BAY AREA GARDEN RAILWAY SOCIETY

TRELLIS AND TRESTLE

OCTOBER 2024

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- ***Plus, our regular features!***

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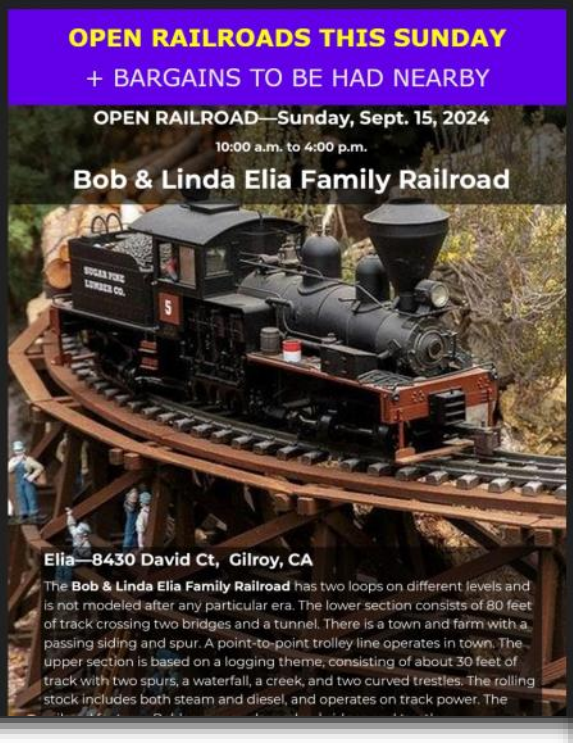
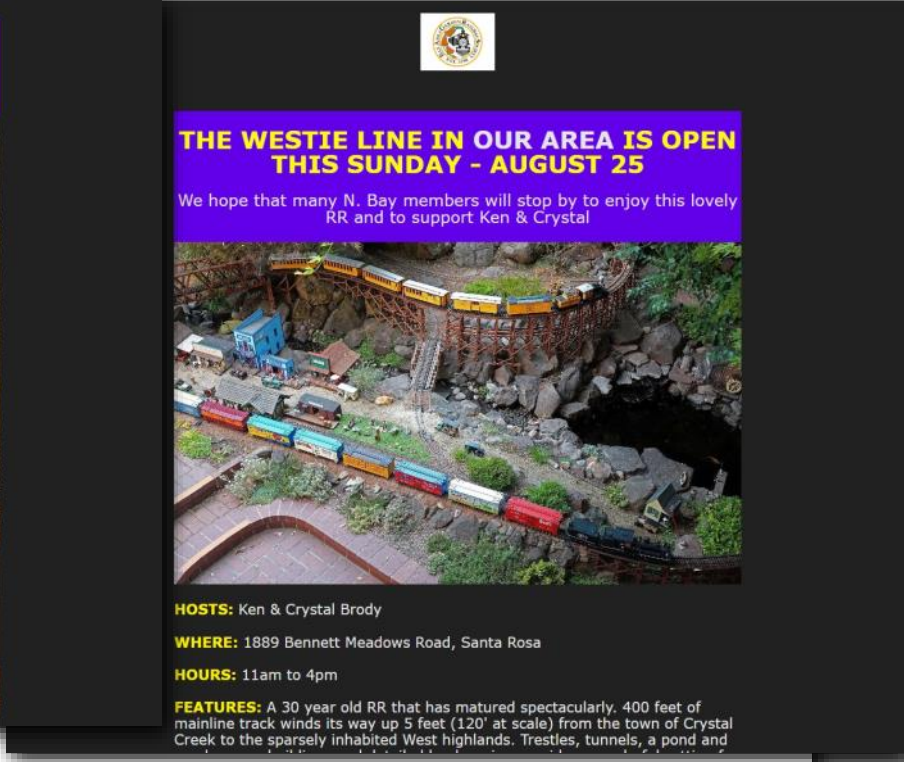
President's Perspectives

Mick Spilsbury is the BAGRS Board President and Marketing Director and operates the BS Ventures' Black Canyon Railroad.

August and September were hectic months. After spending July in Alaska, I had three weeks to finish my fiftieth wedding anniversary train, which I started planning in March. It had to be ready for an anniversary party at my house masterminded by my son, Michael and daughter, Emma on July 24. There is nothing like an unmovable deadline to get the gears rolling. The train passed its final test runs on July 17 and was a big hit on the 24th. The full story of the project may well appear in a future edition of *T&T*.

