



GGRS Gazette

June, 2025

Official Newsletter of the Georgia Garden Railway

Ted's Tickets



Hello, I am Ted Yarbrough, GGRS President for 2025. I received my first electric train, an American Flyer, for my 7th Christmas. I told Santa I wanted a model train with only two rails because the real trains did not have three! You may have guessed, I have never owned a Lionel train. I began to collect HO scale trains in my teen years and built several small rail empires on the floor.

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Georgia Goes to Alabama to meet Tennessee...& It's not SEC Football!

Our May Member Event was out of this World....Country?....Okay, would you believe state? We're just back from the Huntsville, Alabama area, where we made the long distance drive to attend a Tri-State meeting.

Our May Club Meeting was held at the home of Jenny & Grant Sweer's. This was our first Tri-State Club Meeting; GGRS, Nashville Area Garden Railroaders and the Grant Funk Alabama Railroaders. From the fun and fellowship enjoyed by all, I doubt it will be our last.



Construction on the Grant Funk Railroad started in May of 2018 and was fully functional for the NGRA 2021 convention. It is a raised railroad with over 1000 feet of bridge works, powered track with 3 loops and one point-to-point reversing section that will become a full loop in the future.

There are 3 rail yards in the planning. The lower three tracks run any train and railroad we want with no historical representation what so ever. If it looks good, we run it. The top track is more slated narrow gauge and late 1800s style railroads. The lower two tracks minimum diameter is 10ft, mid-level railroad has 18ft minimum diameter.

Grant started his collection in 2005 buying mix and match consists to run for fun hence the name of the railroad.

Jenny tries to use mainly perennial plants on the railroad. There are many varieties of creeping thyme such as wooly, red, white, highland cream, and elfin. Some other plants are Turkish speedwell, ajuga, creeping jenny, dianthus, baby's breath, Calluna heather, snow in the summer, mazus, creeping angel wire, purple verbena, and lots of different sedums and hens and chicks. She can't even remember all the varieties she's got out there!

Continued page 2

For trees, there are boxwoods, Japanese maples and hollies, rosemary and junipers that I've tried to bonsai, some of the dwarf trees from the Iseli Nursey in Oregon, Alberta Spruce and a Mugo Pine to name some of them. They also supplement with annuals in the spring like Mexican heather, calibrachoa, moss roses, verbena and small flower pansies over the winter. Whew!



One of our gracious hosts for the event.







After the meeting, eating, and general comingling, the opportunity to visit John Peter's Hodgepodge & Whimsy Railroad was available. The HWRR runs on 450 feet of track, is predominantly set in the 1930's with battery powered steam engines.

If you missed this meeting, keep an eye out for the next time there is a meeting in Alabama. You won't want to miss it!

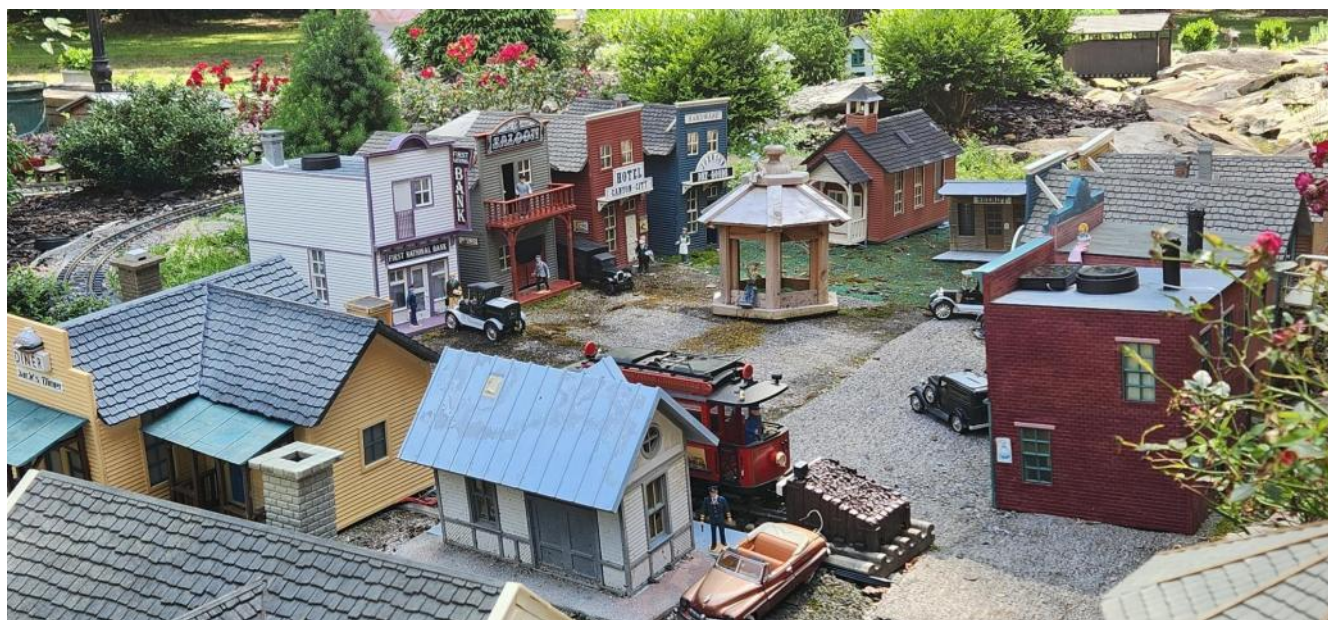
John's dogs and cats welcomed visitors to the Whimsy.





