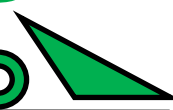


GGRS Gazette Sept.'s

News



President's Message

Ho, Ho, Ho!

The holidays will soon be upon us -- really! Now is a great time to plan that G-scale indoor (or outdoor!) holiday themed layout. Trains aren't just for Christmas anymore. With all of the Halloween decorations that fill the shelves of your favorite retailer it's easy to come up with a haunting display. With the pandemic still in play, maybe a front porch display for drive-by trick-or-treaters would be appropriate. Or put up a Halloween tree with a traditional circular layout. See how easy it is to fill all that spare time you've come into this year!

Thanks to the Lees for hosting our August meeting and sharing their innovative "fenced" railway display and of course their caboose about which we have read so interestingly in the last couple of issues (if you've missed any recent issues be sure to catch them on our website's Home Page). We hope members participating in the 1:1 rail excursion planned by Past President Ted Yarbrough in September will have great weather. The Clarksville GGRS exhibit coordinated by the Williamsons and Lees on September 12 will also be something new for us!

Terry Manning, President

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Garden Railway Magazine Abandonment: Goes the way of so many Railways.

The following information was disclosed on the Garden Railway Facebook page.

"For more than 35 years, Garden Railways has been the leading magazine devoted to the hobby of outdoor model railroading. While we remain committed to serving garden railroaders, we regret to announce that we are discontinuing publication of Garden Railways magazine. The Fall 2020 issue will be the last. However, the Garden Railways brand will live on in the pages of Model Railroader, where our dedicated audience of garden railroaders will continue to find seasonal news, tips and advice from the world's greatest model railroading experts. Garden Railways' website, grw.trains.com, will remain active on a limited basis."

An email I received as a subscriber, included this info: "As a subscriber to Garden Railways, you may have one or more issues of your subscription remaining. You will receive Model Railroader magazine for the remainder of your subscription, starting with the November issue. If you're already a Model Railroader magazine subscriber, your current Model Railroader subscription will be extended for as many issues remaining on your Garden Railways subscription."

Marc Horowitz created, and for a long time, published the GR magazine, which began in 1984. In October 2018, Marc Horovitz stepped down as editor. His magazine was a labor of love. If you ever had an opportunity to talk with Marc, you would know he was frustrated with the lack of participation from the Readership. Few article submissions, low convention attendance, and other issues were beginning to have an effect when I met him. It bothered me at the time, and I wondered when he stepped down as editor how much longer the magazine would last.

Having a subscription to Model Railroader, I am familiar with the team from Kalmbach that took over and ultimately will close down Garden Railway. The sparse coverage of G scale items in MR has been obvious. Of course, giving them the benefit of the doubt, there was a specialty mag., GR, for that scale. The question is, with the incorporation of G into a single magazine with the other scales, will there be an equality of coverage, supplies, advertisements, articles, etc. ?

Continued page 2



To give them credit, the most recent MR I received did indeed have a G scale article. Will it be a new opportunity to promote the gauge, or is it only going to be an offhand nod every now and then in our direction? If you are familiar with many HO scale folks, all other scales are..... well, its not a nice word. There are many dual scalers, and lots of folks who are not averse to other scale articles. But the fact simply is that there are more HO modelers and therefore they get the majority of coverage. Let's be truthful, many articles are useful to all modelers, regardless of the scale, so we cannot judge the magazine based on scale alone.

The obvious solution is for those who fancy G scale to make their desires known. Don't let our hobby focus fade away. Write to the editors. Become more active in the publication through requests, and especially submissions.

Submissions are also appreciated for this publication.....just saying.

The editor

The Next Whistle Stop

The Williamsons

The next scheduled Club Meeting / Layout Tour will be in October. Stay tuned for more information as the date gets closer.



1:1 Train Excursion September 5, 2020

The GGRS 1:1 Scale Train Ride will take place Labor Day weekend on Saturday, September 5 aboard the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad's steam powered train. The Nantahala Gorge Trip departs from Bryson City, North Carolina. We can board the premium open gondola, Nantahala, at 10:00am for a 10:30am departure.

The 4½ hour excursion carries our group 44 miles into the Nantahala Gorge, crossing the historic Fontana Trestle at Fontana Lake before entering beautiful Nantahala Gorge. BBQ sandwiches or Veggie wrap will be served for lunch. The steam train will arrive back in Bryson City at approximately 3:00pm. Tickets include admission (prior to the trip or after your return) to the Great Smoky Mountain Trains, featuring a large operating layout and one of the largest Lionel collections in the United States.

Currently **Covid19** restrictions require a **mask to be worn** by all passengers while on the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad property (train, depot, and Nantahala Outdoor Center). A whole page of **Covid19** guidelines the railroad is following and asking passengers to follow is posted on the railroad's web page.

Those attending from GGRS include the families of Bundy, Bass, Decker, Lank, Williamson, Lee, Reid, Thomas, Blackstock, Luebs, Conrad, Yarbrough, and King. Please note that tickets are non-refundable, but can be sold or transferred to other GGRS members if, for some reason, you are not able to attend.

The GGRS has made the trip several times in chartered caboose and as a photo charter. The ride is one of the most scenic in the eastern part of our country. We are all looking forward to this experience!

Ted Yarbrough

Track Warrants

Treasurer's Report

As of Aug 08, 2020, the GGRS Status of funds was in the black, with \$4,867 currently on hand.

