

BAY AREA GARDEN RAILWAY SOCIETY

PIER 9.

TRELLIS & TRESTLE

MARCH 2022



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THE PREZ SEZ

Russ Miller, BAGRS President

Well, this is my last President's letter for the foreseeable future, as a new BAGRS Board will be elected at the Annual Meeting and they will pick a new President from among their ranks. I have to step away and direct all of my efforts toward the 2023 NGRC.

As you've undoubtedly heard or read, things have been a tad busy around the Miller household and my time has been spread pretty thin. But it is now getting towards crunch time for our hosting the National Garden Railway Convention and I'll do my best to plan and organize the best NGRC yet!

We've locked in the date and venue for the convention along with the host hotel... I tell you, that was no small feat during this time of uncertainty! We need a volunteer that is local to the Santa Clara Convention Center who can check in on the venue periodically to report on the updates and changes that they have planned. There was talk of a new "Bistro" going in Hall "B" and the elimination of the concession stands along with a selection of some sort of self-serve vending machines near the entrance to Hall "A"... I don't see any changes showing up on their website yet so that's why we'll need someone to put their "eyes" on it...

We only have just a couple of months to pull a lot of information together for a presentation at the convention in Denver. We will need the help of all BAGRS Members that are attending the NGRC in Denver to be ambassadors for our convention. To that end, I'll need everyone to be on the same page on the schedule of events, venue locations and activities planned.

We will discuss the convention plans at the upcoming Annual Meeting and I will do my best to keep all of our members informed by posting updates in future issues of our Trellis & Trestle newsletter.

Unique artwork has again been designed for our convention and I hope to have T-shirts available for our members to wear in Denver. I also have some other ideas to help spread the word...



And I'm open to your ideas so tell them to me when you see me... This is going to be FUN!

See you at the Annual Meeting!

Russ Miller

2021 BAGRS President

2023 NGRC Chairman

ANNUAL MEETING

I am told that we have recruited new members at and following recent Annual Meetings. Certainly, every Annual Meeting is an opportunity to increase awareness of BAGRS and our hobby.

How can we all help make the most of this opportunity?

We can invite guests. If our guest joins BAGRS, the annual meeting guest fee is refunded.

We can tell our friends about the BAGRS live steamers display that is open to the public.

If we participate on Facebook, Instagram, or WhatsApp, we can talk up the Annual Meeting there.

If we have any contacts with local newspapers, radio stations or TV stations, we can try to get them interested.

If you have other ideas, please share them with me at marketing@bagrs.org



INSTAGRAM FOLLOWING TOPS 1,000

18 months ago, when our Instagram following was 275, we set a goal of getting 1,000 followers by the end of this year when marketing of our 2023 National Convention will get into high gear. That train arrived 10 months early as we went over 1,000 followers last month.

We will continue working to increase that following because Instagram is a great channel to get word of BAGRS and our National Convention to an audience that is a tad younger than the average age of our current membership.

We have increased our following by posting images of the many great BAGRS RRs, one image almost every day. To continue that we need more images. We have a 3-month inventory but need another 13 months of inventory to keep up our posting pace though the National Convention. That's another 400 images. You can help by sharing images of your RR or other RRs you visit.

Panoramic images don't work very well on Instagram (nor Facebook) because they are often viewed on phones. Images that focus on a detail or two are best, and that is good news. Our



MARKETING

Mick Spilsbury, BAGRS Vice-President

RRs do not have to be tidy all over!

So please take some pix of your RR and share them with me at marketing@bagrs.org . These days, we do not need professional cameras to get great shots. Any mobile phone from the last several years can capture great images.

THE NATIONAL CONVENTION - GR NEWS CONNECTION

The bi-monthly, free, digital Garden Railroading News magazine will be an important marketing partner for our 2023 convention. In 16 months, GR News has built a solid readership base of 5,000+ and a social media following of 3,000+.

It is not too early to start thinking about content for GR News in the build up to our convention and I would love to hear from anyone who could write an 800 to 1500 word illustrated article that would encourage garden railroaders from N. America and beyond to attend our convention. The bar for articles is quite high but we have a lot of talent in BAGRS and writers get a lot of editorial help. (And I am one of the 4 managing partners for GR News so we do have some influence!)

I look forward to seeing many of you on March 19, in person for the first time in what seems like ages.

Mick

NEWSLETTER SHARING

Mick Spilsbury, BAGRS Vice-President

BAGRS has a policy of reciprocal sharing of newsletters with the following garden railway clubs. We do not share private member information such as home addresses or tour information without the express permission of the particular member.

[Central California Coast GRS](#)

[Puget Sound GRS](#)

[Denver GRS](#)

[Rose City GRS](#)

[Gold Coast GRS](#)

[Sacramento Valley GRS](#)

[Orange County GRS](#)

[Santa Clarita Valley GRC](#)

Welcome to [The Garden Whistle](#), New Zealand Large Scale Newsletter

ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE



2022 ANNUAL MEETING: Saturday March 19, 2022

Hiller Aviation Museum, 601 Skyway Road, San Carlos (Holly Street Exit 411 off 101)

This is our first Annual Meeting since 2020. Lots has been going on in the last 2 years and we are looking forward to catching up with everyone and hearing about all the projects completed during various stages of lockdown

THE PROGRAM

WHEN	WHAT	WHO
7:00 - 8:00 am	Vendor set-up	Vendors
8:00 - 9:00 am	Check-in/Light breakfast/Meet & Greet	
9:00 - 9:45 am	Annual Business Meeting	
10:00 - 10:45 am	Presentation: The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad	Rob Lenicheck
11:00 - 11:45 am	Presentation: The World of Garden Railroads	Mick Spilsbury
12:00 - 1:00 pm	Lunch/Meet & Greet	
1:30 - 2:00 pm	2023 National Convention Update	Russ Miller
2:15 - 3:00 pm	Presentation: The State (San Francisco) Belt Railroad	Jack Verducci
3:30 pm	Model & Photography Contest Results	Gary Whaley
4:00 pm	Meeting ends	

ADVANCE REGISTRATION REQUIRED

- ◇ Advance registration on the BAGRS website is required at www.bagrs.org
- ◇ Once at the BAGRS website, log in, then click **Meetings & Events**
- ◇ Your registration fee includes the meeting, a light breakfast and lunch
- ◇ The fee is \$22.50 if you pay in advance: \$30 if you elect to pay at the door
- ◇ In either case, advance registration is required. Also, your annual dues for 2022 must be paid to attend

ATTENDEE SAFETY

- ◇ Attendee safety is influencing every aspect of planning for the meeting
- ◇ Chairs, member-vendor tables & registration will be organized to allow social distancing
- ◇ All food items will be individually wrapped/boxed and there will be space to eat outside
- ◇ N95 or KN95 masks will be worn indoors - if you don't have one, we will provide one
- ◇ The Board recognize that members' risk tolerances vary, but has decided on a safety-first approach

Members can attend the Annual Business Meeting from 9:00-9:45 am only without advance registration or fee payment.

