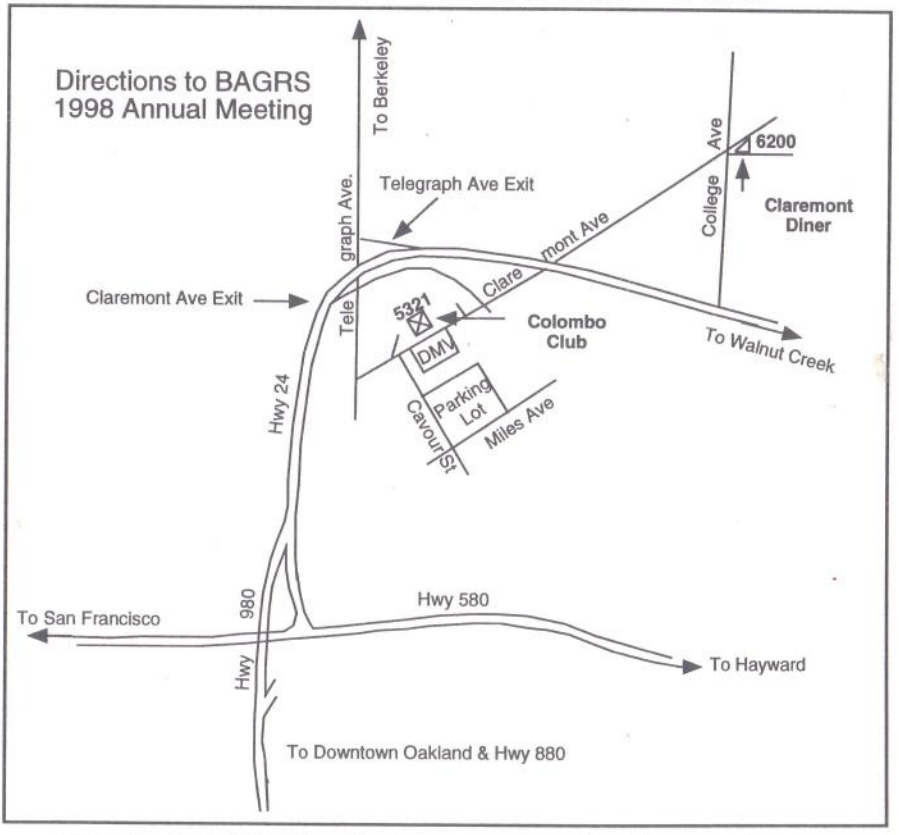
Trellis & Trestle

Volume XI, Number 3 Editors: Joseph & Irene Zajac March 1998

Oh Yes! We're Gonna Have Fun!



BAGRS Annual Meeting
March 29, 1998

Registration Form Inside

New Members

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1998 Annual Meeting—A Unique Experience

by Ken Martin

The 1998 BAGRS Annual Meeting will be a little different than the meetings of the past few years. Because we are hosting the National Convention here this year, we will forego many of the convention-like features that have graced our past annual gatherings, like the banquet, clinics, vendors, etc. This year's meeting will consist of our usual business meeting and election, followed by a great lunch with an excursion to the Tilden Park Steam Train and the Golden Gate Live Steamers layout in the afternoon.

Even the venue will be something different. We will be meeting at the Colombo Club in north Oakland on Sunday, March 29. The business meeting, which will include the annual election and the awarding of BAGRS Host plaques, will start at 10 AM with lunch at about 11:30 AM. There will also be a drawing for some valuable prizes during lunch.

Lunch, which is optional, will be a good, homemade Italian family-style, all-you-can-eat meal that includes salad, pasta, dessert, wine, and coffee, all for only $14 per person ($10 for children 12 and under). Other beverages will be available for purchase. You will not be able to buy a lunch at the meeting because the number of servings available depends on the reservation count. Please fill in the Registration Form in this issue and send it to **Ken Martin**, 1460 Pacific Ave., San Leandro, CA 94577. (Do not send membership renewals and dues checks to me.) Make checks out to "**BAGRS**". We must have a form for everyone that is going to attend in order to get a head count for the hall. There is no registration fee. If you want to have lunch, please indicate that on the form and enclose a check for the proper amount made out to "BAGRS". Please do it now. The deadline for receipt of Registration Forms is **March 15**.

Some things you may need to know: The Colombo Club is located at 5321 Claremont Avenue (not Boulevard, which is nearby) in Oakland. Directly across the street from the club is the DMV parking lot. If there is no street parking left, you can park in the DMV lot. If it is full, there is another lot directly behind it that can be reached by turning left onto Cavour Street, the first street west of the DMV office. See the map in this issue for directions to the Colombo Club.

When you go to Tilden Park, it is advisable to go to the Golden Gate Live Steamers first. The steam train runs until about 6 PM but the live steamers quit about 4 PM. Both of these activities are on a "weather permitting" basis so pray for the Weather Gods to smile on us as they usually do. There is parking by the train ride. If this is full, there is more parking further down the road by the Live Steamers. Follow the "Overflow Parking" signs.