Coordinating the fall open railroad schedule was the priority in late July and the first half of August. It is always an iterative process and quite time-consuming, but the schedule came together, and open railroad details are being shared in *T&T* and again via emails four or five days before each open railroad, like this:





Then it was time to turn attention to access testing of the new BAGRS website, a much more complex undertaking than coordinating open railroads because there are far more moving parts.

- Members use different devices, different types of computers, tablets, and phones.
- Members use different web browsers like Chrome, Safari, Firefox, and Edge

Combine the above two points and there are many access permutations. And if that was not enough, browsers do not follow the same protocols as each other.

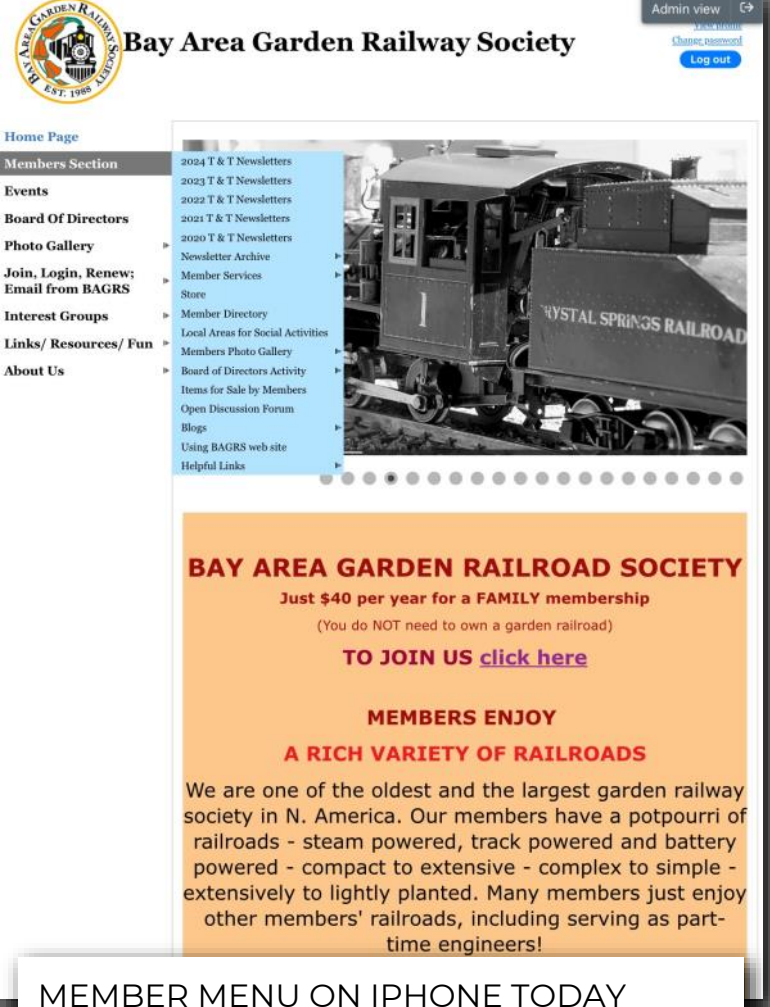
14 generous members participated in the testing—Thank You! Most permutations worked, but, of course, a few did not. We had to dig into the latter to diagnose why they did not work and how to get them to work

At the end of four weeks of testing, we were satisfied that most members would be able to access the new website without any problems, and we are ready to problem solve with the members who cannot.

