



GGRS Gazette

January, 2021

Official Newsletter of the Georgia Garden Railway Society

President's Message

No Pres. = No Msg. You end up with my insanity to fill this spot. Don't Like??? Become Pres. and fill this slot with meaningful info. [Editor]



I Like Trains.



Trump Trains?



Um... No.

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Presidential Trains

Since their introduction, trains have been a part of the presidential scene. For nearly a century, when a sitting President canvassed the country, it was by train. The first five Presidents, unfortunately, never had an opportunity to ride on a train, let alone have one dedicated to their use.

The first Presidential candidate to use a train for campaigning was William Henry Harrison. Harrison ran for President in 1836. He failed to be elected that year, but in 1841, as President-elect, Harrison became the first to use a train to ride to his inauguration.

Two decades later, Abraham Lincoln forged a new vision for how the White House and the nation utilized the rails. From the time he was voted into office, Lincoln used trains to consolidate support for his policies and to reach Americans quickly. Lincoln recognized the fast mobility trains offered his Union troops. Lincoln even signed the



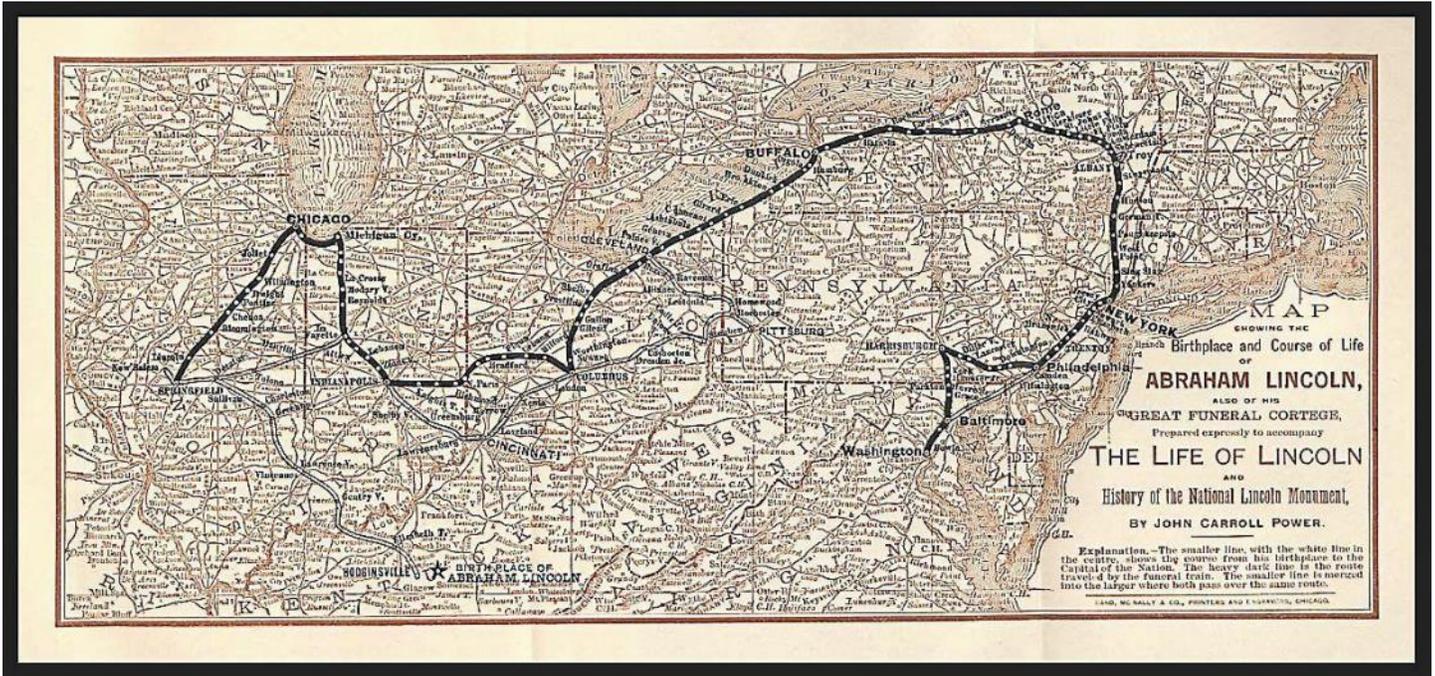
legislation that originated the first transcontinental railroad. *The specially-built Presidential coach dubbed "United States."*

During Lincoln's first term, a coach dubbed "United States" was ordered built just for the President, although he supposedly detested the project. Lincoln was opposed to extravagance and what it signaled to the citizens during a time when the country was ravaged by war.