Maps and directions will be handed out at the meeting.

We will not be holding any other events in the month of March.

Mail your Registration Form now and join your fellow BAGRS for this unique day. Remember, the deadline for receiving your form is **March 15**.

SUGGESTION: If you would like to have breakfast before the meeting, you might try the Claremont Diner, 6200 Claremont Ave. at the corner of College Ave. The food is good and they have a G-scale train running there. They open at 8 AM. It would be best to arrive early because the place is relatively small and service is not always swift. Check the map in this issue for the location.

If you need any further information, please call me at (510) 562-6898. See you at the meeting!

Due to a death in their family, Rusty and Donna Fisher had to cancel their February open house at the last minute.

The officers and members of the Bay Area Garden Railway Society extend our heartfelt sympathy to Rusty and Donna for their loss.

Rusty and Donna will rescheduled an open house at a later date.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Jack Verducci

The annual meeting is especially important this year. Elections of officers is the first order of business. The next most important thing to deal with is the 14th National Garden Railway Convention. The meeting will be two parts this year. Part one the BAGRS annual business meeting, then part two the 1998 Garden Railway Convention. Please reserve all discussion regarding the convention until the second half of the meeting. This will be the time to ask questions and, most importantly, sign up to help out.

It is not too late to put your railroad on tour for the 1998 Garden Railway Convention. If you would like to be on tour please contact me directly. I must hear from you before March 15, 1998.

If you are not going to have your railroad on tour perhaps you would like to volunteer to help run someone else's railroad. This would be a big help since guests always want to talk to the host.

Look for the Annual Meeting registration form in this newsletter. The meeting is to be held at the Colombo Club—Oakland. The business meeting will be conducted on the main floor meeting hall. After the meeting, lunch will be served down stairs in the main dinning hall. You must sign up and pay for lunch in advance, no lunch tickets will be available at the meeting.

Annual Meeting
Agenda
Bay Area Garden Railway Society
March 29, 1998
Colombo Club—Oakland

I. Reading of the minutes
David Gill
II. Treasurer's Report
Sherman Zell
III. Membership Report
Irene Zajac
IV. Newsletter Report
Joe Zajac
V. Election of Officers
Charlie Allen
VI. BAGRS Short Line Report
Bruce Jahn
VII. Live Steamers
Richard Finlayson
VIII. Scheduling Report
Ken Martin
IX. Old Business
Jack Verducci
X. NewBusiness
Jack Verducci

Adjourn annual business meeting.

Open meeting on the 1998 National Garden Railway Convention.

I. 1998 Convention Update
Sherman Zell
II. Committe Reports
As called upon by Sherman
III. Sign-ups for helpers.

Will the HO and N Gaugers Buy Large Scale?

By Wendell Hanks

My N-gauge modeler friend is a devoted scale modeler. He read the outstanding reviews of Bachmann's Shay In *Model Railroader* and in other publications and saw the Shay run on our outdoor layout. His judgment was it was true to scale and priced fairly. He is impressed. Yet not enough to get started in large scale even though he has the yard, the space, and the funds for a second layout. Gary may be representative of a number of scale modelers reluctant to enter large scale. Why?

Gary reports his concern for the lack of other comparable scale and detailed rolling stock choices in large scale—particularly with locomotives. His concern is there aren't choices of 2-6-0s, 4-6-0s, etc.; instead there's essentially one manufacturer for each. He claims "The result is you see everyone in large scale having one or both of those locos on their layout." What might appear an exception is Aristo-Craft and LGB having each produced a car-body diesel; however, they are of contrasting types and scales. Unlike N or HO manufacturers, he claims the large scale industry consistently offers customers single-manufacturer locos with the manufacturer determining the scale. In contrast, he says he is used to something else. In N and HO, manufacturers meet a specific scale standard and directly compete for consumer dollars with models of the same engines, road names, etc.. He has a point. Note how many realistically detailed scale HO or N gauge F7s are in hobby shops. Gary's quick use of a measuring tape made his point by measuring two major manufacturer's "shorty" narrow gauge large scale passenger cars. Car roof length for one was 14 " and for the other it was 16 $\frac{1}{8}$". Gary is bothered by this apparent inconsistency in the large scale industry. Obviously, for many already in the large scale hobby this is not an issue. However, it may be the key as to why the HO and N scale hobbyist have not joined large scalers. According to two dealers, purchasers of the Bachmann Shay are already large scale hobbyists. "I haven't seen any new faces," declares one shop owner. In the meantime, Gary asks, "The Shay's just one product, what's next?" He said he's waiting to see if there will be any other highly realistic, detailed, and scale locomotives. He is definite in wanting detailed and scale products at a reasonable price. Since he wants the largest of the gauge one "large scale" and wants to maximize space at the same time, he's most interested in 1:20 narrow gauge. Meanwhile, for the rest of us here's a tough unanswered question: If the HO and N scalers do not enter the hobby, won't those of us already in the hobby reach a commercial saturation point? Has that point been reached already?