RANDOM NOTES IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER

Greg Hile, Editor

A couple of random notes here in no particular order:

1. Just another and final reminder that Annual Meeting is coming up. Be sure your membership renewal is all set up. The cost is \$22.50 in advance and \$30 at the door, which includes lunch and other assorted goodies. You won't want to miss it!

2. For the record, I will be there and am looking forward to seeing all of you. I would especially be interested in your thoughts on how we've been doing with T&T and what direction you would like to see moving forward.

3. We now have a new monthly column entitled *Gatherings*, with reports on small group activities involving BAGRS members. BAGRS exists whenever and wherever two or more are gathered in our name. *Member Updates* will continue as the place to report on what you are doing.

4. Ray Turner sends the following request:

BAGRS members! Our website has gotten a little out-of-date in some areas and I am working on bringing it up-to-date. I am asking all members to please verify we have your correct/preferred contact information: e-mail, phone, address, etc. Also, if you have built a railroad - or dismantled one - or made significant changes/additions please update the information about that too. We use that information to contact people about open house tours and other district activities.

And it has been a few years since we've seen each other, so how about uploading a photo of yourself too. If you'd take a few minutes to do this, BAGRS members would appreciate it. Just login at www.bagrs.org .

Thank you Ray for taking on this much-needed project.

5. A couple of times this month, we have been contacted by people with train-related items for sale. Just as a reminder to everyone, we have space on the BAGRS website for sale listings. Information on how to do it can always be found in the Membership section in the back of T&T. And while we regularly don't do this, check out the Member Update section in this issue for some current special offerings.

6. Having thought about it, I don't care what the groundhog did. Sounds to me like it's time to play with trains ...

STOP THE PRESSES!

Even though we don't exactly have presses around here, it sounds better than "Don't hit the Submit Button!" but just as I was getting ready to hit the submit button that would start in motion the publication process, I got word of the newest addition to the BAGRS family: **Trevor John Camarillo**, weighing 6 lbs, 15 ounces and 19.7 inches long, born Friday, February 25 at 6:14 am.

Congratulations to Colin and Sarah, who report that they are home, adjusting well, and everyone is very happy and healthy.



WHERE IS IT?

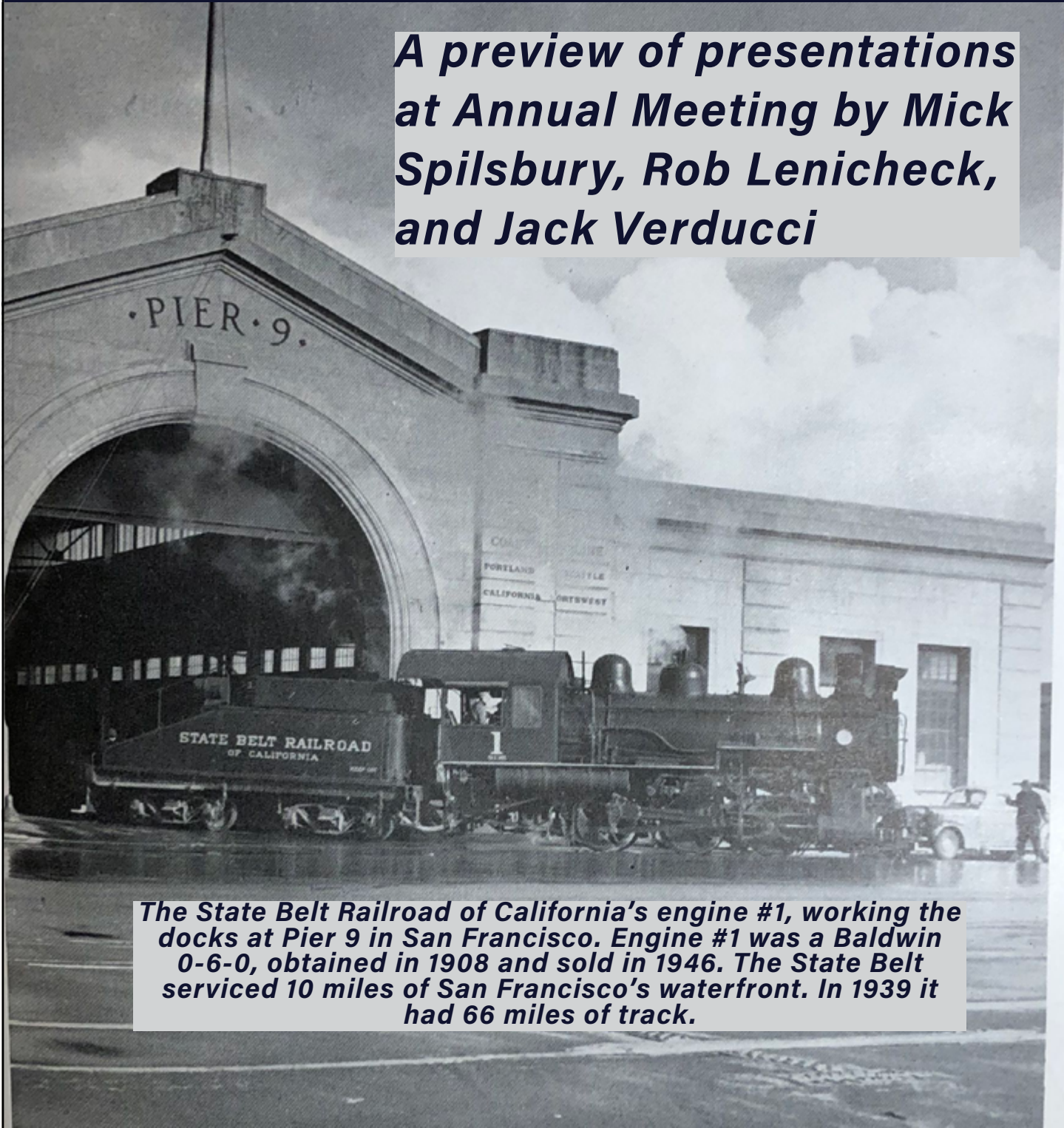
I thought this might be an easy one, but it turns out it wasn't as easy as I thought, something I realized about an hour after publication. This is the Union Station for Denver, Colorado (the site of NGRC 2022, hint, hint!) but like the UP stations here in California, stations throughout the country often had similar building architecture and style. Anyway, kudos this month to **Bryce Reynolds, Frank Headley, and F. John LaBarba**.

