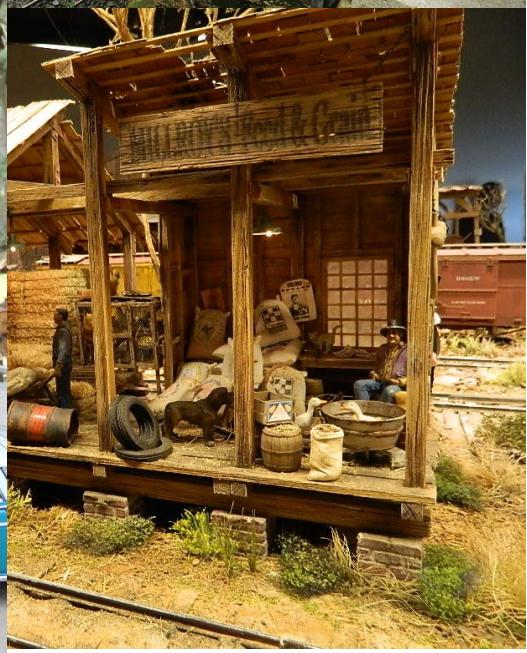
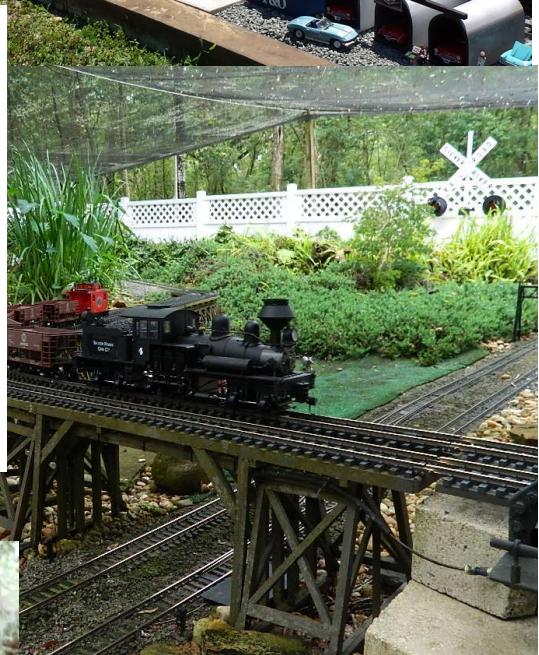
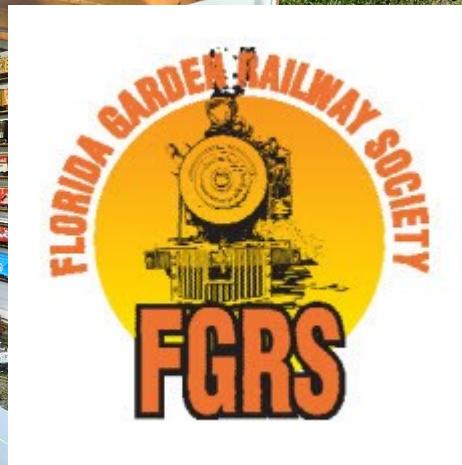
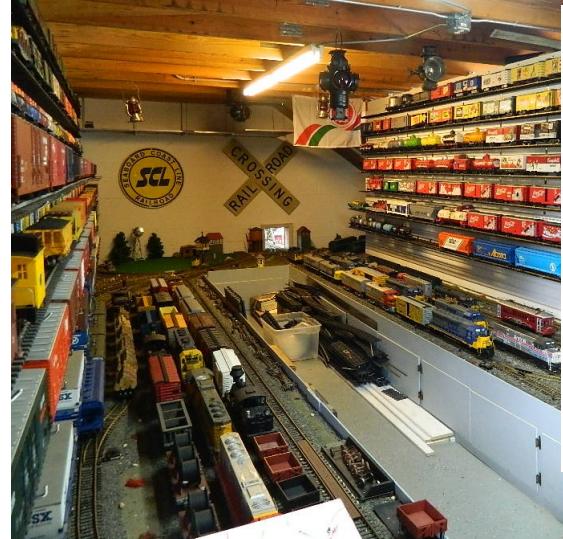




