

GGRS Gazette

February, 2026

Official Newsletter
of the Georgia Garden Railway Society
Semi-Quincentennial of the U.S.A. 1776 - 2026

Roy's Rails



2026 is upon us all. By the time you read this the January Annual Meeting, luncheon and gift swap, as well as the Golden Spikes Train Show will be in the books.

Right around the corner is Trains, Trains, Trains to be held January 24-25 from 9:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Hope to see you there to help with crowd control and the Membership Desk.

I would like to thank outgoing President, Ted Yarbrough, for all his leadership to GGRS and especially with the Helen, GA BTO Convention.

2026 is shaping up to be a busy year. We have host families scheduled from April through October, including 2 new layouts the Buchla's indoor layout in July and the Hewitt's outdoor layout in Kernersville, NC in September.

In addition to our GGRS schedule the BTO will be held in Scranton, PA in July. The Golden Spike Train Show in Duluth, GA will be in August.

It's not too early to start thinking about the 2027 National Garden Railway Convention which will be in Nashville, TN in conjunction with the BTO Convention.

Let's have a great 2026.

Roy Williamson, President

It Was Chaos in CHOO CHOO Town I Tell You !



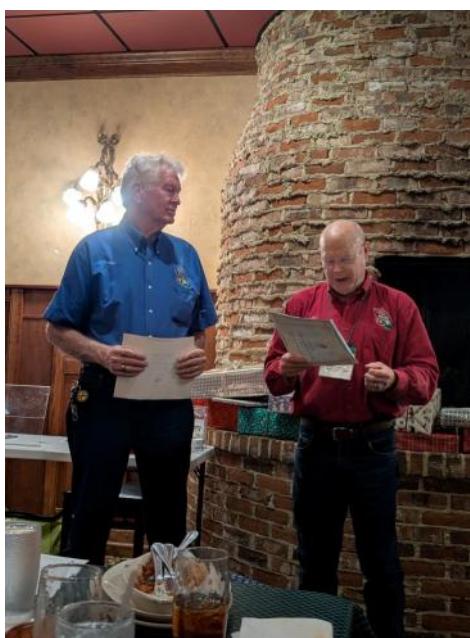
GGRS members will never forget the total chaos that reigned at our Annual Meeting on Saturday at Provino's in Kennesaw. Dinner was great and we had all settled down for long winter's nap, (i.e. Cinder Claus-led exchange of presents.) Those who expected to have a part to play were cozying down, when suddenly Cinder Clause - turned into - **THE GRINCH!!**. Yeah, it was me, with a Grinchly, horrible Christmas busting idea. I read the Dr. Seuss story. Each time I said Grinch members were to pass their present to the right. (No Roy, your other right!). Then if I read Choo, as in Choo-ville, or the Choos, they were to pass in the opposite direction. Instead of passing large bulky presents around, I thought using a deck of cards to represent the presents would be easier..... HA! EASY! With tables all aligned, and not in a circle, (always easier in a circle), all the choos didn't know which way to choose. IT WAS CHAOS from the start! Before long, all the Choos down in Choo Choo-ville were tossing cards back and forth, holding on to them, and even those who didn't participate had to duck and dive for cover as cards went flying. Well, in the end everyone who played got a different gift, the Grinch was run out of town on a rail, as the new year has begun.