ADVENTURES IN BACHMANNLAND

by Ken Martin, The Bachmann Guy

Well, the Bachmann Guy has a couple of things to straighten out first thing.

One is to apologize for putting the wrong phone number for **Bachmann Parts** in the January issue. The correct number is **800-356-3910**. I know this number as well as I know my own and really don't know how I screwed up. A senior moment, I guess. Anyway, a thousand pardons to anyone who had a problem with it.

The other thing is the price I stated for the Bachmann sound system. The price was given to me by one of the real Bachmann Guys in Philadelphia. Apparently people who are calling are being told the price is $20.00. I called Bachmann this morning and talked to **Bud Reece**, Vice-president of Sales, who advised me the $20.00 price is probably correct but that should also include shipping and handling. If anyone has an experience to the contrary, please let me know.

I guess the upside of all this is apparently everyone who has called to get a sound system (about 20 people, I'm told) have been able to get one. This is good because I was told the supply would be very limited.

It has been pretty quiet in Bachmannland. It has been raining very hard here so I haven't even been able to run trains and really haven't come up with any great technical data lately.

This isn't Bachmann stuff but I think I'll throw it in here anyway. A couple of issues back I wrote an article about building roads and gluing them with diluted concrete bonder.

At the time I said that it seemed to work well but that my roads hadn't really been put to any kind of severe weather test. Well, Mother Nature has really helped me test them during the last few days! Something like 2 inches of rain fell last night, and that is after about 3 or 4 inches that had come down during the last few days. I checked the layout this morning and am able to report the roads have held up beautifully. There has been a very slight deterioration of the surface but not enough to matter. Other than that, the roads are in better condition than some of the streets and freeways in the area! The whole layout has been virtually untouched by the weather.

I also used the same diluted concrete bonder on some steep dirt hills on the layout. They have stayed in place perfectly, too. Personally, I am sold on this method of holding fines and dirt in place. So far, it has exceeded my expectations. Try it. You may like it, too!

LIVE STEAM in 1998

National Spring Steamup

May 29-31, Sunnyvale Hilton

National Garden Railway Convention

July 7-12, Santa Clara Convention Center

May 29-31 1998

Sunnyvale, California

Enjoy three days of live steam action as live steamers from around the world converge on Silicon Valley. Tracks available 24 hours around the clock.

Sunnyvale Hilton, Sunnyvale California

(408) 738-4888 or 1-800-HILTONS

Conference room rate of $61.00 per room./Event Registration $60.00.

- Lots of track time, dealers, excursions, and live steam seminars.
- Check out coverage of last year's event at http://www.steamup.com/steamup

For Info & Registration:

Richard Finlayson

2408 Grandby Dr. San Jose, CA 95130

(408) 871-0318

Email: info@steamup.com Web: http://www.steamup.com/steamup

NATIONAL GARDEN RAILWAY CONVENTION JULY 7TH-12TH, 1998 Both large and small BAGRS Live Steamers tracks will be available during Exhibit Hall hours. All sorts of live steam in action, including dealers and products.

Plus! BAGRS Live Steamers Monthly Steamups

- **February 15th, Sunday:** Let's get together at **Gary Broeder's in Morgan Hill.** See you there, call if you need directions. 408/779-4391.
- **March 14th, Saturday: Kevin O'Connor** will open his new railroad for us in **Sacramento.** This is a railroad not to be missed. Kevin's railroad is integrated in a fabulous park-like setting and will easily accommodate our usual crowds. Long, wide curves. Call Kevin at 916/447-5433.
- ~~**April 4th-5th, Saturday and Sunday: Ardenwood with the BAGRS Short Line. A ritual. Be there.**~~ **CANCELLED**
- **May 29-31, Friday-Sunday:** Second Annual **National Spring Steamup** at the Sunnyvale Hilton.
- **June**: Jim McDavid will open his track for us. Details to follow.
- **July 7th-12th, Tuesday-Sunday: National Garden Railway Convention** at the **Santa Clara Convention Center**. Both of the BAGRS Live Steamers tracks will be available during Exhibit Hall hours. Th 6-10 Fr 2-6 Sa 9-6 Su 10-4.
- **August-September**: TBD. Anybody know the dates for the Paso Robles steamup?
- **October 17-18**: Roaring Camp with the BAGRS Short Line. We had a blast last year, let's do it again.

Tips for Those Getting Started Or Refurbishing Their Railway.

By Wendell Hanks

Preventing water from entering switch motors—Water can enter the screw holes on the switch motors. One method to stop leakage is to use silicone glue, such as the 3M silicone. Simply press it into the holes with your finger. For maintenance, the glue is easily removed by a small screw driver blade prior to changing any wires.