There were
visiting
Georgia
Dawgs as
well at the
event.





Ted's Tickets Cont.

After marriage to my high school sweetheart, Deborah, I continued to collect HO trains and when we eventually built a home in Chatsworth in 1980, it had a train room included. After a family vacation to Colorado, I fell in love with the narrow-gauge steam trains of the west. The large-scale train companies were beginning to introduce some American models and those were primarily Colorado narrow-gauge. I was hooked!

In 1990, I replaced the HO trains in the train room with a 6 ½ X 9 table top oval complete with trees and buildings. I soon decided I needed more room and after looking at Garden Railways magazines, decided to build my first outdoor garden railroad in 1992.

I attended my first National Garden Railway Convention in Cincinnati in 1995 and met some fine folks from Georgia that were members of the Georgia Garden Railway Society. I joined up shortly after that and have enjoyed attending meetings and fellowshipping with members for years now. One of the highlights of my time in garden railroading was in 2004, when twenty members of the GGRS attended the National Garden Railway Convention in Denver (site of the very first convention and they know how to do a convention).

Another amazing time, but coupled with lots of work, was when GGRS hosted the 2018 National Garden Railway Convention and I served as co-chairman. I have had the privilege of attending 16 National Garden Railway Conventions plus a few other regional and national events. My garden railroad has been published in the June, 2018 Garden Railways magazine and a few other local and regional papers. I currently serve as the regional representative for Garden Railroading News, a free bi-monthly online magazine for garden railroading.

I have been a volunteer at Tennessee Valley Railroad since the early 1980's helping mostly at the Thomas and North Pole Limited train rides. I also serve as chairman for the Historical Society's Chatsworth Depot Committee where we have had the April meeting for the last several years. Our family vacations usually center around a few train rides or railroad museum visits. As you can see, I enjoy trains and am looking forward to all of 2025.

*Ted Yarborough,
President*

Well, Are You Going? By Ted Yarbrough

The Polar Express Conductor asked a similar question to the young boy in the movie. I am asking, are you going to a convention this year? I have heard from several that are, but I think there may be others.

Conventions are a great time to experience a variety of garden railroad layouts in person. Meet the owners. Ask questions. Get ideas. Take photographs, video. There will also be REAL train ride experiences (often more than one). Vendor halls will be open for all sorts of G-Scale bargains. The National Garden Railway Convention this June in Sacramento will have many manufactures present in the vendor hall. The BTO Convention in Helen will have lots of tables of garden railroaders and mom & pop shops selling their collections of G-Scale items often at great "prizes". Speaking of prizes, the BTO is well known for the vast number of door prizes they hand out on the way back from train rides and at convention events. Both conventions will have the traditional opening event, ice cream social, and banquet. You will get to meet lots of new friends at each event. Conventions are the highlight of the garden railroading year.

The 2025 National Garden Railroad Convention will be held June 18-22 in Sacramento, California at the SAFE Credit Union Convention Center. It will be hosted by the Sacramento Valley Garden Railway Society. This will be the 40th Annual Convention. Registration is available online at www.ngrc2025.org.