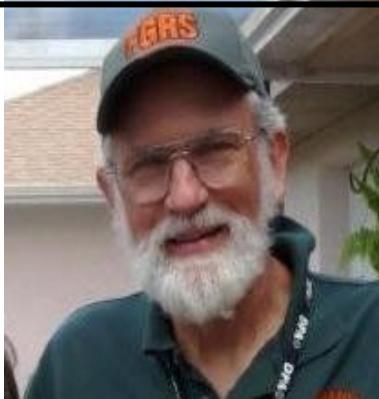
July 2020





July 2020

PRESIDENT'S NOTES FROM PAUL WAGNER



What was that loud crash I just heard!!!? Oohhh! That was the glass ceiling breaking when we hit 100 members! It just happened yesterday, and we're sending a badge to the person who brought us up to 100! I Know I've said it before - it sure feels great to be part of something so good that's lasted so long!

Speaking of which, we've had an enthusiastic "YES!" from an overwhelming majority of members we've polled about their willingness to participate fully in a 3-day, 30 Year Celebration in early 2021. After looking at all possible dates, we have found that February 19 – 21, 2021 will be the best time to have it. And most of you agreed that, at this time, the logical place to have it will be in the Southwest area, centering in Fort Myers. Most of us will want to stay overnight there, and we have rooms reserved at the Holiday Inn Downtown, including breakfast, at a special low price.

Including North Port, Port Charlotte, and Englewood, there will be at least 7 garden railway layouts to tour, a Train Show, a train ride through a park, a Train Museum, a tour of the Edison-Ford Estate and gardens, with a luncheon, an opportunity to ride and participate in the "Murder Mystery Train", and much more.

This will be a great opportunity to take these tours, excursions, and visit the attractions at a reduced price - all in the company of your fellow garden railroaders, while we celebrate 30 years of garden railroading in Florida together. So as Fred Weber says:

“SAVE THE DATE - FEBRUARY 19 - 21, 2021”

**“The last time FGRS had a State Convention was in 2000!
Let’s make this a big one, and keep the tradition going!”**

This pesky Corona virus has really put a crimp in our summer activities, but we’re going to continue making plans so we’ll be ready when things safely open up. The September 12 Season Kick-Off meet at Ridge Live Steamers is on, for now, with many special activities planned for it. Please see the September Meet plans in the Special Events Section of this Newsletter.

We are looking for some Fun Run volunteers for October, and beyond, in both the eastern and western part of the state. We will continue to monitor the virus situation, of course, and cancellations are possible. We certainly don’t want anyone to take even a small chance of becoming ill.

So for July, we have scheduled another Zoom Fun Run on July 18th. The one on June 13th came off very well with nine members joining in, all the way from Fernandina Beach to Fort Myers Beach. There were a few technical difficulties with the Zoom, but overall, it went well, and everyone was reluctant to end it at noon, after 2 hours of good fellowship.

It was not quite the same as being there, but in these times, it was a great relief from quarantine. Conversations were pretty much like face to face, and we got to see some trains run. There was lots of good natured kidding, and friendly conversation. See the write-up in this Newsletter.

Train Shows for the rest of the year are still very tentative, but we will be ready. Due to our Vice President, Phil Barcelona’s efforts with the “Kids Zone” layout, and outreach to more train shows, especially in the Eastern Region of the state, we have decided to purchase a new trailer. This is a smaller one, which anyone with a standard size car could pull to a show.

The new trailer will also be used for pick-up and storage of donated equipment, and transportation of equipment for special events, saving us rental fees that might otherwise be incurred for transportation and storage.



You will also notice a new FGRS banner (on your right) when you come to train shows with us. The impressive artwork was designed by Ron White, and the banner comes with an easily set-up stand with a roll down display.

We expect to begin train show setups soon, and by next year, FGRS should be a household word everywhere.

Keep those trains running!