In This Edition

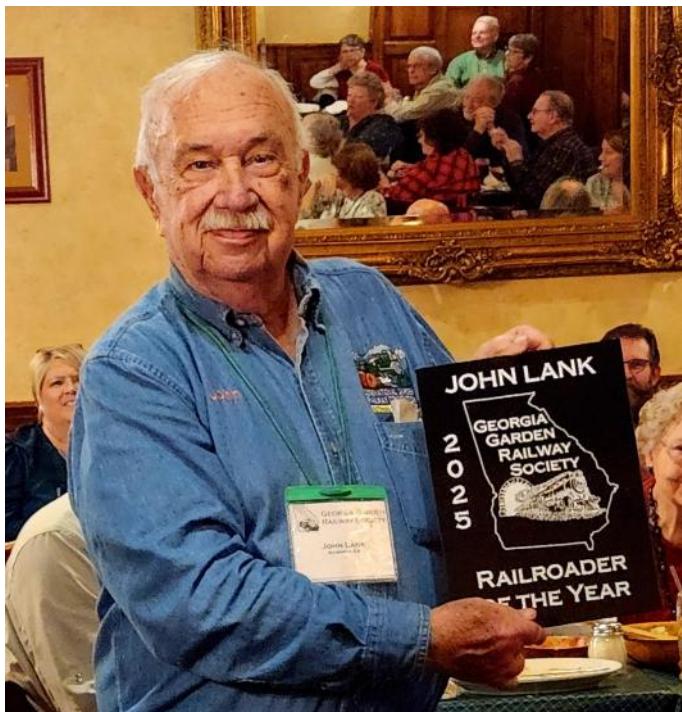
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Annual Meeting







Congratulations to our Railroader of the Year, John Lank, and our Railroad Family of the Year, Carol an Dan Steidle.

Outgoing President Ted Yarborough donated a hand-built custom wooden Durango Station from his layout. Still lots of life left in it, and everybody wanted to win. Ted left before it was raffled, (family business), but it found a good home, Ted. Diane Allen walked away with this wonderful prize. Thanks for donating it Ted!



Membership Report

Membership News – January 2025

On Saturday, January 17, 2025, the Georgia Garden Railway Society had a table at the Gaslight Civic Center for the annual train show. We are always so happy to see many of our members that pass by the GGRS table and say hello. We also received a \$10 donation during the day.

When you see the following new members at our meetings, please welcome them –
Kyle & Brigitte Paridee from Flowery Branch, GA

Jeff Rada from Suwanee, GA

Tom & Daphne Karel from Greenwood, S. C.

The following members have paid their 2026 dues.

Alexander (Doug), Allen, Auverman, Avery, Bando, Barr, Bennett, Black, Buchia (David), Buchia (Todd), Bundy, Cavan, Clapp, Dallas, Deberg, Decker, Delmar, Dibling, Dixon, Dolensky, Eidenire, Foster (Dustin), Garlinghouse, Galvin, Griggs, Harris, Hertes, Hewitt, Holiday, Humphrey, Lester, Manning, Morris, Peters, Porter, Pugh, Redmond, Reh, Reid, Ruff, Sagarin, Sault, Schrock, Sommers, Stotler, Steidle, Stuckey, Sutton, Thomas, Tidd, Williamson, Yarbrough.

Those of you that have not paid will be getting a personal email from me this month as a final reminder/notice. Please don't let your membership drop because you will not be receiving our newsletter and notices of upcoming meetings and events. We would miss you!

Thank you!

Ginny Manning, Membership Coordinator

vlmanning@aol.com



2027 National Garden Railway Convention

We don't know a lot but we do know three things:

1. It's coming, with more info as it gets to us.
2. It's closer than California
3. Fun will be top priority. We know. We've been there before.



**Have you modified one of these?
How about showing us a photo of
your benchwork - handiwork!**



The Dining Car

At the request of several members, a new section has been added to the consist: a dining car, where you can share your favorite dishes with club members. Many are just dying to try them out, after sampling your signature dish at a recent club meeting. Send entries to the editor. A simple recipe, instructions, and if possible, a photo to entice your fellow members to give it a try!

Coconut Pie

Linda Decker per Martha Meade

$\frac{1}{2}$ lb. Bacon (Emil says bacon goes with everything). Fry crispy and munch on while making the pie. . . . Keep fingers and pie filling clean.

1 stick butter
 1 cup sugar
 3 eggs, beaten
 1/4 cup buttermilk
 1 can/package flaked coconut (8 oz.)
 Pinch of salt
 1/2 Tsp Vanilla (optional)
 1 9" unbaked pie shell

Cream butter and sugar, add beaten eggs, and stir well.
 Blend in all other ingredients.
 Bake in 9" pie shell @ 300 degrees until set (approx. 40 min.)



