

BAY AREA GARDEN RAILWAY SOCIETY



TRELLIS AND TRESTLE

MAY 2023



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PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVES

As I write this, the National Garden Railway Convention in the Bay Area starts in just **60 days!**
 So it's not surprising that the focus of this edition of T&T is:
Our National Convention

60 Open Railroads from Sonoma County to San Benito County
6 Social Events Over 30 Vendors



TO BEGIN, WHAT'S IN YOUR (CONVENTION) WALLET?

We pose this question because we all need to be registered for the convention to participate in the following convention activities:

- ◆ Visiting open railroads
- ◆ Attending clinics
- ◆ The July 4 Poolside Fireworks Reception
- ◆ Entering the Vendor Hall

If we want to participate in the following events/activities, we have to register and pay for each of them in addition to registering for the convention:

- ◆ The Napa Valley Wine Train (June 30)
- ◆ The N. Bay BBQ (July 1)
- ◆ The Roaring Camp Train Ride & BBQ (July 5)
- ◆ The Ice Cream Social (July 6)
- ◆ The Convention Banquet (July 7)
- ◆ Any one of the RR Layout Bus Tours scheduled July 1 thru July 8

We can register for the convention and the events listed above at <https://NGRC2023.org> (which is the only way to register!)

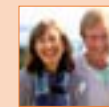
We also pose this question because some events are well over 50% sold. For example:

EVENT	DATE	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
N Bay BBQ	July 1					
Roaring Camp (Late)	July 5					
Napa Valley Wine Train	June 30					

So, if we delay registering, we could miss out.

TO SEE ALL ACTIVITIES & EVENTS IN A CALENDAR FORMAT, GO TO NEXT PAGE.

THEN SEE THE HELP NEEDED TO PULL OFF THAT AMBITIOUS CALENDAR.



PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVES

THE CONVENTION CALENDAR

There may be a few timing changes before June 30 but this is close to final.

BAY AREA NGRC CALENDAR										
AS OF MAY 4										
	NORTH BAY			MID, SOUTH & EAST BAY						
	Fri June 30	Sat July 1	Sun July 2	Mon July 3	Tues July 4	Wed July 5	Thurs July 6	Fri July 7	Sat July 8	Sun July 9
WELCOME DESK	Rohnert Park 2pm - 4pm	Rohnert Park 8 - 11am	Santa Clara 2 to 9pm	Santa Clara 7am to Noon 2 to 8pm	Santa Clara 7am to Noon	Santa Clara 7am to Noon	None	None	None	None
OPEN RRs	None	Open RRs Sonoma County 8:30am to 3:00pm	Open RRs Marin County 8:30am to 3:00pm	Open RRs Contra Costa Diablo Valley 8:00am to 3:00pm	Open RRs North & Mid-Peninsula 8:00 am to 1:00pm	Open RRs San Jose 8:00 am to 2:00pm Santa Cruz 10:00am to 3:00pm	Open RRs Peninsula, Sunnyvale & Mtn View 8:00 am to 1:00pm	Open RRs San Jose S Santa Clara & San Benito 8:00 am to 1:00pm	Tri-Valley & East Bay 8:00 am to 2:00pm	Encore Open Railroads 9am to 4pm
RAILROAD BUS TOURS	None	Depart Rohnert Park at 8:30am	Depart Rohnert Park at 8:30am	Depart Santa Clara at 8:00am	Depart Santa Clara at 8:00am	Depart Santa Clara at 8:00am	Depart Santa Clara at 8:00am	Depart Santa Clara at 8:00am	Depart Santa Clara at 8:00am	None
CLINICS (45 minutes)	None	None	None	None	7.00pm	2:00pm 3:00 m 4:00pm 7:00pm 8:00pm	3:00pm 4:00pm 5:00pm 7:00pm	2:00pm 3:00pm 4:00pm 5:00 pm	2:00pm 3:00 m 5:00pm	None
KID'S CLINICS (2 hours)	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	(#1) 3:00pm	(#2) 11:00am (#3) 1:30pm	None
SOCIAL EVENTS	Napa Valley Wine Train 4:30 to 9:00pm	BBQ at the RR of the Herzogs 4:00 to 8:00pm	None	None	USA Trains Pool-side Fireworks Reception 8 to 10:30pm	Bachmann Roaring Camp RR & BBQ 2:30 to 8:00pm	LGB Ice Cream Social 2 - 3 pm	Cocktail Reception 6 -7 pm Accucraft Banquet 7 - 9 pm	None	None
VENDOR HALL	None	None	None	None	None	Vendor Hall Set Up 8am to 6pm	Vendor Hall Set Up 8am to Noon Open 3pm to 9pm	Vendor Hall Open Noon to 6 pm	Vendor Hall Public Day Open 10 am to 4 pm Take Down 4 pm to 10pm	Vendor Hall Take Down 8am to Noon



PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVES

YOUR CONVENTION NEEDS YOU!

A dozen members have been planning the convention for months. Now we need more members, **MANY MORE MEMBERS**, to step up for roles during the convention.

HELP AT THE WELCOME DESK & MEET A LOT OF GREAT PEOPLE

If you have attended conventions, you know how important the WELCOME desk is. It is the first point of contact for convention attendees and sets the tone for their experience. **We need members to help at the convention WELCOME desk.** There will be more details to follow but the current plan is that the WELCOME desk will be open:

Sun July 2: 2pm to 9 pm - **Mon July 3:** 7am to 8 pm (with meal breaks) - **Tues July 4:** 7am to Noon
Wed July 5: 7am to Noon

We will be welcoming attendees, giving them their convention brochure & badge and their tickets for events they have paid to attend. We will also be answering their questions. Everyone who volunteers to help will get a full briefing including common Q&A's that will arise.