Good health and Railroading to everyone,

Paul

Paul Wagner



FGRS 2020 BOARD MEMBERS



FGRS President

Paul Wagner

941-445-0409

fgrs.president@gmail.com



FGRS Vice President

Phil Barcelona

386-562-4859

fgrs.vicepresident@gmail.com



FGRS Treasurer

Melinda Archer

727-421- 5894

fgrs.treasurer@gmail.com



FGRS Secretary

Millie Weber

941-224-2996

fgrs.secretary@gmail.com



FGRS Newsletter

Ross Marvin

407-435-7012

**Fgrs.newsletter
@gmail.com**



FGRS Membership

Jay Archer

727-736-1989

**Fgrs.membership
@gmail.com**



FGRS Event Chairman

Fred Weber

410-310-6001

fgrs.eventchair@gmail.com



July 2020 Newsletter Contents

In this edition of the newsletter you will find the following:

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- 2) FGRS Future Fun Runs (Page 9)
- 3) Tentative Schedule of 2020 Train Shows (Page 10)
- 4) Club Event Layout (Page 11)
- 5) FGRS 30th Anniversary Weekend—Ft. Meyers (Page 12)

ARTICLES

- 1) Building A Coal Mine (Page 13)
- 2) "MTH" Mike's Train House Sets Closing Date (Page 16)
- 3) How To Participate with and Add Interest To The Club Layout. (Page 18)
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FORMS & GUIDELINES

- 1) NEW FRONT PAGE & Submission Guidelines for the Newsletter (Page 22)
- 2) FGRS Application Form (Page 23)

FGRS “ZOOM” Fun Runs

June 2020 Zoom Fun Run Hosted by President, Paul Wagner

What a great time! Nine members signed in, and we hope that more will join in this month. Kevin Mars showed his new indoor layout, showing off many interesting scenes and buildings as he ran his trains for us. Lots of action in only 18 x 12 feet.

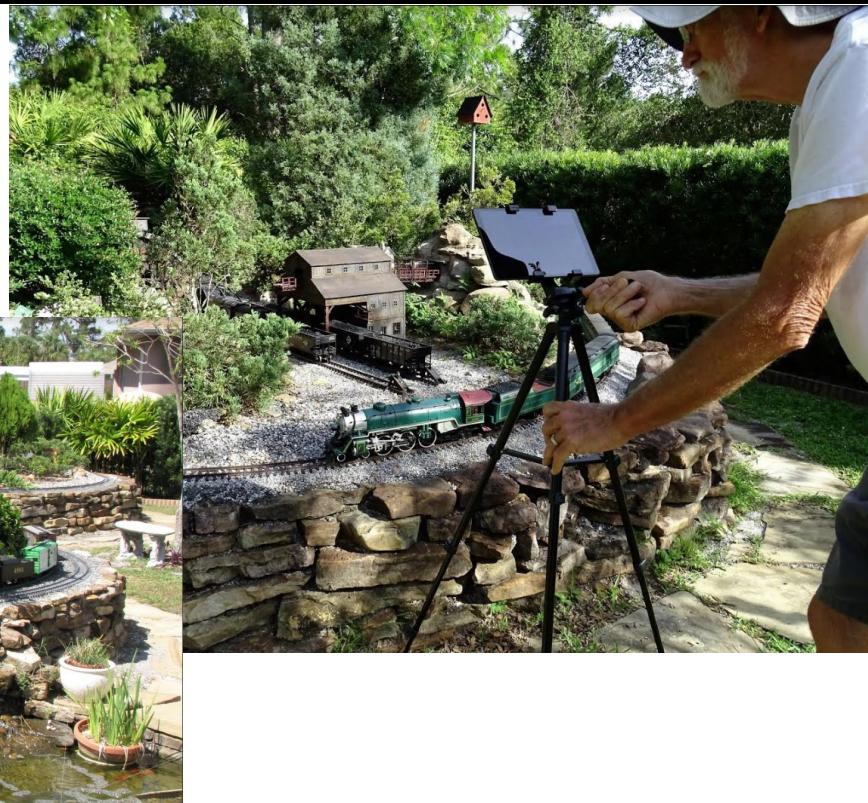
Jim Jerele showed off some new finescale buildings he had just completed from kits, and an unusual Chinese puzzle style train. Unfortunately, Jim



doesn't have internet available at his layout, so couldn't run trains for us. Fred and Millie Weber ran trains on their backyard layout. (Bottom Pix) It has been greatly expanded since his last meet, and he was showing off a new mountain and some great street scenes.