Event	Location	Date	Status
GGRS 1:1 Rail ride 10:00am	Great Smokey Mountains RR	Sep. 5, 2020	<u>Mask Req.</u> Bryson City
Model Train Expo	Chatsworth Depot	Postponed	Again
Miles Through Times Automotive Museum	Clarksville, GA	Sep. 12, 2020	<i>Info: Contact J. Lees or R. Williamson</i>
GGRS Member Hosted Meeting	Braselton, GA	Oct. 24, 2020	Roy & Pam Williamson
36th National Garden Railway Convention	Gaylord Opryland Resort, Nashville, TN	May 30 - Jun. 5, 2021	Ngre2020 .com



CRUISE-IN TO THE MUSEUM
@ THE OLD CLARKESVILLE MILL

SEPTEMBER 12, 2020 | 10AM TO 6 PM

MUSIC | FOOD | VENDORS | ANTIQUES |
 BOWLING | GIVEAWAYS | AND MORE

**ALL MAKES, MODELS AND CONDITIONS +
 MOTORCYCLES, CLUBS, GROUPS WELCOME**

FREE TO PARK | MUSEUM ADMISSION \$7

 **MILES through TIME**
 WHERE THE PEDAL MEETS THE PAST

583 GRANT ST.
 CLARKESVILLE, GA 30523

MILESTHROUGHTIME.COM

The Miles Trough Time Automotive Museum located in Clarksville, GA has requested the Georgia Garden Railway Society setup a G Scale layout for their *Cruise-In To The Museum* event to be held Saturday, September 12, 2020 from 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. The museum is located inside the Old Clarksville Mill. The address is 583 Grant Street, Clarksville, GA 30523.

The allotted space for the GGRS is 24' X 24' located near the museum exit. Setup will take place on Friday September 11th. A contribution of tarps/floor coverings to cover approximately 14' X 14' is needed. The current plan is to run two loops with 1600 LGB curves, a farm and a small-town set in the Baby Boomer era. If you would like to volunteer to run trains, add your rolling stock, engines or buildings to the layout, set up or break down please contact:

Roy Williamson 770-891-9462 roywilliamson52@gmail.com

Here is a little addition info about the Cruise-In from the Museum.

The cruise-in is open to all makes and models and all clubs, including motorcycles.

We'll have vendors, food and music all day. Plan your day to make the museum just one of your stops or spend the whole day with us. In addition, there is over 70,000 square feet of antiques at the mill and a state-of-the-art bowling alley.

We will also have a mobile military museum for you to enjoy and more!

Do you want to sell something at our event? Swap meet stuff, arts and crafts, business showcase? A 10' x 10' space is only \$10. To lock in your space contact the Old Clarksville Mill Antique Mall or call 706-839-7500.

At The Depot

A sunny day brought out many members and guests to the Coppermine RR.



The folded dog-bone which runs a good distance along the fence provided an opportunity to run long trains. And more than one train at a time. At one point I believe there were four units moving along the track.



Teamwork can help make things go faster. And an appreciative Railroad Baron may just recognize your efforts.





Having an artist willing to paint backdrops on fences is rare, but John got lucky it seems. I was informed that Julia Rodriguez is the artist. She is a senior at Brendan University. Her major is theatrical Productions. Unfortunately, she has left railroad employment.

Awesome murals really can transport the soul. And look at the remaining pallet. How are you going to pay / bribe another artist John???

On the other side of the Gazebo there is a small budding development. Railfans under the shade got to observe as trains crawled through the sleepy town.

With the multiple trains on the route, there is bound to be a few meets.





At the business meeting, John received the appreciation of the crowd for hosting in August, one of only a few live meetings.

Of course, the rail stock John is most proud of sits on 1:1 rails behind the gazebo in the side yard. I wonder if she gets jealous of her little brothers and sisters rolling down the line.



John really worked hard on the caboose's interior, as well as outside. If you didn't go down and check her out, you missed a treat.

Signs, plaques, and diverse decorations could be found all over.

And that is probably a sign we should go to our 4th installment of the restoration of the Southern X376 Caboose.



The restoration of the Southern X376 Caboose: Part 4 of a series

by John Lees

Stalls and Waiting

Now I began to press the booster club for a time to go and get the caboose. They told me it would be a problem to pick up the caboose during the week when school was in session. They needed the parking lot for school activities and closing it would present a problem for them. A suggestion came that perhaps we could pick it up on a weekend. I took that information back to the truck driver and Crane Company to see if a weekend move would be possible. That idea abruptly ended when the term, "time and a half" was used.

Back to the booster club, who recommended we wait until the following summer. Come and get it when school is out for the summer? That was too long a wait for all concerned, especially me. One night I began to think about teacher work days. I went to the Powell Tennessee School web site and identified a Friday work day with no classes. A call and request to the booster club was made, and they called back the next day to tell me that the Friday in question was scheduled for their homecoming parade. The parking lot was to be used to stage the parade, and the other parking lot was to be used for parking. They identified a later date as another student day off.

I called the truck driver and Crane Company and was pleased to hear that they were both available to go and retrieve the caboose. The booster club president was then informed they needed to take the power line down before the move and I requested that they affix padlocks on both doors of the caboose. After all, it was now mine, and I was afraid that word would get out that it had been sold and souvenir hunters might make their way inside to take a memento. Both requests were received and understood.

The Pickup

I reserved a room at the Powell Exit Holiday Inn on I-75 for the night before the move. The wait seemed to take forever. My son in law and grandson went with me to be present for the move. As we left home it started to rain. It rained all the way to Powell Exit. A steady rain continued, as I awoke intermittently throughout the night. I trusted the crane company or truck driver would have informed me if the rain posed a problem. Surely I would have heard from either before now. All was quiet until 5:00am. The phone rang and I was up quickly to answer. It was a customer service representative from the crane company. He said to



Rainy days in TN. The crane crew arrives and starts to set up.

me, "It does not look like we will be moving a caboose today."

I was stunned. I responded by telling him I had a truck already here, the power line down and I had spent the night in a motel. It was a little late to be calling me to say they were not coming. He was quiet for a few seconds, considering the water, the soil, and the possibility of the crane bogging down. Then he said, "Look, if you will go to the school and measure the distance between the blacktop parking lot edge and the center of the caboose, we might have a crane that can lift the caboose while on the black top." In order to determine if the crane was adequate, two facts had to be known. That distance was one and the weight of the caboose was the other.