Here is this month's photo. The answer to be revealed on March 19 ...



An Annual Meeting Preview ...

A preview of presentations at Annual Meeting by Mick Spilsbury, Rob Lenicheck, and Jack Verducci



The State Belt Railroad of California's engine #1, working the docks at Pier 9 in San Francisco. Engine #1 was a Baldwin 0-6-0, obtained in 1908 and sold in 1946. The State Belt serviced 10 miles of San Francisco's waterfront. In 1939 it had 66 miles of track.

FEATURED ARTICLE

An Annual Meeting Preview

MICK SPILSBURY

THE WORLD OF GARDEN RAILROADS

Mick built his first garden RR in his side yard which was featured in *Garden Railways* in late 1992 & early 1993. It was a complicated, track-powered layout with 22 remote controlled switches. Only part of it could be reached from a retaining wall along one side so a lot of maintenance was done on hands and knees. It was a bear to maintain. 15 years later, Mick accepted a job that required extensive travel. There was no time for maintenance and the RR was essentially abandoned.



In 2015, Mick's wife, Liz, asked that the abandoned RR be replaced with a vegetable garden. Mick complied and started building his current RR in another location. Although no longer travelling, Mick was determined to design a RR that was easy to maintain and could be operated on demand. The new battery-powered layout is mounted on stone walls, has only a dozen hand operated switches all within easy reach. A fleet of track cleaning locos are deployed because track power is used the light cars. The RR is extensively lit for evening operations and there are a dozen sounds around the layout.

The new RR comes with a story which melds facts with a certain amount of BS. It's 1899 and the Black Canyon residential area of San Rafael where Mick lives is the preserve of 'Baron Spilsbury' who operates a gold mine and various other businesses which required a rail connection to tracks of the San Francisco & North Pacific RR about 1.5 miles away.

Mick was elected the BAGRS Board 2 years ago and joined the small team that produces GR News 18 months ago. He has focused on increasing awareness of both organizations via social media. BAGRS # of Instagram followers has increased from 275 to over a 1,000 in 18 months and GR News has gathered more than 3,000 followers via Facebook and Instagram in 15 months. Social media exposure is driven by posting images daily and Mick has posted about 500 images in the last 18 months for BAGRS and GR News. Garden RRs in the US, Canada, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand have been featured. Along the way, Mick has come across some amazing garden railroads and the people who built and operate them. He will share some of those with us.



FEATURED ARTICLE

An Annual Meeting Preview



THE DENVER AND RIO GRANDE



AND

THE BIRTH OF THE FRIENDS OF THE CUMBRES AND TOLTEC SCENIC RAILWAY



The Denver and Rio Grande Railway was born in the 1870s to satisfy the needs of the booming silver and gold mines of Southwestern Colorado. With the usual bravado to attract investors, the narrow gauge railroad had grand plans for expanding all the way past that area and into Salt Lake City and even down to El Paso, TX and beyond. However, over time the railroad went in and out of receivership but lived longer than anyone could have expected. In the end, the last of the narrow gauge line between Alamosa and Durango was abandoned. This is the story about what came next.

THE FRIENDS OF THE CUMBRES AND TOLTEC SCENIC RAILWAY



FEATURED ARTICLE

An Annual Meeting Preview

The State Belt Railroad of California, try putting that name on the side of an N scale switcher.

The State Belt is the railroad I remember growing up. My grandparents live at Stockton and Francisco Street. For us to get there in those days (before the Bayshore Freeway), we had to go by way of the Embarcadero. This meant weaving through Railroad freight cars and switching operations to get there.

The State Belt Railroad is not as well-known as the SP, AT&SF or WP, however it should be. Over its 100 plus-year history It serviced all these railroads and more. Its rails covered the entire San Francisco waterfront from Fort Mason to China Basin, as well as tracks servicing dozens of businesses up and down its line. Two of its locomotives at age 78 still operate in San Francisco today.

In April of 1979 my father-in-law Sam Palma gave me a book that he found at a garage sale. It was the "Port of San Francisco Biennial Report 1938 through 1940". The reason he got it for me was he knew I built model ships. The book had several pictures of freighters being loaded and unloaded at various docks in San Francisco. At the time of this report the Port of San Francisco was owned by the State of California. Along with the port they also owned the railroad. Therefor the report included details on the railroad's operation.

This began my interest in the interchange between the railroad and ships. Shortly after receiving the book, I built an N scale version of the State Belt. When I got into garden railroading, I needed the space in the garage, so I reluctantly gave the layout away. In my presentation I will talk about my memories of The State Belt Railroad and its operations. Plus, what relics of the railroad still exist today.



This is what the Embarcadero at Chestnut & Francisco Streets looked like Circa 1939. Trucks and automobiles had to cross over as many as four tracks to leave the Embarcadero. As you can imagine automobiles and trains don't mix well.

MEMBER UPDATES

From Brenda Beatty of Spokane, Washington comes this special offer to BAGRS members. Her father passed away late last year and had a great number of LGB locomotives and cars, also Pola buildings, some USA Trains and Bachmann. She is going to a train show on March 6 to hopefully liquidate as much as possible but is extending an early invitation to BAGRS members. Here are some photos of just a small portion of the collection and contact information for Brenda. If you are interested, are looking for any items in particular, or have any questions, we suggest you contact Brenda directly at (509) 954-2279 or email at hmjbeatty@gmail.com.