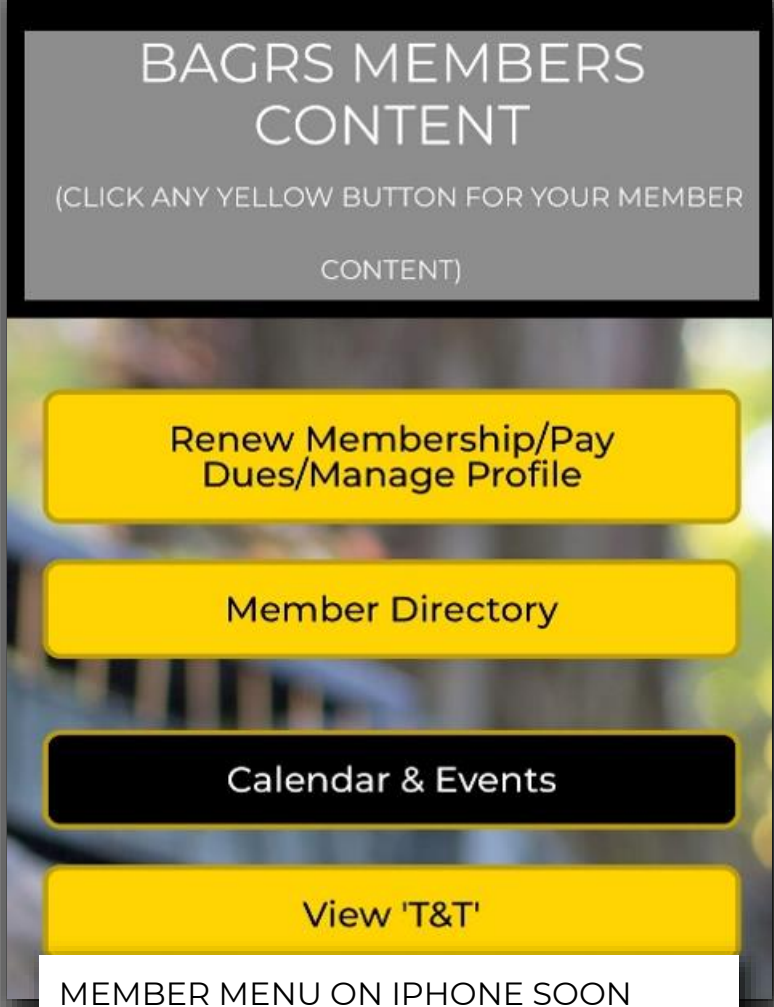
Tasks remaining are:

- Update the test site with recent information, for example, recent copies of *T&T* and Board minutes.
- Test site updating and editing instructions so we are prepared to make updates, so the site stays current unlike the existing website today!

We expect to complete those tasks by the middle of October.



MEMBER MENU ON IPHONE TODAY



MEMBER MENU ON IPHONE SOON

The new site is simpler and less cluttered than our current site. Navigating from one member function to another is straightforward and easier to do on a computer and much easier on a phone or tablet because we will not need to read microtype.

Nonetheless, it will be a new experience for all of us. That is why there will be very simple notes that will work for most members and more comprehensive notes for other members. There will also be a "GET HELP" feature, not exactly instant chat or a 24 hour hotline, but a way to get questions answered and problems solved.

Look for email updates about the new website this month. ■

From the Editor's Desk

Roger Nicholson lives in Union City, California, and operates the *Crystal Cove & Rose Railroad*.

On the cover: This precariously balanced rock, "Thor's Hammer," has held its position on the *Crystal Cove and Rose Railroad* for several years now, and has endured wind and rain without moving at bit. Want to know why? Well, there's an article in this issue about how I did it.

I've promoted Jim Ralph's articles to "Regular Feature." I mean . . . he keeps writing them, so why not?

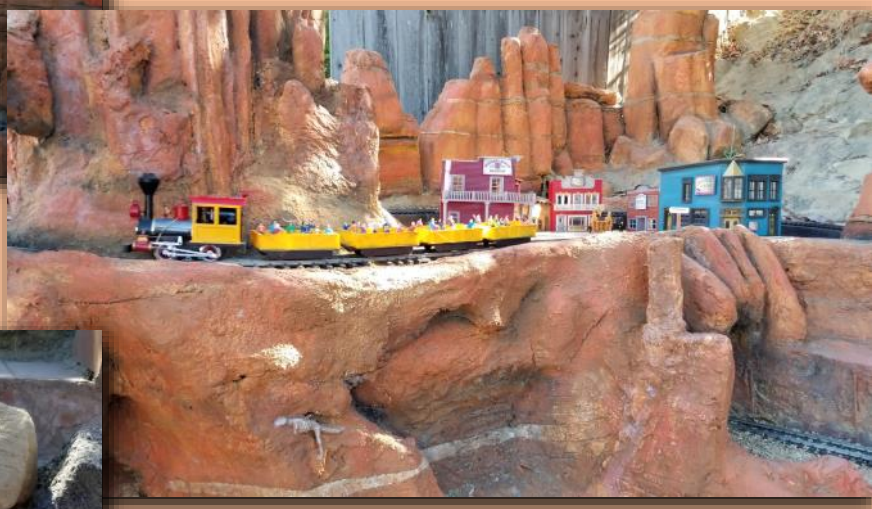
Mountains and rocks and concrete . . . Oh my! Yes, this is the issue to read if you want to know how to build large, heavy, tall monstrous objects in your backyard that will surely increase the resale value of your home.

