





PRESIDENT'S NOTES FROM FRED WEBER

JULY 2022

HAPPY 4th of JULY !

June must have been one of the hottest June months in Florida's history. After the sun went down and the track temperature dropped down to 75, I was able to run a couple of short trains. Good thing I have extra traction tires.

This past Memorial Day weekend saw the Carter's layout open all weekend. Club members, friends and family attended the event during operating hours. Mike and Tracy Walls opened their layout for all to come see one afternoon. The Walls won an award for best yard in the subdivision. My point is when people open up their railroad layout, people stop by to enjoy garden railroading. For many people visiting a layout it's their first time experiencing garden railroading. At Bushnell Station people look at the garden layout and say "WOW this is amazing", especially since it's still under construction! As we show the world what we do, more people will enjoy the hobby of Garden Railroading.

If you would like to have a fun run and invite club members over for a morning or are just planning to run your trains, please contact myself or any board member so we can add it to our upcoming events.

We have an older member who is having trouble getting his railroad running. If you live in his area and can help in anyway, please reach out to him. Below is his contact information. I'm sure he would love to see his trains run again.

Be careful of the heat and drink plenty of water if you're working outside. We want everyone to be safe in this summer heat.

Happy Railroading!

Fred Weber President

FGRS 2022 BOARD MEMBERS



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**YOUR PICTURE
COULD BE HERE!**

FGRS Vice President – Western Region
Position Open – This can be you!



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Don't Forget To Order Your Club Shirts! Both 30 Year Anniversary and Traditional "FGRS"

All shirts are \$35.00 which includes embroidering your name, taxes, and shipping to your home. The shirts are made by Core365 and are 100% polyester—Moisture Wicking, Antimicrobial, UV protection, and easy care.



Traditional Shirts

Available in True Royal (Blue) or White

30 Year Anniversary Shirts
Available Only in "Platinum"

Men's shirts are available either with or without a pocket. Men's "Tall" sizes are only available without a pocket. 30 Year Shirts are not available in "Tall" or with a pocket. Color choices are True Royal (Blue) or White. 30 Year Shirts come only in "Platinum" Sizes start at S,M,L,XL,2XL,3XL,4LX, and 5XL

Ladies sizes start at XS,S,M,L,XL,2XL, and 3XL

Youth sizes start at S,M,L,XL

Ladies sizes are true to size. Women who wear a men's large would need to order a ladies "extra large". These shirts are very comfortable and easy to care for. You will love them! All arrangements have been made. Order yours direct from the dealer using the form sent out in a separate document. The form with 30 Year Anniversary Shirts added is being sent out again as you receive this Newsletter. Be sure to include your email address on the order form so they can contact you if there are questions about what you want. Watch for the order form which is being sent out in a separate email today.

“GETTING TO KNOW”

Jim Lewis and



Model Train
TECHNOLOGY

My Dad and I built an N scale railroad (4x8) in 1968 with mostly Marklin products. Over the years and many houses Dad built various HO layouts and I helped with some of the electronics and mechanicals. His last railroad was a



very impressive layout (30 x 30) up in the attic in his house on Hilton Head Island. That railroad was fully DCC with all sections of track blocked and via Digitrax Loconet it was hooked up to the computer.

We used a very nice program called Railroad Automation (not JMRI) and he could have up to 17 trains running scripts to start and stop, switch tracks, signals etc. I recall one time dialing into his computer from Manila (business trip) to help him with some problem.

(Dad above running the railroad) That was amazing .. 20 years ago or so!

Link to Dad's layout video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5mu6W8X3lc>

You might think that he and I are the technical type but not really. He was in the oil business with an MBA and I was PolyScience from an NY liberal arts school. Just goes to show that anybody can learn this stuff with a little persistence.

Model Train Technology was born 3 years ago but it wasn't the inspiration to start a business, certainly not after I had spent my career being a CEO and building business all over the world in the software and services industries – and travelling 200k miles/year.

Nope. I wanted to stay home in Florida and play with my trains.

While working on my small 4x8 layout I decided I wanted my Amtrak passenger cars to have lights in them. I had Kato cars (nice) but their lighting system was not good. I took the smallest Digitrax decoder I could find, attached LEDs and manage to get that to work. In the process, I had to grind down the interior seats, etc. The thought of doing that 12 more times was not attractive. So, I searched the internet for a 11.5mm wide LED light board with a built in DCC decoder. It didn't exist!! That's when I decided to see if I could make one.