MEMBER UPDATES

Ken Kopper writes: "I spent some time (finally) installing replacement rocks for my upper level on the MRRR. The rocks have been piled up on my walkway for a year and I was tired of tripping over them. The old rocks just did not look right. I have some plans for the layout and will start working on them this spring. I will not be adding any more plants this year due to the drought. Other than this, I was distracted by getting my shed insulated and my HO layout going. I also spent some time organizing and cleaning up my office and shop.



From **Pat Halleran** comes the following information: "I recently went to order from Bridge-Masters for my new layout. I talked to the owner, who told me he has sold all his designs to another party who is continuing the business under a new name. While the old Bridge-Masters website is still up, the owner told me he intends to take it down asap to avoid confusion, especially since he now maintains an eBay store site selling various garden railroad related items, which is also called Bridge-Masters.

The new business is called WrightBridges (<https://wrightbridges.com/>) and has remained in Southern California. The website shows all their bridges, culverts, trestles, and bents, along with a tunnel portal and some other items, all made of wood. While there doesn't appear to be any way to order directly from the website, the owner, Mark Wright can be reached at (657) 549-4849 or by email at mark@wrightbridges.com, to place orders. Mark told me that he is currently operating WrightBridges out of his garage, as he has "a day job" and he is also a member of the Orange County Garden Railway Society.

GATHERINGS

Whenever Two or More BAGRS Members Are Gathered ...

EDITORS NOTE: This is a new column dedicated to reporting on small group activities of our members. If you have notes, stories, and/or photos to share of your group activities, please let me know. If you haven't submitted before or if you have questions, please contact me at newsletter@bagrs.org.

Bay Area Steamup, 2/19/22

The live steamers gathered together on a perfect (unfortunately, for the need the rain) February day at Rob Lenicheck's. A good time was had by all and included some new and exciting engine sightings.

Here is Bill Allen overlooking the newest Accucraft live steam offering with Channing Cheng of Accucraft: a 1:20.3 narrow gauge D&RGW C-18. This is a prototype of the model run and will have many design improvements which Accucraft has incorporated into their recent designs such as a ceramic burner designed by Bill, full Stephenson's valve gear and a roof which folds off to the front rather than overhanging the side of the cab. The engine ran well.



Ron Sickler attended and brought his coal-fired Accucraft Emma and a new project which he is discussing with Bill Allen.



GATHERINGS

Whenever Two or More BAGRS Members Are Gathered ...

Ron shows off the correct vessel by which to add whiskey, er, water, to a boiler.



Sanjaya Kumar, a rather new and welcome addition to the Bay Area live steam ranks shows off his fine articulated model of the Skookum built by Bill Allen.

Tim Boles is very serious about getting his coal off the hot start.



GATHERINGS

Whenever Two or More BAGRS Members Are Gathered ...

Some of the group discussing Ron's project. From left: Bill Mansell, Ron Sickler, Bill Allen, Gary Whaley



Finally, a group shot of all who attended. From left: Bill Allen, Channing Cheng, Mike Williams, Bob Trabucco, Mike Laine, Bill Mansell, Ron Sickler (seated), Dennis Mead, Tom Winter (at back), Sanjaya Kumar, Tim Boles, Jim Goss, Gary Whaley, Rob Lenicheck



M.T.H. DUMP CAR - CONVERSION TO REMOTE CONTROL

About four years ago I bought a used M.T.H. (Mike's Train House) Operating Side Dump Car. It was originally operated using an accessory track section and a switch control box that would allow the dump car to raise and tilt to one side and then return to its resting position. Not having the accessory track or the control box, and wanting to be able to dump the car anywhere I wanted. I started looking for a way to do this. After asking around, I found just what I needed. I located a small wireless 12 volt single channel controller from a company called "All Electronics", Part #RM01. The only other parts needed were a 9 volt battery and an on/off switch, for a total cost of around \$35.00.

The circuit board was very easy to install.

1. Remove pickup shoes from the truck assemblies and cut the connecting wires as close to the pickups as possible. You will no longer need the pickup shoes.
2. Remove the two (2) truck assemblies and remove the four (4) screws that hold the top cover of the motor compartment.
3. Remove the circuit board that sits to the right of the motor. Then cut all the wires as close to the circuit board as you can.
4. With the circuit board now removed, you will find the two standoffs that held the circuit board in place. Using a Dremel you can cut off the standoffs, they need to be cut flush with the bottom of the housing.
5. Cut two half-round openings about three-eighths of an inch on the rear wall of the newly opened area, this will allow clearance of the new wiring that will be installed later.
6. Drill a one-fourth inch hole on the side of the motor compartment, opposite the direction that the car dumps, for a toggle switch. Make sure this location will not interfere with the battery when it's installed.
7. Remove the cover of the new controller that was just purchased, the new controller will now sit on top of the 9 volt battery.
8. The new circuit board has five wires. One (1) red wire marked, 12 volt "in", one (1) white positive wire marked, 12 volt "out", two (2) black negative wires marked (gnd) ground and one (1) blue wire marked (ant) antennae.
9. Connect the white positive wire from the new circuit board to the positive black wire with a white stripe coming from the motor. Connect the black wire coming from the motor to one of the black negative wires going to the circuit board. Connect the red positive wire from the circuit board to the positive terminal on the toggle switch. The remaining black negative wire from the circuit board goes to the negative pole of the battery. Using a piece of scrap red wire, connect it to the common pole of the toggle switch to the positive pole of the battery. The blue wire is an antenna wire.
10. With the battery now sitting flat on the bottom of the housing compartment and the new circuit board sitting on top of the 9 volt battery, all the connecting wires can be placed around the two half round openings. Check that all the wires aren't being pinched. The top cover needs to sit flat against the housing when screwed in place. Reinstall the trucks and you're ready to go.

DAVE'S CORNER

Dave Frediani

Your hand held transmitter has two (2) buttons. The "on" button will operate the dump action and the "off" button will stop the dumping at any time, even if the cycle hasn't been completed. The use of a 9 volt battery will only give you about a 30 foot range. The circuit board is designed to be operated using a 12 volt battery. Since there isn't room for a 12 volt battery we used the 9 volt battery which cuts your range in half.