FGRS “ZOOM” Fun Runs

Your old president here ran trains in the backyard, and couldn't resist showing everyone a new mountain and coal mine just completed.



**Please Join us on July 18th for
another Zoom Fun Run.**

As before, you will get an email from the meeting host on the Monday before the Zoom.

On Saturday, July 18th, click on the link you will see in the email, and follow the instructions.

If you have Zoom on your computer, it will open it for you; if you don't, it will help you download it.

It is free to use, and now very secure. FGRS owns a license for up to 100 people to get on a Zoom call, all at the same time. I hope to see you there!

Paul

Paul Wagner

FGRS FUTURE Fun Runs

Please Join us on July 18th for another Zoom Fun Run. As before, you will get an email from the meeting host on the Monday before the Zoom. On Saturday, July 18th, click on the link you will see in the email, and follow the instructions.

If you have Zoom on your computer, it will open it for you; if you don't, it will help you download it. It is free to use, and now very secure. FGRS owns a license for up to 100 people to get on a Zoom call, all at the same time. I hope to see you there!

OCTOBER FUN RUN

We're looking for members to host a Fun Run in October, and for the rest of the year. We understand that it is uncertain as to whether it will be safe by then, and, of course, any plans you make will be subject to your final go or no -go judgement as your date approaches.

If you are interested in hosting, please contact the FGRS Event Chairman or Newsletter Chairman. Their information is in the beginning of this newsletter.

We are all hoping for the best, but we will remain vigilant.

In any case, please join us in our Zoom Fun Run Meet on July 18th. Watch for the email invitation for it on Monday, July 13, which will have all the details.

2020 TRAIN SHOWS

The listed shows have not yet been officially cancelled, but we are awaiting word from some of them.

August 29, 2020 Pinellas Park
Lopez Hall
7177 58th Street N
Pinellas Park, FL 33781

September 12, 2020 Brooksville
Hernando County Fairgrounds
6436 Broad Street
Brooksville, FL 34601

November 28, 2020 Pinellas Park
Lopez Hall
7177 58th Street N
Pinellas Park, FL 33781

December 12, 2020 Dover
Hillsborough County Fairgrounds
215 Sydney Washer Road
Dover, FL 33527

Vendors- Running Train layout- Indoors- Food- Free Parking
All Shows 9-2
\$5.00 Adults Children under 12 free
www.regalrailways.com

For a Complete list of Train Shows go to http://www.railserve.com/events/train_shows.html

Save the above web address as it has a complete updated list of Train Shows Nationwide, along with a lot of other good information about the Hobby. You will be very surprised at how many train shows there are just in Florida year round and will find them listed here.

SPECIAL EVENTS



FALL SEASON KICK-OFF

September 12 – FGRS Season Kickoff Ridge Live Steamers, Dundee Florida.
(Subject to health concerns)

9AM - 3 PM.

Steam, Battery, and Track power trains can run on their G scale track. Bring anything you have.

There will be a:

- 1)G scale live steam demonstration
- 2) A special sale and swap meet
- 3) and of course, train rides around the beautiful orange grove ranch.



Details will be posted in a special mailing mid-August.

February 19 – 21, 2021 - 30 Year Celebration Statewide Convention (See Page 12 of this newsletter for more Detail)



CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF FGRS

SAVE THE DATE FEBRUARY 19 TO 21, 2021

THREE DAYS OF RAILWAY FUN IN

BEAUTIFUL FORT MYERS

Friday:

Layout tours, RR museum, and Murder Mystery Dinner Train.

Saturday:

Layout tours, RR Museum, Train Show, and tentative Social Hour /Dinner.

Sunday:

Edison and Ford Estates tour and luncheon, RR Museum, and Train show.

For overnight accommodations we have rooms reserved at the
Holiday Inn Downtown Fort Meyers.



Building a Coal Mine

By FGRS President, Paul Wagner

Some of you may have seen this structure on my layout before, but it has now reached a much better stage of completion and detail.