We don't expect anyone to work all the hours the WELCOME desk will be open so we need a whole bunch of members to help out, which is why recruitment starts NOW. Please help make this convention the best ever by volunteering to work the registration desk! Contact **Lynn Gerber** either by email at secretary@bagrs.org or call Lynn at (510) 407-2822 .

BE A BUS HOST & SEE GREAT RAILROADS

There will be 2 buses going to layouts daily July 3 through 8, a total of 12 bus trips. **We need one BAGRS Member on each bus acting as a guide and time keeper, the 'Bus Host'**, who also gets to see the railroads on the bus tour.

Buses leave and return to the Santa Clara Hyatt Regency . Loading begins at 7:30 am, buses depart by 8 am and return between 1 pm and 3 pm depending on the distance of each tour.

We have some Bus Hosts but need more. If you can help, please contact **Steve Smith** by email at steveasm@live.com or call Steve at (415) 672-4716 .

HELP KIDS CUSTOMIZE FLAT CARS

There will be three free 'clinics' for kids aged 7 to 14 where they get to customize flat cars using all manner of loads including logs, pallets, barrels, pipes, cages, animals & figures. Their finished cars will be run on a simple track behind a battery powered loco. Then they get to take their customized flat car home.

There will be 3 FREE clinics: from 3pm to 5pm on Friday July 7, from 11 am to 1 pm and from 1:30pm to 3:30 pm on Saturday July 8. All will be held in the Vendor Hall at the Santa Clara Convention Center next to the Convention Hotel, the Santa Clara Hyatt Regency Each clinic is for a maximum of 20 kids.

Liz & Mick Spilsbury and Malinda & Steve Jungst (from Nashville) are running the clinics **and need some BAGRS Members to join them in guiding the kids as they go about customizing their cars.** If you can join the 'Flat Cars for Kids Team' for one or more the clinics, please contact: Mick at president@bagrs.org or call Liz at (415) 806-4999 .



PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVES

YOUR CONVENTION NEEDS YOU!

LAST BUT NOT LEAST-SAFETY & SECURITY

Towards the end of the week, **we need people to help with Safety & Security around the Vendor Hall.** We have nine shifts to fill July 5 thru July 9. Some are 4-hour shifts , some 6-hour shifts. We need multiple people for them all.

During shifts, you would be in the Vendor Hall. Part of the time you would be walking around; at other times you would be sitting. There will be ample opportunity to chat with vendors and to spot hard to find products and bargains. And there will be rest breaks.

Safety & Security is being directed by **Pete Pearson**, a retired law enforcement professional, for the fourth BAGRS convention in a row. You do not need that background because Pete & Team Leaders do.

Please reach out to Pete at petepearson4000@comcast.net if you can join the team for a shift or more.

OTHER CONVENTION NEWS



Roger Nicholson has been producing short videos about some of our open railroads and we are posting them on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. The dozen videos on YouTube have been viewed over 23,000 times. You can check them out at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiktHWHfzFJXM5nsVhy703Q>



FOR MEMBERS OPENING THEIR RAILROADS FOR THE FIRST TIME

On the next page of this T&T, we reproduce the **GR News** one page article called 'Hosting an Open Garden Railroad'.

Several, experienced, open garden railroaders collaborated on the article which I edited and have now updated (so any errors are all mine) !!!!

FOR EVERYONE

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR EMAILS THAT LOOK LIKE THIS

There will be a lot of convention news in the next 60 days.



HOSTING AN OPEN RAILROAD

Several garden railroaders with extensive open RR experience collaborated to produce this guidance.

TWO PRINCIPLES ABOVE ALL OTHER

There are many things to do before we open our railroads and the tasks vary from railroad to railroad. However, 2 really important things apply to ALL open railroads:

- ◆ Recruit one or more train engineers to operate consists, leaving you time to meet and greet. (Responsible youths can be excellent engineers)
- ◆ Keep operations **simple!** Like 2 shorter consists running on independent circuits.

THE WEEK BEFORE

- ◇ Prune plants infringing on tracks
- ◇ Clean the RR
- ◇ Reposition varmint-mauled features!
- ◇ Ensure that tunnels are clear of anything that could impede a consist
- ◇ Set out stored buildings/trackside details
- ◇ Check that any trackside sounds/animations/lighting are operating
- ◇ Select the locos you will run
- ◇ Service those locos
- ◇ For rolling stock, oil squeaky axles/ensure that couplers are snug
- ◇ Run as you plan to run at the open RR with your engineers (2X if possible)
- ◇ Have enough water/fuel for steamers
- ◇ Ensure that any loco batteries are charged and that spare batteries are fully charged
- ◇ Put new batteries in any remote throttles
- ◇ Set out any required 'out of bounds' signs
- ◇ Set out signage that guides visitors: street signs, parking signs, entrance signs
- ◇ Procure refreshments to be served (if any)



THE DAY OF

- ◇ Final visual inspection for track obstacles
- ◇ Final check for spider webs
- ◇ Test runs of consists and test steam-ups
- ◇ Set out guest book (and writing instrument)
- ◇ Set out any literature about your RR or a video presentation you are going to share
- ◇ Set out refreshments
- ◇ Set out any children's activities
- ◇ Make sure that your guest bathroom is presentable (if it is to be available)
- ◇ Consider watering your RR landscape: plants often look better after a recent watering

THE HOUR BEFORE

- ◆ Breathe
- ◆ Chill out
- ◆ Enjoy how great your RR is
- ◆ Know that visitors will not 'see' the imperfections that bug you
- ◆ In fact, know that 99% of visitors will be supportive and respectful
- ◆ And you can always ask the 1% to leave!

MONTHS/WEEKS BEFORE YOUR OPEN RR

Why is this section last?

Because it makes more sense after we see what we are doing **the week before!**

Experienced Open Railroaders are doing most of these things MONTHS before!