Driving Europe's Last Steam Train

A Polish trip that puts rail enthusiasts at the controls of a 'breathing dragon'

by Martin Fletcher, a non-BAGRS steam enthusiast (with thanks from Ray Turner)

[Editor's Note: This article is a reprint from the [original article](#) available behind a paywall on February 14, 2022 by Financial Times. What you see here is an abridged version without photographs that has been published in various forms and on a variety of social media. The photograph below was not part of the article. It was taken by Steve Knight and uploaded to flickr.com on April 7, 2021 and is reproduced here, without changes pursuant to a Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic ([CC BY 2.0](#)) license].



It is 5.20am and I'm sound asleep in a guest house in Wolsztyn, a small town in western Poland. The light snaps on outside my room. I hear Howard Jones, my host, shout: "It's working, it's working." It takes me a second to register what's happening, then I leap from my bed and hurriedly dress.

Thirty minutes later Jones and I reach the train station. It is cold, dark and raining but, sure enough, there's a huge black steam engine standing at the platform, steam and smoke billowing from its chimney.

We climb up into the cab, where Andrzej and Marcin, the driver and fireman, are waiting in their grimy clothes and baseball caps. At precisely 6.03am the great steel monster pulls out of the station, clanking and creaking, shaking and shuddering, huffing and puffing as it slowly gathers pace.

Thus the last daily standard-gauge scheduled steam train service left in the world, the last one providing primarily for regular passengers not tourists, begins its morning journey.

It is also the last one on which novices like me can learn to drive, but I'm getting ahead of myself.

It was three years ago that a friend of a friend who happened to be a steam-train lover —

ALL STEAMED UP ...

Richard Murray

also known as a "gricer" — told me about Wolsztyn's steam engines and of the curious Englishman who had done so much to keep them going by setting up "footplate courses" for those who longed to drive them.

Intrigued, I contacted Jones, who invited me to visit in February 2020. I booked my flights, but the day before I was due to leave he called to say that unfortunately none of the three serviceable steam engines was working. Then came Covid-19 and the lockdowns.

I resurrected my plans last month, booked a three-day visit and flew out to Poznan with a gricer named Peter Lockley, a retired solicitor from Leamington Spa who now travels the world photographing steam engines for fun. An hour later we arrived in Wolsztyn, where Jones broke the discomfiting news that just one of the locos was working.

The service to Leszno runs twice daily, at 6.03am and at 11.41am. Having got in late, I opted to lie in the next day and take the second one. That was a bad mistake. The loco developed a fault in its brake pump during the early-morning run, so the later one was cancelled.

That gave me time, at least, to be inducted into the strange and secret fraternity of gricers — most of them men old enough to remember Britain's last steam trains; men raised on Thomas the Tank Engine and films like *The Titfield Thunderbolt*, *The Great St Trinian's Train Robbery* and *The Railway Children*.

I admired the guest house where Jones accommodates his visitors, and which he has filled with steam-engine memorabilia: signals, ticket collectors' caps, guards' lamps, platform signs, model trains, jigsaws, a library of railway DVDs and, of course, photographs galore.

Lockley and I explored the Wolsztyn engine shed, where there is a splendid old "roundhouse" (workshop), a working turntable of a sort I had not seen since childhood and 18 ageing steam engines in various states of repair — or disrepair. Lockley knew them all. "That," he would say knowledgeably, "is a Pm36-2, built in Poland in 1937 and the last of its kind in the world."

And over a long, late lunch of wild mushroom soup and venison in a prewar aristocrat's country mansion, Jones, now silver-haired and 70, told me his story.

Born and raised in south London, he was taken by his father to see a rare "Clan Stewart" steam locomotive at Liverpool Street station when he was just five. As a boy, he would sneak into "sheds" at Cricklewood, Neasden and Old Oak Common to admire the steam engines. "In the summer it was trainspotting and in the dour winter days it was a model railway in the bedroom," he said. When the last regular steam-train passenger service ended in Britain in 1968 "it was almost like losing a close friend".

He left school just as the era of cheap package holidays was beginning. He worked for Clarksons and Freddie Laker before both went bust, then set up a company that organised weekend trips for British gricers to heritage railways in Germany and Poland. That was how he discovered the Wolsztyn depot.

Steam trains had survived longer in communist Poland than elsewhere because the country produced lots of cheap coal, and diesel locomotives were expensive. They were still common in the 1980s, and three or four working sheds survived until 1990, but by 1994 Wolsztyn was the last one left. "It was just clinging on" thanks to a wheeler-dealer manager whom Jones described as a "Polish Del Boy".

By that time Jones's company — and his marriage — were in trouble, so he decided to follow his heart. In 1997 he moved from Burgess Hill, West Sussex, to Poland to try to save Wolsztyn and its steam engines. "It was a kind of eureka moment," he said. "Someone said 'you'll never get away with it' and that was a bit of a kick in the backside. They said 'you'll never get beyond five years' and here we are 25 years later."

He promised to raise funds for the shed provided the state railway company continued to run the trains. He tapped into the surprisingly large community of British train lovers (the UK supports at least eight railway magazines). He persuaded 40 gricers to invest £2,000 each, in return for which they could spend a week a year for the next five years learning to drive the steam trains. He moved out to Wolsztyn, launched his footplate courses and began organising special steam train trips around Poland.

His scheme worked. By the early 2000s he was contributing about £50,000 a year to Wolsztyn's shed and attracting visitors from around the world to that small Polish town. In 2006 he was awarded the MBE for his contribution to British-Polish relations. "I felt a bit of a fraud because all I'd done is play trains," said Jones, who also married a Polish woman. Today the Wolsztyn to Leszno service carries about 50,000 passengers a year, of which only about 5,000 are tourists.

I asked Jones what it was about steam engines that he found so fascinating? "To me a steam engine is the closest thing in machinery to being alive. It's like a breathing dragon," he explained. They are temperamental. Each has its own personality. "No two steam engines are alike. They're all completely different. You have to learn the characteristics of each loco. You have to learn how each one handles. You call them 'she', and you certainly swear at them... It requires a lot of skill to drive a steam engine, but any idiot can drive a diesel or an electric."

Jones, incidentally, can drive a steam engine but cannot drive a car.