As a youngster growing up in southwestern Pennsylvania, I was fascinated by the coal mines surrounding my small town. Most of them were “drift” mines, that is, a mine with a



small, electric, narrow gauge train of coal cars that would run into a tunnel in the side of a hill carrying miners who would chip the coal out in the underground tunnel. A small electric engine, like Picture A., above here, would pull the little coal cars into the mine, and, at the end of the day, it would pull the cars filled with coal back out of the tunnel and into a building similar to picture B. Inside the building, the coal would be sorted and loaded into hopper cars waiting on the tracks, below.

During my last year of high school I worked as a canoe guide on the South Fork of the Cumberland River, in Kentucky, near Cumberland falls. While hiking into the creek, I stumbled across an old branch line of the Southern Railway which led to this mining structure, which is now restored and open to tours.

More recently, while RV camping in that area, Patty and I went back there, took a ride on the railroad, and toured the mining camp. (Patty's friends all said how lucky she is to have a husband who takes her to see coal mines) It gave me the idea to build a model of that building, and a drift mine, on our garden railroad.

I lacked a mountain large enough accommodate a mine like that, so I brought in some dirt, rocks, and "Hypertufa" cement mix, and built the mountain too, so that the 2' gauge mining cars would have a tunnel to roll into. I am using Gargraves "S" gauge track for the 2' gauge line.

The mining cars will be built on old American Flyer S gauge wheels. (Pix. C)



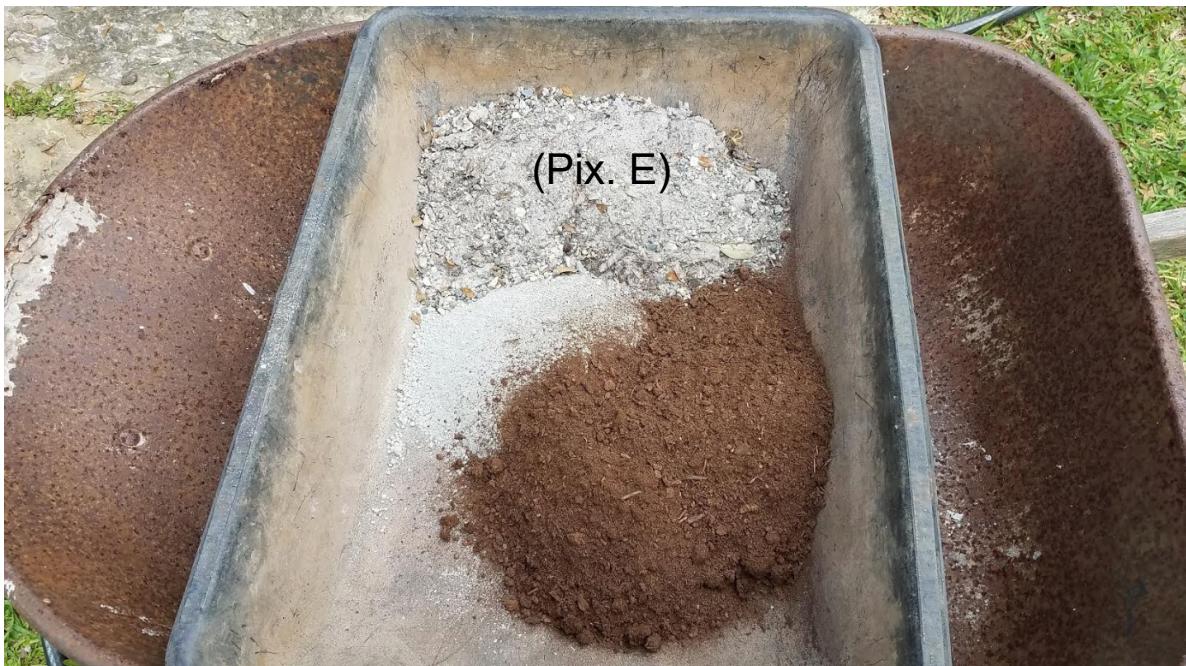
I started with a pile of dirt, rip-rap, and granite rocks. (Pix. D) I made the pile about 2" smaller than I wanted the mountain to be. I then set in a tunnel entrance, and molded the earth with Hypertufa, leaving openings for the dirt to allow some ground cover to grow, representing Kudzu, an out-of-control vine that grows on hillsides almost everywhere in the Kentucky area.