A fast way to solder jumper wires to the track—Without question, the most frequent method of ensuring electrical efficiency is to solder jumper wires across the rail gaps. Some solder these approximately 2" lengths of wire inside the rails; some solder them outside. I think outside is easier and it eliminates any problem of wheel flanges hitting excess solder. The question is, how can this labor-intensive, time-consuming process be simplified? 100-watt soldering guns take time—a lot of time! My response to those new in the hobby is to purchase a 250—200-watt soldering gun. This is a heavy-duty model. I use a Weller model D550, 250/200 watts, that is carried by OSH and other stores. Here's the 30 second-per-solder process I have used:

- Scrape the rail a half-inch with a 1/8" flat blade screwdriver—it easily exposes fresh brass;
- Touch the 250-watt gun tip to the exposed rail for 15 seconds and apply the electrical solder;
- Place the end of the pre-cut wire and secure it with the solder;
- Repeat the process.

Choice of jumper wire—My choice is the non-insulated and stranded copper grounding wire (about 20 gauge) used for appliances. It is cheap and available by the foot at Home Depot, etc. Our railway is essentially a garden and we constantly walk on the track. The jumpers help hold the track together and using this braided wire has been an asset.

Painting the track and rails?
As far as appearance, spraying the entire track, ties, and soldered areas with Krylon "Colorworks" Hi-Temp #1345 brown spray hides the wires and gives a realistic appearance to the track and rails. Trust me, unless you are making close-up photography of your garden railway, the jumpers and soldering will disappear with use of this brown spray. A quick pass with an LGB cleaning block removes any paint from the rail surfaces. This spray paint is available at Home Depot, etc.

Elevating the track from the garden soil?
What? Yes, I strongly suggest making sure your roadbed is actually above soil level. From experience, weeds love to cross under the rail,

You're Invited to the 14th National Garden Railway Convention

July 7th – 12th, 1998

Santa Clara, California

Sponsored by the
Bay Area Garden Railway Society
www.bagrs.org/ngrc.htm

14th National Garden Railway Convention
1777 Hamilton Avenue, Suite 106
San Jose, California 95125

Convention Highlights

The 14th NGRC is scheduled for July 7-12, 1998, using the Santa Clara Convention Center as the headquarters. The Bay Area Garden Railway Society will have more than 100 layouts open for tour. The majority of these layouts were not open for the 1993 convention. With all the special programs and events being planned, the 14th Annual NGRC will be something to remember.

LGB Ice Cream Social

This Wednesday event is open to all conventioneers. The sponsor, LGB, has planned a special program using the local Light Rail System, including a tour of their facilities and will have numerous door prizes to give away.

Aristo-Craft/Hartland Barbecue & Train Ride

Sponsored by Aristo-Craft Trains and Hartland Locomotive Works on Friday evening, the barbecue will be at Oak Meadow Park in Los Gatos, home of the Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad. This 15-inch gauge railroad can carry up to 75 people per trip over its mile of track. Unlimited rides will be available. The barbecue will feature chicken, hamburgers and hot dogs with all the fixin's. Aristo-Craft and Hartland have generously made available numerous door prizes. A drawing for over 15 engines and 40 cars will be held at the function.

Bachmann Banquet and Video Spectacular

Taking place on Saturday night, Bachmann Industries will sponsor this event. Bachmann Industries will give a special car FREE to the first 400 registrations that attend the event and will have a special drawing for their new Shay engine.

USA Trains Buffet Breakfast

Rise on Sunday morning to a special buffet breakfast hosted by USA Trains. The breakfast will feature numerous special door prizes by USA Trains.

Garden Railway Tours

Northern California's mild climate make it an ideal area for garden railroading. The wide variety of garden styles range from "desert Southwest" to "Great Northern woods" to "fine scale" and "fantasy themes". There is something for everyone. Over 100 layouts are planned to be open for viewing. A tour book containing descriptions, and a map to each layout will be provided. Drive your auto or use the chartered bus to the layouts. Cost of the bus tours is in addition to the basic registration fee.

Door Prizes

Door prizes will be provided by hobby manufacturers and dealers. Each registration is automatically entered in the convention drawings.

Convention Car

No conventioneer should go home without one. Details will be forthcoming.

Exhibit Hall

The hall has over 50,000 square feet of space to house the dealer merchandise, manufacturers displays, and the module layouts. You will find the latest garden railway products and ideas as well as great buys.

Model Contest

Bring your favorite model or project for the model contest and show. Models will be judged by popular vote of the conventioneers. There will be several categories and 1st, 2nd and 3rd place will be awarded in each category PLUS "Best of Show". Enter as many models as you like. In this contest the "10-foot rule" applies (if your model looks good from 10 feet away, share it and show it.) In addition, LGB, Aristo-Craft, Hartland, Bachmann Industries and Timber Times will sponsor separate special model contests with emphasis on kit-bashing and/or superdetailing one of their products. All entries will automatically be eligible for all contests.