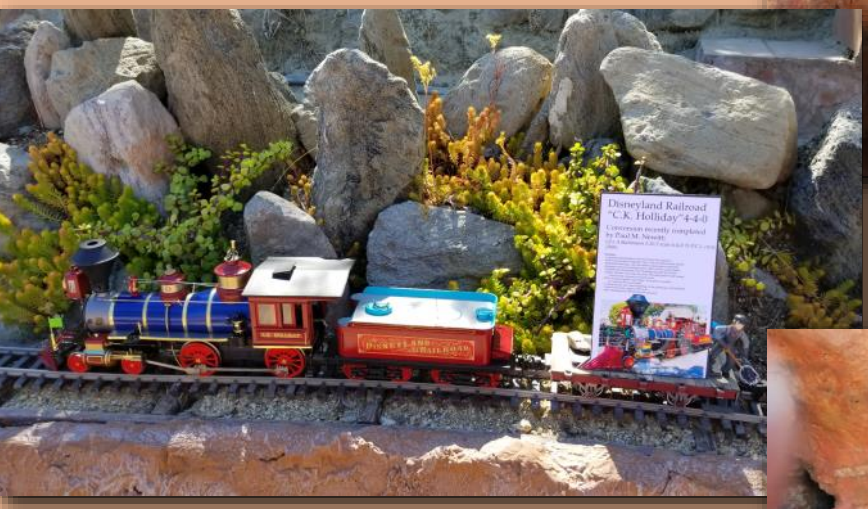
I attended a nighttime operating session on Ray Turner's Mystic Mountain Railroad. One of my 3-D printed SW 1500 locomotives even participated a bit. Is this perhaps the first diesel that has ever operated on the *Mystic Mountain*? More on Ray's operating session in the "Member Updates" section. Here's a video of my experience:

Crystal Cove and Rose #3474 EMD SW 1500 visits the Mystic Mountain Railroad on 4 Sep 2024

Paul M. Newitt's article, (reprinted from the May and June 2017 issues of the *Trellis & Trestle*), shows the construction of the scenery on Kermit Paul's *Lone Pine and Tonopah RR—Garden Division*. Unfortunately, we no longer have the opportunity to view this amazing railroad. Kermit Paul also had an incredible indoor HO layout. Much of the HO equipment went to Paul Newitt, and the outdoor track was removed, but rumor has it that the mountains may remain (and could remain for years to come!).

I was fortunate enough to have visited the *Lone Pine and Tonopah* railroad once in July 2017, so I will share a few of my own photos here. Here is a brief look at what once was. ■





Open House Schedule for September/October 2024

BAGRS Open Railroad Schedule - Fall 2024															
Who	Sat 8.24	Sun 8.25	Sat 9.7	9.8	9.14	Sun 9.15	Sat 9.21	Sun 9.22	10.5	Sun 10.6	Sat 10.19	Sun 10.20	Sat 10.26	Zip	City
Ackerknecht														95060	Santa Cruz
Brody														95405	Santa Rosa
Murray														94030	Millbrae
Ronconi														94040	Mountain View
Robert Elia														95020	Gilroy
Hill (Kevin)														95023	Hollister
BAGRS Steamers														Los Altos History Museum	
Elam														94002	Belmont
Squiers														94019	Half Moon Bay
Paterson														94086	Sunnyvale
Nagata														94087	Sunnyvale
Turner														95127	San Jose
Spilsbury														94901	San Rafael
Smith (Steve)														94925	Corte Madera
Nicholson														94587	Union City

Welcome New Members

We would like to welcome BAGRS' newest members and invite you to tell us something about yourself. We are happy that you decided to join us, and we hope that you will enjoy getting to know other members.

Remember, you do *not* have to have a garden railroad to participate in the club or have to contribute to BAGRS or the *Trellis & Trestle*—approximately half our members do not have their own railroad. Also, if I get some information wrong or misspell your name, please let me know and I'll take care of it.

If you would like to submit an article, member update, fun train-related thing you saw while traveling, open house you visited, photographs, videos, or have any questions or corrections, please contact me **(Roger Nicholson) at communications@bagrs.org**.

- **Richard Sackmann, Kathryn Keaty.** Pleasanton, CA. Joined September 1, 2024.