The 2025 National Big Train Operators (BTO) Convention will be held in Helen, Georgia at the Holiday Inn Express. The dates are July 13-18 and the group will be celebrating 45 years at the event. Registration info (and membership info as you are required to be a BTO member to attend) can be found at www.bigtrainoperator.com. The GGRS will have member layouts on the garden railroad tour and two members will be presenting clinics at the event, so come out and support us!

I know Deborah and I (and others) will be at the BTO Convention and Dan & Carol Stiedle (and others) will be at the National Garden Railway Convention. If you attend, be sure to look us up and say 'hello' (or email us before you go and we will try to look for you). Also, please take photos and write up your thoughts regarding the event and submit to Emil Decker, our newsletter editor, for publication when you return. (eldecker@windstream.net) We all want to hear your stories.

Membership Report

Membership News – June 2025

This past Saturday we attended the monthly meeting in Huntsville, Alabama. At that time, I met for the first time and welcomed Kenny and Denise Pugh (from Ellijay, GA) by giving them their nametags and getting their photo. Between Terry and I, we were able to convince our host for the day to become our newest members.

Welcome to – (had a great time on Saturday)
Grant and Jenny Sweer from Huntsville, Alabama

No additional annual dues were paid for 2025 at this time.

PLEASE NOTE - Those that have not paid their dues have been removed from the mailing list and the on-line directory.

Ginny Manning, Membership Coordinator

vlmanning@aol.com

Track Warrants

***** NOTE:** The Calendar contains some Rail related events that are NOT GGRS events! Due to timing of events and newsletter deadlines,, some updates may not have been posted. Contact host for additional info.

Event	Location	Date	Status
GGRS Club Mtg	Richard and Rebecca Chitwood Cumming, GA	Jun 21, 2025 10:00-2:00	New members have stepped forward. How about you?
GGRS Club Mtg	YOU? WHO? Sign up now	Future Openings Available 2026	Start Planning Now
"Tour of the new Trainz Facility"	The new building is now in operation	Stay tuned for more details	Exciting!
National Garden Railway Convention	Sacramento, CA	Jun 18 - 22, 2025	Long distance flight or drive, but worth the trip
Big Train Operators Convention	Holiday Inn, Helen, GA	Jul 13 - 18, 2025	National Event, Local Destination
GGRS Club Mtg	Terry & Ginny Manning Lilburn, GA	Jul, 2025	In Planning Stage
67th Atlanta Model Train Show	Gas South Convention Center Sugarloaf Parkway, Duluth, GA	Aug 23	9:00 am - 4:00 pm
GGRS Club Mtg	Sloan & Sara MacKarvich Buford, GA	Aug, 2025	In Planning Stage
GGRS Club Mtg	Elliot & Katherine Stotler Highland, NC	Sep, 2025	In Planning Stage
GGRS Club Mtg	Josh & Margaret Sagarin Atlanta, GA	Oct, 2025	In Planning Stage

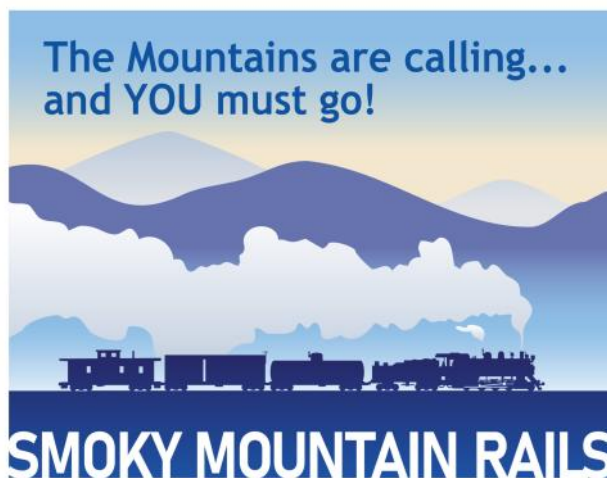
Mark Your Calendars!

Saturday - July 12

G-Scale Swap Meet

The monthly yard tour in July will also feature our semi-annual swap meet. Bring a table, set up a tent, or open your trunk and sell your excess model train accessories! Dozens of G - scale buildings will be available for sale, lots of figurines, and many vehicles.

