



From The Shop



The newsletter of the Lehigh Valley Woodworker's Guild

Issue 09.2006

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Upcoming Meeting Information

Next Meeting: September 19, 2006 (3rd Tuesday!)

Location: Lehigh Co. Senior Center
1633 Elm Street
Allentown, PA

Speakers and topics:

- Festool – tool demo
- Terry Green Virtual Shop Tour
- Take 10 – 10 minute Q&A

Joe and Paul Deevy Garden Railroading



Paul Deevy in the drivers seat for an interesting presentation on Garden Railroading.

Woodworkers are not one dimensional people. We tend to take interest in many hands on endeavors. This presentation was no exception, and it captured the interest of everyone present. The presentation was not

only special because of the subject matter – it sent a powerful message to everyone who is family oriented. The presentation was opened by Joe Deevy. Joe made it clear that, while he was going to do the bulk of the verbal presentation, his son Paul was the expert on the subject of Garden Railroading. Joe referred most questions to Paul, who capably answered them.

Garden railroading involves many diverse skills, one of which is woodworking on many different levels. There is also gardening, artwork, metalwork, some masonry work, planning, engineering. Obviously, photography and some computer skills were involved in the very well prepared for the presentation, with excellent photos and movies in a Powerpoint presentation. Again, much of what will be written and shown here is courtesy of that presentation. Here is how they got started.

Paul became interested in this hobby in about 2003 and, in 2004, Paul began to accumulate trains and parts for the railroad. In 2005, they built the track main line. In 2006, they expanded the layout to include a railroad yard and began work on structures which now decorate their railroad. Paul's railroad is modeled after the Great Northern Railway near Klamath Falls, Oregon. It was also served by the McCloud River Lumber company. The setting is in the 1950's with regard to era..

At present, there is 135 feet of track, 12 feet of trestle, 2 concrete arch bridges, a railroad yard with 3 tracks, and a branch line that has been put in place for a future logging railroad setup. Let's think a little bit about cost of basics. There are two types of track that can be used for this type of railroading – Brass and Stainless Steel. Brass runs \$2.50 per foot, but is subject to corrosion. Stainless runs \$3.50 per foot, but does not corrode.

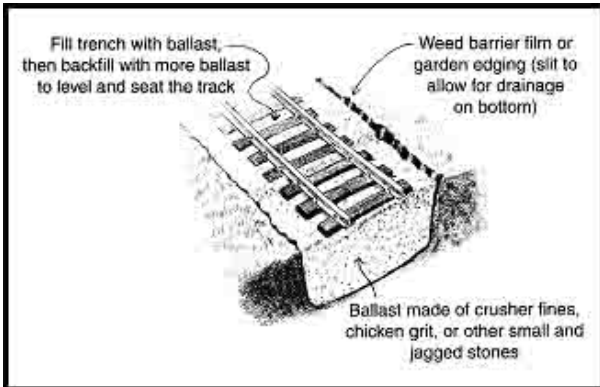
OK, the "scale" question came up first. These are not good old H/O scale. These are referred to as large or G scale. What does this mean? Well, there are about 5 scales that Paul and Joe mentioned:

1:20.3 - 1:22.5 - 1:24 - 1:29 - 1:32

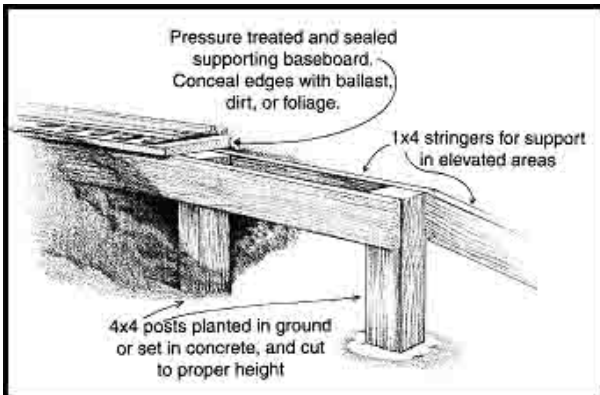
No matter what the scale, it seems that track width is always the same: 45 mm or 1/34" between rails. It was pointed out the 1/24 scale is a good selection because there are many cars and accessories made at that scale from the slot car collections

You can approach this hobby as simply or as elaborately as you like. You can just lay the track on the ground and have at it, you can make a 1"

