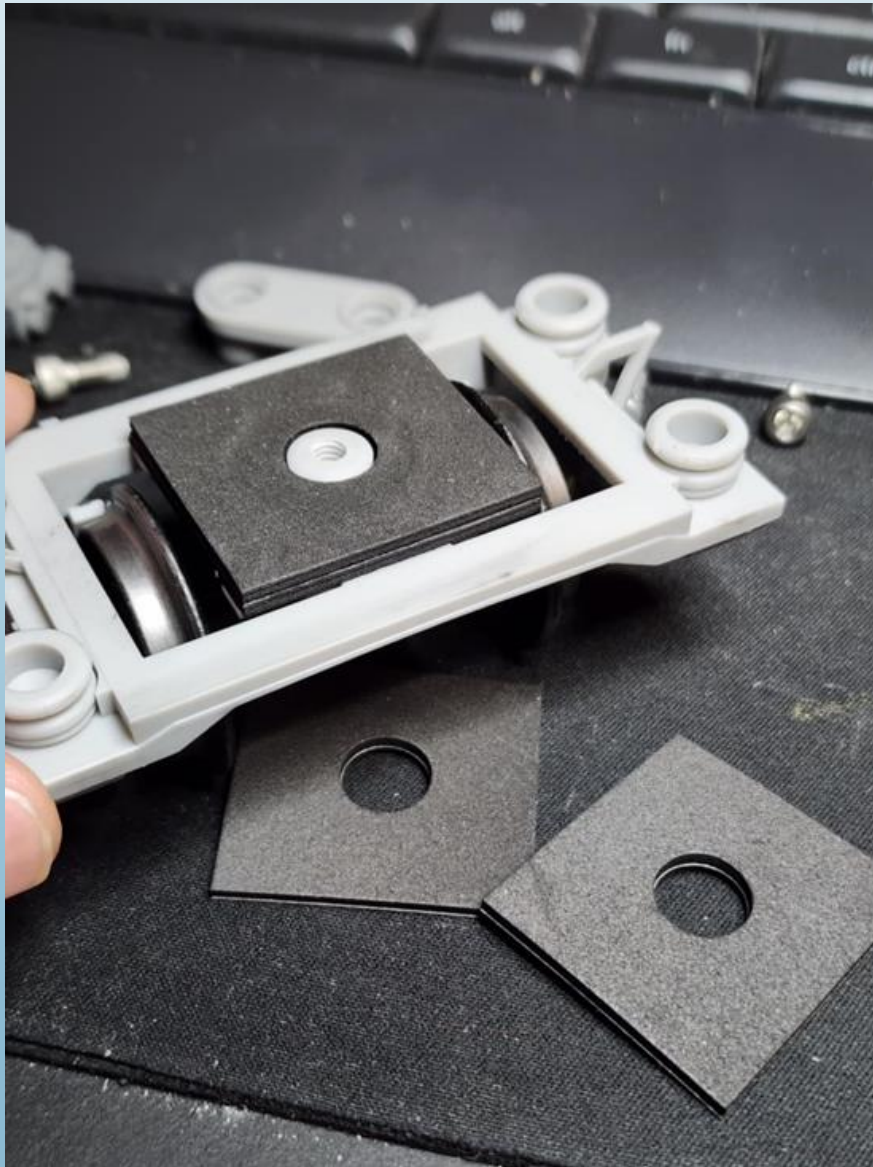
Next is a detailed rendition of the truck showing the working parts.





**THE BACKSHOP**  
**MODELING PROJECTS AND TIPS**  
**Continued**

In this case, we didn't have enough space to add working springs, so we improvised and substituted a foam pad. This provided the same function as springs. Below is a photo of the printed truck.



We also decided to add some interior details to the coaches, such as luggage racks and seats.