- ◇ Recruit/train engineers
- ◇ Prune vegetation, especially close to tracks
- ◇ Plan refreshments (if any)
- ◇ Plan activities for kids (if any)
- ◇ Prepare materials about your RR for visitors
- ◇ Get any signage needed
- ◇ Tell your neighbors about the open RR day
- ◇ Perhaps invite your neighbors to stop by

Various Contributors: Editor Mick Spilsbury: ©GR News 2023



RANDOM NOTES IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER

When **Greg Hile** gave up a promising career in major league baseball to pursue a life of creosote and whistles, little did he know how long it would take to fulfill his other dream of being a garden railroad club newsletter editor. Greg's a busy dude, and he cried when Vin Scully died, but he wouldn't have it any other way.

A couple of random notes here, in no particular order:

1. Been a little busy around here lately. It seems we have a national convention coming up. Creating and maintaining the convention website and registration process has been, shall we say, challenging. I have been working with tech support here in the United States, in Ireland, Bulgaria, Ukraine, and India, and with the exception of the Bulgarians, who have been great, the rest of them have found the glitches in our set-up to be unusual, intriguing, and basically unsolvable. Fortunately, things are pretty much in order now, and as tickets for several of our events are filling up, it is time for you to get your order in, as well.

2. The convention itself will also be rather busy for me. Aside from troubleshooting and handling registration and ticket sale issues as they arise early in the week, later in the week I will be presenting two clinics and my layout will be open on encore day. Somewhere in there I will also be a bus host on a layout tour (which I am really looking forward to). The July issue of T&T is also scheduled to be released mid-week on the 5th—not sure what the plan for that will be yet.

3. And so, without sounding like a broken record echoing the pleas of others around here, we really could use some help. Best part of it all: regardless of the amount of work, it's going to be a blast. Why it's the place to be in '23!

4. With regard to our two pre-convention layout dates, sign-ups have been a bit light, so we're going to extend the time a few days for signing up to **Thursday, May 11**. On Friday the 12th I will be sending the info to our printer for postcard reminders to be sent out. You will also receive an email in advance of the May 21 and June 4 dates, as well.

5. Remember, the intent of the two open houses is to give those opening for the convention a chance to have a dry-run or two of their layouts. Everyone is encouraged to come out and show your support, especially our national convention veterans. offer observations and assistance.

6. Layout hosts: you are not expected to have a perfect layout. This is an opportunity to show where you're at, what resources you have at your disposal, and what needs to be done to get ready for the convention. It's also a time to receive affirmations and encouragement from a community that supports you. You may sign up for either or both the May 21 and June 4 dates.

7. Speaking of conventions, Lois Zell recently sent me a number of photographs Sherman had in his collection related to our first BAGRS-sponsored convention in 1993. There will be more but here's a couple on the next page to ponder and help us identify the subjects.

8. As for me, I think it's time to play with trains ...

FROM THE LOIS AND SHERMAN ZELL COLLECTION



Golden Date District 2022 Images



Images from the Bretag, Brody, Guinan, Herzog, Olsborg, Rinefort, Smith & Spillsbury RRs.



Golden Date District 2022 Images



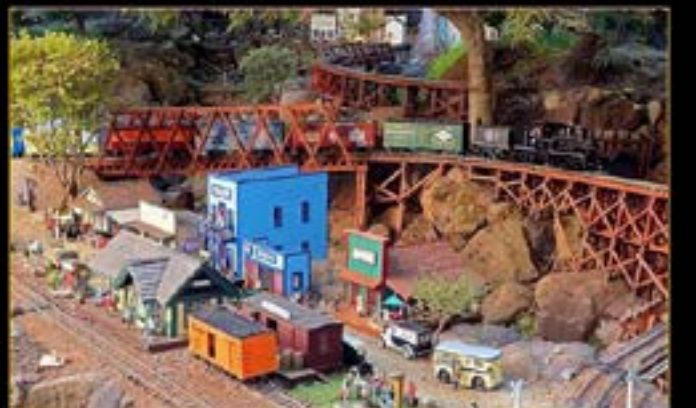
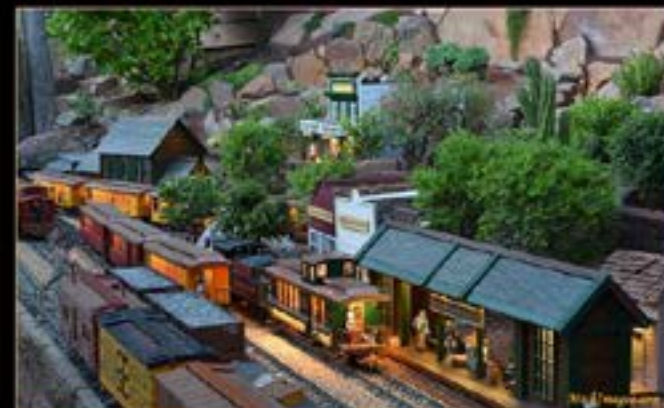
8 of the 13 Golden Gate RRs that will be open for the 2023 National Convention



Golden Date District 2022 Images



Images by Ken Brody, Russ Miller & Mick Spillsbury



NEWSLETTER SHARING

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](#)

[Denver GRS](#)

[Gold Coast GRS](#)

[Orange County GRS](#)

[Puget Sound GRS](#)

[Redwood Empire GRS](#)

[Rose City GRS](#)

[Sacramento Valley GRS](#)

[San Diego GRS](#)

[Santa Clarita Valley GRC](#)

[The Garden Whistle](#)

MEET YOUR NEW BAGRS MEMBERS

Wayne Grubbs, Cupertino, SNY/Santa Clara

Brian Parry, Walnut Creek, Diablo Valley, steamer interest

Angel Green, Madera, Outlying area, steamer interest

Brandy Jones, Mill Valley, Golden Gate

Colton Snell, Roseville, Outlying area

Richard Piasecki, San Francisco, North Bay/SF

Sasha Cox, San Francisco, North Bay/SF

Al Foley, Moraga, Diablo Valley

Daniel Brown, Aptos, Santa Cruz district

Rob Wullenjohn, Pacifica, North Peninsula

Rick Randazzo, San Jose, San Jose district

Dave Abelson, Los Gatos, Sunnyvale district



I'm not really accustomed on planning things out on paper (or the computer). I never drew a track plan for the Crystal Cove and Rose Railroad. Most of my design work goes on in my head, as I visualize different construction scenarios that I think might work. As I begin actual construction, the design evolves as I encounter and deal with the realities of the project.