OPEN RAILROAD—Sunday, October 6, 2024

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

White Wolf Logging Railroad

Elam—2203 Pullman Ave, Belmont, CA

The **White Wolf Logging Railroad** is inspired by the logging railroads of the late nineteenth century. The overall goal has been to fit the railroad into the natural grade of the yard, as we are on a hillside. The average grade of the finished railroad is about 5 percent. The layout features several bridges, a grade loop, tunnels and lots of trestles. Locomotives are steam era geared locos using battery power and AirWire control. Note: layout is at bottom of hill accessed by stairs and gravel paths. Not recommended for mobility limited folks.

Photo by Jeff Namba

OPEN RAILROAD—Sunday, October 6, 2024

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Pino Grande Railroad

Squiers—229 Myrtle St, Half Moon Bay, CA

The **Pino Grande Railroad** was inspired by Michigan-California Lumber company ***Pino Grande***, with steep "mountain" climb for geared engines (4-foot radius) and small circle/ellipse (5-foot radius) in "camp." Recently remodeled.

OPEN RAILROAD—Saturday, October 19, 2024

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

BS Railroad

Paterson—1064 Cassia Way, Sunnyvale, CA

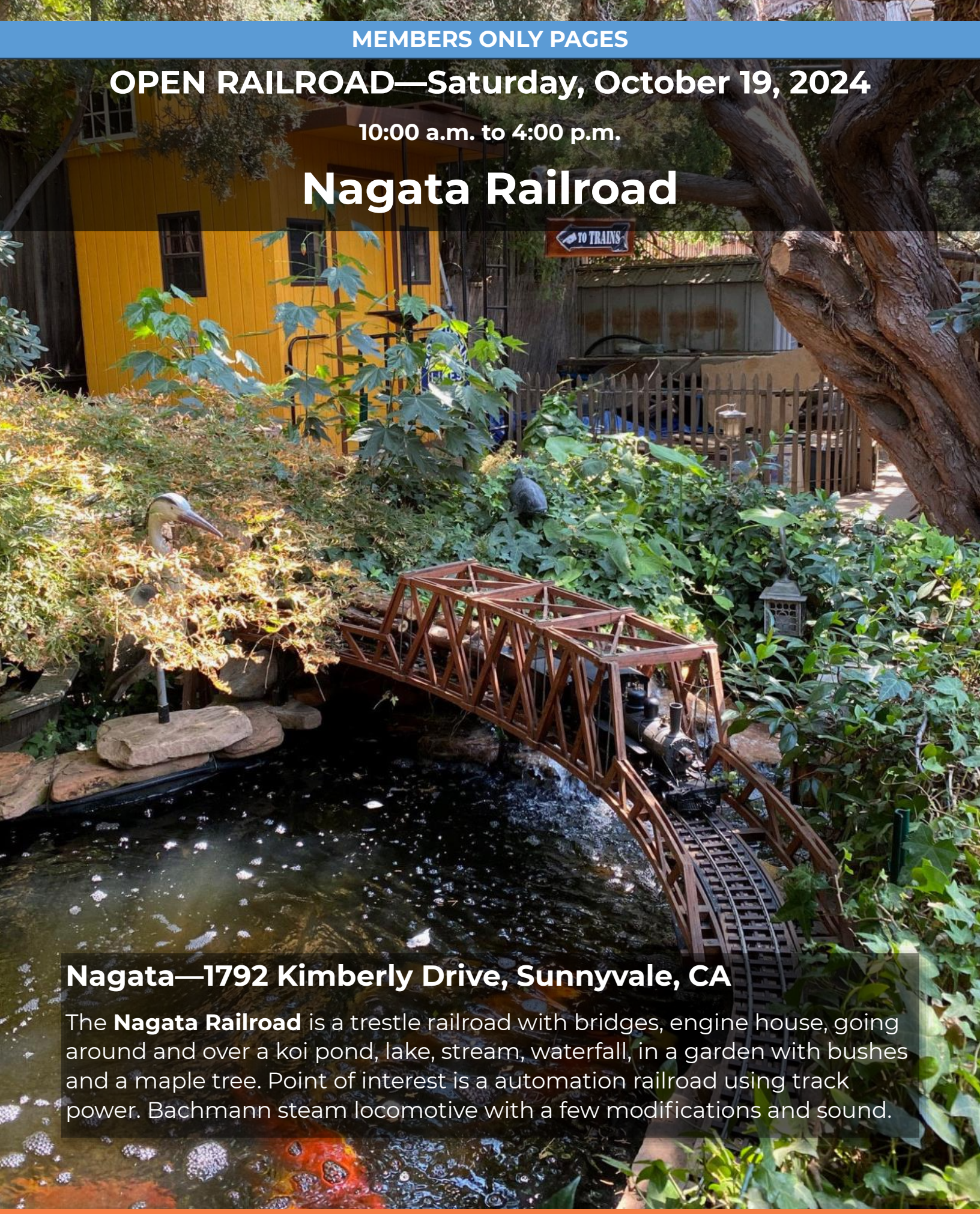
The **BSRR** has undergone multiple iteration over 33 years; the most recent being an ongoing effort started in 2020 to repair drought damage. Originally established in 1989, the BSRR has over 250 feet of non-electrified track, minimum radius 4' & 2% grade. Board at Main Street and ride the rails through the yard, around a pond fed by a stream, and past a series of dioramas that are Disney inspired, and historical sights. All structures are either kit bashed or scratch built. Whimsy and short trains reign.