Clinics

Over twenty clinics and demonstrations are planned covering a wide variety of topics from electronics to gardening and everything in between.

BAGRS Live Steamers

Enjoy the live steam layouts on display for all conventioneers. You are invited to bring your live steam

locomotive to run. Club members will also be running various live steam engines during the convention. The live steam layout will be available at all times during the convention.

BAGRS Short Line

See over 3,600 square feet of train modules running 4 to 8 trains at a time. This spectacular portable layout will be open whenever the exhibit hall is open.

Children's Room

A room will be set up as a special place for kids ages 3-12 to enjoy trains at their level. There will be many activities, including videos, coloring books, trains, puzzles, board games, books and other fun toys to play with. However, children using this room must be accompanied by a responsible adult at all times.

Accommodations

The Westin Hotel is connected to the Santa Clara Convention Center. The business and convention hotel features two restaurants, two lounges, a fitness center and an outdoor pool. The 14th NGRC special hotel rate of $96 for a single and $106 for a double is available until June 10, 1998. Contact the Westin Hotel directly to make your reservations.

The Westin Hotel—Santa Clara
5101 Great America Parkway
Santa Clara, California 95054
Reservations... 800 • 228 • 3000
Local ..... 408 • 986 • 0700
Fax ..... 408 • 980 • 3939

Additional Information

For general convention information, contact the convention registrars:

David and Dawn Gill
14th National Garden Railway Convention
1777 Hamilton Avenue, #106, San Jose, CA 95125
Tel/Fax: 408 • 371 • 8124
E-mail: train@bagrs.org

For other information, contact the convention chairperson, **Sherman Zell** at 408 • 978 • 1950. For commercial registration, **Hans Coufal** at 408 • 268 • 5568.

Tentative Summary of Convention Events

Tuesday, July 7, 1998

*Layouts Open - Self Guided
*Registration - Westin Hotel

Wednesday, July 8, 1998

*Registration - Westin Hotel
*Layouts Open - Self Guided & Bus Tours
*Clinics
*LGB Ice Cream Social

Thursday, July 9, 1998

*Registration - Westin Hotel
*Layouts Open - Self Guided & Bus Tours
*Clinics
*Grand Opening of the Exhibit Hall
*BAGRS Live Steamers and Short Line Modules

Friday, July 10, 1998

*Registration - Santa Clara Convention Center
*Layouts Open - Self Guided & Bus Tours
*Clinics
*Exhibit Hall Open
*BAGRS Live Steamers and Short Line Modules
*Aristo-Craft/Hartland Barbecue and Train Ride.

Saturday, July 11, 1998

*Registration - Santa Clara Convention Center
*Layouts Open - Self Guided & Bus Tours
*Clinics
*Exhibit Hall Open to Public and Conventioneers
*BAGRS Live Steamers and Short Line Modules
*Bachmann Industries Banquet and Gala
*NGRC Business Meeting

Sunday, July 12, 1998

*USA Trains - Buffet Breakfast-Awards Program
*Registration - Santa Clara Convention Center
*Layouts Open - Self Guided
*Exhibit Hall Open to Pubic and Conventioneers

WELCOME TO THE 14TH NATIONAL GARDEN RAILWAY CONVENTION

Please use this form to register for the convention.

NAME: _____ TELEPHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____ E-MAIL: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____ CLUB AFFILIATION: _____

Print names as you want them to appear on badges:

_____

		Unit Cost	Number	Subtotal
Family Registration (2 Adults & Children under 18)	Prior to June 1, 1998	$75/Family	_____	_____
	After June 1, 1998	$90/Family	_____	_____
Individual Registration	Prior to June 1, 1998	$60/Individual	_____	_____
	After June 1, 1998	$75/Individual	_____	_____
Daily Registration-Family		$50/Family	_____	_____
Check Day(s) __Thu. __Fri. __Sat. __Sun.				
Daily Registration-Individual		$40/Individual	_____	_____
Check Day(s) __Thu. __Fri. __Sat. __Sun.				
Friday: Barbecue and Train Ride*		$25/Individual	_____	_____
Saturday: Banquet and Video Spectacular* **Sponsored by Bachmann Industries**		$40/Individual	_____	_____
Sunday: Brunch and Social* **Sponsored by USA Trains**		$15/Individual	_____	_____
Garden Railway Tour Buses				
Wednesday	Area A	$20/Individual	_____	_____
Thursday	Area B	$20/Individual	_____	_____
Friday	Area C	$20/Individual	_____	_____
Saturday	Area D	$20/Individual	_____	_____
		TOTAL ---------->		_____

*Register early, limited availability.