The next morning brought more bad news. The brake pump was still not mended, and I was due to fly home at noon the following day. Desperate situations require desperate measures, so late that afternoon a young employee of the Wolsztyn shed was dispatched on a 650-mile, 10-hour round-trip drive to a railway museum in Chabowka in south-east Poland to collect a cannibalised spare part. He returned in the small hours of the morning, the faulty pump was swiftly mended and at 5.20am Jones woke me up. Over the next three hours I began to understand why gricers are gricers.

Dressed in a boiler suit, I climb up 6ft of metal steps to the cab of the steam engine, an OL49-69 built in Poland in the early 1950s. It has old wooden floorboards; the doors and windows are held together by bits of wire. In front of me, above the firebox, is a huge and bewildering bank of levers, wheels and dials. Behind is the coal tender. Every surface is oily, black and grimy. There is a strong smell of sulphur.

Jones briefly introduces me to the "regulator" (a long steel lever that serves as the accelerator), the "reverser" (a wheel that operates the gears) and a handle for the brakes. Then we're off — 140 tonnes of steel rumbling out into the pre-dawn darkness amid clouds of steam and smoke.

It is thrilling, but a little alarming too. We can barely see the line ahead because the loco's great long boiler is in the way. Andrzej, aged 67 and a 48-year veteran of the railways, relies almost entirely on his intimate knowledge of the track to know when to accelerate and when

ALL STEAMED UP ...

Richard Murray

to stop. Fortunately, he could navigate it blindfolded.

Leszno is 30 miles and 73 minutes away. En route we stop at 11 village stations with Polish names comprised largely of consonants. Normally there would be lots of schoolchildren and students waiting on the rudimentary platforms, but it is half-term so today we pick up just a few huddled figures, mostly early-morning commuters. They are blithely unaware that they have a complete beginner not actually driving the train, but pulling levers and turning handles as Andrzej barks instructions at me in broken English.

I'm told to blow the whistle as we approach level crossings. I help Marcin shovel large chunks of glistening coal into the blazing firebox, filling the cab with an orange glow and a blast of hot air each time we open its steel doors to expose the red-hot furnace inside. At times we reach 40 or 50mph, and the whole loco is vibrating, but somehow we make inch-perfect stops at every station.

Approaching Leszno, a major junction, our single branch line merges with a dozen others. We place our lives in the hands of an unseen signalman, who somehow guides us through the tangle, and we grind to a halt in a crescendo of noise and smoke. Diesel and electric trains glide in and out almost silently, but steam engines are drama-loving, attention-seeking prima donnas — a statement.

A dozen passengers get off, and scarcely 20 minutes later we set off back to Wolsztyn, only this time the loco is at the back of the train so we are going in reverse.

It is light now, though grey and misty. We pass factories, warehouses and modern boxy houses as we leave Leszno. We speed under bridges, past old-fashioned signal boxes and over level crossings where cars as small as Dinky Toys wait as we roar past. We thunder through flat rich farmland, then forests of pine and silver birch, scattering deer. We pick up shoppers heading for Wolsztyn's market, and Ukrainian workers heading home, 38 passengers in all. In no time we're pulling into Wolsztyn's station having burnt our way through two tonnes of coal.

It is 9.07am. Elated, I thank Andre and Marcin, pull off my boiler suit and sprint to a waiting car with my hands and face still black and filthy. I should just make my plane. Either way, Jones informs me: "You are now one of perhaps 2,000 people in the world who have helped drive a steam locomotive on a main line in the 21st century".

Details: The web site thewolsztynexperience.org offers a week-long "footplate course" - \$2500 for 7 days lodging and 4 days running a steam loco on a mainline run in Poland.

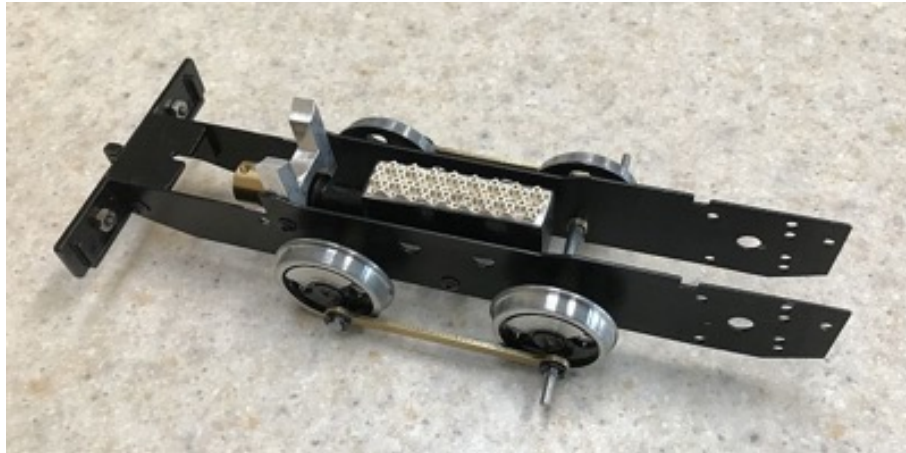
Sounds like a vacation.

EAST DEVIL HILLS MODELING GROUP

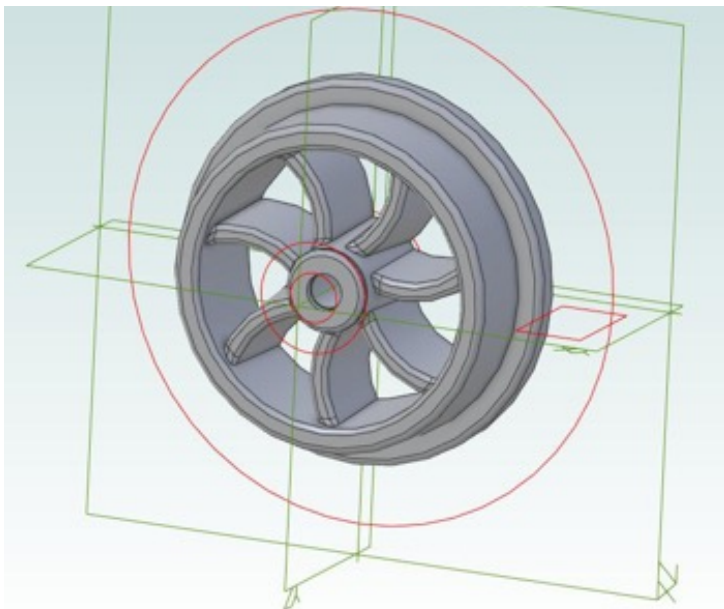
Henner Meinhold

This month will be a very short report, as Bill Allen, Rob Lenicheck and Marc Horowitz were not able to send in progress photos.

