



# The Lantern

**Whistle Stop  
Postponed**  
See  
Inside

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Dan King hanging out in the cab of Great Smokey Mountain Railroad's GP9

## Railroadin' From the Head End – Part 2

By Dan King

*Part one of Dan's article appeared in the February 2005 issue of The Lantern.*

Driving to Bryson City, N.C. for my ride, I was filled with memories of my time in 1955 as a young fireman on the Atlantic Coast Line. As I met engineer Joe Dean at the depot, I marveled at the changes in railroading that have taken place over the past 50 years. Times change!

At 12:30PM, we climbed into the cab of Great Smokey Mountain Railroad's diesel #1751, a GP9 built in 1951 by E.M.D. The unit was purchased from the Southern Pacific by GSMRR and is equipped with 24 RL dynamic brakes. Also in the cab with us was an engineer trainee recently hired from Norfolk Southern who was learning the road.

Joe put me in the fireman's seat and he

took the head brakeman's seat. After all three of us read the track warrant (a form or train order - see page 2) we were ready to move out. The radio crackled "Ready to go back here" and, with two short blasts on the horn, the trainee knocked the brakes off and we were rolling.

"Dillsboro dispatch, 1751 clear Bryson at 2:01PM – on time," said engineer Dean as we eased through town on our way to the Nantahala Outdoor Center. The road to the Outdoor Center is full of curves and we could hear the flanges of the wheels grinding against the rails. We had to sand the wheels several times to keep them from slipping.

As we rode along, I glanced back from time to time to check our train for irregularities. From habit, which should have been long forgotten, I said aloud "all dark" indicating there were no problems

## Locomotive Maintenance Information

By Sal Martocci

Probably the most common mistake we make is tolerating dirty track. Even your rolling stock contributes to dirty track. Plastic wheels in particular can be one of the causes [Many HO scalers consider metal wheelsets as an alternative. However, most N scalers remain with plastic.].

Don't overlook a weekly track wipe down if necessary. The best cleaning technique I have found is a clean paper towel and some alcohol. Rotate the towel often as to not leave paper bits on the track.

Next in line are the locomotive's wheels. I think Roy Mantooth's method (paper towel and alcohol) works best. Simply place a paper towel dampened with alcohol on your powered track. Hold the locomotive lightly over the towel so that it makes contact and the wheels turn freely.

The paper towel will clean the wheels.

For older engines (steam) where the engine and tender have insulated wheels on opposite sides this



Continued on page 4

# Whistle Stop Tour 2005. September 24th.

With a new open format, it'll be fun for all. More info in next month's issue.

## From the Head End

Continued from page 1

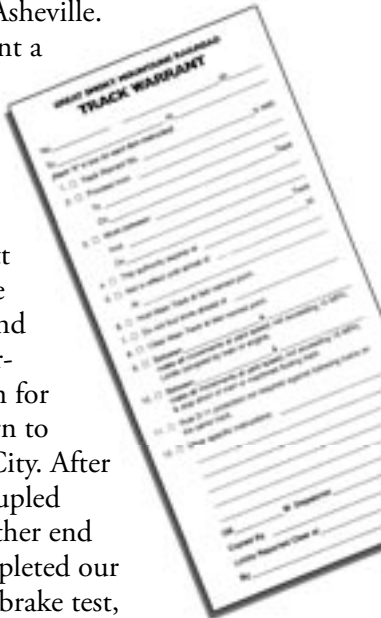
on the fireman's side of the train. I can not begin to tell you what memories this entire trip evoked. It was like going back in time! We rumbled along talking about engine operation and getting over the road. We discussed rules and how some from the 1950s still apply. Both of these gentlemen are good railroaders and a real pleasure to be with.

We passed Almond depot at milepost 75, now abandoned. At milepost 76 we saw the summer home of D.W. Brosnan, president of the Southern RR during the 1930s and 1940s. People say Brosnan would hold staff meetings at his home and occasionally fire an employee who had to walk back to Almond then find his own transportation back to Asheville.