In all my research, the gross weight of that rail car was between 41,000 and 50,000 pounds. I told him that and he responded by telling me that the distance determined the weight capacity of the crane.



I woke everyone up and we quickly left the Holiday Inn and drove to the school. We measured and called back. He listened for a minute and responded by saying that the distance, which caused the boom of the crane to move toward parallel to the ground, was what calculated to a total lift capacity of 43,000 lbs. He made the following proposal. He would send a 265-ton crane over and attempt to lift the caboose. If it weighed more than the 43,000 lbs., I would owe the full eight hours at the rate normally billed for the larger crane. If it weighed less, then cost would remain at the quoted amount. I told him to send it over and pulled out my roll of Tums and popped a few in my mouth.

We purchased take-out breakfast and sat in the parking lot waiting. A little over an hour later a semi with flatbed trailer pulled in carrying some flat metal pieces. A few minutes later a second 18-wheeler pulled in with equipment on it. About 20 minutes later a very large crane arrived and pulled over near the edge of the black top. The truck drivers got out and directed the crane to a spot they all liked. A utility truck with box body came next, followed by a crew-cab pickup. Seven men emerged and began positioning the flatbeds, walking around the crane and attempting to open a gate with a padlock on it. Almost immediately a car pulled in with the booster club president and the key to the padlock. A third, smaller semi with a flatbed trailer pulled in and parked. They were now a crew of eight.

The gate was opened and while some of the men walked around the caboose, others were pulling out the outrigger legs of the crane, used to stabilize the machine. The flat pieces were off-loaded and placed near all four outriggers. The crane boom remained short and positioned straight up. The outriggers were lifted up and extended over the metal plates, then lowered. As weight was placed on the metal, I saw the idea was to distribute weight across a larger area preventing the blacktop from giving way under the outrigger. Next the crane removed much thicker but shorter plates from the second semi and placed them on the back of the crane. They appeared to be counter weights that would offset the weight of the load. They used a lot of them. Meanwhile the crew ran wire cable through the trucks under the caboose.



The closest the crane could get and still remain on the blacktop.

Large metal plates helped distribute the weight so the outrigger legs did not bust up the pavement.

Once set in place, the crane will pluck the caboose up and over the fence.



About this time, the athletic director arrived with all the required paperwork I had asked for. He asked me where the truck was that would take the caboose to Georgia. I had no idea. It looked to me like the crane had a good hour, or more, before they would be ready to load it. I called the truck driver and got his voicemail. I left a message we needed him here within the hour.

I kept worrying about the weight of the caboose and began to wonder why no one from the crane crew had come over to talk to me. They were busy and it looked like I would be in the way, so I kept quiet and watched. I walked toward the caboose as the crew worked with a series of vinyl strips that were 30 feet long. Soon they had them attached to the main cable on the crane. The cable was retracted and the boom was extended to lift them so they were hanging vertically off the ground. I asked one of the crew about them and he told me that it was a mobile home harness used to lift mobile homes. Plastic? He said it was no problem. I told him the truck should be here at any time and was surprised that he did not seem to care. The boom swung around and lowered the harness over the caboose. The crew attached the cables through the trucks to the harness and they spaced the rig evenly to allow for the lift to bring the caboose up straight and true.



Once the straps were in place, the crane slowly tightened them. Then the actual lift began.

The lift

Spotters were on all four corners and one seemed to have authority. He watched as the harness became taut. The crane operator lowered the window and looked at the man. The man by the caboose slowly moved his right arm out from his body about six inches and his thumb came out from his hand parallel to the ground. Very subtle but deliberate. He moved his thumb up and the crane motor increased its RPM. The lift was on. After a few seconds the operator yelled out the window that he was at 35,000 pounds. There had to be a scale on the crane! It was now a major worry for me as he yelled out the weights in 1,000 lb. increments. I forgot all about the truck driver because it had to come up at or before 43,000 pounds. He was at 40,000 lbs. when he slowed the rpm. They seemed to take a minute to look over the harness and check things. I was nervously holding my check book and breath, wondering if we were going anywhere today. RPM increased and the thumb came up again. I heard 41,000 then 41,500. It looked like the caboose was wiggling and just as I was looking closer the man yelled out 42,000 and the caboose came up an inch. Then it was a foot and then four feet. He ultimately lifted it to ten feet and stopped. *[Recall that the price-line/weight limit quote was 43,000.]*

Tension, in more ways than one, gripped the scene as the caboose starts to lift.



I got out my cell phone and called the driver. He answered on the first ring. I told him we needed him right now. He told me he was here. He was in the parking lot and could not find us. He was at the wrong end of the school and had to drive around. In the meantime, the crane operator had lifted the caboose high enough to clear the chain link fence and had moved the caboose in toward the crane to eliminate the horizontal problem with the boom. Just as all looked well, and I was ready to breath a big sigh of relief, a new problem reared its ugly head.

Continued in part 5. next issue.

Up, up the caboose rises. Straps are holding, the total weight is good. As long as it does not twist or slip, its going to be headed over the fence.



Clearing the fence. A major hurdle, pardon the pun. Now to load it onto the awaiting Semi trailer.





<http://galleries.apps.chicagotribune.com/chi-120712-flashback-railroad-fair-pictures/>

Cranes have been a part of railroading since the first derailment. Baltimore and Ohio locomotive Lafayette built in 1837 is being unloaded for display at the Chicago Railroad Fair in 1948. — Chicago Tribune

Sounds Like...

by Terry Manning

Although I think it would be neat to add sounds to my layout which includes a zoo, various farms, and a small town, I haven't the foggiest clue how I could do that. However, someone clued me in to a website that has a wide variety of sounds like roaring lions, cows, and helicopters that are easy to search for: www.freesound.org. Since I still have no clue what to do with such sound clips, I thought some members might find the site useful and perhaps could even write up some suggestions for using it. I copied some of the following notes from the website:

How do I download a sound?