## **THE BACKSHOP**

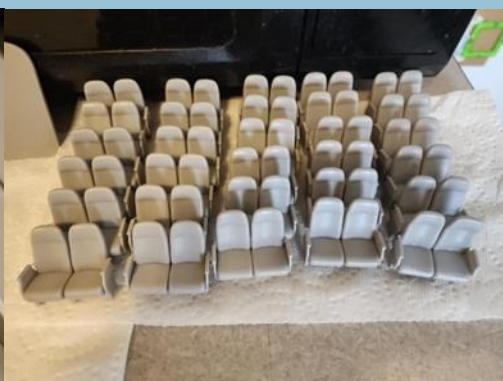
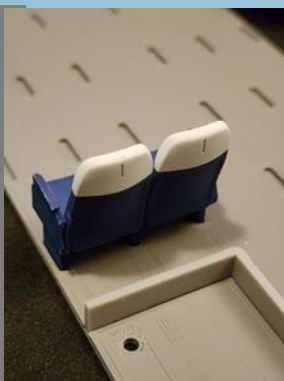
### **MODELING PROJECTS AND TIPS**

#### **Continued**

Racks: On the left is an interior view showing the luggage racks (and seats) and on the right is a printed rack.



Seats: Image on left is computer rendering, the ones in middle are printed and the right photo shows enough for two coaches and ready to be painted.



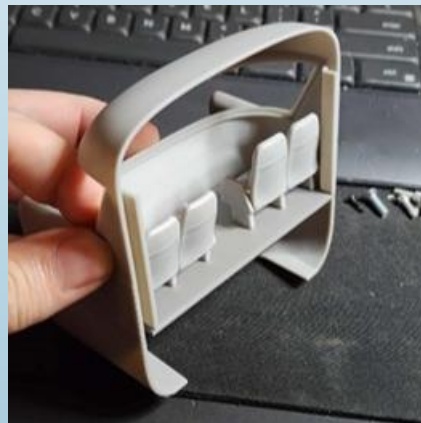


## **THE BACKSHOP**

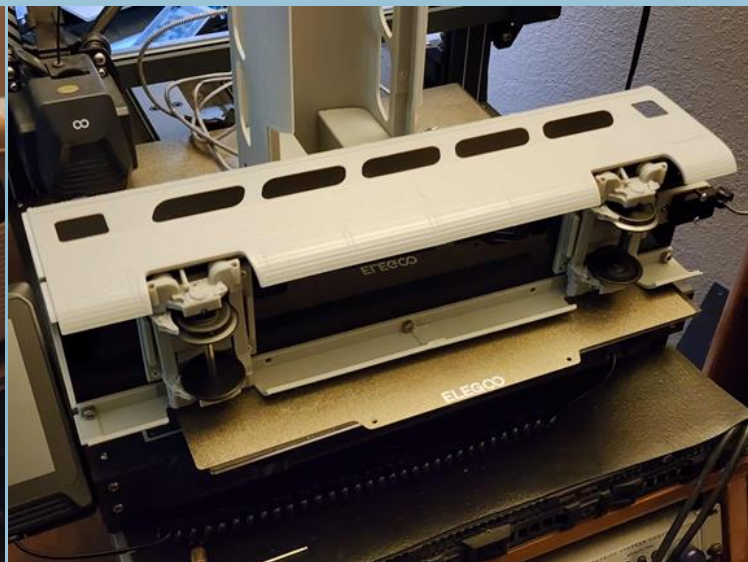
### **MODELING PROJECTS AND TIPS**

#### **Continued**

As far as the coach bodies are concerned, we've made a start. Here are a few photos showing our progress. On the left is a print of the unusual end of the rear car. It's said to be based on a Chevy station wagon. On the right is a print of the rear section's interior with seats. The coach ends are printed separately so that the floor can be installed.