After about three months of trial and error and experimentation with all sorts of electronic experiment kits (like Arduino), public domain software, circuit board design, etc. I had my first working circuit board that a) fit into my cars and b) the lights could be turn on and off via DCC. When the LEDs lit, I thought it was like giving birth. Since then, my wife of 35 years has corrected my understanding of that!

Today we design all the circuits on the computer with CAD software and then send the files via internet to our PCB maker. About a week later the boards come back. We use a stencil to apply solder paste and then one of our robots places the parts. We bake the board in a small oven and voila, a completed circuit is ready to roll. Everything is assembled in the US and everything that we can make ourselves, we do.

Video of pick and place machine.

<https://youtu.be/R3ODR5jgVEU>

I completed my Amtrak train with additional boards and then started adding variation in length and features (like rear blinking lights and different variations of LEDs. Family and friend suggested I try to sell them. I was still consulting for a few clients, but I thought, "Sure, why not?"

That is how Model Train Technology was born. We added more variation of the LED light boards including coming up with a Caboose lighting Kit for N and HO. We have sold of lot of those. We also invented a LED Scene Controller that allows for animation of 16 separate channels with over 5 million animation possibilities. This was designed to replace all the Woodland Scenic parts except for the actual lights. Then we started making fiber lighting products (We designed and manufacture the Lamplighter Fiber controller for Dwarvin Enterprise). We have a sound controller and many other items for the inhouse scales.

Link to Catalog

<https://modeltraintechology.com/catalog/>

However, the biggest hit came last year in June when we introduced the first Block Signal Controller and signals. The beauty of the products is that it is darn simple. I had produced 50+ videos on YouTube and usually we had 500 to 1000 views, some more and some fewer.

The video that we made for the Signal Controller had 30,000 views in the first four weeks!! That was crazy!

Then we introduced the first non-IR (Infrared) detector that was not susceptible to varying light conditions. We knew that a cousin of the chip could be used for an outdoor sensor.

The twinkle in my eye then was to eventually make a G Scale system using the same technology.



G SCALE SIGNALING SYSTEM

- Battery Powered or 12VDC
- One Battery Unit can power other units
- Built in Signal Controller
- Built in Precision Detector – Works in Direct Sunlight or total darkness without adjustment
- 1mm precision with range up to 500 mm
- Auto Light shutoff to preserve batter life

PRODUCTS:

1. Battery Powered, Choice of Signal \$199
2. 12VDC Version \$165
3. LIPO Charger \$50
4. Rubber Mounting Blocks (2) \$20

That meant combining the sensors and the signal controller into one product and making it rugged enough and functional to work outside in the rain and sun. Functionally, the system works identically to our small-scale system.

Link to the famous Signal Controller Introduction video:

<https://youtu.be/Blsc2OEmQQY>

Our G scale products were announced at the beginning of June and we're beginning to ship the first few units. Demand is always hard to predict but in this case it was good. This is a new area for us so the traditional marketing paths that we used for small scale don't apply.

Thus, I am very grateful to the Florida Garden Railway Society for sharing our story and helping us to get the word out.

As a core part of our business model, we want customers to know that we are available by email and phone with a *rapid response attitude*. *This is the phone number and 99% of the time I will answer right away. I carry the phone around with me about the shop. If not, please leave a message and I will call you back. 407-242-5436.*

At the beginning of last year, we put some cash into the business so that we could purchase additional equipment and build up some inventory. We have a farm of 3D printers and few other machines that take on the tedious tasks.

At the same time as many of you know, the chip shortage hit us. At the beginning we had consolidated our designs to use a common chip used in the auto industry. These are made in the millions, and we could get them inexpensively – that was until we could not get them.

Fortunately, we are small and nimble and could redesign our products within weeks. But we had to find suitable replacement chips and we had to buy enough, and we had to do that before we had tested the boards in a circuit. These are all fun challenges of a startup business that lead to sleepless nights – the kind of thing I thought I had retired from!

Although my life as a heavily traveled international executive was exciting and rewarding, it wasn't nearly as fun as what I am doing now. If it's possible, I think I am working harder now than I did before! And we keep learning new skills and practices.

3D design and printing was not part of our repertoire nor were we even contemplating its need. Today, 3D printing is big part of most of our products.

When I say "we", I mean two sets of people. Of course, friends relatives help in many ways. Cecilia (wife) oversees 3D parts preparation. Kids do packaging, marketing, and legal review. (it's good to have a lawyer in the house) I also use a group of freelancers from all over the world who help with graphic design, website work, circuit design, patent filings, etc. I'm the only full-time employee. (Again, my wife will disagree!)