To download a sound, first make sure you are logged in to your registered account. Then, navigate to a sound's full description page by clicking on the title of the sound on either the search results list or any link on the site. Example of this page: <https://freesound.org/people/InspectorJ/sounds/406900/>

On that web page you will find a big yellow download button on the right-hand side of the screen. Click on this button and your download should begin. If that doesn't start downloading the file, but instead takes you to another page with a streaming player, you might have to right-click on the download button and select "save target as" or "save link as" depending on your browser. Do this for each sound you want to download.

This file has a weird format (flac?? ogg??), how can I play/open/convert it on my computer?

We support 4 formats at freesound: mp3 is mpeg 2, layer III. We don't really need to explain this :-)

FLAC (.flac or .fla) is the Free Lossless Audio Codec, an open-source compression scheme that can cut the size of an audio file in half (on average) while not losing any quality in the process. It's basically ZIP for audio files. Using FLAC is good for Freesound because it saves on disk space and bandwidth usage, reduces download times, but doesn't degrade the quality of the sample like mp3 or another lossy codec would.

Ogg Vorbis (.ogg) is an open-source lossy audio codec comparable to modern AAC Audio (as used in the iTunes store, etc.). It does degrade the quality of the sample somewhat in order to save on space, but it is much more efficient at this than an older format like mp3. An Ogg file can have the same quality as an mp3 file using less space, or better quality using the same space.

AIFF/WAV (.aiff or .aif/.wav) are both uncompressed audio formats. Files in this format are considered by some to be easier to work with because there is no extra conversion step in most cases. However, this comes at the price of a much larger file.

All file types can be opened with the audio editor [Audacity](http://audacity.sourceforge.net/). Other recommendations for sound conversion software are, for example, under Windows: [dBpowerAmp](http://www.dbpoweramp.com/) + [Flac plugin](http://www.flac.org/) or [VLC](http://www.vlc.org/).

Gandy Dancers

Highlighting Members and their work

Theme for the Month - Quoting the Grinch, “Noise, Noise, Noise”, or “sound effects” on your railroad:

Members were asked to send in photos, plans, and possibilities for incorporating sound into their layout.

See the article on page 10 about how I produced this amazing tow behind sound car - Alan Luebs



During the Denver, CO hosted National Convention a few years back, I visited a railway layout that used multiple MP3 players located inside some building scenes. The volume was low enough to hear if you were close to the scene, but not so loud as to disturb someone at a different location around the layout. The player was set to loop, so ever so often the recorded file was played. There was an “Adams Family” house with theme song, as well as this “Stooges” museum/theatre. You can just imagine the theme music and slapstick clips coming from this scene. I loved it. Gonna incorporate something in my layout soon. - Emil Decker

[What song would you loop at this location?
I Bet hearing it would make you, “Feel Good!” Editor]



For Aristocraft locos, I use the sound system module that comes with the Train Engineer Revolution remote control package. For LGB and USA Trains locos, I use the Phoenix Sound system. The higher end LGB locos normally come with their sound system. Most, if not all, MTH RailKing locos come equipped with their proprietary Proto-Sound.

For Bachmann & other brand locos, I use Dalle Electronics for their price / value advantage.
- Dan C Alvero





As everyone knows, I like to go big! Even with sound for my railroad. I installed a New York Central passenger train whistle. It is mounted 15 ft in the air, and has three chambers, measures 30" tall by 12" in diameter. It weighs about 30 pounds. The Pipe that feeds air to the horns is 1 1/2 inches in diameter. It is impossible to get sound from this device using a typical home compressor. Adding a large tank fixed the problem. The holding tank and plumbing for the whistle system the small lean-to sticking out from the back of this shed is the location of the air compressor. When empty, the air tank takes about half a day to fill. It takes a 350 gal tank at 150psi to blow the whistle. It has been heard 3 miles from our house - John Lees



All trains must have an audible device on the first part of a car or engine that warns of a train approaching a road crossing. If the train is backing up, the caboose needed a whistle, like this one. - John Lees

Atlanta Senior Life: *Big Fun with Little Trains*

The Atlanta Senior Life newspaper carried an article in its July 2020 Vol. 5 No. 7 edition that featured a couple of couples from the GGRS. Front page news held the "Big Fun With Little Trains" title and a photo of James and Sally Bando at their indoor layout. The article was not G Scale only, but did a good job of representing the hobby as a whole, and Garden Railroading was not snubbed.

Later in the article, another GGRS pair, Russ and Leslie Ann Bundy were also interviewed. Maybe we can pick up a couple of new members from this coverage. The Atlanta Senior Life is available online at atlantaseniorlife.com or on facebook.com/atlantaseniorlife.



2020 Piedmont Pilgrimage -- An Online Tour of the Atlanta Area's Great Model Railroads

By Russ Bundy

The Piedmont Pilgrimage is sponsored each year by the Piedmont Division of the NMRA. Founded in 2003, and occurring in the October-November timeframe each year, this event usually features open house presentations of train layouts located throughout our area. Last year's event had more than 70 individual layouts which were open to the public for viewing. Several of us look forward to participating each year. The Bandos and Grindhouses' have been hosting Open Houses for quite a few years. For Leslie and me, this would have been our third year participating in the event. Looking forward to the 18th annual pilgrimage, 2020 is proving to be quite a challenging year.

Social distancing to minimize chances of contracting the **COVID - 19** virus has affected a lot of activities, including the Piedmont Pilgrimage.

Continued page 10



Even though our layouts are outdoors and provide ample space for social distancing, many others are indoors and do not have the space available.

As the pilgrimage planning committee discussed what to do about the 2020 Piedmont Pilgrimage, it was determined that most layout owners, understandably, did not feel comfortable having visitors coming into their homes at this time. The Piedmont Pilgrimage committee therefore decided that there will not be a

2020 pilgrimage in the usual form with in-home layout visits or a tour booklet. The Piedmont Division's Board of Directors supports this decision.