We went a little beyond the Outdoor Center to Hewitt where we ran around the excursion train for our return to Bryson City. After we re-coupled on the other end and completed our running brake test,

we returned to Wesser where the Outdoor Center is located for a one hour layover.

The whole trip is scenic and most enjoyable. I would recommend it to all train fans. Unfortunately, GSMRR has now started charging a large sum to ride in the engine so I fear that was my last cab ride. But, the memories are there from this trip and I will have them forever.



## What Does "Swamp Gravy" Have To Do With The GF&A?

By Larry Benson

What on earth does "Swamp Gravy" have to do with the Georgia-Florida & Alabama (GF&A) Railroad you ask? Well, I'm gonna tell ya.

On the third Saturday in March, Shirley and I along with several friends motored 60 miles north on highway 27 to Colquitt to see Georgia's official folk life play entitled "Down At The Depot."

The musical is one of a series produced annually under the auspices of the Georgia Council for the Arts. The play features an all amateur cast of local talent with many characters appearing several times in various songs and skits.

Before the play, we ate a delicious buffet dinner at the historic Tarrer Inn located in downtown Colquitt. After eating, we walked to Cotton Hall, a renovated warehouse-like structure which was jam-packed with an eager audience. Attired in typical railroad duds, a narrator engineered the crowd through two

acts, weaving railroad history with hilarious and sometimes unhappy stories from the 1940s gathered in and around Miller

County, Georgia.

Two stages recreated a railroad station waiting room and an imaginary passenger train which took folks away from Colquitt then brought them back later. One resident, a WW II veteran returned in a flag-draped coffin.

Many of the stories chronicled humorous tales about riding the GF&A from Montgomery through

Colquitt to Bainbridge and beyond. The play was enjoyable, well choreographed and perfectly timed with a fast paced, rollicking script. For the most part, the music and lyrics were written by local composers who are well acquainted with railroading and its romantic past.

For more information about future performances call (229) 758-5450. To make reservations at the Tarrer Inn (pronounced Tara) call toll free 1-888-282-7737.



## News & Notes

We are searching for next month's feature article. Don't wait another minute, send your story to Larry or Shawn. Don't think that your writing is polished enough? Don't worry, we will help.

Also, How-to articles are in demand! Please share your skills and help us all grow as modelers.

The Whistle Stop Tour is around the bend. Because of two host cancellations, the tour has been postponed to September 24.

This event will feature a new format where all hosts will be open for a single three to four hour block while members roam freely. Can you say more time and room for your camera? John Sullenberber will provide more detail in next month's issue.

# Operation Inspiration



**Setting the scene.** In this photograph, there's a sense of time and place. Careful attention to detail means memorable frames for your railroad. Always remember, less is more. Your mini stages should compliment, not detract.

## Executive board reports

Sal Martocci, **Vice President**

### Getting Started...

This phrase could apply to many parts of our lives but for this column today lets keep it to Rail Roding. I am kind of an authority on doing it tomorrow. Some things can't wait but building our dream layout, for many reasons just doesn't happen. Going to school, earning a living, being with the family, vacations and football season are all distractions that we have to deal with. However, when we visit someone's layout often we can hear "got to get started on mine... but."

I visited a members layout (outside large scale) several weeks ago and saw an unbelievable display of trains and scenery. What made matters even more hard to believe was that he did this all in less than seven years. Other folks in the club (Roy, Sam, John A, Bob, Harold and Paul) and others somehow resisted the temptations of doing it tomorrow.

Now for the rest of the story. I finally got started on my layout. It's outside, its

G Scale and its elevated. Looking an ant in the eye is too difficult anymore so I'll bring the tracks/trains up to where I can see them without being bent over. Will it work just fine? Maybe. Should I have done something different? Maybe. Is it too small or too large? Maybe. The important part is it's under way, construction has begun. I hope to have it ready for the fall tour and of course you are all invited. So what are you waiting for... Get Started!