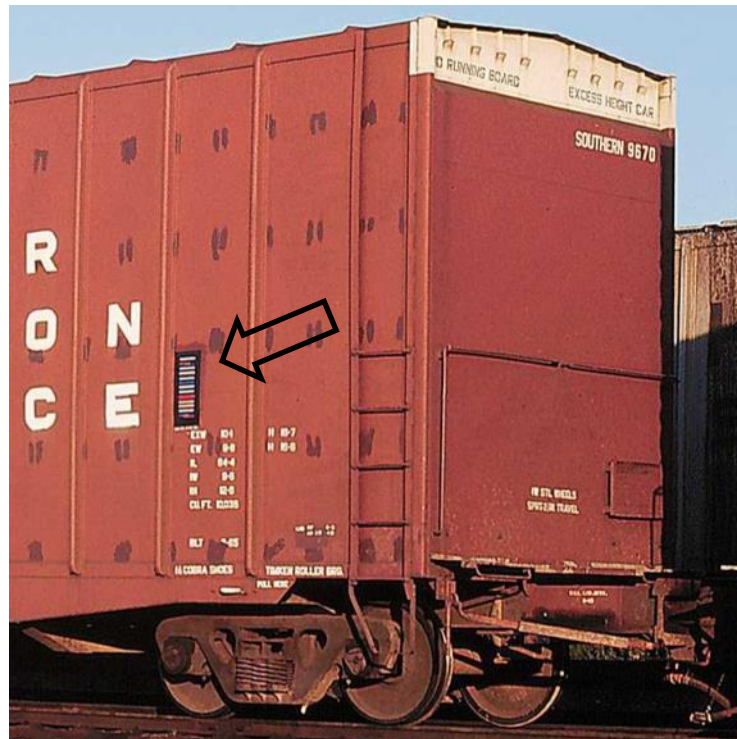
The photo on the left shows the details of a car end with Kadee coupler installed. The photo on the right shows a partially assembled coach with the trucks installed. That's it for this installment.





## RAILROAD TRIVIA ANSWER

KarTrak, sometimes KarTrak ACI (Automatic Car Identification) or just ACI was a colored barcode system designed to automatically identify railcars and other rolling stock. KarTrak was made a requirement in North America in 1967, but technical problems led to the abandonment of the system by around 1977.



ACI or Automatic Car Identification was, as the name implies, an experimental system in the 1960s to combine automatic identification of cars and their locations via colored bar code labels that encoded the car's reporting mark and number on each piece of rolling stock and trackside optical scanners that could read the labels to identify the cars as they passed. The data from the trackside readers would be fed into a computerized tracking system in order to improve the efficiency and accuracy of tracking the location and movements of railcars throughout the North American railway system.



## RAILROAD TRIVIA ANSWER

### Continued

Beginning in 1967, the US Federal Railway Administration mandated the use of ACI labels on all new freight equipment, with a target date of 1970 to apply the labels to all existing equipment. However in 1977 maintenance and reliability issues caused the system to be abandoned. Dirt, rust, fading, vandalism and damage to the labels all contributed to an up to 20% failure rate in reading the labels.

Therefore, after 1978 no new or repainted cars had ACI labels applied any more, and they could also be removed from existing cars, although many never were and while more and more rare now it is still occasionally possible to find an intact ACI label on cars with build dates from the mid 1970s that still bear their original factory paint.

There is an online program to generate these yourself, here's the link:

[ACI tag generator](#)

Or you can just buy scale decals from these links [Kartrak ACI Scanner Barcode Tags - Decal - Choose Scale – K4 Decals – Model Train Decals](#) or [Microscale Decals: G Scale - ACI Plates \(1967-1977\)](#). I used these decals on my boxcar model below. I'm trying to model 1976 on the Southern Rwy.

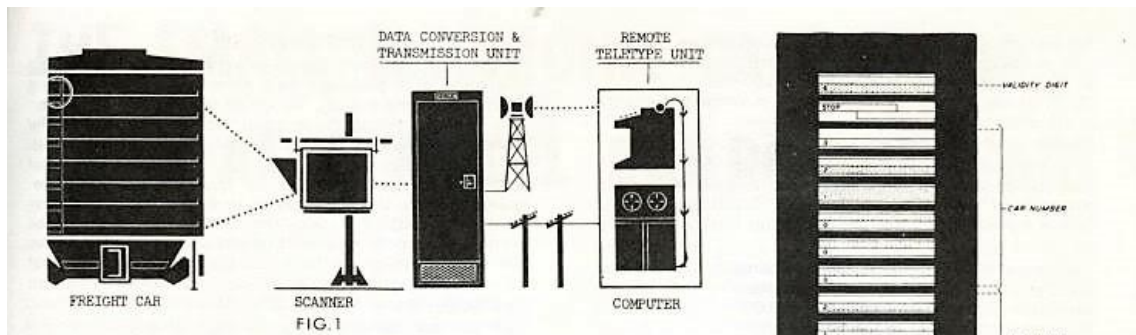




# RAILROAD TRIVIA ANSWER

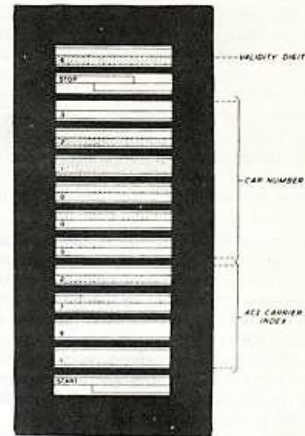
## Continued

Technical specs for their use by the railroads.