In place of the regular open house style tour, the committee is developing a "virtual tour" for this fall. The virtual tour will include posting new videos of hosts' model railroads on the division's pilgrimage website and may include an opportunity to ask questions of the hosts about their railroads. Filming of these videos has been taking place during the last several months. The purpose of these videos and interviews is designed to focus on what is new on the hosts' railroads. Camera people have been coming to each host's layout to shoot scenes on the model railroad and to interview the host. The edited videos are in the process of being uploaded to the pilgrimage website for viewing at a scheduled time and date. The current plan is to show the videos on Saturdays and Sundays beginning on Saturday, October 31, and concluding on Sunday, November 22. The Garden Railroads are usually scheduled in the first couple weekends, please check the club webpage for more information about dates and times.

As a Club, the Piedmont Division of the NMRA is looking forward to returning to in-home visits for the 2021 Piedmont Pilgrimage with tour booklets, as has been done prior to 2020.

For more information, please visit the Division webpage @ <http://www.piedmont-div.org>

Or the Facebook page @ <https://www.facebook.com/PiedmontNMRA>

October Meeting to be Location for Voting on Major Club Issues

Members will vote on dues for 2021. Specifically, the board has determined that 2021 should be a rollover year, or a "2-fer" year, meaning if someone has paid for 2020, their dues covers both years 20 and 21. No dues to be collected. If a new member joins in 2021, their Dues will cover only the year 2021.

A vote of 2021 budget is also scheduled. Many of the expenses budgeted for 2020 were not actualized, and the new budget proposal takes this, what actually was spent, and future operational expectations into account.

The board requests that nominations for **"Railroader of the Year"** should be given to President Terry Manning, or another member of the board by November 1.

Members willing to run for 2021 positions on the board are:

Bass –	Treasurer
Williamson –	Secretary
Bando –	Member at Large
Decker –	Member at Large
Lank –	Member at Large
Bundy –	Member at Large

The Office of President is open for nomination.

If you wish to run for, or nominate someone for any office, first talk to them, ensuring that they are willing to serve. Then contact either the president or another board member about the nomination.

November 30, 2020 is the deadline for submitting records for our audit. An Audit Coordinator will work with the Treasurer to accomplish a timely audit.

November 30, 2020 is also when a final slate of Board nominations for 2021 will be submitted to members.

A DIY customizable “Sound” Flat Car

By Alan Luebs

One of my two locomotives produce steam engine effects as it moves around the track but it does not “know where it is” on the track so it does not produce location-appropriate whistle and bell sounds. My other steam locomotive is silent. Adding a sound generator to its tender would be expensive and would compete for space with the Li-Ion batteries carried in the tender. I wanted to add unique sounds to my track operation that would be triggered by the train passing specific places on the track.

I considered two ways of doing this: 1) sound source fixed on the layout, perhaps in a building or in the hardscape or 2) sound source rides on the train. In both methods of implementing sound, I wanted the train to trigger the sound recording at specific places on the layout. For example, as the train approached the ‘train station’ it would trigger a train whistle sound. As for the sound files themselves, I had personally recorded audio and video files of steam engines and I had also found hundreds of train sound files available on the internet.

I based my DIY version of a ‘sound’ car on electronic sound modules available from AliExpress (an online storefront like Amazon or Ebay). These small recordable sound modules are inexpensive, less than \$5 each, are battery powered, and typically record up to 20-30 seconds of user supplied audio. These modules are often installed inside ‘plush toys’ (teddy bears) and are triggered when the toy is squeezed. They are also installed in personal message greeting cards which play a user recorded message when the card is opened. The modules have their own small speakers. I purchased two of these modules shown in **Figure 1**.

The modules I purchased had microphones for recording a user audio “message”. A Play Button is momentarily depressed to activate the playback of the recorded audio file. Some other available modules on AliExpress accept the loading of mp3 audio files via a USB connection.

I loaded one of my sound modules by playing an audio file I had made while standing next to an arriving steam engine in Strasbourg PA. This audio file was made with the Voice Memo app on my iPhone. The sound module was put into ‘record mode’ and the iPhone speaker was placed a few inches from the microphone of the sound module. Playing a video which also has audio could also provide a source for the sound file.

I loaded my other sound module by playing on my iPhone a steam engine sound I found on **soundsnap.com** website. This website has hundreds of train sound recordings. Audio mp3 files can also be downloaded from the website and stored on your phone or PC. An audio mp3 file loaded direct to memory via USB probably provides a higher fidelity recording. There is some loss in quality when using the relatively cheap sound module microphone to record an audio file. Therefore, in the future, I think I would use sound modules which support direct loading of mp3 audio files into the memory chip of the module.

Since these sound modules are designed for voice frequencies and the speakers are 1 to 2 inches in diameter one should not expect good bass fidelity. Bells, whistles steam discharges and general locomotive sounds are reproduced OK. One could also record an “All Aboard” or personalized announcement with your own voice.

I now had two sound modules with 30 seconds of different train sounds recorded on each. Now I must figure out how to power and trigger the sound modules and then install the modules, battery and triggers in suitable rolling stock. I chose to install the modules in a single axle flat car whose appearance was consistent with my layout and locomotives. Installing the sound module in fixed location in a building or under a bridge might also make sense for a layout in which particular sounds are appropriate as the train approaches a specific location.