What's your favorite dish to share over the holidays, or year round? Send it in to the editor. Otherwise, you might get his "Goloshes Goulash", "Catbox Cookies", or even worse!



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
Annual Business Meeting	Provino's Kennesaw	Jan 10, 2026	Complete
Golden Spike	Duluth, GA	Jan 17, 2026	Complete
Trains, Trains, Trains	Kennesaw, GA	Jan 24, 2026	Planning - Terry Manning
GGRS Club Mtg	Kris & Charlotte Dixon - Cochran, GA and Joe & Mary Schrock, East Dublin, GA	April	In Planning Stage
Tate Depot	Tate Depot, Tate GA	May, 2026	Planning - Emil Decker
GGRS Club Mtg	Ted & Deborah Yarborough Chatsworth, GA	Jun 6, 2026	In Planning Stage
GGRS Club Mtg	David Lorraine and David Buchla	Jul 11, 2026	In Planning Stage
GGRS Club Mtg	Dan & Carol Steidle	Aug, 2026	Includes Annual Swap Meet
GGRS Club Mtg	Bill & Liana Hewitt	Sep 12, 2026	In Planning Stage
GGRS Club Mtg	Becky & Rich Chitwood	Oct, 2026	In Planning Stage

**Event Details**

Museum operating hours for Trains, Trains, Trains! are from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on both January 24 and 25, 2026. Regular admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors (ages 65+), and \$5 for children (ages 3 to 17), active duty, reserves, guard and retired military personnel (with ID) and university students (with ID). Tickets are available online. Admission for Museum members is always free!

Parking for the event will be available at Swift-Cantrell Park, located at 3140 Old 41 Hwy NW, with a free shuttle service to the Museum.

Sponsors for the event include Watson Injury Law, Gay Construction Company, J Lunsford CPA, Kennesaw Museum Foundation, Kennesaw Business Association and the City of Kennesaw.

Caboose x372 Boarding Experience

The "Board the Caboose Experience" will offer the opportunity to tour the caboose for a \$5 donation to the. Proceeds from the donation will support the Museum's mission.

Kennesaw Museum Foundation. Children 3 years old and younger are free. Proceeds from the donation will support the Museum's mission.

Get Tickets Here: <https://southernmuseum.ticketspice.com/trains-trains-trains-2026>

NMRA National Convention in Chattanooga

The NMRA is having their national convention in Chattanooga the last week in July. The largest model train show in the US is always with the convention. The NMRA (Chattanooga Division) has invited Georgia Garden Railway Society to set up an operating display.

Annual Business Meeting Minutes

At approximately 12:30 p.m. January 10, 2026, GGRS President, Ted Yarbrough, called the membership to order for the Annual Business Meeting at Provino's Italian Restaurant, Kennesaw, GA.

Treasurers Report - Terry Manning advised GGRS to have the following funds on hand:

Renasant Bank	\$ 1,470.00
Wells Fargo Checking	\$ 5,929.26
Wells Fargo CD	\$10,000.00
Total	\$17,399.26

Since the club's finances are strong, Terry will suggest to the Executive Board that 2027 dues should cover both 2027 and 2028, if postmarked or paid prior to December 31, 2026.

Membership Report - Ginny Manning reported: GGRS 2025 Membership 96 Families
GGRS 2026 renewal Memberships to date 40 Families

Ginny will continue to follow-up with members to renew their membership.

Event Report – Pam Williamson stated only April remains open on the 2026 Event Calendar. There will be 2 new layouts to view in 2026, the Buchla's in July and Hewitt's in September.

If you would like to host in April, please contact Pam at 770-851-9462 or pspaan@msn.com

Also, when you respond to the GGRS Club Meeting Evites to say you'll be attending, please let us know if you plan to bring a side dish or dessert. This way we will avoid the abundance of desserts and lack of sides we experienced at our November Club Meeting.