Before I built my main line, I anticipated the need for some sort of arbor structure at the end of my yard that would be integrated into my layout. The exact form and function of that structure was still undetermined, but it was clear enough in my mind that I went ahead and installed a quantity of vertical 4x4 redwood posts at the end of the yard. I would figure out how to use them later. That's just the way my brain works—do the work, then figure out what to do with it later and modify it as needed.

FEATURED ARTICLE

Roger Nicholson

My newly completed garage storage and access track along my side yard was seven feet off the ground, ending in my backyard on a "bridge into the void." My main line was only two feet off the ground. As spectacular as it would be to see trains surge off the end of the bridge, it would rather quickly severely limit my ability to enjoy my trains. I could get the trains from the garage to the backyard easily enough, but I needed to somehow get from that

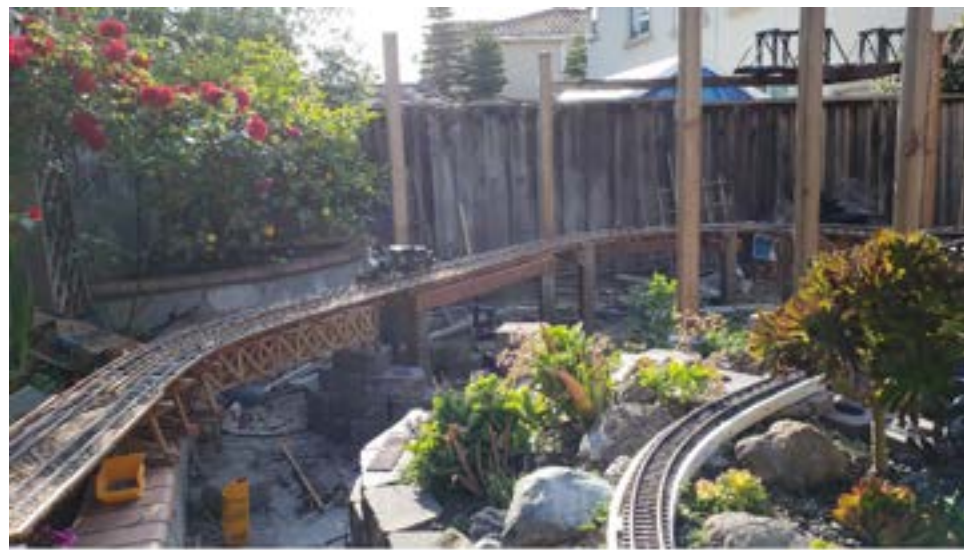


PHOTO 1

bridge up at the top down to the main line without pulling a *Back to the Future Part III* on my locomotives.

I considered various options. I knew that I needed to keep the grade to 2.5% or less, and I also knew that curves on a grade would put even more stress on the locomotives. I didn't want a solution that would result in numerous stripped gears, and I needed to be able to haul rolling stock up and down over that vertical distance. I considered running the track along the back wall across the entire length of the yard, but it would still have taken a huge distance to cover five feet vertically at 2.5% grade. I even considered building a "train elevator," but I still would have had to break trains into shorter segments in order to get them down to where they needed to be. Ultimately, I decided to go with the most obvious solution: I would build a very large helix.

I had already worked out a method for making a curved redwood trestle deck that involved using Titebond III exterior glue to laminate thin pieces of redwood together and create curved stringers (see Photo 2, left). I would then glue and nail individual ties, which created a very strong and



PHOTO 2

durable curved trestle deck. I installed horizontal supports between my vertical 4x4 posts, and then set the long segments of curved trestle deck on them. As I constructed each new trestle deck section, I joined the stringers together using glue, then filled in the gap with more ties (see Photo 3, right).

I made sure to offset the loops so that they were not right on top of one another. What I ultimately ended up with was a continuous trestle deck from top to bottom, ready for me to install track. The result was pretty impressive. I wonder what my next-door neighbor was making of all this (see Photo 4, right).

I made sure that my grades were all 2.5% or less (see Photo 5, next page).

Testing for clearance was also important. You can't have your longest or widest rolling stock bumping into everything on the helix (Photo 6, next page).

Even with offsetting the loops, there were places where two or more tracks would be directly on top of one another for some distance. I wasn't planning to hide the helix in a mountain—I was planning to integrate it into a mountain with tunnels and trestles, and much of it would remain visible. The helix would be landscaped, and I needed to figure out how to "stack track" in that landscape in places where it would be visible. There wasn't really a prototype for this type



PHOTO 3



PHOTO 4



PHOTO 5

As an interesting note, at the time I built the helix, I was still using track power that was feout from a transformer in the garage. I would sometimes have to break trains up in order to get all of the rolling stock back up to the garage. When I eventually switched to Lithium-



PHOTO 6

of thing that I could copy. So, I took some inspiration from the old wooden snow sheds that used to be up on Donner Pass and came up with a "stackable" wooden structure. It was strong, it didn't flex, and it did the job in the places where I absolutely couldn't avoid stacking the tracks where they were visible (see Photo 7, next page).