In fact, the only time Lincoln rode in it was after his assassination. The car became the centerpiece of the "Lincoln Special" funeral train that carried his body back to Springfield, Illinois, his hometown. It was a time of national mourning, and the train acted as an observable link between the shocking headlines and the American people who were so affected by the loss. After acting as Lincoln's rail-bound hearse, the railcar was supposedly lost in a fire years later.

Continued page 2

This custom train car was the first mechanized vehicle specifically built for POTUS. It began a trend that has expanded remarkably over the last 150 years. One might say it's the great-granddaddy of the Presidential limousine, Marine One, and Air Force One. *Lincoln Funeral train route.* <https://i.redd.it/nly04q7o7ss41.jpg>



Succeeding Presidents and Presidential candidates used trains constantly for transportation and promotion; James Garfield even died right before getting on a train. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who used trains extensively on his way to being elected in 1933, and his beloved U.S. Car No. 1 rose to prominence during World War II.

U.S. Car No. 1 was built in 1928 by the Pullman Company, and originally named Ferdinand Magellan. It was one of six similar custom cars, all named after the world's great explorers.

The car was acquired by the government in 1941 for the President's wartime use. The retrofitting made it the heaviest railcar ever built in the United States, weighing in at 285,000 lbs. It was armored with 5/8 -inch steel plating on its roof, sides, and floor. Three inch bulletproof glass windows were installed. Two escape hatches were also mounted. It was a rolling fortress that reflected the extreme security precautions of wartime.

U.S. Car No. 1's interior was remodeled with a presidential suite, two guest rooms, a dining / conference room, and an observation lounge that Roosevelt and staff utilized during long trips. It was extremely luxurious and had telephones in most rooms. Recall that this was a time of land-line telephones, operator connections, party lines, and telegraph, not the ubiquitous cell phones of today.

Communications were facilitated by a converted hospital car that had (for that time) incredibly high-tech radio gear installed so the President could stay connected at all times. A second converted hospital car was also part of the train. It was used by the Secret Service detail and included a kitchen, bunks, bathroom, and lounge area. The code name for these two cars was "Crate." An oversize baggage car would often carry two sedans and two convertibles for motorcades. Other cars could be added when needed for the press and other aides for high-profile missions.



The Ferdinand Magellan, aka U.S. Car No.1, on display in Florida.
EBYABE / WIKICOMMONS



Inside the dining air of U.S. Car No.1. ALEXF / WIKICOMMONS



The rear platform of U.S. Car No. 1 that Roosevelt famously used for public addresses. ALEXF / WIKICOMMONS

Car No.1. Many famous people rode in the President's car, including Winston Churchill, and much key war planning was done in its conference room.

Moving the President on the rails was an intricate affair. Special instructions were issued so that no other train movement would interfere with the special. Freights had to clear 30 minutes in advance and be at a standstill while the special passed, regardless of direction or track. Conductors were instructed to insure against loose doors and other possible projections. Division engineers had to inspect tracks, interlockings and drawbridges. Drawbridges could not be opened within 30 minutes of the train's arrival. Car inspectors rode the train, state police monitored grade crossings and platform access was limited.

Like Lincoln's final trip home, the Presidential railcar was part of the rail procession that delivered Roosevelt's body back to his home town after his sudden death in 1945. FDR had traveled nearly 250,000 miles on the train during his presidency.

Harry Truman continued to use U.S. Car No. 1. following FDR's death. Truman conducted a 31,000-mile whistle-stop tour of the US during the 1948 Presidential Campaign. Even then, like passengers today, he bemoaned its slow speed. He demanded the train be run at 80 mph whenever possible, double the speed Roosevelt preferred.

President Harry S. Truman and the First Lady aboard U.S. Car No.1

The exterior of U.S. Railcar No. 1 had the word "Pullman" painted on its side, allowing it to blend in with other train traffic. The President's train used the callsign "POTUS," although the Secret Service called it "City Hall," during operations. Naturally the POTUS had the right-of-way whenever and wherever he traveled, just as Air Force One and a Presidential Motorcades have today.



FDR giving a speech from the rear of U.S. Car No. 1. AP

FDR used the car extensively for his 1944 campaign. The train allowed FDR, who suffered from polio, to make public appearances under controlled circumstances, as health concerns had loomed heavily over his candidacy. He set up shop right on the car's elevated rear platform. Loudspeakers were installed on its roofline for this purpose, a signature feature on previous campaign cars used by Roosevelt.

A special wheelchair was constructed for FDR's use while on U.S.