Bill Mansell worked on his conversion of a Mamod to gas firing. He finished the ceramic burner and installed it:



He also considers building some cars. They will have wheels with "curly" spokes. Dennis designed them using his Alibre 3D software and printed them with his new 3D printer:



EAST DEVIL HILLS MODELING GROUP

Henner Meinhold

As mentioned earlier, Eric Maschwitz has now a continuous loop of dual gauge 3 1/2" and 4 3/4" track around his house. Here an impression of his modified and detailed Accucraft loco on the removable trestle spanning his driveway:



And proof that his railway serves a real purpose in harvesting the lemons in his backyard:



EAST DEVIL HILLS MODELING GROUP

Henner Meinhold

Robert Burrill installed the marker lights made by Dennis in his Zephyr, I am sure he will write up more about this iconic train in a separate article.



I am finally getting back at my cog loco and trying to design the brake system. It took several iterations to squeeze it into the limited space available. I pre-assembled it on a jig. The brake shoes are laser cut and the remaining bits and pieces CNC milled. The brake band will be glued to the shoes:



That's it for this month. Stay healthy and enjoy the annual meeting!

Henner

Introduction – Trying to get going in the great outdoors this year but maybe “wimping-out” as its cold and windy on the garden railroad front. At least I did do some mushroom hunting a few weeks back on the NW Coast and finally hit the “mother lode” of black trumpets before finishing a two-day foray with wife and friends. I actually have a railroad movie to announce early on but so early on, cannot find out where its playing. But more of that below.

Note: This was written obviously before the February heat wave.

Compartment No. 6 – Is a new train movie from Finland. Again, it’s so new, that I cannot find out how to view it, so this is just a heads up. The plot suggests quirkiness and not zombie in sight. Though gathering all kinds of kudos, this one does not appear to be a big commercial success in the era of Marvel Land, but you never know. It involves train travel from Moscow to Murmansk where a Finnish student forms an unlikely friendship with a gruff Russian miner. I like an occasional quirky movie like “The Station Agent” with Peter Dinklage which is almost 20 years old now but more on that one next month. Below is an appealing review by the East Bay Times. So far, I have read three reviews of Compartment No. 6 and all have been positive which bodes well for this one.

<https://www.eastbaytimes.com/2022/01/28/review-compartment-no-6-is-an-adept-journey-of-discovery/> - East Bay Times Review

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=itL_GpBalA4 - Trailer



At the time of writing, cannot find any information on theater showings in the Bay Area. Because of awards, this is bound to be available somewhere in an art theater showing or streaming. Look for it if interested and will provide further information when I get it.

Meet Me in St. Louis – Could not help myself in bringing you this story about a closed streetcar coming back in this world of light rail. Some time ago I remember providing a YouTube video of “The Trolley Song”. I think Judy Garland would approve this Wall Street Journal Story (WJS). I would list the URL, but WJS would likely ask for a subscription for many so why not just a direct excerpt which is below.

A closed streetcar in St. Louis could get another shot at life as local officials look for a way to relaunch service after federal officials last month took the rare step of threatening to claw back tens of millions of dollars in construction grants.

St. Louis Mayor Tishaura Jones,



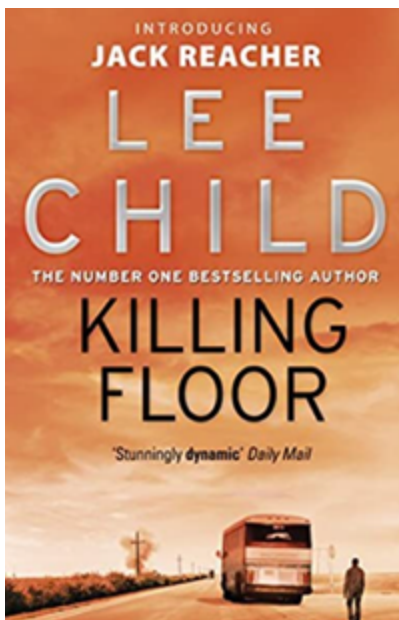
who long opposed the project that first began operating in 2018, is looking to put together a plan to get the trolley running again to avoid repaying \$37.5 million to the Federal Transit Administration—and risk losing out on future federal grants for other projects.

The Loop Trolley, which shut down in late 2019 amid numerous technical problems and low ridership, is among 20 streetcars funded by more than \$1.1 billion in federal grants since 2009, according to a spokeswoman for the Federal Transit Administration. The projects served 13.4 million riders in 2015 and 16.1 million riders in 2019, she said, giving residents a unique way to connect with their communities and sparking development in many places.

Okay, I know I have given you this song before but here goes again as it is just a great music video. Again, our ATSF girl, Judy Garland would approve.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hwP6kNIDg30> - The Trolley Song

Is Reacher a Hobo? - Watching new series "Reacher" on Amazon Prime and "he is what he is" per the many novels of Lee Child (sorry Tom Cruise but you make a good Navy fighter pilot). Hardly a railroad TV series. Jack Reacher is referred to as hobo in this one. I have read a lot of these novels and never remember him catching a freight, but lots of hitch hiking and cheap bus lines. Anyway, enjoying the series as a fan but some may wonder about him. If you are new to the Child series, the fellow portraying the ex-Army MP is "spot on" as cross between Sherlock Holmes and the Incredible Hulk. Maybe he will catch a freight at some point in the series as have not read them all. Bet he could do it "on the fly" if he tried.



Movie & TV Scenes Showing Model Trains - Saw "The Day the Earth Stood Still" long ago and a classic. They say it was conceived as a metaphor for the "Red Scare" of the "50's" and maybe apropos for today's situation in the former Soviet Union.

In this one, Alien Klaatu (Michael Rennie) warns that continued aggression

and nuclear arms races might finish earth. Posing as an earth person, he stays at a boarding house in Washington DC and looks at little Bobby's Lionel O-Gauge setup and comments that he knows of a train that does not use tracks. Somebody please get that information to The California High-Speed Rail Authority.