This drawing shows where to place the label on the car. The preferred location is above the inner axle of the right hand truck, approximately 7 feet above the rail. (This is the same as the recommended height for the scanner.)

FIG. 3



The strips are put on the side of a railroad car so that they spell out in numbers the type of equipment, the owner's name, the car number, and a validity digit

FIG. 2

# A.C.I.

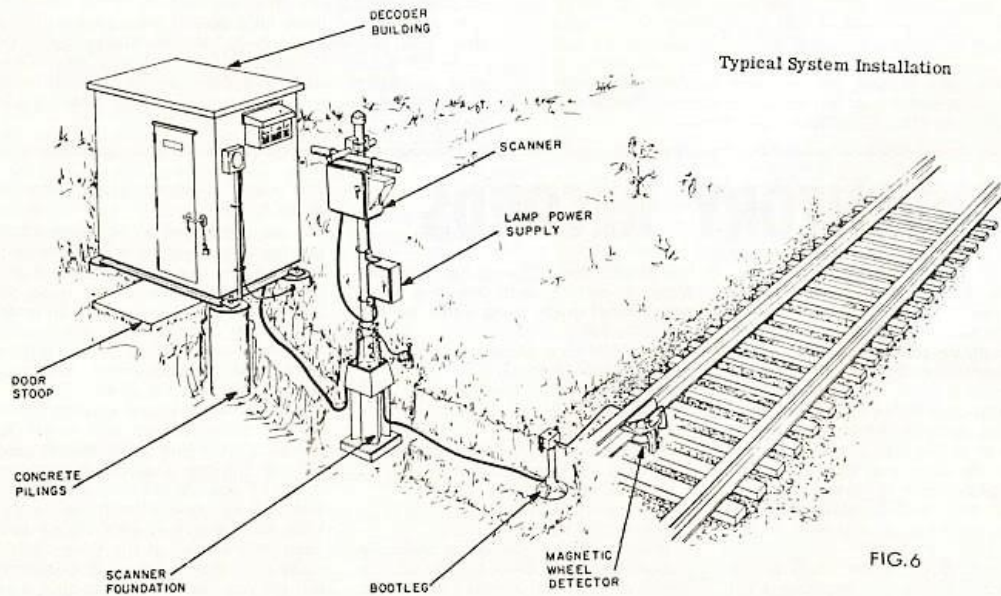


FIG. 6





## WEB BYTES

### Web Links to Resources & Information

[SOUTHERN Railfan](#)


[Great Northern Empire - Then and Now](#)

[Full steam ahead to Hollywood: Virginia City's steam train stars in Paramount's  
1923 Series - Carson Now](#)

[O Gauge Outdoor Garden railroad Layout Update #2](#)



## BUSINESSES ASSOCIATED WITH OUR CLUB

	<p><b>Jim's Train Sales</b> O &amp; G Gauge New &amp; Used Trains <b>Jim Hendley</b> Etowah, North Carolina 28729 Lionel, MTH, USA Trains, PIKO, LGB Bridgeworks Power Supplies, Bachmann Split-Jaw Rail Clamps, O &amp; G Gauge Track</p>
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Garden Railroad Design, New and Used Track

You can now reach Jim at: [hendleyjim4@gmail.com](mailto:hendleyjim4@gmail.com)

Or....(828) 333-2523

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

The **Asheville Train Lovers Luncheon** will be the first Thursday every month from 10am to 2pm at the Hendersonville Depot. **Please bring trains to run.**

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

The **Columbus Train Lovers Luncheons** are held at 12:00 on the Third Thursday of each month at Sully's Restaurant in Columbus, NC.