Continued page 4

Truman increasingly opted to use the C-118 Liftmaster labeled *Independence*, instead of going by rail. Still, U.S. Car No. 1 kept on chugging down the tracks right into the Dwight D. Eisenhower administration. However, by the mid-1950s, rail travel was steadily decreasing. When the White House put the first aircraft, a Lockheed Constellation named *Columbine II*, to use with the callsign Air Force One, flying became the favored mode of travel for most Presidents.

Columbine II sitting behind armed guards. US ARCHIVES

The last use of U.S. Car No. 1 by the White House was by First Lady Mamie Eisenhower. She took it to christen the world's first nuclear submarine, the USS Nautilus. Eventually, the historic car was retired to the Gold Coast Railroad Museum in Florida, where it remains on display today. Car No. 1 was kept, but by the end of the 1960s its days of operational usefulness had ended.

Although the retirement of U.S. Car No. 1 spelled the end of trains being the primary form of transportation for US Presidents, it remained one for special occasions. Trains allow Presidents and opposition candidates to get closer to voters and constituents than when arriving on Air Force One. Trains also bring a heavy dose of nostalgia to a campaign. This was not lost on Presidents Nixon, Carter, Reagan, Bush (41), Clinton, Bush (43), and Obama, all of whom have leveraged rail travel for political purposes.



Ronald Reagan seen taking to the rails in 1980. AP



Who was the first president to ride in a train?

&

What Presidential related railcars are at the Southeastern Railway Museum in Duluth, GA ?

Answer on page 19.

Gandy Dancers

Highlighting Members and their work

Theme for the Month - Railroads Resolutions

Members were asked to send in their 2021 resolutions with regard to railroading.

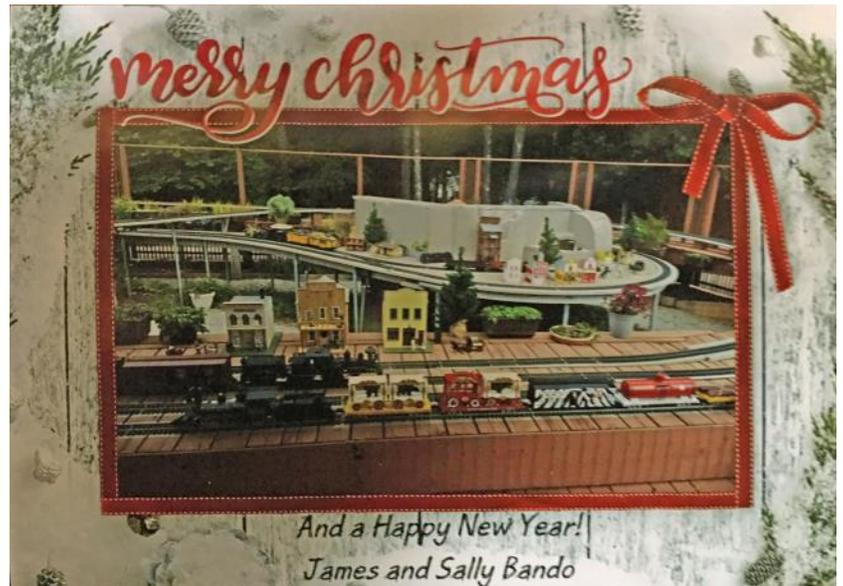
My resolution this year for my garden railroad is to actually have one. I have been so close for years, but have never made the last steps. Finished buildings / scenes and acquired various odds and ends...but never got the dang thing running. (of course, resolutions were "made to be broken" according to some folks, so I can confidently, with absolutely no doubt, can almost assure myself it will be done this year.....maybe). - Emil Decker



My resolution is to stop watching any political news. Oh, you meant trains. I resolve to go to Nashville whether they have a convention or not! - Terry Manning

Hoptown Station is located under oak trees, in the middle of a swale and millions of dropping acorns. The station's staircase has not weathered well under these conditions. This winter I will attempt to create a new staircase following Larry of the UB Railroad's U-tube DIY instructions.

My resolution is to make the stringers out of Home Depot large paint stirrers and the steps from the smaller paint stirrers. I hope to use our new mini table saw from Harbor Freight to make the cuts. I'll let you know how it turns out, but we all know I will be dragging Roy into this project. - Pam Williamson



Our Christmas card was made at Walgreen photo gallery. If you watch, you can get them for 60% off around Thanksgiving. You can personalize your card with a photo and their styles of cards. These are the flat cards, you can also get a regular card personalized. Usually one day Turn-around too! This is the 5th year that we have sent our railroad out as our card, and I resolve to do it again this coming year - Sally Bando



This year I resolve to continue to run the "Gandy Dancer" section of the newsletter in spite of receiving minimal submissions from our members. Since I volunteered to continue to publish the GGRS Gazette, I also resolve to hound, harass, embarrass, cajole, criticize, bribe, blackmail, plagiarize, or simply lie by putting words into your mouth in order to get more involvement into this section.