Just a mile away, the Five Forks Antique Mall at 4100 Five Forks Trickum Road SW in Lilburn will also be open from 10:00 to 6:00 if you're in the market for some unique home décor. (Yes, it's hard to believe but some GGRS family members would be more interested in buying jigsaw puzzles, Beanie Babies, accent furniture, lamps, jewelry, and such than railroad crossing signs!)



The 2025 Southeastern Region Convention
September 18 - 20, 2025 in Gatlinburg, TN

- Clinics
- Contests
- Layout Tours
- OP Sessions
- Prototype Tour
- Non-Rail Activities



For More info and to register, visit: 2025SERConvention.org

Or email to: info@2025SERConvention.org

BTO Convention Update!

Georgia Garden Railway Society members may tour any of the layouts that BTO are visiting on Wednesday, July 16 from 10 - 4pm. Layout visitors will need to wear their official GGRS name tags. We also have an opening for ONE garden railroad to join the tour (needs to be in the area between Cleveland and Cumming, Georgia and would need to contact Ted Yarbrough ASAP).

As a reminder, the layout owners will be invited to the BTO farewell banquet on that Friday evening, July 18th. They will also be receiving a special banquet car as a thank you gift.

67th Atlanta Model Train Show

GAS SOUTH CONVENTION CENTER

6400 Sugarloaf Parkway • Duluth, Georgia 30097

Saturday, August 23, 2025

9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Over 300 Tables of Model Trains and Railroad Collectibles For Sale
Atlanta's Oldest and Largest Model Train and Railroadiana Show

For Dealer Contracts and Show Information Contact:

Charlie Miller
3106 N. Rochester Street
Arlington, VA 22213
Phone: 703-536-2954
Fax: 703-241-7027
e-mail: rrshows@aol.com

Tickets available at:

Large Operating Layouts

www.gserr.com

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Next Show Date: January 17, 2026

Present
This Card
For \$1.00 Off
One Admission

Last Call GGRS 1:1 Scale Train Rides!

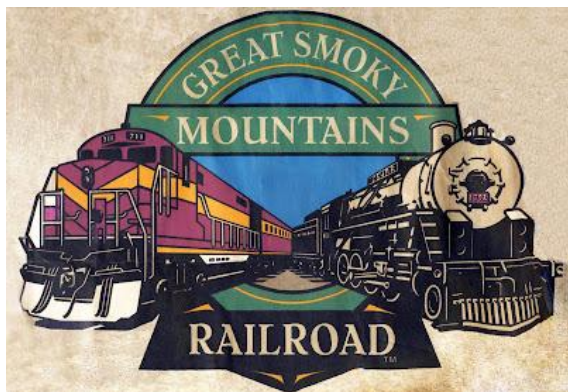
By Ted Yarbrough

The first ride is coming VERY quickly on the Tennessee Valley Railroad's Copper Hill Special set for Saturday, May 31. This ride will be diesel powered and follow the Hiwassee River from Delano, Tennessee to Copper Hill, Tennessee. This train excursion will take you to the apex of the renowned Hiwassee Loop. Witness this incredible railway marvel near Farner, Tennessee, where the tracks intriguingly cross over themselves as they spiral up the mountain. Notably, there are only six such loops in North America, with this one being the sole example east of the Mississippi River. Copper Hill is located on the Georgia state line (it actually runs right through the middle of town). We will be seated in the traditional coach seats. The train will have about a 90-minute layover so you can eat lunch and explore the town before the return trip. The train leaves at 9:30 and returns at 5:30. Tickets with our group rate cost \$72.00 for adults and \$42.00 for children under 13 years old and must be ordered NOW BY PHONE with Olivia at Tennessee Valley Railroad and she can add you on to our group. Give her a call at 423-894-8028 and let her know you are with the Ted Yarbrough May 31 group. Then let me know you have booked and I will get your tickets with the group and have them at the train (departing from 'Train Parking' pasture on HWY 411 in Delano, Tennessee-on right going north just past Hiwassee River).