Make checks payable to 14TH NGRC. Return payment and registration form to:
14TH NGRC, 1777 Hamilton Avenue Suite 106, San Jose, California, 95125

Payment by Major Credit Card: Visa:__ MC:__ _____ . _____ . _____ . _____ Exp. _____

Signature: _____

For additional information on all events contact the registrars, Dawn & David Gill at 408-371-8124.

dirt blocks the passage of trains, and you then have to lift the track or do your best to sweep it free. We have had great success on our and two other garden railways by using narrow block wall "topper" blocks for the roadbed base. We use concrete along the edges with pea gravel placed on the fresh concrete for a realistic roadbed. The brown spray lightly applied on the hardened concrete makes for changes in tone. The blocks are a great mechanism for leveling or determining track grade prior to application of the track.

What's this idea of using concrete as a roadbed?

None of my suggestions has garnered any stronger response—both favorable and conclusively not—to the idea of putting fresh mortar mix (sand and cement) on top of the topper blocks, leveling it, and pressing the track into the leveled mix. Yipes! You're sinking the track in concrete! The track will buckle! It will not expand! All of those statements are true if you do not wait 10-15 minutes and wiggle the track and lift it from the fresh concrete leaving holding impressions from the hollow ties. I use paint stirring sticks to hold the track above the freshly impressed concrete for about a hour. Viola! You now have a mechanism for holding the track to the roadbed without using any other securing method. You can lift it to replace or make any repairs; wash leaves and debris away from the track; and, best of all, you can walk on it without it sinking or it moving out of place. Try having a fully planted garden and an intricate layout without wanting to walk on the track using the roadbed as access. Good luck. We have found the concrete method fast, easy, and a no-brainer for prevention of future hassles. The result is a flat-running train on a roadbed that is easily cleaned and is usable for foot traffic. We periodically blast our track and roadbed with a nozzled garden hose. No problem. One note: For those of you in areas with heavy water run-off, I suggest putting short sections of ½" PVC (or larger diameter) in between those topper blocks if there is a need for runoff water to pass rather than sink into the garden. To prevent the concrete from entering the PVC tubes during construction, simply take Kleenex tissue and put it into the ends of the cut tubes. It will block the concrete, keeping the tube open. It is easily removed.

Free to a Good Home!

140 feet
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Llagas Creek
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Aluminum Rail

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2898 Winchester Drive
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A Modest Proposal

by Wendell Hanks

Dear Bay Area Garden Railway Society Membership, As I have written in both San Diego, Bay Area, and previous SoCal GRS newsletters, my concern for the large scale garden railway hobby is that manufacturers appear not to solicit new hobbyists from readers of gardening publications. I say "appear" not to solicit as I have yet to see a garden railways feature in *Sunset Magazine* or *Better Homes and Gardens*. Add up your own list. To me, my concern is obvious: Our hobby needs to grow in order for new products to appear; to generate stability in the hobby; and increase those valued relationships resultant from sharing new garden layouts. The "garden" is a feature that is already established in this country—just look at the numbers of magazines, videos, books, CD Roms, and nurseries available to consumers.

Question: Could not the San Diego, SoCal, and San Francisco railway groups influence commercial promotion of the hobby by getting member input from the position that we are an obvious hands-on hobby authority. Simply, what choices do we think manufacturers could consider to increase customer interest—outside of their apparent continual appeal to both those who already "have everything" and the HO/N/O gauge railroaders.

Examples:

- Promotion of photo garden railways layouts and articles in Sunset Magazine.

- Promotion at up-scale nurseries with photos or running layouts.

- Photo stories in other gardening and home magazines.

- Promotional displays at home shows.

My proclaimed (repeatedly) fear, as people drop out of the hobby, is the lack of enthusiasts to replace those lost. Besides, from the lack of alternatives, how many times will people continually go to see the very same garden railways? As to the hosts, how many will continue to host simply because they know there isn't anyone else? Most importantly, we will lose manufacturers as they try to sell one more locomotive, one more car, one more piece of track, to those current enthusiasts who have barely enough room to store or use what they have—let alone discretionary funds to make continual purchases.

14th National Garden Railway Convention

Registration Form
&
Car Order Form

Inside This issue!

Tips From Mad Dog

by Dale McAnally

Tip #1—When adjusting pitch on rails, use a string level. It fits exactly across the rails and ballast can be adjusted with the level on the rails. The string level is short enough that it does not interfere with any trackside detail. String levels are available from Orchard Supply, Home Depot and other hardware stores for less than $3.

Tip #2—When setting grade use a string level called a "Varipitch" level. This level is designed for setting grade on sewer lines and shows a rise or drop in 8ths of an inch per foot of run. This works out to be 1 eight of an inch in 96 eighths of an inch or roughly 1% grade. By stapling the string to a post and stretching to any other point on the road bed, you can read the grade directly off the level. This level is available in a package with a regular string level from Orchard Supply, Home Depot and other hardware stores for less than $3.