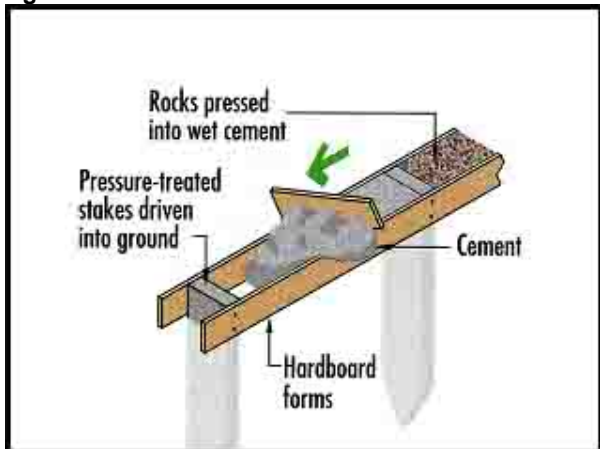
depression in the ground, fill with gravel and lay the track on there, or you can get into a more permanent layout, digging a trench (4" deep is recommended), putting in a weed barrier, filling with ballast such as screenings or other small aggregate. Likely, many folks take a simpler approach initially to see if this hobby suits them and then graduate to a more permanent layout if it does. You can also build bedding of poured concrete, and use aggregate pressed into the top for a realistic bedding. You can build a bed of pressure treated lumber. So - you can also build these layouts as a seasonal thing or as a full time hobby.



A more permanent approach to track bedding is shown above.



Pressure treated lumber can work for bedding and for bridge structures.

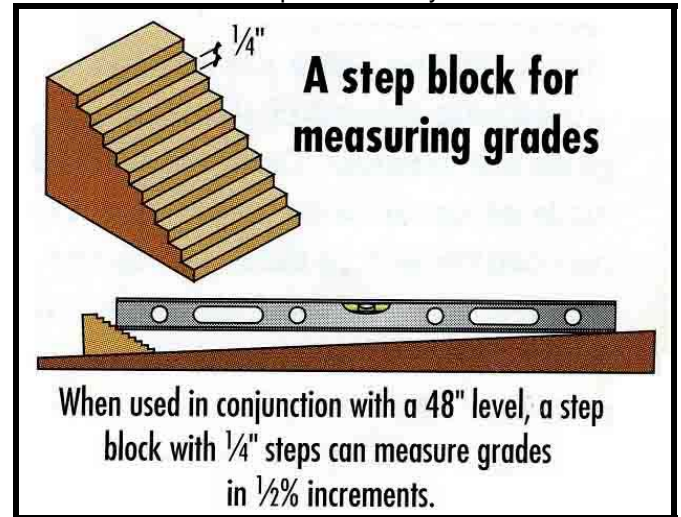


Concrete – the ultimate bedding.

Track is subject to thermal expansion, so it should only be fastened to the bedding in a few locations. On

straight runs, it should be fastened in the middle rather than at the ends – gee, sounds like we are talking about breadboard ends on tables, but it is the same idea.

Grades should not be too severe – 3 degrees is acceptable (1.5" over 4'), but 4 degrees is more or less of a maximum. There are many ways to check for level, from laser and string levels to a level made from clear plastic tubing (hose level). Radius of turns is also critical in layouts, and a 4' radius is an accepted minimum radius. S turns should be avoided as the major objective of a garden railroad is visibility, and an S turn does not accomplish this very well



A neat way to figure a grade....

So what about the weather? Well, the track and bedding and trestles must be built to withstand weather of all kinds. The trains are somewhat weather resistant. Buildings must also be built to stand up to weather unless you plan on removing and storing them over the winter, but rain and heat are as equally damaging as cold and ice.

Trains run on various types of power, but most typical is power that is transmitted through the rails. Rails are soldered together using typical propane torch and solder tools as you would with copper pipes. Since the track ties are plastic, you should embed them in wet sand or gravel to prevent damage from the heat of the soldering process. This is NOT a copper pipe, however, and so prolonged heat is not required. You are looking for a decent electrical bond.

Before we get into the woodworking aspects of garden railroading, let's talk a bit about the trains themselves. Cars can cost from \$40 to \$60, but specialty cars can run much more. Low end locomotives start at \$60, with a good diesel replica costing \$150 - \$300. Steam replicas run from \$125 to \$4000, with mid range being about \$400. Suppliers were names like LGB, Aristocraft, USA Trains, Bachmann (no, not Norm!), MTH, and Accucraft.