Hypertufa is a custom cement mix made from one part Portland cement, 2 parts sand (and/or gravel), and 2 parts sphagnum peat moss, colored brown with concrete coloring. (Pix. E)

It has the advantage over concrete of being more workable, even after hardening, and it is more plant friendly. You can form it with your hands (wear heavy rubber gloves) about like oatmeal. Moss and plants will readily grow on or around it. Increase the proportion of Portland cement if you want to pour it or trowel it.

I have a clinic about this and I will be glad to send the notes to anyone interested.



(Pix. E)

The structure was built by bashing a Colorado Models Barn and one of their stations, along with a generous supply of Plastruct and Evergreen Styrene and ABS girders and strips.

Unfortunately, Colorado Models has gone out of business, and these kits are no longer available. It is a fairly simple structure, though, and wouldn't be too difficult to scratch build, or bash from some other buildings.

I have an extensive collection of photos and information on coalmines of this era (pre-1950) and I would be glad to share it with anyone wanting to build a similar mine.

I also have info on vertical shaft mines. Those have a tower with a wheel on the top which accesses the mine via an elevator and bucket conveyor lifts.

Mike's Train House Sets Closing Date

Submitted By Bruce Benardo

MTH Trains' Wolf sets 2021 end date for company

Many of you have at least a few pieces of rolling stock from the well-known model railroad company, "Mike's Train House"(MTH). They were especially remarkable for their well detailed moderately priced garden trains, models of standard gauge prototypes. They were almost alone in that they produced trains in 1/32 scale, instead of the more common 1/29. They also produced trains in O, S, and HO scale. Following is the announcement:

M.T.H. Trains President Mike Wolf has announced his May 2021 retirement and the subsequent closure of the company after 40 years in business.

"It is, therefore, with mixed emotions that I tell you I have decided to retire in 2021 and close the business," he said in a June 8, 2020 letter to the industry.

"The last two M.T.H. catalogs, our 2020 Volume 2 O Gauge catalog, and our 2020 HO catalog and all non-delivered items from our 2020 Volume 1 O Gauge catalog, 2020 Ready-to-Run Train Set catalog, 2019 -2020 S Gauge catalog, and 2019-2020 G Gauge catalog will feature the last products produced by M.T.H. Electric Trains," the letter stated.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the MTH Electric Trains website. At the top, there are links for Home, MTH Europe Business Opportunities, Dealers, Login, and social media icons. The main header features the MTH logo with the tagline "Model trains that do more!". Below the header, there are sections for RAILKING, HO TRAINS THAT DO MORE!, and Lionel TRAINS. Each section includes a brief description, item numbers, and links to learn more. The footer contains links for Home, Product Lines, About MTH, Catalogs, MTHRC, MTH Service, Privacy Policy, and Contact Us. Logos for RAILKING, SCALETRAX, and DCS are also present in the footer.

(Picture above is a snapshot from the MTH Website showing all the brands)

Mike's Train House Sets Closing Date

Submitted By Bruce Benardo

However, in a communication to the dealers the following day, the company revealed its electronics department will live on as a separate entity. "The new tech company will continue to manufacture and provide support including any necessary software updates to the DCS hardware or DCS WiFi App. In fact, new and exciting product ideas are currently under development."

The DCS System controls any Proto-Sound 2.0 and later equipped locomotives. The new company will be comprised of current M.T.H. staff.

The items in those catalogs will be available now through April 2021 and will carry a limited 1-year warranty supported by the company's Authorized Service Center network and the M.T.H. Service Department. After the company closes in May 2021, the ASC network will provide warranty coverage through April 2022.

Wolf thanked the retailers who have carried the company's products throughout the years.

"M.T.H. Electric Trains would not have enjoyed success without the support of the M.T.H. Authorized Retailer network. I wish all of them good luck and prosperity in the years to come."



