

**Upcoming
events**

**February 21
Meet at the
Barber's**

**March 21
Meet at the
Barber's**

**March 26 & 27
ECLSTS
York, PA**

**April 18
Meet**

**May 16
Meet & plant ex-
change**

**2010 DUES
Are due**

Backyard Railroaders

ISSUE # 2

FEBRUARY 2010



BETHLEHEM CENTRAL RR—DOTHAN ALABAMA

JANUARY 2010 MEET

The January meet was held on the 17th at the Barber's. The weather was good for January with no snow so driving was a little easier.

We were short a few members due to holidays etc. so any business was put off until the February meet.

Roger Stevenson had forwarded a DVD from a friend of his Wally Ely who has a weekly talk

show on Allentown PA's television station RCN.

The video was on a Garden Railway in Dothan Alabama owned by a friend of Wally's. The video was about an hour long and was very well done. It had a story to it which explained how the railroad came about.

I have an article following with pictures and more information.

BETHLEHEM CENTRAL RAILROAD

The Bethlehem Central Railroad is the largest garden railway in the southeast United States. It's located near Dothan Alabama which is in the southeast corner of Alabama near Florida and Georgia, and is owned by Tom Ruddell.

Dothan gets its name from the Bible, it's the town where Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers. It's known as the Peanut Capital with many various peanut statues around town. It also has large historic wall murals depicting local industries such as cotton and also the coming of the railroad.

The Bethlehem Central is based on the Bible with most of its stations named after biblical locations such as Zion, Sinai, Bethlehem, Nazareth etc.

The grade of the two acre property drops off by as much as seven feet from the floor of the train storage building. The grade of the railway has been held to one and one half percent.

The railway operates on a fixed Timetable schedule with up to six trains making a daily trip from Zion to Poverty (one end to the other and back), The railway uses a ten to one time ratio, which means one hour



Bethlehem Central as seen from a distance. The train storage building in the far upper right corner is as much as 7 feet higher than the ground thus the elevated track. The pedestrian bridge allows people to get inside the railroad to view the various dioramas. As you can see there are a lot of trees with sky slabs (leaves) falling on the track, so a work train with blower car is sent out to clean off the track.



Bethlehem Centrals "BIG DADDY" a FA ABBA unit pulls a long freight. In the video it was pulling a 56 car train. The colour scheme of the Bethlehem Central is Red and White, the lettering is Black lettering on white vinyl.

equals six minutes.

The railroad is home to the “Wiregrass Garden RR Society” who help run the railroad.

Most of the layout is elevated for easy access to the track and for groups. Tom has developed the “Garden Railway Bible Challenge” as a successful program with groups from Churches and Christian Schools, as well Boy Scouts and homeschoolers, having fun with the trains and testing their knowledge of the Bible. Various sayings and Bible verses are scattered throughout the railroad.

All trains are made up in the train storage room and exit through the “train door” on a specially built trestle Tom built after the “lightning strike” early in the summer of 2003. The trains then cross onto a larger trestle, cross over the “High” bridge and continue on the mainline. Much of the trestles and bridgework are handcrafted by Tom.

Heavy pulling is provided by an ABBA (Big Daddy) consist of FA’s. They pull a forty car train with ease. All engines and muck of the rolling stock have been customized lettered using exterior vinyl material (similar to Julie’s signs).

Over and under effects are



When Moses came down from the mountain the people were worshipping a golden idole, on Bethlehem Central they are worshipping the almighty dollar. People are on top of the rock on their knees, while others are scaling the rock in an effort to get there.



Mikado #33 pulls a string of heavyweights over “HIGH BRIDGE” which gets its name from being a high bridge. The heavyweights are all named after verses in the Bible. This shot was taken just after the train departed Zion and the train storage building.

created with the multiple levels. As mentioned all the dioramas are created with a message for those Bible study fans.

The video was all shot at track level to simulate a 1/29 person riding in or on the engine, and as per the schedule the trains stop at the stations along the way.

The one thing I noticed was the use of many “rerailers” before and after switches or after a certain number of feet of track. This was probably done to keep derailments to a minimum, especially with leaves and needles. It might be a thing for some of us to build into our railroads.

The comments made by Tom as the train travels along, made you feel you were riding along with him on his guided tour. This is one of the best railroad videos I have seen. The railroad itself by being elevated loses something from those built on the ground, but the way it was shot from track level almost eliminated the knowledge it was elevated.

Thanks Roger & Wally.



**2010 DUES ARE NOW DUE.
PLEASE FORWARD THEM TO EARL GRAVES
ALONG WITH THE FORM IN THE JANUARY
NEWSLETTER
THANKS**

**YORK CENTRAL
RAILWAY DINING
CAR RECIPE OF THE
MONTH** by Julie Barber

CHEDDAR DILL SCONES

Mix in a bowl:

- 4 cups of flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 2 tsp salt

Add 3/4 lb cold butter
(chopped coarsely at the
start)

Mix in mixer with dry ingredi-
ents to size of peas using
the paddle

Wisk together
1 cup cream and 4 eggs

Add the wet ingredients to
the dry ingredients
Dough will be moist

Add 1/2 lb grated cheddar, 1
cup of fresh dill, (before you
add this, add a little bit of
flour to coat everything so it
gets distributed well)

Use lots of flour to pat the
dough out to a circle 3/4”
thick, cut with a biscuit cut-
ter

Brush with egg wash with a
little cream mixed in
Bake 20—25 min at 350

Goes good with coffee or tea

ENJOY

**THIS MONTHS AT-
TEMPT AT HUMOR**

A few years ago I decided to
visit my brother-in-law who
was living in Quebec. I as-
sumed that most French
would speak English.

I found that many people
spoke only their own lan-
guage and this included the
ticket inspector on the train.
He punched my ticket, then
chatted cordially for a bit,
making several expansive
gestures. I simply nodded
from time to time to show
him that I was interested.

When he had gone, an
American tourist, also on the
train, leaned forward and
asked if I spoke French.

“No,” I admitted.

“Then that explains it,” she
said, “Why you didn’t even
bat an eye, when he told you
that you were on the wrong
train.”!!!!!!!!!!

DCC coming to YCRR

I finally realized I’m getting
older even though most of
the time I don’t feel it.
I decided I couldn’t put off
getting DCC any longer or—
—.

I purchased a Massoth sys-
tem (as recommend by a
Garden Railroad friend here
in town), from LA Hobbies
in Burlington.

They are doing the installa-
tion and adapting the exist-

*Ole & Lars were on their
very first train ride.*

*They brought along bananas
for lunch.*

*Just as they began to peel
them, the train entered a long
dark tunnel.*

*“Have you eaten your banana
yet?” Ole asked excitedly.*

“No,” replies Lars.

*“Vell don’t touch it de,” Ole
exclaimed.*

*“I yust took vun bite and vent
blind!”*

A passenger train is creeping
along slowly. Finally it creaks to a
halt. A passenger sees a conduc-
tor walking by outside.

“What’s going on?” she yells out
the window.

“Cow on the track!” replies the
conductor.

Ten minutes later the train re-
sumes its slow pace. Within five
minutes, however it stops again.
The woman sees the same con-
ductor walk by again. She leans
out the window and yells, “What
happened? Did we catch up with
the cow again?”

ing sound systems as well.

I got a progress report last
week that all but the Hudson
were completed, at it should
be done in a week or so.

I discovered however that
due to DCC running 24
volts, the smoke units should
be disconnected as the volt-
age is to high. I don’t use
them, so not a big deal. I’m
now waiting for spring to see
if York Central can run mul-
tiple trains.