Paul at work soldering sections of track. Note us is using what looks like wet screenings to keep plastic railroad ties from melting.

I am not going to delve much into the gardening aspects other than to say that the goal in most cases is to be able to SEE the layout, so overpowering plants are not going to provide a good effect. Paul and Joe did mention several good plants and even had a chart showing we are in USDA hardiness Plant zone 6.

When it comes to woodworking, you can build almost anything.. Trestles, abutments, houses, even cars. Western red cedar and redwood are good choices, Joe and Paul use Titebond3 glue and brass nails to hold structures together. Here again you can be as simplistic or as elaborate as you like.



A little woodworking here.



Bridge abutments are built similarly to trestles with solid lumber filling in the space.



Example of a wooden tunnel and supporting retaining wall.

Tunnels can be crafted of wood or masonry. Interesting note is to restrict tunnel length to twice the length of your arm – in case something gets stuck in there!!



This house was made by Joe and Paul from scratch, A lot of detail work went into building the windows and sills to look real.

Their Buildings, Bridges, and Trestles are constructed of Redwood and Cedar; and are designed specifically for outdoor use, although many of their customers have indoor railways. Generally bridges and trestles are in large part Redwood except for bracing, stringers

and cross beams which is Cedar. On Buildings, generally all structural elements such as beams, columns, trusses, rafters, and such are Redwood; and siding, decking and such is Cedar in order that the more rough sawn textures of the Cedar look best against the smoother Redwood textures.



From the "Garden Texture" web site – these buildings and many more are available in kit form. Supplies to build from scratch also available.



So you can go from this....



....To this. Paul and Joe built this switch tower from the kit in the former picture.

Woodworking skills of all kinds –on a very small scale - are needed in construction of these items, Router templates used for sides of houses that will be repeated, siding panels made from a piece of wood repeatedly cut using a beveled dado blade at 1/4 increments, gluing and clamping, etc.



Under construction!



Tenant houses (these are Paul's) were common in the old days. These were cookie cutter "company housing". So, making several similar in design would be a realistic way to add buildings while reusing templates.



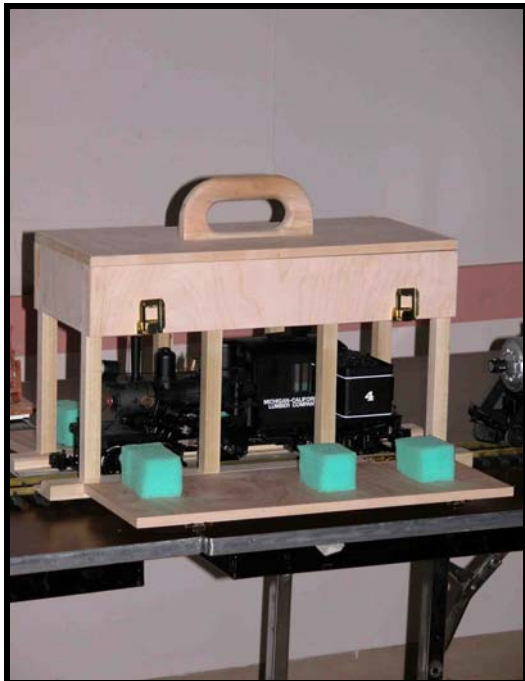
A router template for Paul's build from scratch Tenant houses.



Where's the house? In this maze of clamps!



The roof is added, mini shake by mini shake. RTV cement holds them in place.



This locomotive box can be set right on the track and you can drive the train right out of it. Top section holds supplies for the locomotive.



The snowplow car is on the right! Paul's yard.



Paul built trestle....



Paul's trestle. The word PATIENCE comes to mind. Quite a few of these....

In closing this write-up, this is a fine hobby and a great way to bring FAMILY together. This can be enjoyed by people of all ages. There are enough diverse skills required to challenge anyone, and also to bring people together who have varying interests to accomplish a common goal. No matter if you are parents with kids, grandparents, or just a person who enjoys trains and the out of doors, this is an interesting way to spend time. This presentation was a welcome diversion from our mainstream woodworking agendas while showing how woodworking skills contribute to this endeavor. See Paul's web site at www.dvgardenrr.4t.com

Take 10 – 10 minute Q&A

- Question #1 – Can you use contact cement to do veneering.
- Ans – Aldoph Schnieder answered this one. Contact cement is not recommended as it has some degree of flex to it and cracking would

result. Also, because it has solvents, it can bleed through and discolor wood.