The final results exceeded my expectations. I was now able to run trains all the way from my garage down to the main line without taking the trains apart and carrying them. Plus it's rather mesmerizing to watch trains go up or down the helix.

lon battery power, I found that I had more power to pull trains up the helix than I did before. Since then, I've never had to break a train up to get it up the helix. Now, when someone stops by and wants to see the railroad, it only takes me a few minutes to run a train out from the garage and down to the main line.

Although the helix was now functional, it wasn't by any means finished. I had many interesting ideas about landscaping it. But for now, the "void" between my garage storage and my main line had been filled.





ALL STEAMED UP ...

A true Renaissance man if ever there was one, **Richard Murray** has been the BAGRS coordinator of live steam events for about twelve years. He has written many "Plant of the Month" articles over the years, knows a thing or two about British cars, and has recently taken on the detailed art of bonsai. A retired dentist, born and raised in San Francisco, Richard has been married to Melinda Murray for 53 years.

Easter @ Hiller

by Richard Murray

I saw the Easter bunny! I saw the Easter bunny! A couple thousand other people also saw the Easter Bunny. It first flew overhead in a helicopter and circled the airfield several times before landing. It waved to me personally. I was sure his wave was meant for just me, even though there were hundreds of people all around me. Everybody was excited to see him. Parents were lifting their small children onto their shoulders to get a better view. He certainly looked like a happy fellow. Surprisingly, he didn't have any Easter eggs. I later found out that inside Hiller, he gave away some plastic eggs to children. Because of the heavy crowds, he needed to be held tightly and guided by one of Hiller's organizers. Or... he was not eating his carrots and couldn't see very well. Some non-believer even swore that he was wearing a rented costume which covered his eyes. Certainly he was much bigger than any bunny my dog has ever chased. Just as certainly, he didn't hop like any bunny I have ever seen. I'm sure all of it can be explained. Anyway, once he got through the crowds and into the Hiller building, he sat down on a chair with scores of balloons all around him. It was very festive looking. Kiddies and their parents all lined up for photos with the Easter bunny. I wasn't able to hear what he told all the kiddies, but perhaps he told them to eat their salads, especially their carrots. He gave each of the kiddies a package of goodies. Given the reproductive habits of bunnies, I'm sure the Easter bunny will be around for many years.

While the Easter bunny was entertaining the kiddies and parents, the steamers were also entertaining the kiddies and parents. We had the biggest turnout of visitors since the old days of Maker Faire. We were surrounded by visitors too deep for much of the day. We gave out every one of the club's coupon cards offering 2 for 1 admissions on the public day of the National Convention. We also hung our big banner advertising the National Convention.

Many of the steamers bring an extra engine just in case one engine happens to non-perform, to vary the experience of running, or to display an interesting engine. Jim Goss brought three engines, all built by Bill Allen: The Blue Comet, A Garrett, and a Mogul. He ran the Blue Comet and the Mogul. Both of those engines are quite powerful. One of the cars that the Mogul pulled was a bubble making car. It is a favorite car for the kiddies because they always love to chase the bubbles around the track. The huge Garrett was shown for display purposes along with its very nice custom wooden case that Jim built.

Eric Child brought a Forney that he was having trouble lighting. He was being very persistent in his attempts even after 5-10 minutes. Finally, another steamer saw Eric needed some help. It seems that the gas throttle was set so low the fire stayed quietly in the smokebox with the possibility of serious damage. After increasing the gas flow substantially, the fire was much greater. Then, after slowly reducing the gas, the fire was able to jump back from the chimney box to under the boiler where the fire belongs. If only all steam problems could be solved so easily.

We had one member who hadn't been to a live steam event in a couple years. It was good to see him, Chris Gathard. He brought a Ruby. Ken Mitchrone also brought a Ruby, to which he added a fancy tender. So the two of them did a doubleheader, which worked fine until one of them prematurely ran out of fuel. One Ruby pushing another is not a successful procedure, so they ended the run.

Rob Lenicheck brought an Accucraft T-12, a relatively rare engine. It looks much like a C-18 but with 2 axles for the pilot instead of 1. Of course, Rob, being Rob, converted it to coal firing.

Tim and Philip Boles, the father and son duo, each brought their 7/8 scale Accucraft Forney. Tim brought the butane fired one and Phillip brought the coal fired one. Tim also brought an Accucraft 2 cylinder Shay, which gave off a nice plume.

Maybe next year the Easter bunny will bring, instead of plastic eggs, a live steam engine.



The Easter bunny is guided through the crowd.

Bob Armstrong brought our newest live steamer, Ed. It later demonstrated that it can fly a bit.





Bill Mansell's scratch built engine. It was based on the ones made by the De Winton Co for the Penrhyn slate quarry in North Wales in the late 1800s.



Eric Childs overcame the Forney's initial trouble of getting the fire lit.

Typical of the heavy crowds seen much of the day.



The author's 1/32 Accucraft Adam's Radial engine pulled 3 brass coaches built in England 30 years ago. Note that the coaches have only 4 wheels.



Tim Boles' Accucraft Shay gave off consistent plumes.



Two Rubys double-headed and were owned by Chris Gathard and Ken Mitchrone.



Jim Goss showed off the biggest engine of the day, a Garrett.



Bob Trabucco has steam up and is ready to open the steam throttle of his Accucraft Mogul.

LIVE STEAM CALENDAR

Saturday/Sunday, June 17-18, 2023		Roaring Camp
July 6-8, 2023	NGRC 2023	Santa Clara
July 12-16, 2023	National Summer Steam Up	Lodi
Saturday/Sunday, Sept. 2-3, 2023		Ardenwood



POSTCARDS OF THE PAST

Retired from the publishing industry, and back after a well-deserved sabbatical, **Bill Ralph** knows a thing or two about amusement parks and postcards. He is also a highly-skilled garden railroad creator. Working with brother Jim Ralph, the Porcupine Gulch Railroad, located in Fremont, California, was selected by Garden Railways Magazine as the Best Small Railroad in 2016 and rightfully so.