Last Minute Fun Stuff - Had a couple of articles on Los Angeles train robberies and trains stuck in the snow. Maybe a couple of short fun videos might be better to counter the mood of the times.

The Day the Earth Stood Still, 1951



Please Don't Call This Snowpiercer – From Trains.com a really cool garden (guess there is a garden under that snow) railroad in Main.

[Double headed live steam snow plowing](#) - Trains

Not a Wine Cellar – Simon George has built the largest model railroad in the UK and kept it from his girl friend telling her his basement was a wine cellar. Many stories on this but here is the best one.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CTjoVxPxfo> – UK Model Railroad

Railroad Song of the Month – During KKUP volunteer radio work, had fulfilled a musical request recently for bluesman of the unlikely name, Omar Shariff (but not the Egyptian actor of Dr. Zhivago fame). Both passing with a few years of each other. Most of his recordings were under the name Dave Alexander although in later years was primarily known by stage name, Omar the Magnificent. I worked with him at KKUP on radio blues programming for about a year and we just called him Omar at the station. He was truly magnificent on the piano as the “Lonesome Train Blues” song clearly indicates. I miss him to this day.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQbm2iKlCmM> – Lonesome Train Blues



Jim Maley and his Hobo's Lament railroad live in Milpitas. Jim can be heard on KKUP FM radio 91.5 and knows a lot about movies, music, trains, and New Mexican chiles. He can also be reached at kkupdj@me.com



DIXIANA SHAY

The Dixiana Shay, famous narrow-gauge passenger locomotive pauses for a formal portrait on the three-foot gauge rails of the Roaring Camp & Big Trees Narrow-Gauge Railroad near Felton, Santa Cruz County, California. The RC&BTNGRR is the last steam passenger railroad in the Far West.

Norman Clark located the first locomotive for his envisioned 1880's railroad town and tourist railroad sitting under a coal tibble at Coal Processing Corporation's railroad in Dixiana, Virginia. The 50 year old two-truck Shay-type geared 42 ton steam engine was built by the Lima Locomotive Works in 1912 and already had a full career in the logging and coal industries serving six short line railroads. Clark had the well used aging engine shipped back to the California aboard a standard gauge flat car where it arrived 50 years to the day after being out shopped from the Lima. The old shay was carefully restored outdoors in front of the freight shed in Felton for temporary operation as a construction locomotive as well as providing passenger service on Bear Mountain. In addition to mechanical restoration, the locomotive received a new tender tank, paint job, and renaming "Dixiana". Work was soon underway to construct 4 open passenger cars and complete track work through the redwood forest and over a corkscrew loop trestle on the steep climb to the summit of Bear Mountain. 44 visitors were on hand in April of 1963 to explore the scattering of western structures and attractions and be the first of thousands of eager passengers to ride behind the "Dixiana" shay, Roaring Camp and Big Tree's Locomotive #1.

From the collection of Bill Ralph

MUSINGS OF A THEME PARK FAN

Bill Ralph



KNOTT'S BERRY FARM GOLD MINE

The Gold Mine in Ghost Town is an authentic re-creation of a typical 1849 California Gold Mine complete with Tunnel, Shaft house, Waterwheel and Sluice box. Here you can pan actual gold nuggets with the expert help of the old prospector who shows you how.

Beginning in 1947 and as a precursor to the immersive Calico Mine Train ride, visitors to Knott's Ghost Town had the opportunity to follow a gold vein through a dark mine tunnel to a gully where they could pan for real gold flakes. Conceived and created by Walter Knott and park Art Director Paul von Klieben, the groundbreaking interactive gold mine attraction was constructed by using a rented steam shovel to dig a large deep pit in the farm's parking lot. Realistic rockwork was created by covering a wooden framework with dirt from the pit, coating it with sprayed gunite and finishing the effect with detailed sculpting and coloring by Von Klieben.

Guided by helpful miners, visitors were instructed on panning techniques to sift real gold flakes from the sand **that was then placed in glass vials as valuable park souvenirs. In 1998 the gold mine pit was filled in and theming removed to make way for a new ride attraction.** After a temporary stay on School House Road between Boot Hill and the Miner's Bank, a condensed version of the Pan-For-Gold attraction was returned to its original location, only now in the shadow of the huge wooden Ghost Rider roller coaster.

Circa 1950's postcard from the collection of Bill Ralph



The Porcupine Gulch Railroad, located in Fremont, California, was selected by *Garden Railways Magazine* as the Best Small Railroad in 2016. Retired from the publishing industry, Bill knows a thing or two about amusement parks and postcards.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

NEED A BAGRS NAME BADGE?

Send a \$15 check, payable to BAGRS, for each badge ordered. Be sure to print the name(s) and City(s) for the badge(s) clearly. Send to: BAGRS Member Badges, 210 Friar Way, Campbell, CA 95008

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List items you have for sale or items you want. You'll find it in the middle of the "Members Section" menu on our website, bags.org. Log in is required.

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Many photos & videos are hosted at: <https://photos.google.com>

Click on "Go to Google Photos", if offered.

Login with this e-mail and password: BAGRSvideos@gmail.com BestClub4014

The upper-left corner has a pull-down menu to select ALBUMS. Then click on the album of interest.

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2022 March 19, BAGRS Annual Meeting at Hiller Aviation Museum

2022 June 20-25, National Garden Railway Convention, [Denver](#)

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DENVER GARDEN RAILWAY SOCIETY

COME'ON ABOARD! ◀



▶ VISIT NGRC2022.ORG

2023 July 3-9, National Garden Railway Convention, S.F. Bay Area

**38TH NATIONAL
GARDEN RAILWAY
CONVENTION
SANTA CLARA, CA
JULY 3-9, 2023**

“The place to be in '23!”



BAGRS 2022 BOARD MEETING DATES (all at 10 am via Zoom unless noted)

MARCH 19		<i>(election of officers)</i>
APRIL 3		<i>(in person -- location tba)</i>
MAY 22		
JULY 24		
SEPTEMBER 25		
NOVEMBER 20		
JANUARY 29, 2023		



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TRELLIS AND TRESTLE

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