Additionally, he praised the people who make the company run. "I want to thank all of my employees for their hard work over the years. Most of them have been with me for decades and their loyalty and talents were paramount to our success."

Wolf is open to the possibility of selling the firm's thousands of tools, molds, and intellectual property and days he'll "entertain various options and buyers."

One scenario is a new company organized and owned by members of my current staff," he said.

The company was founded in Columbia, Md. in 1980 as Mike's Train House, a manufacturer of reproduction Lionel standard and O gauge trains. It remains headquartered in Columbia.



How To Participate with and Add Interest To The Club Layout.

Written by FGRS Board Member Fred Weber

Adding interest to the club layout. Whenever the club sets up the big layout you will have the opportunity to run your trains or use the club's trains.

Here is an easy way to bring your favorite buildings or scene onto the layout for everyone to enjoy.

Let's start with how much room you have per module: 47 7/8" long x 16" wide.

If you bring your buildings or scenes on your own board that is a little wider than 16", that will work too. 16" measures from the end of the track tie to the edge of the module. See photo #1 above.

The next picture, Photo #2, shows two houses and garages. I just picked them up from my layout. Now if you have a car to include, that would add more detail. Also, you could personalize using a mailbox, paper or painted driveway, paper or painted roadway, swimming pool, flowers, sidewalks or people.

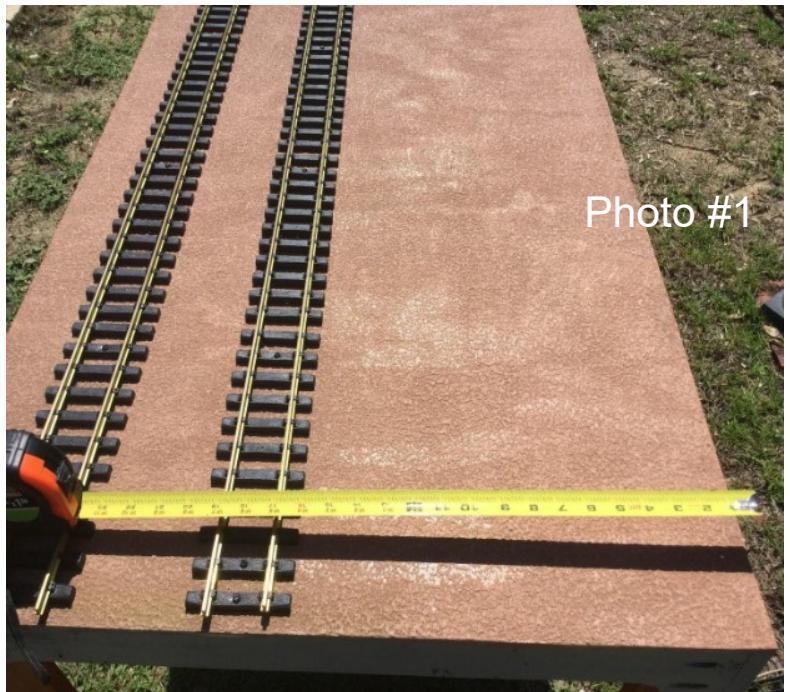


Photo #3 shows some western buildings. Again adding detail will improve/enhance the scene.



Photo #3

The Photo #4 shows the Fitzwell House. This would look great with a garden on the side and a "Bed & Breakfast" sign in front for example.



Photo #4

How many trackside structures do you have that would look great next to the tracks? How about a fairy garden? Live flowers? I look forward to seeing your different structures and scenarios as the trains go by our club layout!



TIPS & TRICKS!

By FGRS President, Paul Wagner

Like most of you who are taking the quarantining as an opportunity to catch up on sprucing up your garden railway, I was rebuilding and finishing several of the little buildings on ours. I use lots of rattle-can spray paint, and have had very good results in the past. Not as good, or as consistent as air-brushing, but very satisfactory, to my eye.

But this summer, I ran amuck in a couple different ways.

First, I always use Rustoleum automotive primer on anything that has not been painted recently, or on bare metal and plastic. I have never run across any plastic that it attacks.