- [The Editor] I also resolve to stick to Bibliographies..... No More Appendices !!! - [The Editor]

"One might want to cut the editor a little slack for venting his spleen, since they forcibly removed his appendix about a week ago. " [Editor's wife]

Spleen, appendix, whatever.....parts is parts..... [The Editor]



Track Warrants

Want to become a host for next year? Now is the time to consider, then select the month you would like to reserve. First come, first choice of month. Next year is going to be wide open for only a little while, so pick your date and inform the Secretary (Pam Williamson) now.



Event	Location	Date	Status
Model Train Show 2021	Clarence Brown Convention Center, Cartersville, GA	March 13 - 14, 2021	Currently still on schedule
The Model Train Expo	Chatsworth Depot	April, 2021	Outdoor Display
36th National Garden Railway Convention	Gaylord Opryland Resort, Nashville, TN	May 30 - Jun. 5, 2021	Ngrc2020.com
NEXT GGRS Member Hosted Meeting	Your Layout ??	2021	Plan Now!

The year 2020 has had a tremendous impact on everyone. As we are still in the midst of the pandemic, we are **cancelling** *Trains, Trains, Trains!* scheduled for late January 2021. Please know that this was a difficult decision as *Trains, Trains, Trains!* has become a Southern Museum tradition having celebrated its tenth year in 2020. However, we simply cannot risk your well-being (many of you travel from out of state to attend each January) or our visitors for such a large indoor event.

For the sake of our membership we will be hosting a small, **museum members only** event called **Model Railroading Fun** on January 29-30. This will consist of the museum staff assembling a

few small safely distanced viewable train layouts for members in the Jolley Education Center. This miniature event is in no way intended to replace or replicate *Trains, Trains, Trains!*

In the meantime, we will begin planning for an even better and larger *Trains, Trains, Trains!* for January 2022! As always, we welcome your suggestions. Feel free to contact me. Please stay safe.

Sincerely,
Dr. Richard Banz
 Executive Director
 Southern Museum and Kennesaw Museum Foundation

NMRA SER News

The SER and Palmetto Division are moving forward with plans for Swamp Rabbit Express, the 2021 Convention to be held in Greenville, SC June 10-13, 2021. Check out the Convention website - www.swamprabbitexpress.org Dave Winans, Convention co-chair



ALL ABOARD!
THE
PIEDMONT DIVISION
MODEL TRAIN SHOW
2021

INTRODUCING A NEW LOCATION FOR 2021!

The Clarence Brown Conference Center
 5450 GA Hwy 20 – Cartersville, Georgia
 Easy access from Hwy 41 and 75. Hotel available next door.

March 13 & 14, 2021
Saturday: 10-5, Sunday: 10-4

Six Operating Layouts to Enjoy
150 Tables of Model Trains Dealers
“White Elephant” tables
Raffle Layout

Admission: \$9 per Person - Kids 9 and Under are Free!
FREE PARKING

Sponsored by the Piedmont Division
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www.piedmont-div.org