Larry Benson, **Secretary**

The June 21, 2005 membership meeting convened in Program Room A of the Leroy Collins Leon County Library with 23 members present. Minutes of the May 17, 2005 meeting were approved as published in The Lantern.

Division coordinators reported on their activities. Barrett Johnson mentioned a possible way BBMRA could assist the Boy Scouts in helping their members obtain the railroading merit badge. John Sullenberger is coordinating

our "Whistle Stop" Layout Tour to be held from 1PM to 4PM on July 16. [This event has been postponed until September 24, 2005]. Next Meeting: July 19 in Myers Park Community Room at 7:30 PM. Also, Frank, the new owner of HobbyTown USA spoke to the club about his new, larger store and increased inventory.

### All Scales

Now that summer is in full swing, all of our scale crews have taken a much needed break for the long, hot summer. Each crew chief are planning for inventory and work parties in the late summer or early fall.

## More NMRA Membership Information

Last month president Barrett Johnson talked about the National Model Railroad Association and some of the benefits of membership. This month, we've gathered more information to fully explain the NMRA.

Where ever N.M.R.A. members meet at the regional and divisional level, you will find 'how to' and 'hands on' clinics with members demonstrating the art and skill of modeling including scratchbuilding, kitbashing, painting, researching prototypes, photography, track laying, scenery construction and electrical and electronic work and much more.

Additional features include: Monthly NMRA Scale Rails w/Bulletin, Region & Division newsletters, NMRA World Wide Web site, NMRA Standards & Recommended Practices, Participation in the Achievement Program and more.

From the Golden Spike Award to Master Model Railroader (MMR), there are many programs designed to recognize the modeler who excels in modeling and/or service to the hobby, and to encourage modelers to develop excellence in model building and service by the earning of Merit Awards and Certificates of Achievement.

To learn more, please visit NMRA.org or check our calendar of events to see when the nearest division will meet again. Here's your chance to add to your network of modeling friends.



# The Lantern

2023 Gardenbrook Ln, Tallahassee, FL 32301

[www.bbmra.org](http://www.bbmra.org)

## Upcoming events

### July

7/16-17 • 11AM-5PM  
Great American Train Show.  
Clearwater.

7/19 • 7:30PM  
BBMRA meeting at Myers Park.

7/23-24 • 11AM-5PM  
Great American Train Show.  
Orlando.

### August

8/9  
NMRA meeting. Tucker, GA.

7/11 • 9AM-5PM  
TCA Toy Train Show.  
Lake Worth, FL.

7/13  
Model Train & Artifacts Show.  
Atlanta, GA.

Veteran's Memorial RR  
Regular Operating Session  
Bristol, FL.

## Locomotive How-to

Continued from page 1



method won't work. For these engines turn them upside down and clean the wheels with a Q-tip.

Sometimes engines slow down in a particular section of your layout and then resume normal speed. If you have noticed this check for loose rail joiners in that section of track. A small voltage drop because of a poor connection can cause this.

Now that your track and your wheels are clean we can get to the engine. I have

found that today's engines regardless of manufacturer are quite good. Things like all wheel drive, which means all wheels have electrical pickup, are common. Most have "can" motors that require little voltage and little maintenance to perform well.

To keep your engine running well, use a plastic compatible lube oil BUT use very little of it. Over oiling gets oil on the track which in turn gets oil on all your rolling stock which attracts dust and dirt. That would lead us back to the top of this article: dirty track.

Once your locomotives are running smooth, make sure you're properly harnessing all their pulling power. Checking your couplers will ensure you're getting a great connection to the string of cars you'll want to tow.

Also consider checking the gauge of your wheelsets if you ever encounter rough running through turnouts or notice side to side movement.

If you have an engine that you really like but it "doesn't run as good as it used to" and everything you have done hasn't helped, bring it to a monthly meeting and let's see if we can resolve the problem and learn something in the process.

CALENDAR