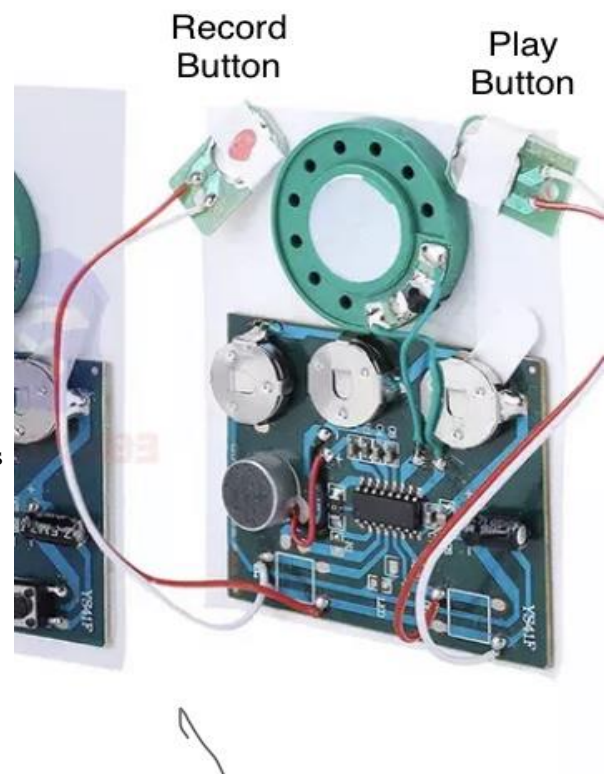
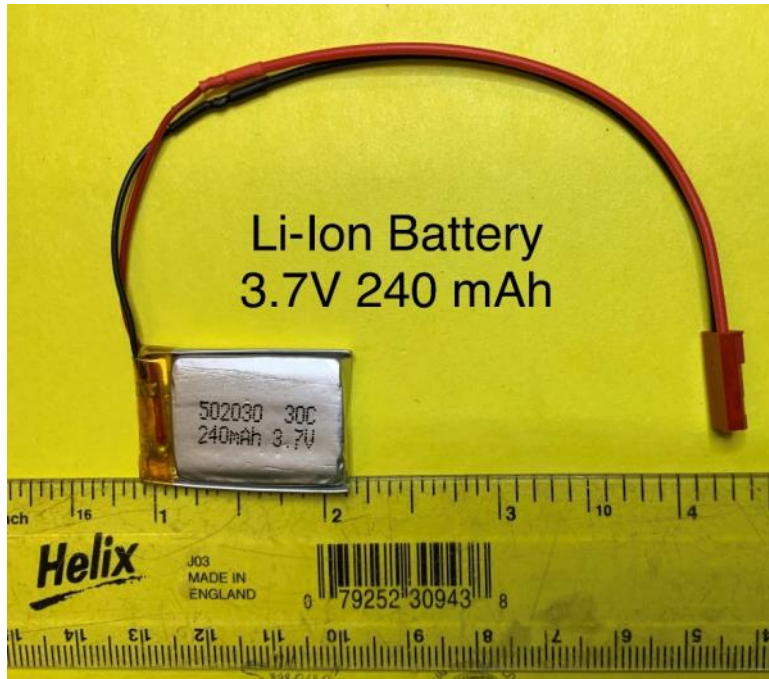


Figure 1 Sound Module (screenshot from AliExpress App)



The sound modules I purchased operate with less than 5 volts. Some use three 'button cells' for a total of about 4.5 volts. Button cells do not last very long. Three AA or AAA cells also work but have to be replaced periodically. The modules also operate on a single Li-Ion rechargeable cell (voltage nominally 3.7 volts). These modules use very few milliamperes so I used a 240 milliAmpHour (mAh) Li-Ion battery purchased on AliExpress. It will rarely require recharge. It is shown in **Figure 2**.

I already own a battery charger for Li-Ion batteries so using a rechargeable battery made sense for me. I used a single cell Li-Ion battery to power both sound modules and provided a disconnect feature so I could recharge the battery.

The sound module requires a momentary switch closure to initiate playing of an audio file recorded in memory. A small pushbutton is provided with the sound module to trigger the recording, however, I wanted to trigger the recording as the train passed a certain point. I used a type of magnetic switch that is often seen in security systems to detect opening of windows or doors. These switches are rugged, sealed and waterproof. It consists of a normally open switch which closes when a magnet passes close to it (less than 10 mm). I found two switches with matching magnet triggers on eBay for less

Figure 2 Li Ion Battery single cell

than \$6. One switch with its trigger magnet is shown in **Figure 3**.

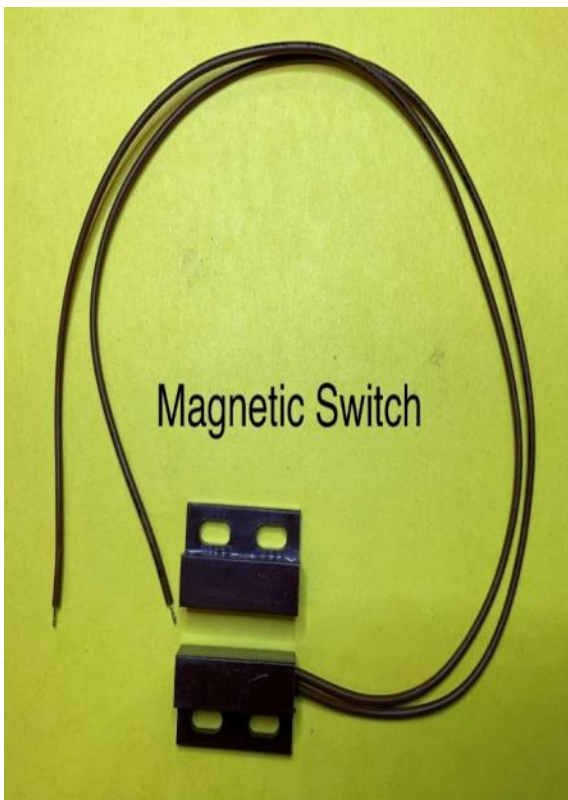


Figure 3. Magnetic Switch and Magnet Trigger



Figure 4. Magnetic switches underneath flat car

With some soldering I replaced the pushbutton switches provided with the sound modules with magnetic switches. The magnetic switch was hot-glued to existing structure on the bottom of the flat car as shown in **Figure 4**.