The restoration of the Southern X376 Caboose: Part 8 of series

by John Lees

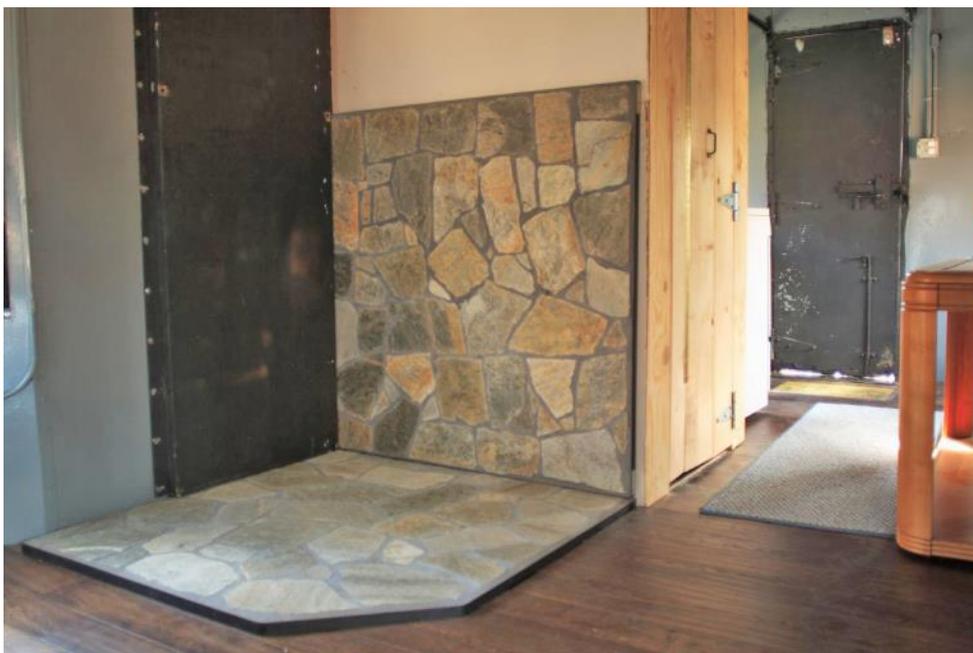
Conductor table

The conductor table is an important item for a caboose. The tabletop and seat were dry rotted and beyond repair. Using the removed pieces, I made replacements from finished $\frac{3}{4}$ plywood sheets. Sanding and staining, followed by steel wool, & seven coats of nice polyurethane made the replacement work look very nice. It sealed the look.

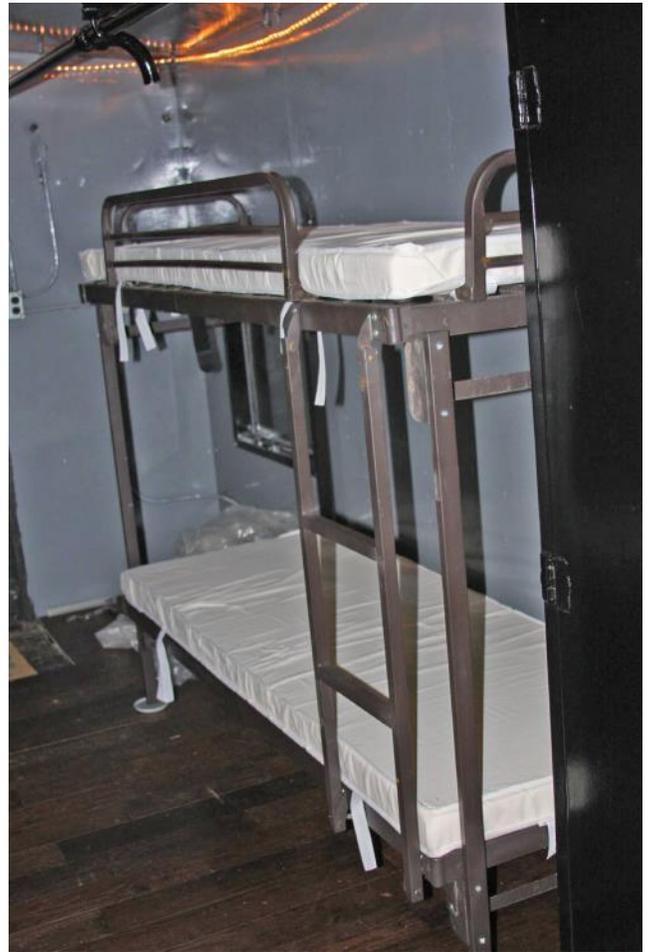


Coal stove

The coal stove, dated back to the early 1900's, was about fifty percent usable. I was at an impasse with this. To not have a coal stove would be wrong. To put in an incorrect model would be wrong. To leave a broken stove would be wrong. So I started with an eBay search. In a week I had a hit. One for sale in Kansas that is broken. After several emails back and forth it looked like the two together would make one complete stove. It was placed on a truck and arrived here the next day. Much to my amazement when I was done, the stove was ready. I was also investigating what I needed to do for safety. One wall would be wood, another metal. With new paint, when I got that far, there would be a danger of fire. I stopped at a fireplace store in Cumming, Georgia and explained what I was trying to do. The clerk got the owner to come into work from home. He listened and was hooked!



Continued page 8

The restoration of the Southern X376 Caboose: Part 8 (Cont.)*by John Lees*

He inquired what color paint would be used. When I told him industrial gray he smiled. Follow me, he instructed. Out into the warehouse we went. He told me that a customer had ordered a custom hearth last year and changed his mind. With the restocking fee collected this one would be very reasonable. I stopped him in his tracks when I asked, what is a hearth? Right there I got a lesson in fireplace technology. He showed me a beautiful hearth, grey cement base with gray stones bottom and back. He said that it was set aside for a customer that came in and wanted a unique application. I was that customer. My only concern, getting it into the door of the caboose. Four men delivered it and they managed to get it in and set it up.