UNIVERSAL HOLLYWOOD'S RUNAWAY TRAIN

Ever since Carl Laemmle opened his Universal City to the public to see the interworkings of a movie studio in 1915, guests have been pouring into the San Fernando Valley destination by the millions to see the historic back lot, film sets, potential star sightings, and signature staged events and attractions. For a nickle, early day guests were encouraged to roam the extensive former Taylor Ranch, purchase fresh produce, and sit on wooden bleachers to watch the action on various sets while enjoying a chicken box lunch. Public tours were discontinued around 1930 because the increased noise and, the studio sound stage buildings were not sufficiently sound proofed. Tours were not resumed until 1964 following the purchase of Universal Pictures by Music Corporation of America. Eager to increase profit's, MCA opened the studio commissary to the public and initiated tours of stars' dressing rooms and peeks of live production from the comfort of narrated "Glamour Trams." As on-location shooting increased and fewer movies were being filmed on the lot, tram tours were ramped up with staged attractions including a Mexican village flash flood and the parting of the sea threatening to swamp trams, the near miss of styrofoam rock slide, a dizzying revolving tunnel and heart stopping collapsing bridge. In the studio's western set, a gonging wig wag signal warns of a runaway steam locomotive with glaring headlamp and screeching brakes that narrowly misses a certain collision with a tram full of guests, which has become stuck in the tracks. The staged realistic Runaway Train attraction that frightened tram riders between 1974 and 1985 was actually a replica steam loco constructed by the Universal Studio's Special Effects Department that was set in motion with compressed air. No longer a back lot superstar, the slowly weathering faux #67 iron horse is now a static prop that was upstaged by an oversize gorilla nearly forty years ago.

CIRCA 1970'S POSTCARD FROM THE COLLECTION OF BILL RALPH



DAVE'S CORNER ...

Born and raised in San Francisco, **Dave Frediani** moved to Sonora in the early 1970s. Married for 50 years to his best friend Juanita, Dave once purchased an Accucraft 7/8 scale Emma locomotive, soon realized no one supplied 7/8 scale rolling stock, so he started building it himself, and hasn't stopped.

Freelancing Gone Wild

After building freelance rolling stock and motorcars in 7/8 scale for some time now, every once in a while I let my imagination get the best of me.

I really enjoy seeing the masters of scale model builders and try to use their skills in a slightly different way.

After last month's article of the two 7/8 scale passenger cars, I had some time on my hands and decided to build something a little different. So off to the shop I went to see what I could come up with.

The first thing I did was to go through my box of styrene scraps to see what I had to work with. Then, I searched on the internet to try to get an idea of something new to build. I came up with nothing.

About two or three months ago, I built an odd looking 7/8 scale box cab and thought of building another one, but once again that didn't interest me.



First odd looking 7/8 scale box cab



Back in high school many years ago, I had a 1950 Chevrolet with a turtle back end or fastback as they're called today. So I thought why not build a motorcar with a turtle back end.

I had no idea what it was going to look like. I came up with many different drawings, but none of them were what I was looking for. Then after talking with some friends and a few sleepless nights, I came up with this.

The new 7/8 scale motorcar was going to be built out of 1/8" and 1/16" styrene and its measurements would end up being 10-1/2" long, by 3-1/2" wide, by 6-1/2" high.

For the power unit, I used an LGB 0-4-0 motor block that I changed to battery power and one of my small R/C units that uses a rechargeable nine volt battery. With the nine volt battery, the motorcar will run for about 45 minutes. It takes about 30 minutes to recharge the nine volt batteries.



Start of new 7/8 scale motorcar



Motor block installed



Floor and sides assembled



Turtle back roof installed



Windows trimmed and engine cowling in place



Small R/C board



R/C control board wired to motor and battery

The last two photos shows the motorcar almost finished, just needing paint and door handles installed, This has been a fun build. I test ran the car for over fifty minutes on one charge of the nine volt rechargeable battery. Not bad for a nine volt battery.



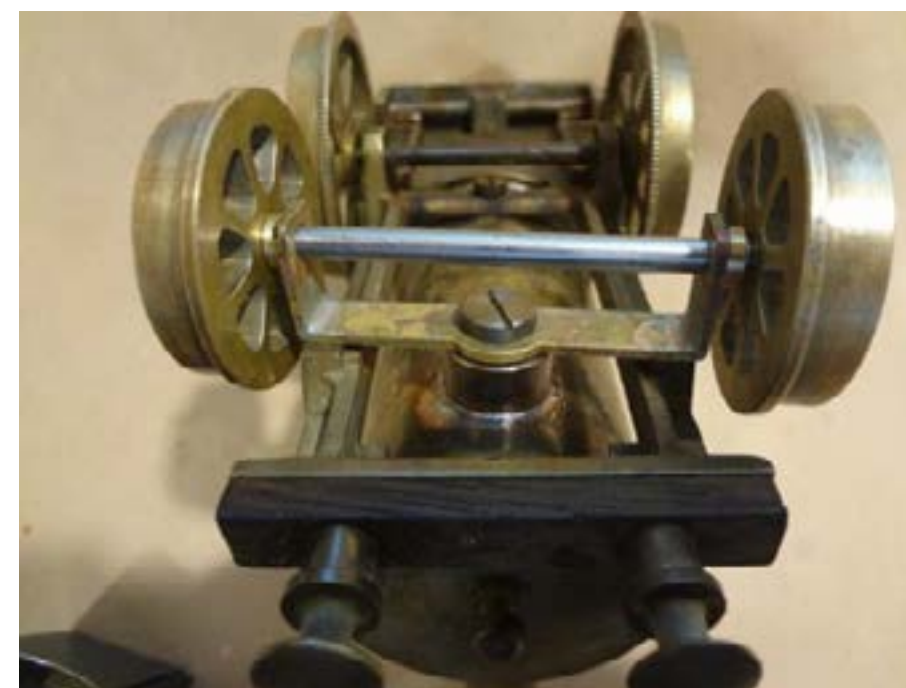
EAST DEVIL HILLS MODELING GROUP

Formerly of Fremont, California, **Henner Meinhold** now resides in Berlin, Germany. Like clockwork, Henner always submits his monthly contribution on time, although sometimes he's working with German time. The East Devil Hills Modeling Group meets regularly to create, collaborate, and share incredibly-machined models.