The second & third rides will be with the BTO Convention in Helen, Georgia this July. To help support the BTO, we will be riding on their scheduled train trips. The first BTO trip will be Monday, July 14 on the Blue Ridge Scenic Railway. This trip will carry passengers from the city of Blue Ridge, Georgia to the border town of McCaysville, Georgia. This is on the old L&N Hook and Eye Line. You will have about 90 minutes for lunch in town (included in your ticket) and exploring the state line town of Copper Hill, Tennessee. The train will then return to Blue Ridge. Bus transportation is included and there will be DOOR PRIZES on the trip back to Helen. I will ride this trip because I will be taking my great nephews and it is more child appropriate in that it is a shorter bus ride and train ride. The second BTO train ride will be on Thursday, July 17 on the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad Nantahala Trip. This ride will be in crown class and include a box lunch. This is a very scenic ride to the Nantahala Outdoor Center and return. Steam power is anticipated for this train ride. Bus transportation is included with DOOR PRIZES on the return trip. This is one of my favorite train rides in the Eastern US. To ride with the BTO, you must be a member of their group and register for the convention (order tickets on the convention registration form at www.bigtrainoperator.com). Registration deadline is soon approaching!!!!

Accept our invitation to ride with the GGRS this year on a 1:1 Scale Train Ride. We have a great time and it is very enjoyable riding the full-size versions of the trains we model.

All Aboard!



Highballing down the Track

On your way to the 2025 Sacramento Valley National Garden Railway Convention, plan to make a month of large scale train plans.

The **2025 Northeast Large Scale Train Show** will be in Springfield, Massachusetts, on May 3 and 4, 2025.

The **Great Lakes Large Scale Train Expo** sponsored by the Riverside Railroad Crew will be in Girard, Ohio, May 9 and 10, 2025; information at: www.greatlakestrainexpo.com.

The **2025 Midwest Garden Railroad Gathering** will be June 4 to 7, 2025, around Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The Convention website is fully online with complete information about activities and tours. Ticket bundles are available for early birds at reduced prices. The site also lists hotels and camping info for RV's.

For all the latest info, Go to: <https://ngrc2025.org/>



40th Anniversary

National Garden Railway Convention

June 18 - 22, 2025

SAFE Credit Union Convention Center - Sacramento, CA



Announcing the 2025 Convention Hotel:

Holiday Inn Express Helen, GA.

Enjoy recreational amenities including an indoor pool and a 24-hour fitness center. The hotel also features complimentary wireless Internet access and gift shops/newsstands.

Satisfy your appetite at the hotel's coffee shop/cafe. A complimentary continental breakfast is served daily from 6:00 AM to 10:00 AM.

Featured amenities include a 24-hour business center, complimentary newspapers in the lobby, and a 24-hour front desk. Free self parking is available on-site.

Make yourself at home in one of the 86 guestrooms featuring refrigerators and flat-screen televisions. Cable programming and DVD players are provided for your entertainment, while complimentary wireless Internet access keeps you connected. Conveniences include safes and desks, as well as phones with free local calls.

When you stay at Holiday Inn Express Helen, you'll be in a national park, within a 15-minute walk of Helen Tubing & Helen Water Park and Chattahoochee River. This hotel is 0.2 mi from Alpine Helen/White County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Amenities

- Internet Access
- Swimming Pool
- Fitness Center
- Restaurant
- Pets Allowed (conditions apply)
- Handicap Accessible
- Meeting Facilities
- Smoke free facility
- Smoking Areas
- 24 hour Concierge
- Conference Center

The cost per room will be \$169 plus tax. This includes breakfast and free parking. Rooms outside of the convention time are at a discount room rate of \$209 per night. Because there are limited rooms available in the area, we urge club members to reserve rooms as soon as possible.

RESERVATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED!

To reserve a room, call the hotel directly at
706-878-1084 extension 3.

Ask for the special BTOC rate for July next year.
Reservation deadline is June 13, 2025.



GEORGIA *on my mind!*

BIG TRAIN OPERATOR CLUB
CONVENTION/HELEN, GA
JULY 13-18, 2025

Celebrating 47 years!





GEORGIA *on my mind!*

**BIG TRAIN OPERATOR CLUB
CONVENTION/HELEN, GA
JULY 13-18, 2025**

Celebrating 47 years!

A reminder to all club members that early registration for this years convention in Helen, Georgia ends on May 1, 2025. Get your registrations in before the prices go up! Let's make this one of the best! Go to the club website for more information and to download registration forms!