- Question #2 – How reliable is 1980's vintage woodworking equipment and how much should you pay (A member has a chance to get some used equipment)
- Ans - Andy Anderson huddled with the member asking the question to get specifics and provide an answer.
- Question #3 – A member has a black stain on a table top. How can it be removed?
- Ans – Craig Bentzley advised this is caused by Tannic Acid in wood. Oxalic acid crystals can remove these stains. Care must be taken in their use. The word ACID is sort of a tip off there...

PLEASE NOTE!! This Q&A need not be restricted to woodworking per se. Tools, finishes, sandpaper, steel wool, shop power – anything woodworking related topic. Sorry, no marriage counseling.

Virtual Shop Tour – Ron Wiley

Nice to see someone put their money where their mouth is. Ron suggested that we have guild members give us a virtual shop tour. No – not the mega-stars that we are fortunate to have in our guild – sure, they probably have great shops full of the best tools. (although some professionals can get by with a very minimalist approach). We are looking for the average guy. So Ron decided to set the stage for the rest of us by giving us a tour of his shop. And, being the thorough guy he is, he even brought in a hardcopy floor plan so we knew where we were in his slides. Nice touch..



Master power cutoff – a good idea for everyone from a safety and fire standpoint.

Ron remarked that he has a master shutoff to his shop wiring. First thing he said. This is important for two

obvious reasons – the first being safety of folks who may walk in there and tamper, and the second being that, if there is no power to the wiring, there is not a likely chance of an electrical fire starting when no one is around. We have had first hand witness in our guild to what can happen during an electrical fire. Ellis Valentine's original shop was devastated by one. Since I am about to put 220 vac in my garage, this master shutoff is a feature I will be incorporating.

Features of Ron's shop:

- Ron uses his cellar window to get long stock into the basement shop.
- Ron uses strong magnets to hold accessories to stationary shop tools such as drill press and band saw. The wrenches needed for these are always close at hand.
- Ron has a cabinet mounted right next to his drill press for all bits. There is also a reference chart that he has stuck in there with drill data.



Ron's cabinet for drills and drilling info.

- Ron uses carpet padding on bench surfaces when he has work on his bench to prevent scratching.
- A scrap box is available for cutoffs.



View of the 2x6 stock holders Ron added to his bench.

- His workbench is simple fare, with 4x4 legs and a butcher-block top he bought from Grizzley for \$200 (HA! HA! HA!). He

acknowledged that he could have gotten it from Bally for \$45. While the bench is no frills, it appears rock solid. He uses old fashioned iron hold downs and swears by them. He also has a neat system for handling sheet goods, made with 2x6 stock and rods.



Tail vise pictured here holding a machinist vise for metal work.

- Ron has a front vise and tail vise and also has a machinist vise on a wood block that he mounts in the tail vise when working metal.



Wooden tool holding racks held to pegboard with toggle bolts.

- Does any of us like pegboard? Well, most of us like more eloquent solutions to shop organization, but you have to admit pegboard has its place. But the hooks never stay put without help. Ron was toying with the various solutions to this, but did not need them. After he applied a couple of coats of paint to the pegboard, the paint in the holes make hooks fit in snugly.
- Ron has found that toggle bolts work fairly well on pegboard to hold larger items. He made a chisel rack out of cherry and it is held to the pegboard with toggle bolts. This rack is not heavy, but the toggle bolt arrangement makes it a more secure fit than some makeshift hanging arrangement, We all know what happens if you stress pegboard.

- Ron's table saw is the center of his shop. A Unisaw, he has a Dubby sliding table and an outfeed table which he says he does not know how he lived without. I need to fashion one of these for myself – I find that whenever I am doing "stupid Dan Tricks" near a power tool, it is when I am ripping long stock without an outfeed device of some kind.



Ron loves the outfeed table he has. Minimalist approach to this shop accessory that works.

- Ron has a Grizzly dust collector, but admits that it really did not do much for the fine dust till he got a JDS canister. He swears by it, although it is admittedly expensive.
- He turns on the dust collector with a remote switch. See my note on this at the end of this article.
- Ron made a unit of storage drawers from some plans he saw. The original would have cost a fortune given the materials they called for, Ron used birch plywood and saved a bunch.



Clamp rack solution in Ron's shop

- There is the ubiquitous clamp rack and Ron has lots of them. As messy as some

woodworkers are, a clamp rack seems to be one thing that is a necessity. Ron's is pretty neat.