Tip #3—When building concrete mountains (ferrocement) use "Fiber Reinforce" concrete sack mix. This product contains thousands of short fiberglass strands that act as reinforcement and produces an incredibly strong "hollow" mountain. The walls are less than 1" thick, do not have cracks and will support a 200 pound man without problems.

Tip #4—Apply pigment to concrete mountains with a gardens sprayer. Use liquid pigment diluted approximately 20:1 and spray on structure after it has set. If a darker color or a different color is desired, repeat the procedure. Get creative. Use different color on various parts of the mountain and blend them where they meet.

Tip #5—To build a road bed that is stable, use ordinary concrete sack mix, blend in dry tan or brown pigment and place to grade. Then when everything is just right, use a garden spray to wet down. The concrete on the surface will set over night and the balance will harden over time as moisture soaks in. The track can be ballasted to correct any minor grade/pitch adjustments.

Tip #6—To increase the ability of concrete/cement materials to "Hold a wall" [adhere to a vertical surface] add approximated 10% fire clay when mixing. Fire clay is sometimes referred to as "mortar clay" or "Mason's Cream". This improves the plasticity of the mixture greatly and makes the mix approach modeling clay consistency. I have used this mixture to apply to the roofs of tunnel entrances.

Tip #7—When working with cement/concrete, wear plastic gloves. Concrete contains chemicals that are rough on the skin, causing drying and cracking and, in some people, severe dermatological problems requiring medical treatment.

Tip #8—To make a weak concrete mix for road bed or anything else you may wish to remove in the future, mix 1 part Portland cement with 5 parts sand and 5 parts Vermiculite or Perlite [whichever is cheaper]. The resulting "rocks" or "roadbed" can be easily broken out with a sledge hammer should the layout be redesigned.

Tip #9—For a different effect on concrete mountains, mix a 10 parts water to 1 part liquid pigment solution and apply with a sponge to the surface of the concrete. By various use of colors, you can create "shadow" effects, etc. Be creative and experiment.

Tip #10—When making tunnel portals, don't forget to allow clearance for a camcorder if you plan to video tape "from the rails". Overhead Rails sells a nifty car designed to mount a camcorder to be hauled by your locomotive. If gives an interesting "rail view" of your layout.

Tip #11—For trestle stock buy "trellis" rods at your local lumber yard. They are sold in bundles of 25 sticks of 3/4" redwood. Since the material has already been cut, any knots have been eliminated because the wood would have already broken and become unsalable. In G-scale, these represent 18" timbers, which, while healthy, are not too far out of scale. If this is unacceptable, the stock can be cut further on a table saw using a rip fence set to the desired size.

Tip #12—If you are doing a lot of trestle construction and have an air compressor, buy a pneumatic nailer [approximately $250]. It will make construction go a lot faster. Small nailers can handle $^1/_2$" to 1 $^1/_2$" nails. [Tip compliments of **Al McCracken**.]

Tip #13—When building trestle bents, first build a jig on a piece of scrap plywood. Using scrap wooden blocks, screw or nail them down creating slots for your timbers at the correct angles. Then, simply cut your bent stock, drop into the proper slot and screw or nail them together. That way each bent comes out identical. If the bottom ends are left open, you can make bents of varying height.

Tip #14—To "pre age" redwood bents and other structures, soak them for a few minutes in a 5-gallon pail of water to which a half cup of baking soda has been added. They come out a pleasing gray in a few minutes instead of the months that nature requires for the same thing. [Tip compliments of **Al McCracken**.]

Tip #15—To avoid derailing and slipping wheels, design your layout with grade changes on the straight portion of track and keep turns as flat as possible. The combination of both grade and turns are very tough on our "Big Iron." An engine that could handle a 4% grade on a straight line or a 3' radius curve without problems will often be too

weak to pull the same train up 3' radius with a 4% grade.

Tip #16—When installing drip irrigation systems, you can use "Pop-Up" micro sprinklers. Agrifilm [available at Automatic Rain and other commercial landscape supply companies] makes a 12" pop-up for micro sprinklers. The pop-up is designed either $^1/_2$" MPT or micro tubing and has a "non-rotator" feature so your half-round head doesn't spray your retaining wall because it rotated around. Install by drilling a 1 $^1/_2$" hole with a fertilizer auger bit in your drill, insert micro tubing into pop-up and insert pop-up in the soil. If you cut 2" PVC pipe into 2" long sections and place them over the head, the entire sprinkler will recess out of sight without danger of debris clogging the head. Ground cover will grow and finish the camouflage job.

Tip #17—Before you begin to install a layout, study the drainage of the area. Correct any problems using corrugated drain pipe and drain boxes with grates if necessary. WATCH YOUR SLOPE. Check it with a level. Our winter rains can destroy all your hours of good work in just an hour if everything washes away. More tips in your next issue.