Sunday July 13, 2025

- BOD Meeting
- Convention Setup
- *Registration Opens*
- Runnin trains
- *All Aboard Party*
- Convention Rooms Open
- Trivia contest #1

Monday July 14, 2025

- *Blue Ridge Scenic Railway*
- Convention Rooms Open
- Clinic #1

Tuesday July 15, 2025

- *General Membership Meeting*
- *Free Day to Explore the Helen, GA Area*
- Convention Rooms Open
- Ice Cream Social
- Trivia contest #2

Wednesday July 16, 2025

- *Georgia Garden Railway Society Layout Tours*
- Convention Rooms Open
- Ladies Wine & Cheese Get Together

Thursday July 17, 2025

- *Great Smokey Mountain Railway*
- Convention Rooms Open
- Clinic #2
- Trivia Contest #3

Friday July 21, 2025

- *Drag Races*
- Teardown Convention Rooms/
Banquet Setup
- *Farewell Banquet*
- Trivia Finals

Register Today!

(Schedule subject to change.)

Two important bits of news from the BTO Club
The Convention Schedule and Registration forms are out.

The Menu Choices for the box lunch were not specified on the Reg Form due to time constraints. Here they are for the 7/17/25 Great Smoky Mountain Trip. Sandwiches - **T**urkey, **H**am, **C**hicken Salad, **V**eggie Wrap with cookie, chips and water. If you are choosing that trip, please send me your choice of sandwich for each person in your party.

We now have several Registrations (about 9 or 10)
Any thoughts? Share them with me or Tim
Thanks for your help in notifying members.

Using Credit Cards for Registration. I would like to have those wishing CCs to complete the paper form and write "Use PayPal", just under "**Registration Total**". I will create an e-mail Invoice from PayPal and have it sent to you. It will include a 5% adder for PayPal processing charge. When paid, the Registration will be confirmed through e-mail to the member. The BTO Club never sees or has access to your Credit Card Info.

*John Groot, Registration
4 Saslow Ct.
Quarryville, PA 17566*

<https://www.bigtrainoperator.com/2025/pdfs/2025%20conv%20registration%20form%20wMenu.pdf>

Big Train Operator Club Membership Application



The Big Train Operator Club will not sell, share or otherwise provide any personal information to any entity or organization for any reason.

Membership Chairperson: David Snow

Welcome Aboard

☐ 1-year BTO Club membership, USA

Annual dues of \$50 includes \$40 for a 1-yr subscription
to the Big Train Operator Magazine.



Want some railroad history related to North Georgia?
What was the Civil War's "Great Locomotive Chase"?
Where are those locomotives today?
Who received the nation's first "Medals of Honor"?

Come to the Thursday, July 17 BTO Clinic at 7 p.m. and meet Union secret agent James J. Andrews and his nemesis, Confederate Conductor William A. Fuller, as they describe the thrilling account of the theft and recovery of the locomotive, "The General" and the 90-mile chase from Atlanta to Chattanooga.

The plan was to steal a train on its run north towards Chattanooga, stopping to damage or destroy track, bridges, telegraph wires, and track switches behind them, so as to prevent the Confederate Army from being able to move troops and supplies from Atlanta to Chattanooga. But as one would expect, the plans started to fall apart as soon as they were implemented.

This presentation will give you the full story from the gentlemen themselves.....(well, perhaps from their ghosts) and direct you to the most interesting train drama from the Civil War, or as we here in the south call it, "The war of Yankee aggression".

2025 AML Club Car - Covered Hopper

Manufactured by American Mainline (Accucraft) Mfg.
in 4 Road Numbers: 2025 01, 2025 02, 2025 03, 2025 04



Car specifications & Details

Scale / Gauge	1:29 / 45 mm
Construction	Plastic body, Brass castings
Mini. Radius	4 ft.
Length	24 in. (609 mm)
Width	4.3 in. (109 mm)
Height	6.3 in. (159 mm)

Car Features

Die-cast trucks w/ metal wheels
Longitudinal hatch covers
See-through roof walks
Full underbody detail
Body mounted couplers
Truck Mounted couplers
Loop truck mounted couplers

The Hook & Loop will mate with all other brands. The AML knuckle couplers will not reliably mate with the other brands. The cars do have a mounting pad to install Kadee body mount couplers (906 Style)

Ordering Details

You can order now with check or PP/CC but please e-mail me first for latest info. JohnGroot@aol.com

[Download Order form for printing](#)

For pickup at our 2025 Convention there will be no shipping charge by the Club.

There will only be 60 cars made. 15 of each road number.