I think many of you know that building any business is very hard work. I work seven days a week with scheduled time out for family. I stop working every day at 6:30 to exercise as it's the best way I know to slow down and stay healthy! Again, we appreciate your interest and support. Please give me a call and let me know what you are thinking about your layout and what products we should be considering.

Kind regards,

Jim Lewis

Founder

Jim@ModelTrainTechnology.com

407-242-5436

Products Page Links:

<https://modeltraintechnology.com/g-scale-signaling/>

Website link

<https://modeltraintechnology.com/>

Store Link

<https://modeltraintechnology.com/buy/>

YouTube Channel Link

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCICo-pj4Y5IFv_VnaNalbvg/videos

LinkedIn Profile

www.linkedin.com/in/jimlewisMTT

Brief Highlights from NGRC 2022

By Paul & Patti Wagner

Railroads in the mountains, railroads in the plains! It was the most intense and fun filled National Convention ever! Most of us dozen FGRS members who attended are still on the road, or recovering (!) so a detailed write up will have to wait until the August Newsletter. Also watch for a huge pictorial in the coming Garden Railroading News issue, as well. Editor Carla was everywhere with her big pro camera and insightful inquiries.

As usual, there were many concurrent activities, so no one could see everything. The clinics were right on target for the information we all need -Battery, sound, remote control, laying track, building power supplies, 3D printing, structures, landscaping, and a forum hosted by Garden Railroading News to come up with ways to ensure that the traditional great NGRCs and growth of our hobby will continue.



With 50 layouts on tour, there was every size and type that you could imagine. From mega RRs with thousands of feet of track, to simple loops; some with towering mountains and trestles, and some with more modest landscaping. And some of the most imaginative were the smaller ones, incorporating one clever idea and detail after another!

The Keynote Address by Mick Spilsbury of Garden Railroading News traced the beginning of that great publication, just over a year ago, and the leadership it has lent to the hobby up to the present, along with a slide show of Garden railways from around the world. His big announcement was that Garden Railroading News will now be available in PRINT format for a reasonable price, as well as continuing to be free online! I for one will gladly pay to have it delivered. To me, there's nothing like thumbing through a real magazine!



I'll be assembling and editing the great pictures and stories from the convention when we return to Florida next week.

2022 TRAIN SHOWS AND EVENTS

July 9 - 10th, 2022 – 77th Rail fair, Deland, Florida

9am – 4pm

Volusia County Fairgrounds

Go to <https://10times.com/rail-fair-florida> for more information

**October 22 & 23rd - 74th Pinellas Park Performing Arts
Center 10am-5pm**

(just behind the HR Trains & Toys store).

**February 18-19, 2023 – Real Rail Train Show, Palmetto
(Bradenton), Florida** Go to [https://realrail.org/upcoming-
events/rail-pass/](https://realrail.org/upcoming-events/rail-pass/) for more information

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

Sent in From James Kasik, of the Washington, Virginia and Maryland Garden Railway Society (www.wvmgrs.org).

This is a a great club up in the Washington DC area that frequently exchanges newsletters, ideas, and welcomes us to meets and train shows in their area.

This is a young lad, age six, who I am mentoring about trains. He is extremely knowledgeable about all aspects of trains. I give him an assignment related to some aspect of trains each month to look up and then I ask him to tell me what he learned.



Here are my cousin's grandkids playing trains on my layout.

Jim Kasik, Arlington, Virginia

FGRS Club Member Needs a Little help

Ed Finch, a senior member of FGRS, has had many medical issues over the past couple of years, making it difficult for him to complete his garden railroad. He started this layout about 5 years ago with the help of his sons who have moved away. He is having trouble with a lift bridge and a cross over.

Any members in the Clearwater area who can help Ed complete his layout would really be appreciated. Ed can be reached at 727-851-2833.

FGRS Membership Application for 2022

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 and outdoors, or modules. We are a group of individuals, couples, and families who enjoy socializing with others and participating in train related activities.

Dues for 2022: \$25/YR for single or family memberships.

Annual dues includes a subscription to FGRS Newsletter, via web and email. If you cannot receive the newsletter via internet, a printed copy will be mailed to you. All renewals are due in January. If you are 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: Ray Lambert, Membership Chairman
410 S Center Street
Eustis, FL 32726**

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. The badge has 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: _____ Town or RR Name: _____	Second Badge: Name: _____ Town or RR Name: _____
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