Bunk beds

My plan had been to put two sets of bunk beds into the caboose. I was trying to make this a sleepover magnet for my five grandchildren. I started a search on eBay after looking through Camping World type catalogues. I found two sets of folding bunks being sold by an individual. I emailed him questions but rather than specific answers, he told me he didn't recall who he bought them from. He never used them and now he was trying to get rid of them. He did send dimensions. They were long twin-beds. Soon they arrived and we did the "I cannot believe we got them in there" routine.

Entertainment

Now for entertainment for those who choose to sit down and enjoy themselves. One day while walking through Sears, I spotted a clearance table in the home entertainment section. There in front of me was a Sony surround sound system with five speakers and a subwoofer. It had a blue ray player and radio. At 50 percent off it was priced right. It also had what was needed for the close confines of a bay window caboose.

*Continued page 9*

The restoration of the Southern X376 Caboose: Part 8 (Cont.)*by John Lees*

The speakers were all the same size, 1-inch squares. In the caboose, no one would notice them. I have used 1-inch full range Sony circular speakers in hobby projects in the past. Could this be the same Technology? It was the same and they sound very large. I decided to run a cable



lead from the house to the caboose and take a cable box out to add a television. This was a bad idea. A call to the cable company resulted in a service call when I mentioned a caboose. Here we go again with the caboose mystique. The service tech was all smiles. He told me about an idea that must be cleared by the home office. It was and when he left there was a new dish in the yard dedicated to the TV in the caboose.

Paint

It was time to paint the inside. I stopped by the Railroad Museum in Duluth, Georgia. I found a retired Southern Railroad man who knew about paint and trains. He said the technical answer to your type of paint questions would be a specific formula using a specific base paint. However, in the real world the paint used was whatever was laying around when it was time to paint. He told me to use three Rust-o-leum paints, all safety-paints. Red, yellow and gray. Four coats of gray now were on the walls. I added a black for contrast reasons.

As the interior began to come together, I started thinking about the outside. My requirement had been from the start to make the outside look like an original Southern Caboose. The obstacle that needed to be overcome was the lettering. All letters and numbers must comply with size and style or the project will look amateur and un-professional. I was talking about this at work one day when a young employee mentioned that he and his girlfriend have a side business making wraps for automobiles. He was hooked with the idea of a caboose and he wanted to do lettering. I sent him the blueprints that included technical information about the letters. I asked for a cost estimate before he started. Instead, he and his girlfriend showed up one night with all of the letters. The next day Safety Red paint was being applied to the outside. The following weekend the letter makers came back and applied the letters.

As to visitors, they still come by.

The caboose restoration declared complete.

This story was written a little at a time as each step has been taken. Once the restoration was completed the need for furnishings became obvious. The width between the railing and door, the narrow door and the inability to have room to raise one end of the furniture caused problems, at first. Then finding out that all recliners have removable backs solved a seating problem. Bunk beds that fold flat took care of beds. They were found on eBay with the seller having removed them from an old motorhome. One later addition, three years after the completion, was a barber chair I found in an antique store that was in pieces. I felt sorry for it. I got it home and explained to my wife that I wanted to rescue it. Then came the question, "So once it is back together are you going to

The restoration of the Southern X376 Caboose: Part 8 (Cont.)*by John Lees*

show respect by putting it in the garage?" I was like a deer in the headlights, I had to provide a dignified answer. I told her it was going in the caboose. A good friend of mine came to my rescue. He wanted to paint it. Like Tom Sawyer I reluctantly agreed to let him.

An examination of the hydraulic pump showed a flapper valve off center. One screw turned, flapper centered and screw tightened has been declared a major repair. When I walk into that store now, people move out of my way, Strangers shake my hand and fathers tell my story to children to make sure the legend of the hydraulic repair will pass from generation to generation. Funny, the more I explain how it was fixed the bigger the legend grows. I was recently asked if I had consulted on a new dam installation in the county. I told everyone I had no idea how a dam worked and everyone nodded their head and winked at each other. The fame grows.

About two years after completion a county sheriff's deputy pulled into our driveway. I walked over to him and he smiled and said, "I found it, I just wanted you to know". Somewhat surprised, I asked him to explain why he was looking for it. It seems the caboose has been added to a list of 12 things new officers have to find. It seems there was an accident down the road and the driver knew nothing other than she had just passed a caboose. Her reference is now on the list of questions a lost 911 caller will be asked to help locate the emergency. With an Army base nearby and maneuvers being practiced by land and air, we have noticed that the air functions seem to turn above the caboose. Headed in one direction until right above, the helicopters will turn and head away.

Adding a three chamber NY Central passenger train whistle with a 500-gal air tank has also helped make the neighbors aware they have a train "nut" for a neighbor.

So, am I done? Or what is next?