With the flat car on the track, the magnetic switch just looks like a piece of railroad equipment riding underneath. The two magnetic switches were positioned underneath the flat car so they are above and slightly outside of each track rail. This allowed the two different audio files to be triggered by placing two magnet triggers outboard of each track rail on the layout. The magnet triggers are shown in **Figure 5** beneath the switches.



Figure 5 Magnet Trigger on Track beneath Magnetic Switch

The magnet trigger is mounted on the track at a location where you want the audio file playback to commence, keeping in mind the 'sound car' is behind the locomotive. Since you want the recorded train sound chosen (whistle, bell, chugging, etc.) to occur when the locomotive is near a specific location, the position of the magnet trigger on the track depends on how fast you typically run your locomotive and the timing of the sounds in the recorded audio file. I fastened the triggers to the track by hot gluing them to the top of the track ties. They can be relocated with a bit of effort. It is important to verify the triggers do

NOT interfere with anything on your locomotive or rolling stock (like wheel trucks) as stock passes over the magnet trigger. It is generally safer to mount the triggers on a straight track section for predictable clearance. Of course, if you have decided to locate the sound module at a fixed position on the layout then the magnetic switch is mounted on the track ties and its wires are routed to the hidden and protected sound module. The magnet trigger is fastened to the locomotive, tender, or a piece of rolling stock so that the switch and trigger pass in close proximity as the train moves past the magnetic switch.

I chose to mount the sound modules in a small flat car on a piece of black plastic which had small standoffs. See **Figures 6 (underneath)** and **7 (top)**.



Figure 6 Two Sound Modules fastened to Plastic Panel

The circuit boards and battery were mounted on the bottom side of plastic panels with holes for the upward-facing speakers. In Figure 6, the silver rectangular object on the top center is the 3.7v Li-Ion battery with red connector next to it. The two pairs of loose wires at the bottom of Figure 6 are the unconnected wires to the magnetic switches mounted underneath the flat car. Double sided tape or hot glue are useful fastening methods.



Figure 7 Top of Sound Module Assy

RECORD (HOLD) buttons that activate the microphone to record a new audio file are accessible and the battery can be disconnected for storage or recharging. Note the microphones are exposed for easy recording.

Figure 8 shows the exposed sound module assembly resting in the flat car. The remaining task was to camouflage the electronics on the flat car with freight consistent with the epoch of the railroad layout. Figure 8 shows the sound module assembly installed and connected to the magnetic switches.



Figure 8. Flat Car with Sound Module Assembly

Figure 9 is the completed 'sound' flat car (*it is turned 180° from Figure 8*). The green tarp hides the sound module assembly and in the foreground are the two magnet triggers to be fastened to the track. Be careful that the sound from the speakers is not attenuated excessively by the camouflage. With a little effort I can remove the tarp to gain access to the sound module assembly and battery.

Figure 9. Completed Sound Flat Car

The pros and cons of adding this kind of sound feature to your railroad are:

Pros:

Inexpensive. Excluding the flat car, out-of-pocket expense was less than \$15.

Plays unique train sounds of your choice; including audio or video recordings that you have collected yourself.

The sounds can be specific to a track location that you choose: for example a track crossing, bridge, station, tunnel or bridge.

Can play same audio recording multiple times provided trigger spacing is such that the audio file is finished before next trigger event occurs.

Design method is suitable for both on-train and off-train applications.

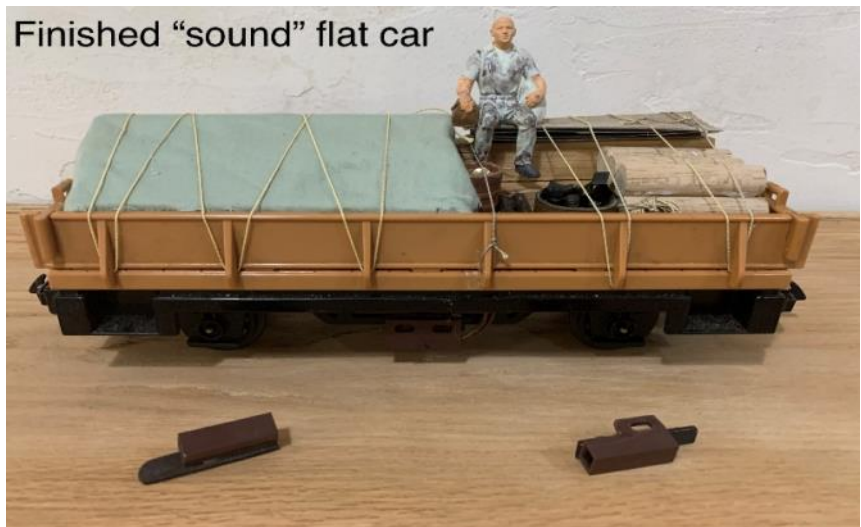
Cons:

Sound module does not know train speed or if train has stopped after audio is triggered.

Sound is associated with the 'sound car' and not the locomotive/tender. This is not usually an issue since your mind wants to associate the sound with the locomotive regardless.

Occasionally must recharge/replace the battery.

Sound modules are not really loud and their low frequency sound reproduction is weak is due to small speakers. Using a small amplifier and larger speaker, perhaps in a boxcar, could improve sound reproduction quality.



If you have any questions, comments or suggestions about this project please contact me.

Alan Luebs
678-622-3145
Farm1811@hotmail.com

The absolute most favorite Steam Locomotive, owned by almost all railroads, was the **Consolidation**. Over 21,000 were produced. How did it get its peculiar name?

Answer on page 23.

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/59/Grand_Canyon_Railway_29_2015_003.jpg



Highballing down the Track

Hindsight is...

2021!



2021 National Garden Railroad Convention Update

May 30 to June 5, 2021 Nashville, Tennessee

Wow! What a spring it has been for the members of the Nashville Garden Railway Society. One we would just as soon forget. All the members of the Nashville Garden Railway Society have remained healthy during the pandemic and many of us have been working on improvements or expansions to our garden railroads in anticipation of tours next year. Our club members are now focusing on getting the 2021 National Garden Railroad Convention on track and having a great convention. In this newsletter we want to update you on several items resulting from the cancellation of the 2020 National Garden Railroad Convention and also items related to the 2021 convention which will be held from **May 30 to June 5, 2021** at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center in Nashville, Tennessee.