Photo by Jeff Namba

OPEN RAILROAD—Saturday, October 19, 2024

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Nagata Railroad



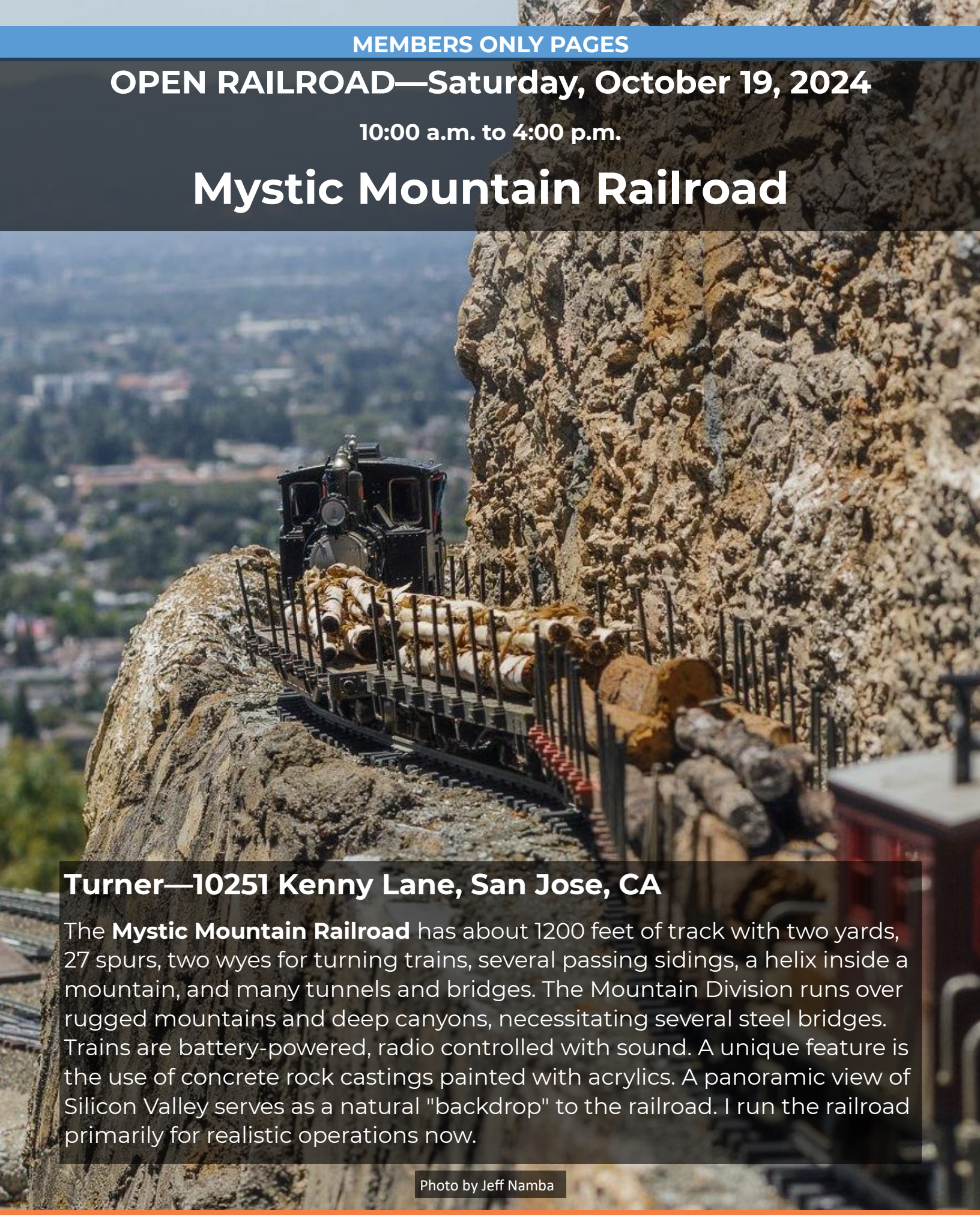
Nagata—1792 Kimberly Drive, Sunnyvale, CA