I have been looking at dining cars. I wonder what they weigh?



Hindsight is...

**Highballing down
the Track**

2021!



2021 National Garden Railroad Convention Update

May 30 to June 5, 2021 Nashville, Tennessee

Convention Registrations

Marriott Properties, which manages the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center, is now accepting reservations for hotel rooms for the week of the Convention. Our recommendation is to call the National Reservation telephone number to make your hotel reservations to ensure you receive the special convention room rate. The telephone number is (877) 351-5021. Mention you are booking rooms for the National Garden Railway Convention and request the special convention room rate. Our experience has been trying to get the discounted convention room rate has been hit or miss when trying to make room reservations on-line. If you encounter any difficulties please don't hesitate to contact us using the convention email address: ngcnashville@gmail.com.

For a quick look at the prices of each item/tour/offering available see the quick shop page at: <https://ngrc2021.com/pages/sc-quick-shop>

The Rip Track

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

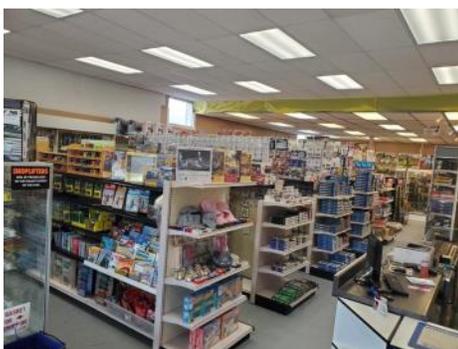
Members with Garden, Train, or other related items to sell (new or used) can submit their items for inclusion in "The Rip Track". Send information to the editor for the next issue. Items will run for a single issue, unless the editor is notified to repeat the item. (Quality photos appreciated) Members 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.)



1359 4th Avenue
Auburn, GA 30011

Hours of Operation

Thursday through Saturday - 11am-6pm
Sunday through Wednesday - Closed



Start the New Year off with a new shirt

Engineer's Wish List

Embroidery
Design & Gifts
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Sally Bando | 404.550.4816 | sbandogeorgia@comcast.net

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Embroidery Design and Gifts
Georgia Garden Railway Society Club Shirts
Each Shirt will have the club logo on included in the price.

Contact Sally for other designs



Men's	S	M	L	XL	2XL	3XL	Price
Grey Pocket t-shirt							\$10.00
Carbon or Burgundy Polo							\$18.00
Carbon or Burgundy Pocket Polo							\$20.00
Long Sleeve Denim							\$22.00
Short Sleeve Denim							\$22.00
Name on Men's Shirt						(Specify Name)	\$5.00
Ladies	XS	S	M	L	XL	2XL	Price
Grey T-shirt							\$10.00
Carbon or Burgundy Polo							\$20.00
Long Sleeve Denim							\$22.00
Name on Ladies shirt						(Specify Name)	\$5.00



Train Installations, LLC

Woodstock, GA 30188

770-597-0038

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



Here are a few before and after pictures of a small garden RR we managed to rehabilitate in one day after ten years out of service. What can we do for you ?? ?



Yes, Trainz.com is open for business, with 90% of our orders shipping in one day! Don't forget to sign up for Trainz Rewards to earn points on your purchase!

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Here at Trainz, we buy and sell a lot of trains! *In 1975 Scott Griggs, the founder and chief engineer, started his first model train business in his parents garage. Over thirty years later that business has exploded into multiple warehouses full of model trains.*

Visit us online At:

<http://trainz.com>

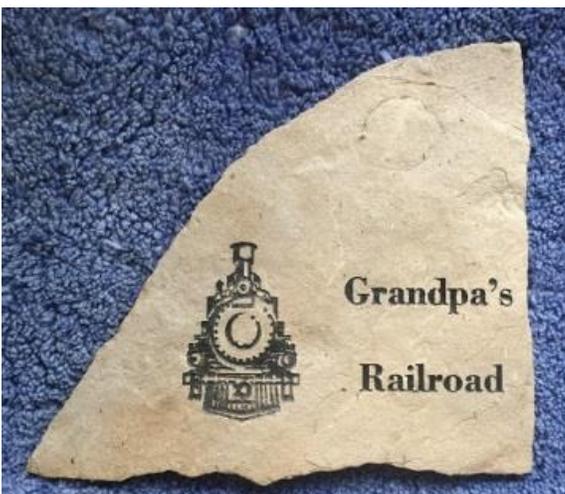
New Rocks for the New Year ??

Emil Decker's STICKS + STONES



Custom carved stonework for your RR., Garden stones, Pet Memorials. Deep etching provides years of enjoyment. Let everyone who visits your railway know you are a proud Georgia Garden Railway Society Member.