Convention Registrations

By now every registration, whether family or individual, should have received an email message from us asking if you wish to transfer your convention registration to the 2021 convention or if you would prefer to receive a refund of your money. Many thanks to those of you that have responded and stated your wishes on how you prefer for us to handle your registration fees. To those who transferred their registrations to the 2021 convention, a special thank you for your support.

If you have not seen the email message you might want to check your spam filter to see if this message was trapped and not delivered to your inbox. For those that requested a refund, this means you will need to re-register for the 2021 convention once we open up the website later this summer for new registrations. We have started making telephone calls to those we have not heard from yet to explain the options available to you for your 2020 convention registration. **If we have not received your cancellation request by July 1, 2020, we will automatically transfer your registration and apply it towards the 2021 convention.**

Hotel Registrations

All the contracts with the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center and the other venues we were going to use for the 2020 convention have been re-signed and transferred to 2021. The Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center is still shut down, but is scheduled to re-open for business on June 25, 2020 if there is no significant spike in the incidence of Covid-19 cases in the Nashville metro area. The last word we have received from the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center is they will be able to accept on-line registrations for hotel rooms in late July. We will announce in a forthcoming newsletter when the hotel is ready to accept hotel room registrations. We are going to delay opening up on-line convention registrations until the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center is also ready to accept hotel room reservations.

Convention Cars

There are still plenty of 2020 Convention cars for sale. No decision has been made if we will have a convention car produced for 2021. If you are a collector of convention cars and you do not have one for the 36th National Garden Railroad Convention, this might be your only chance for a car. The cars are available on a first come – first serve basis.

The Rip Track

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



Engineer's Wish List

Embroidery Design & Gifts
by On-Line Consign, Inc.

Sally Bando | 404.550.4816 | sbandogeorgia@comcast.net

Machine embroidery designs & themes on shirts and gifts.
Prices upon request. Company and group projects welcome.

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

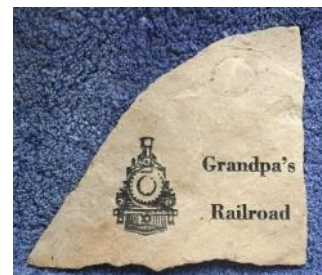
Contact Sally for other designs

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



Emil Decker's
STICKS
+
STONES



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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

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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.

[sticksnstones@](mailto:sticksnstones@weegrr.com)

weegrr.com

Here are some pictures of an elevated garden RR we just completed for a customer in Fayetteville. We used steel fence posts and PVC spline road-bed. Thought you might like to see some of my latest work.

Check out our **NEW** 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

Train Installations, LLC

Woodstock, GA 30188

770-597-0038

dave@traininstallations.com

Rolling Stock Contact Information:

Store Location: Weekdays: Tues - Fri (11A - 5P)
4255 Trotters Way Closed on Monday
Suite 5B Weekends: Sat (11A - 5P)
Alpharetta, GA 30004 Closed on Sunday

Phone: 770 714-5545
Mon - Sat (Call between 10A - 9P EST)

E-mail: rollingstocktrains@att.net





TrainMaster continues to evaluate current recommendations and while the retail location is still closed, our website is back up and running! With thousands of items available, take some time and look around!

www.trainmastermodels.com

Stay safe. Mike Devaney

NOTICE FROM ORGANIZERS OUT WEST

My name is Jonette Lee and I am a member of the Rose City Garden Railway Society in Portland, Oregon. We are compiling a list of current garden/railroad clubs/societies.

Since *Garden Railway Magazine* is going away, we are looking to pull together a nationwide publication for vendors who used to advertise in the magazine to advertise in this publication. We are losing more and more vendors for our hobby and feel we need to help out those that remain or who are new vendors looking to advertise. Your club will eventually be contacted about this at a later date.

Thank you in advance for your response.
Jonette

[This is good news for local vendors for future sales potential. We will keep you posted on their actions. If you wish to contact Jonette, reach out to the editor.]

Consolidation:

The Consolidation was indeed the all-round favorite steam locomotive design for almost all railroads. With over 21,000 manufactured, they were the most-produced of all models. From their beginnings in 1866, the 2-8-0 work horse was upgraded, modified, became heavier, and pulled all types of loads, from Class I's to short lines, but remained named "Consolidation" despite the years and model upgrades. Many are still in excursion service today. But why were they named Consolidations?

The name comes from the first railroad to order one. The Lehigh Valley RR had been "consolidated" from several smaller railroads, and was referred to as the "Consolidated Railroad Line", thus the name was born with the first purchase, and it still is the title of this magnificent iron horse.

Yard Hostler

Didn't I see you at the Lees' house?

Yep, I thought so. More of us than ever braved the wicked plague to come outside to enjoy the weather, layout, and caboose. Are you enjoying the ongoing feature about that railcar? John has done a fine job of documenting its acquisition and refurbishment. If you have missed an issue, or wish to go back to pick up an old issue of the newsletter to reread it, you can do so simply by logging onto the website. You will find all 2020 Gazettes there.

Going to the Smokey's for a great ride? Good. Wanted to, but are still dodging the viral menace? Here's a suggestion. Stay in or near your car,.....and drive up to film us as we fly along the rail line. We get to ride, you get to document as a railfan. *[I have to admit, I did this a time or two on the Cumbres Toltec RR, and it was almost as thrilling as riding. Chasing and photographing / videoing.]* Ever done it? Then you know. Never? You don't know what you are missing. So..... It's a way to join in without "joining in". Stay safe and keep on photographing !!! And yeah,..... Share !

Emil Decker, Editor, GGRS Gazette
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