January 17	68th Atlanta Model Train Show	Duluth, GA
January 24	Trains, Trains, Trains	Kennesaw, GA
May	Tate Depot (planning stage)	Tate, GA
June 6	Ted & Deborah Yarbrough	Chatsworth, GA
July11	David Lorraine & Todd Buchla	Acworth, GA
July 20 -25	BTO Convention	Scranton, PA
August 8	Dan & Carol Steidle	Cumming, GA
September 12	Bill & Lianna Hewitt	Kernersville, NC
October	Rich & Becky Chitwood	Cumming, GA

2026 Nights of Lights – Atlanta Botanical Gardens – Doug Alexander encouraged members to consider signing up to work at the Atlanta Botanical Gardens to run trains and get paid. The Nights of Lights runs from mid-November until mid-January. There are two shifts per day 8:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. For more information please contact Doug at 404-272-2986 or alexander@bellsouth.net.

Golden Spike – 68th Atlanta Model Train Show – Roy Williamson stated there will be approximately 20 GGRS member tables setup as dealers, plus Trainz and MELOVETRAINS. Additionally, there will be a Membership Table for GGRS, a Membership Table for the Alabama Garden Railroad, and a Table for the 2027 National Garden Railroad Convention.

Trains, Trains, Trains January 24 & 25 Kennesaw, GA – Terry Manning urged members to assist at the Membership table and to help with crowd control, mainly keeping the children out of the GGRS layout.

Election of Officers - At today's meeting, Pete Harters, presented a slate of officers for the Executive Board: Roy Williamson, President; Terry Manning, Treasurer; Pam Williamson, Secretary; Members at Large Emil Decker, John Lank, Ginny Manning, and Dan Steidle. A vote was taken and unanimously approved.

Garden Railroader of the Year – There were two strong nominations, from the Membership, for Garden Railroader of the Year. Two awards were presented:

Railroader of the Year –This person has excellent attendance at monthly membership meetings as well as at community and GGRS sponsored train shows. This person is helpful in recruiting new members at train shows, regularly assists in crowd control and layout operations at our train shows, and has been known to mentor new members. He has served on the Executive Board since 2020 (and has volunteered to serve again in 2026). As a Board member, he contributes greatly to the updating and revision of society policy. He has also been helpful in reducing our inventory of excess equipment over the last couple of years. He has and his wife Carolyn, helped plan our annual holiday meeting for several years. GGRS is proud to award Garden Railroader of the Year to John Lank.

Garden Railroader Family of the Year— This family regularly attends monthly GGRS meetings and often serve at the Membership Table when we host a table at area train shows, thus helping create our largest membership of almost 100 families this year. Both have opened their fantastic indoor layout to our members and to the public on several occasions this year, including a layout tour during the BTO convention. They have volunteered to serve as event coordinators for the Piedmont Division train show in 2026. Even as they travel to foreign nations on vacation, they serve as GGRS ambassadors by passing along GGRS themed gifts to overseas train engineers, conductors, and other staff. Dan has served effectively on the Board since 2023 with helpful input. GGRS is proud to award Garden Railroader Family of the Year to Dan and Carol Steidle.

At approximately 1:00 p.m. the meeting was adjourned, followed by a lively gift exchange game of "How the Grinch Stole Christmas".
Respectfully submitted, Pam Williamson, Secretary

Passenger Rail Plans Between Atlanta and Tennessee Cities Inch Forward

According to WSB, long-discussed plans for passenger rail service linking Atlanta to several major Tennessee cities are moving ahead, as planners focus on using existing rail infrastructure to keep costs down. Because high-speed rail is considered too expensive, planners are targeting conventional passenger service along current freight corridors to connect Atlanta with Chattanooga, Nashville, and Memphis.

Ellis Smith, who is helping lead the effort, says the main challenge has been scheduling passenger trains around slower-moving freight traffic. The proposed solution involves adding sidings, or sections of double track, so freight trains can move aside while passenger trains pass. "We're building sidings and double tracks so the freight trains can move over and the faster passenger train can pass them by," Smith said. "That's the whole game, that's what we're working on."

Smith recently spoke to the Chattanooga City Council, saying the project has buy-in from mayors along the route, as well as the Georgia Department of Transportation and the Tennessee Department of Transportation. He says planners have also held partnership discussions with Amtrak.