The **Nagata Railroad** is a trestle railroad with bridges, engine house, going around and over a koi pond, lake, stream, waterfall, in a garden with bushes and a maple tree. Point of interest is a automation railroad using track power. Bachmann steam locomotive with a few modifications and sound.

OPEN RAILROAD—Saturday, October 19, 2024

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Mystic Mountain Railroad



Turner—10251 Kenny Lane, San Jose, CA

The **Mystic Mountain Railroad** has about 1200 feet of track with two yards, 27 spurs, two wyes for turning trains, several passing sidings, a helix inside a mountain, and many tunnels and bridges. The Mountain Division runs over rugged mountains and deep canyons, necessitating several steel bridges. Trains are battery-powered, radio controlled with sound. A unique feature is the use of concrete rock castings painted with acrylics. A panoramic view of Silicon Valley serves as a natural "backdrop" to the railroad. I run the railroad primarily for realistic operations now.

Photo by Jeff Namba

OPEN RAILROAD—Sunday, October 20, 2024

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

BS Ventures' Black Canyon Railroad

Spilsbury—35 Bradcliff Court, San Rafael, CA

The Black Canyon RR, centerpiece of the mythical Baron Spilsbury's BS Ventures Empire in 1899, has some new features. The most obvious is a five stage 'New Victoria Waterfall' that falls a scale 150 feet. A third track on the 100-foot main line straightaway and a new passing track near the waterfall add operating flexibility. A new charging station ensures the fleet of battery-powered locos are ready to run. A surprise (to Liz) Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary Train is scheduled for its first public appearance and may be pulled by a new Accucraft Consolidation if it arrives on time. For more details of the RR and the BS backstory visit the Baron's new website at www.BSRR.net.

See this railroad on YouTube: Black Canyon Railroad - 2023 NGRC Preview

OPEN RAILROAD—Sunday, October 20, 2024

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Vista del Bahia Railway

Smith—17 Balclutha Drive, Corte Madera, CA

The **Vista del Bahia Railway** runs through lush gardens, over a river, and past a working vineyard, and is perfectly aligned for taking photographs against an unobstructed Mt. Tamalpais background. The railway has a fully automated block system including signals, sidings, and trackside features. A cable car line runs a Powell & Hyde style car, with two fully automated turntables, one on each end. "Two bells"! The most recent addition is a separate, fully automated Mt. Tamalpais Railway. A Shay pushes gravity cars up the steep hill to the Mt. Tam Tavern, then launches them off the top one by one to coast "the crookedest railway in the world" down to Mill Valley station.