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Presidential Trains at Southeastern Railway Museum

Private Car “*Superb*” – Seaboard Coast Line

Built in 1911, this Pullman unit is the second-oldest steel private car in existence. *Superb* was used by President Warren Harding for his 1923 cross-country tour; later it carried his casket in a funeral train from San Francisco, to Washington, D.C., and to Marion, OH. This is a heavyweight car bearing the original floor plan. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999. *Superb* was donated by SCL in 1967.

NEWS FLASH ! ! !

Norfolk Southern donated private car *Marco Polo*, used by President Franklin D. Roosevelt while in office, to the Southeastern Railway Museum in Duluth, Ga. The car arrived at the museum on Nov. 14, 2020 and was the center of a brief unveiling ceremony. The car was built by the Pullman Co., in 1927 as part of a small fleet of cars for charter by VIPs. Roosevelt used the car both as governor of New York and as president, using it on trips to and from Warm Springs, Ga.



It was purchased by the Central of Georgia in 1944 and converted to an office car, becoming Southern Railway property in 1963 with Southern's merger with the Central of Georgia. The car has been displayed at various locations, spending 25 years at Washington, D.C., Union Station.

“The Marco Polo is a critical piece of railroad history, and we are honored Norfolk Southern has entrusted us to help preserve the railcar and its story for future generations,”

Sue Kelly, interim executive director of the Southeastern Railway Museum, said in a press release. More information on the museum is available at:

<https://www.train-museum.org/> .

If you haven't visited the museum recently, now you have another reason to go.

While John Quincy Adams was the first ex-president to ride a train in 1830, the first sitting president to travel by train was Andrew Jackson, when he rode the B & O from Ellicott's Mills to Baltimore in 1833.



On behalf of the team at GR News, Bill Derville, who visualized and coordinated its creation, our Editor, Carla Breitner and myself, we wish you and your members the happiest possible and entirely safe Holiday.

In the last 3 months, GR News has been embraced by more than 100 clubs with more than 7,000 members. We are thrilled that you and your members are part of this community.

We are looking forward to 2021, to sharing GR news and facilitating garden railroading connections in North America & beyond. We also hope that more of that news will be about live meets and open railroads.

**Mick Spilsbury GRNews
Marketing [GRNews.org](https://grnews.org)
GRNews on Facebook**

OUR MISSION

To build the garden railroading community by connecting people who love the hobby

OUR INITIATIVE

A FREE on-line, Garden Railroading Newsletter/Magazine fueled by Garden Railroading Clubs. Get our Sample Newsletter here - <https://grnews.org/get>



Pico Remote Controller

I must confess that I am not tech savvy. I resisted the Aristo Train Engineer over the years. DCC sure seems confusing as to what F2 does or doesn't do. Then comes PIKO with their key fob R/C system. It's officially the PIKO product #35028 R/C Analog DC Track Power Set.

Has that train ever derailed on the other side of the layout from your power pack? Did you ever need to restart a train on the other side of the layout only to have it not respond and you have to leave controls to go nudge it? Have you ever wanted to slow a train down to watch carefully for bad track but power control was not close by? I confess I have done all of the above.

I saw a PIKO YouTube video a few weeks ago about one of their new products, the key fob remote system. After a few inquiries, I purchased one from Reindeer Pass (often my go to for g scale purchases as they support the hobby and attend all the National shows). The system arrived in one box. Inside was a 5 amp power supply, a base station to wire to the track, and the soon to be famous key fob. I quickly hooked it up to the track, brought out an LGB mogul and was off and running.

Operation is easy. Up arrow increases speed, down arrow decreases speed. Bottom button is emergency stop. A fourth button can control lights, or any other accessory you might want to just turn off or on. System does what it says, remotely starting, speeding up, slowing down, reversing, and emergency stop. I have not tried accessories button yet. Every thing seems to work well from zero to about thirty feet away (which would cover most spots on my garden railroad). PIKO says you do not have to have clear line of sight, but I found the remote did not like going behind my rock wall, but after lifting up the remote key fob a little higher, it worked OK. There is some delay in response, but it seemed acceptable, but it was not instant as you would find with a traditional track powered train. I found this to be an acceptable trade off for being able to start, stop, slow down, or speed up my train while standing anywhere on the garden railroad.

Ted Yarborough



Yard Hostler

Happy New Year !!! May the new one outshine the old one.....

And that won't take much work.....

At least we can start well.... Remember, if you paid your 2020 dues last year, you are also covered for 2021. Our little PPP plan to get your railroad "Back-on -Track."

Cold weather inside project??? Write about it in an upcoming Gazette.

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