- Ron uses a separate room for finishing. Looks like this room does some double duty. Lets face it, most of us do not have room to devote purely to our hobby. Since good finishing should be done in "clean room" type of environment, and since finishing does not make the kind of dust and dirt that occurs when working wood, you can use a room that would double for other things when you are not using it for finishing.



Separate, non sawdust producing area of Ron's basement used for finishing.

Ron gave us good insight into how he makes his shop work and some useful tips that we may want to incorporate in our own shops. And that is the whole idea. A nice job by a good guild contributor. Thanks for sharing.

Automation for the shop.

Speaking of the dust collection and remote switches, there are a few vendors who offer wireless remote switching. Grizzley has a keychain remote system. However, there is a company called X10 (X10 is also the name of the technology standard that sends signals through home wiring) that offers a wide range of remote control devices. Among them are 220v plug in devices that are addressable. You unplug your duct collector, set the address for the duct collector on the plug in device, plug that into the outlet, and then plug the dust collector back in. Elsewhere in the shop you need a wireless sensor, and then a keychain remote. You can automate your whole house, but there may be other applications for this in the shop. I did an article on this in a newsletter back in the 1990's. The controller looks like this:



The unit has 2 addresses that need to be set. Pick addresses you like. Then the keychain remote needs to be set with the same address. Plug in a wireless receiver, and you are good to go. You can use this technology on 110 or 220v systems. Possible shop applications are for things like dust collectors, ceiling mounted air filters, compressors, etc. I would NOT use these for tools, obviously.

I had most of my home automated. For example, when I walk into my garage from my house, there is a sensor that detects the motion and turns on a ceiling light. There is another motions sensor in there that can be used to set off a chime if motion is detected. Like if there is motion in the garage at 3:00 in the morning, the old Smith and Wesson may be needed. When I worked for AT&T and would travel, my wife had the plug in chime set up in the bedroom. Any motion in the garage on either deck in my yard, or in my driveway would sound the chime. Yes, there can be false alarms, but better safe than sorry. I also have them in stairway lighting. As soon as motion is detected, the light goes on. By the way, instead of STAYING on, it goes off after a time you preset (I had it on 2 minutes). You can use these in areas like laundry rooms. Walk in, lights on. As long as there is motion, the lights stay on. No motion, the lights go off after X minutes. My lovely wife leaves the lights on in the laundry room while the machines are doing their work. I guess she feels that they get afraid of the dark and will shut down.

Anyway, there is an excellent web site at www.x10.com. They have all kinds of wacky stuff!

Steering Committee Notes

The Steering Committee met on 9/5/2006 at the Woodcraft location. Topics discussed:

- Treasurers report – Andy presented it. Accepted by the team.
- Newsletter cost reduction – Dan will continue to approach members to switch to e-mail, but the new system of increased e-mail, sending post cards (at 24 cents per instead of 39 cents for newsletters), less mailings in general has saved enough money to make our budget run rate safe.

- Blocks – Allen will be following up with Bally on a regular basis to see when wood pickup needs to occur and also on a process for members to get access to the Bally surplus products.
- Gerry gave a readout on the refreshments. There was good response to pretzels (I liked them anyway..) and the costs are in order.
- Gerry reported that we expect to have a fall sale on Taunton books. More to come in the next month.
- Lou Supina suggested that we develop an outline or Standard Operating Procedures document (as opposed to by-laws). Things like dues, payment of dues, routine category of expenses, speaker reimbursement, etc will be included in this document. The Steering Committee will formulate this and review with the guild in the near future.

Wood Specials

SHADY LANE TREE FARM

Louise & Mike Peters
5220 Shimerville Road
Emmaus, PA
610 965-5612 Please call

FLEETWOOD LUMBER & FLOORING

BILL BURKERT
27 Rapp Rd.
Fleetwood, PA
610 944-8364 Please call

Member discount 5%

Bailey Wood Products, Inc.

441 Mountain Rd.
RD#2 Box 38
Kempton, PA
610 756-6827

Woodcraft

Pkwy Shopping Ctr.
1534 Lehigh St.
Allentown, Pa., 18103

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Book / Purchase Coordinator Gerry Chiusano	610-730-3958
Guild Contact Person – E-mail Russ Reinhard	

Member's Mart – For Sale

Nothing for sale this month. Of course, when you get to the meeting, invariably there will be items for sale. But, in spite of requests to give you advance notice as to what it is, I have received no info to give you a heads up. Let's see if there is anything for sale!