The Rip Track

**Need Repairs? Supplies?
Buy Good Stuff from
our Members**



*We are proud to introduce
another 2025 new product:*

A G Scale first: All-Aluminum Bridge Switch Section

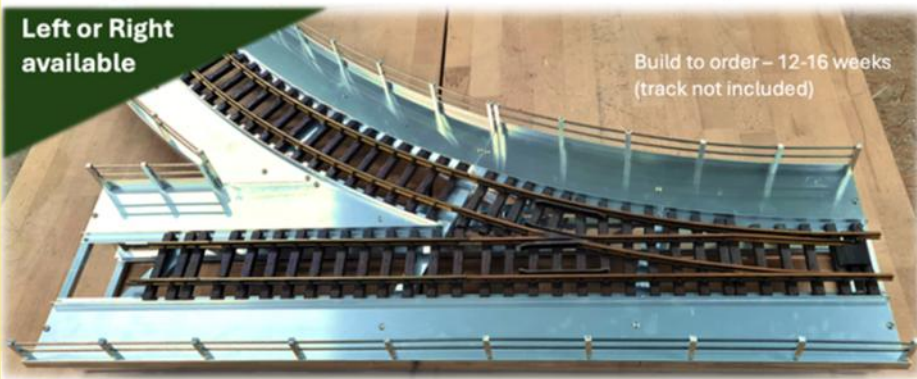
*All our aluminum bridges are made
from ultra durable aircraft grade
aluminum that will last a lifetime.*

New! Bridge Turnout Sections

**Left or Right
available**



Build to order – 12-16 weeks
(track not included)



Members with Garden, Train, or other related items to sell (new or used) can submit their items for inclusion in "The Rip Track". Send information to the editor for the next issue. Items will run for a single issue, unless the editor is notified to repeat the item. (Quality photos appreciated) Members with related business advertising may also submit ads. These will run continuously until policies change or notice is given. Non-member publishing by arrangement. (Contact Editor for details.)



<https://www.grnews.org/>

GR NEWS Edition 2 of 2025

A multi-generational layout started by a grandfather and maintained by a grandson is featured. The Loco of the Edition is an unusual scratch-built Western Maryland RR diesel. A battery & radio control installation is described in detail with images. And there are lots more highlights!

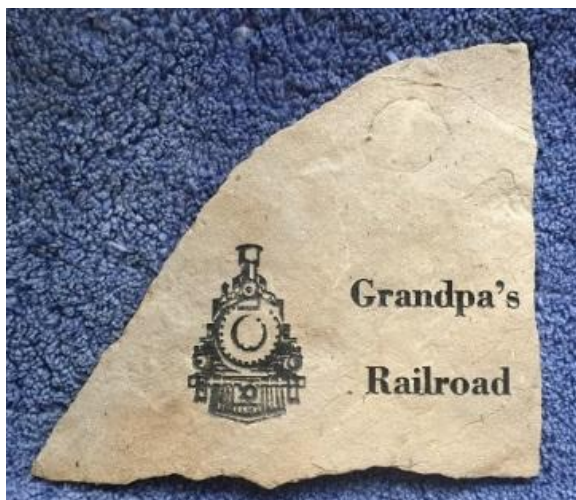
Rock me gentle, Rock me slowly

Emil Decker's
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SALE ENTRANCE ON LEFT SIDE OF THE BUILDING





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Woodstock, GA 30188

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dave@traininstallations.com

Check out our online store and updated website at

www.traininstallations.com

Think about other ways or things we can help you with while we are stuck at home over the next few weeks including.

- Layout planning and CAD drawings
- Custom bridges
- Overhead RR systems
- Model kit assembly
- Train storage shelving

Now is a better time than ever to distract yourself with the hobby of model railroading! Let us know how we can help.

Thanks - Dave 770-597-0038



Depot for sale:
Yours for only
\$225

yar-brought@charter.net

Yard Hostler

While I am off to Alaska to take in the Alaska Railroad and the Yukon and White Pass, I will be thinking of you all, here in the "Hot - lanta" area. Get ready! I will try to bring back some photos from my trip. In the meantime, you don't have very long to wait before the multiple BIG TIME conventions are here. If you haven't made plans, its not too late, just might cost a little more since you delayed. Don't miss out!

Emil Decker, Editor, GGRS Gazette
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