The project has federal funding attached and is now moving from planning into an engineering design phase. Smith estimates that phase could take about two years, though he says delivery timelines and total costs for the full project are still unclear. "We're using the existing rails that today already connect Chattanooga, Atlanta, Memphis, and Nashville," Smith said.

While additional investment will be needed in the years ahead, planners say the approach could make it feasible to launch passenger rail service in years rather than decades, potentially creating a new regional rail link between Georgia and Tennessee.



CELEBRATING 5 YEARS IN CARTERSVILLE, GA!

Mark your calendars for this Model Train Show!!

Saturday March 14th, 2026 10-5

Sunday March 15th, 2026 10-4

The Clarence Brown Conference Center, 5450 GA HWY 20, Cartersville, GA

This Model Train Show features 2 days of fun! There will be 8 Operating layouts, 180 Vendor Tables, "White Elephant", Raffle Layout, Train Set Give-a-way, Scavenger Hunt for the kids with prizes, EARLY BIRD Hour too!

EARLY BIRD ADMISSION - \$25 Saturday 9-10, plus the rest of the show.

General Admission - \$10 Both Days, Kids 9 and under are FREE!

ALL TICKETS INCLUDE BOTH DAYS OF THE SHOW!!

Purchase your tickets early at: ThePiedmontDivisionModelTrainShow.com

This show is sponsored by the Piedmont Division



<https://piedmont-div.org>



National Model Railroad Association



<https://bigtrainoperator.com/BTO%20Store/default.shtml>

BTO Member? Check out the Store page for all kinds of cars, accessories, and calendars available for purchase.

The Rip Track

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

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.)



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- Overhead RR systems
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- Dave 770-597-0038

Train Installations will be at three shows this winter!

The Golden Spike Train Show

Saturday Jan. 17th 9:00-4:00

Gas South Convention Center

5200 Sugar Loaf Parkway

Duluth, GA

<https://www.gserr.com/shows.htm>

The Piedmont Division Model Train Show

Saturday & Sunday March 14th & 15th 10:00-5:00

The Clarence Brown Conference Center

5450 GA Hwy. 20

Cartersville, GA

<https://themodeltrainshow.com/>

Amherst Railway Society Railroad Hobby Show

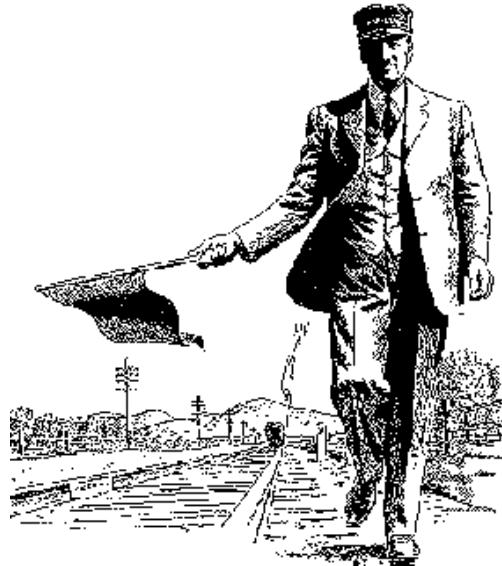
Saturday Jan. 24th 9:00-5:00

Sunday Jan. 25th 10:00-4:00

Eastern States Exposition Center

1305 Memorial Ave. West Springfield, MA

<https://www.railroadhobbyshow.com/index.php>



Yard Hostler

Happy 2026! the 250th Anniversary of our Country. I expect a lot of Red, White, and Blue train themes this year. Let's make the most of it. Show us your consist of these colors on your railway. Lots of exciting events possible, and I know you want to be there and be involved. So GO! Enjoy. Document. Share. This is "your" newsletter you know.

Thanks to the outgoing Officers, and welcome to the incoming ones. Hope you are as good as the last batch.....come to think of it, most of you are!!! Keep up the good work!

Emil Decker, Editor, GGRS Gazette
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