Dennis continued with the restoration of his Birmingham dribbler. He added the new front wheels and aged them to match the rest of the loco:

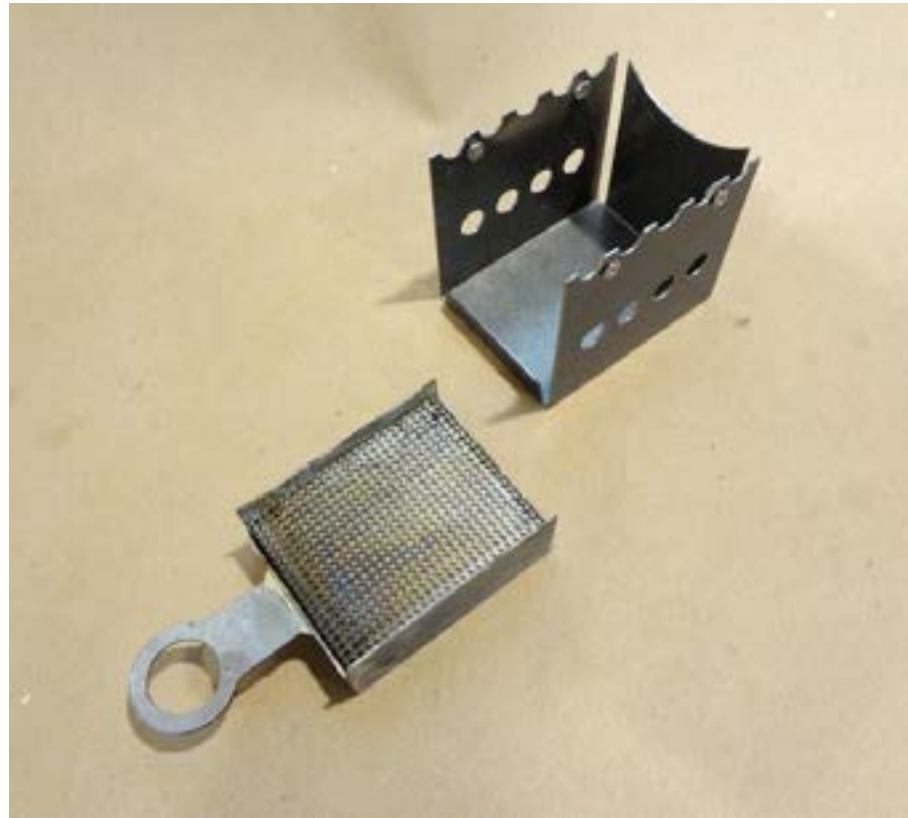


He then mounted them on the yoke with the "steering":



He designed and built a new burner box. Here in the flat (together with the rest of the new parts):

And folded up:



His loco now looks very similar to the "prototype":



Unfortunately the burner is not yet up to the task, so Dennis is improving the design.

Bill Allen found some time to work on his "Trojan." Here a view of the boiler front with the tubes and the special nut to attach the smokestack. The smokebox door is again a team work with a CNC milled "back plate" and the rest built up by Bill:



Here the current status of this magnificent Mallet:



Rob Lenicheck made progress on his Darjeeling:



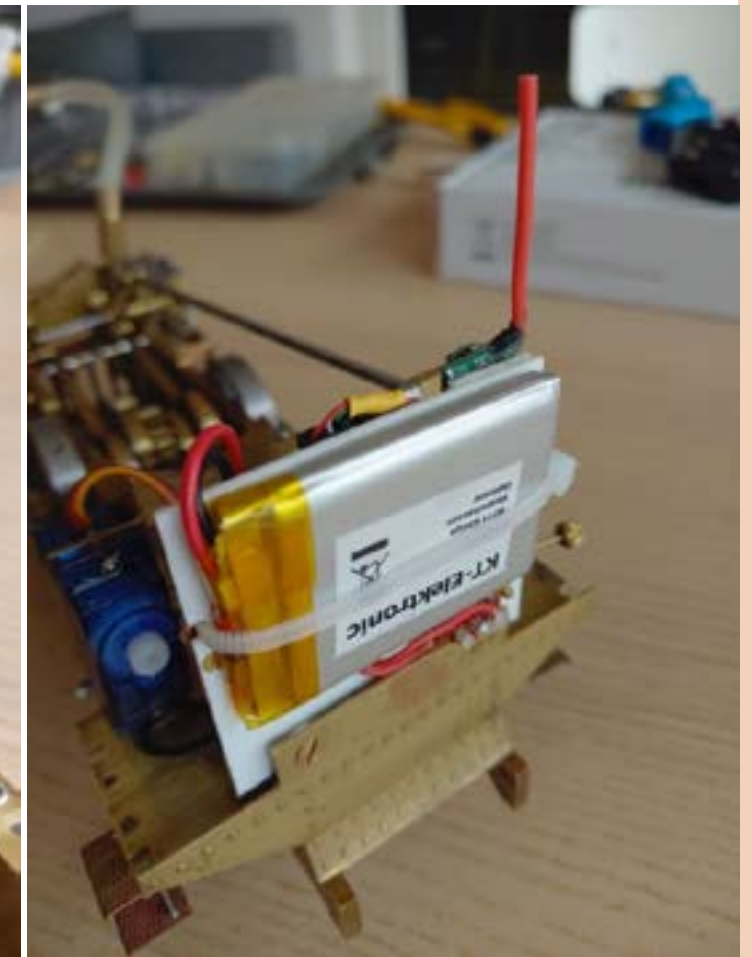
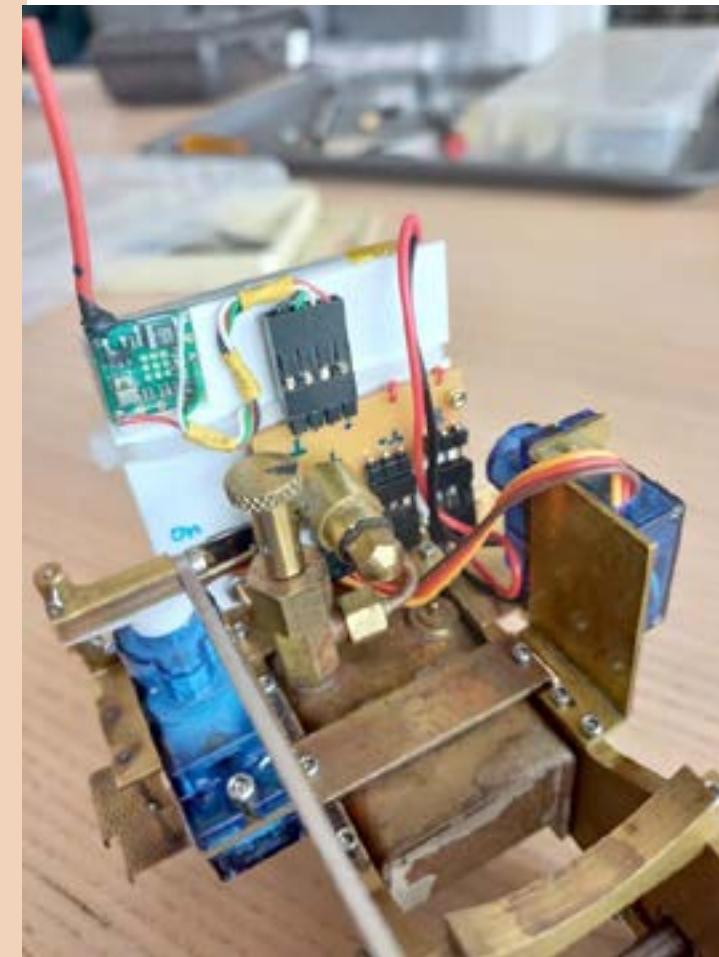
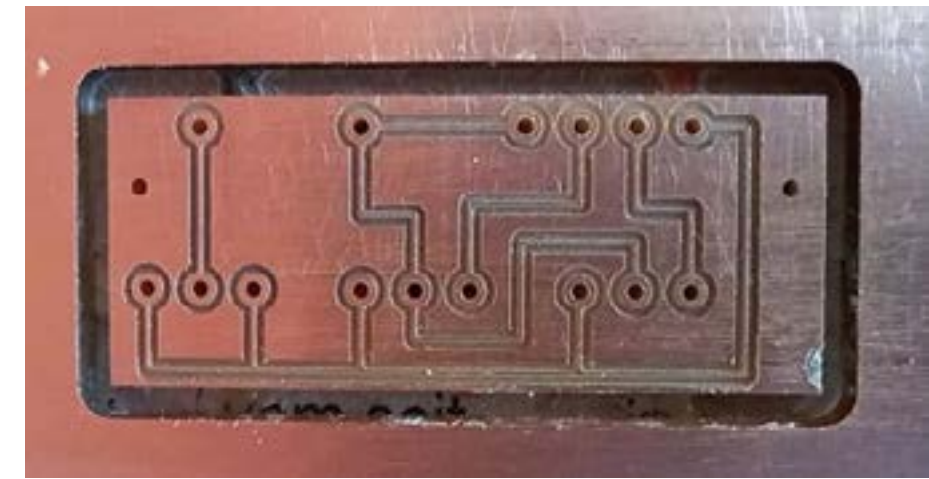
And



Note the excellent craftsmanship with a mixture of handmade, machined and 3D printed parts.

I finally installed RC in my rack loco. As the space was very limited, I had to learn some new trades. One of them was to CNC mill a printed circuit board for a distribution panel (photo next page)

And crimping to shorten the servo leads. The RC components had to fit between the burner and back of the cab. It required a micro receiver and a single cell flat Li-battery (photo next page).



The servos are special low voltage types. Tests with RC and compressed air were successful. Next step is testing and running the loco with steam.

Henner

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CALENDAR

May 21, 2023	Pre-Convention Open House	various
June 4, 2023	Pre-Convention Open House	various
July 1-8, 2023	38th NGRC	Santa Clara and Beyond

LIVE STEAM CALENDAR

Saturday/Sunday, June 17-18, 2023		Roaring Camp
July 6-8, 2023	NGRC 2023	Santa Clara
July 12-16, 2023	National Summer Steam Up	Lodi
Saturday/Sunday, Sept. 2-3, 2023		Ardenwood

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Last month saw several people who correctly identified the Sacramento Union Pacific station but all the accolades and honors goes to Bryce Reynolds. Honorable mentions to Richard Murray and Mike McKenna. So, where might you find this beauty? Okay, here's a hint: the trestle is still in use today but the photo is circa 1950s. The first person to correctly answer wins the praise and accolades of the entire garden railway community ... and a mention in the next issue.

TRELLIS AND TRESTLE

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