Don't forget to Register for the Annual Meeting.
We must have a headcount for the meeting room.
You do not have to pay to attend the meeting only!

Show Your Colors at the Convention

by Ken Martin

Did you ever notice how the BAGRS blue shirt stands out in a crowd, whether it is at an open house, the Big Train show or a national convention? It is great to scan the crowd and be able to identify virtually every BAGRS member there, if they are wearing a club shirt. With the 14th National Garden Railway Convention coming up in July, we really ought to make ourselves known by showing our colors.

The BAGRS Baggage Car has on hand a complete supply of shirts—T, sweat, and golf in all sizes including children's T's, Caps, tote bags, and mugs. All of these are in BAGRS blue with gold logos. All items are available at our open houses and will be at the Annual Meeting. If you can't make contact there, we do mail order. Please see our ad in this issue.

Let's show everybody that the BAGRS are there, especially at our own convention. Get your BAGRS blue and gold now!

Two Shays Hit the Floor—and Survive!

by Wendell Hanks

Bachmann's new Shay has certainly garnered its share of positive reviews. Because of the Shay's mechanical complexity, product reliability by any manufacturer is obviously at issue. Any new true-scale and highly accurate Shay model will have possible mechanical concerns not inherent in conventional steam or diesel locos. I found the following incident supportive of further trust in Bachmann's new product.

The January International Model show in Pasadena, California, featured the immensely popular Del Oro modular railway in which a double-headed Bachmann Shay consist of 34 logging cars ran prior to show time. During this running a near disaster gave long-time scale modeler and Del Oro member, **Dean Lowe**, reason to testify to the Shay's durability.

Dean reports: "That Friday morning we double-headed two Shays pulling 34 logging cars. We were unaware that inadvertently two scenic trees were across the tracks snagging the lead Shay. Both Shays left the track falling four feet to a bare concrete floor. My Shay suffered the loss of a motor block screw, a missing tender hatch screw, and a screw holding the 3-pound weight in the engine. What is of importance is the locomotive fell on the driveline mechanism. No damage to this mechanism was sustained by this drop. Once the motor was secured and the other cosmetic details resolved, it was back to 100%. My Shay has over 50 hours on it—including 15 that followed the accident.

Clearly, Bachmann's efforts in detailed construction and use of their solid metal frame has paid off."

Coming to a Convention Center near you!
The 14th National Garden Railway Convention
Santa Clara, California
July 7—12, 1998

BAGRS, please don't wait to order your convention car.

National advertising is in progress and they may all be gone before the convention begins!

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BAGRS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Meeting Schedule

1st Tuesday
every other month

April 7, 1998
June 2, 1998
August 4, 1998
October 6, 1998
December 1, 1998

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE IS:
March 10, 1998

BAGRS Baggage Car

BAGRS Apparel Source

Items are blue with BAGRS logo in yellow.

T-Shirts	Adult Sizes	(M, L, XL)	$10
		(XXL)	$12
		(XXXL)	$15
	Youth Sizes	(S, M, L)	$6
Caps	(Adjustable)		$6
Golf Shirts w/Pocket		(L,XL,XXL, XXXL)	$20
Sweat Shirts	(L, XL)		$15
		(XXL)	$20
		(XXXL)	$25
Tote Bags		Small 14"	$10
		Large 20"	$15
Coffee Mugs—Blue w/Yellow Logo			$5

To order:

- List the items you wish to purchase (be sure to note sizes).
- Send a check for the total amount plus 15% for shipping to:

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Submissions are due by the 5th of the month preceding publication. Any format is acceptable. Line drawings and black/white artwork are not only acceptable but desirable and can be scanned in for inclusion in the newsletter. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and length.

BAGRS Timetable

March 1998	
29—Annual Meeting	BAGRS Annual Meeting 1998 Colombo Club, 5321 Claremont Ave, Oakland
April 1998	
~~4 & 5—BAGRS Short Line~~	~~Ardenwood Farms~~ CANCELLED
19—Layout Tour	Jose Picazo 115 Harwood Court, Los Gatos—408•356•7300
19—Layout Tour	David & Dawn Gill 5162 Brewster Avenue, San Jose—408•371•7472
May 1998	
1 & 2—BAGRS Short Line	NMRA—PCR Convention—Modesto, California
30 & 31—BAGRS Short Line	Talbot's Salute to G Scale
June 1998	
13 & 14—Big Train Show	The Big Train Show—Queen Mary—San Diego
July 1998	
8, 9, 10, 11, & 12—14th NGRC	14th National Garden Railway Convention Santa Clara Convention Center

••• Layout tour hours are Noon until 4 PM Unless Otherwise Noted •••

Please respect these hours for the benefit of our hosts.

BAGRS Members are welcomed to attend Sacramento Valley Garden Railway Society events.
Contact Judy Arrigotti at (916) 933-4663 for directions and times.

BAGRS—Newsletter (*Trellis & Trestle*)
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