I first wash down the surface with denatured alcohol. Denatured alcohol does not really “attack” plastic, but fogs it a little, so in addition to removing wax and grease, it does improve the adhesion of the paint. Never use denatured alcohol on clear plastic “windows” –it will fog that also.

I am in the habit of placing spray paint cans out in the sun before use, to make the paint flow better. This summer, I noticed my primer was leaving kind of a sandpaper looking surface – not too bad, and most of the structure surfaces I was doing looked a little more “weathered” as a result, which was good. But then, one of the roofs I was doing looked like it was covered with loose dust when I finished with the primer, and indeed, it was loose. It wiped right off with a rag. I cleaned it off with mineral spirits, and re-applied it with the can closer to the work – say 8” or so, and then it came out OK, but still a little sandy looking. Well I checked with the great “Google on The Mountaintop”, and quickly came up with the answer:

It's just too d---d hot! A bright, skillful woman, Brooke Ulrich, at

<https://www.allthingsthrifty.com/everything-i-know-about-spray-paint/>

gave this advice: “Spray between 60 and 85 degree F. Too cold, the paint is too thick or can freeze; too hot, and the paint dries before it hits the surface. Never spray paint in direct sunlight.”

- Problem solved! I have a nice spray paint booth, but used to only use it on small articles to save clean up. I guess I'll have to squeeze these building in, and go inside. Brooke recommends cleaning out you garage, and doing it in there. Good luck with your painting!



TIPS & TRICKS!

By FGRS President, Paul Wagner

Now for the attack of the “Hairy Chested OH NO! Bird”!

My nice switch tower (a modified Colorado Models Kit) was needing a refurb this year, so I fixed up some of the broken details, came up with a nifty way to enhance shingles on the roof (textured paint, and black wash) and started repainting the rest of it. Well, the old paint was getting thick and chipped, so I decided to strip it and start over. I grabbed a can of “Klean-Strip” paint stripper, sprayed it on, and began gently power washing it off. **DON’T DO IT! The stripper bubbled up the plastic surface, unglued and distorted the detail parts.** She’s done for.



I may paint it with camo dark brown, glue some rotten wood strips to the top, and use it for an abandoned building, but since it makes me sick every time I look at it, I should probably just write it off, and throw it away. Live and learn.

Next time, test it on a similar piece before using a stripper, Paul.

Paul

Paul Wagner



Be On Our New Front Page “Member Montage”

As you can see, we have a “**NEW OPEN-ING PAGE**” Please send pictures of your layout or other G scale Railway project and we’ll include them on future front pages.

We are also starting a “**TIPS & TRICKS**” column so we can share our worst and best moments as a teaching experience for other club members. :) So send articles/stories, ideas, pictures with text. What will make this newsletter more fun to read is seeing what members like you are doing, have done or learned. So a few guidelines to help me, help you.....

1) When submitting pictures and articles to the NL please make sure the articles are written in Word and the pictures as SEPARATE .JPG attachments.

Imbedded pictures in an e-mail sometimes gets stripped off by virus software, or just come out weird. Separate attachments please.

2) A few sentences to be put in the NL is okay. It doesn’t have to be long.

Please feel free to contact me at:

fgrs.newsletter@gmail.com



FGRS Membership Application

The Florida Garden Railway Society (FGRS) invites you to join a group of people who share a common interest in large scale trains, both indoors, outdoors, or modules. We are a group of individuals, couples, and families who enjoy socializing with others and participating in train related activities. Dues

\$30/YR for single or family memberships. Annual dues include subscriptions to FGRS Newsletter. All renewals are due in January. If interested in joining FGRS or to renew your membership, please complete this application and send a check payable to Florida Garden Railway Society (FGRS),

Attn: Jay Archer, Florida Garden Railway Society, P.O. BOX 2695, Dunedin, FL 34697-2695

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone#: _____

E-Mail: _____

Would you like your information shared with the club members only? Yes _____ No _____

Name badges are \$12 each. If mailed add \$1.00. They have two lines: One for your name and the other line can have the town where you live or the name of your railroad.

First Badge

Name: _____

Second Badge

Town or RR name: _____