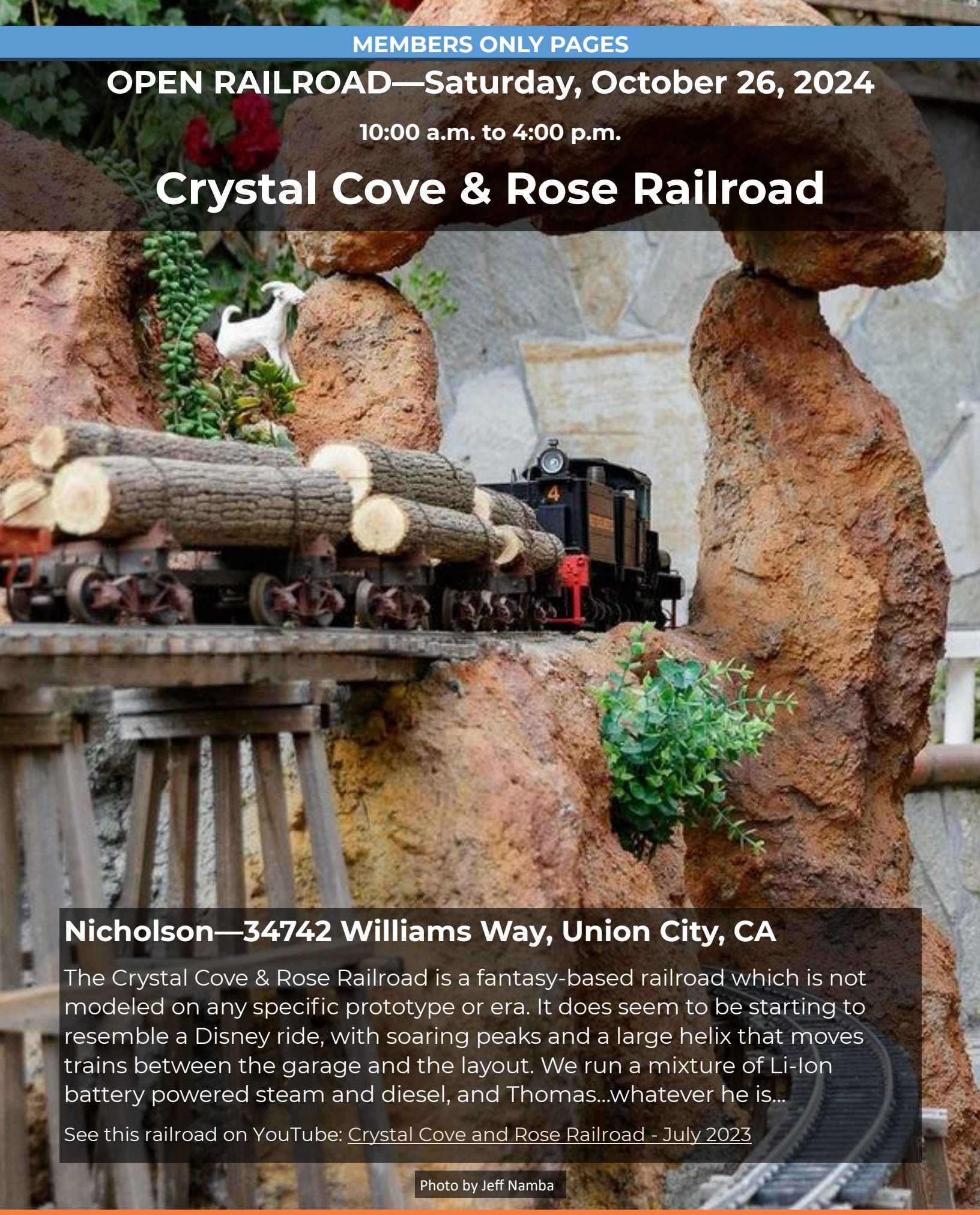
See this railroad on YouTube: Vista del Bahia Railway - 2023 NGRC Preview

Photo by Jeff Namba

OPEN RAILROAD—Saturday, October 26, 2024

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Crystal Cove & Rose Railroad



Nicholson—34742 Williams Way, Union City, CA

The Crystal Cove & Rose Railroad is a fantasy-based railroad which is not modeled on any specific prototype or era. It does seem to be starting to resemble a Disney ride, with soaring peaks and a large helix that moves trains between the garage and the layout. We run a mixture of Li-Ion battery powered steam and diesel, and Thomas...whatever he is...

See this railroad on YouTube: Crystal Cove and Rose Railroad - July 2023

Photo by Jeff Namba

Making my Matterhorn for the Tri-Valley Railroad

By Larry Silverman

On the European side of my layout, I had an unfinished area that was originally designed to make a mountain—this turned into my designing my Swiss Matterhorn.

As I am no longer able to actually do any construction, I asked Lote, who is my concrete and welding expert, to assist me in following through with my design to build my Matterhorn.

I first purchased the following items:

- Concrete mix
- Rebar-various sizes
- 1” chicken wire mesh
- Shade cloth fabric (505)
- Stucco mix (Fibered Stucco)
- Concrete stain—various colors
- Enamel glossy white paint

Original hill site to make my mountain—The Matterhorn

Below are some photos of Lote constructing the mountain. Note that he has never attempted to do anything like this before, but with my help, here are photos of it. The Matterhorn took millions of years to appear, but he and I built it in less than a month.

Rebar set in concrete mix

Rebar being cut and welded to make the approximate shape

Placing the chicken wire over the rebar's rough form to make a more accurate shape

Applying the stucco dipped shade cloth fabric

Adding more stucco to further shape the mountain

Continuing to shape the mountain with final grooves and flat areas

Using various techniques such as wrinkled aluminum foil on the wet stucco and choosing the appropriate stain colors

We painted the entire stuccoed mountain with white enamel

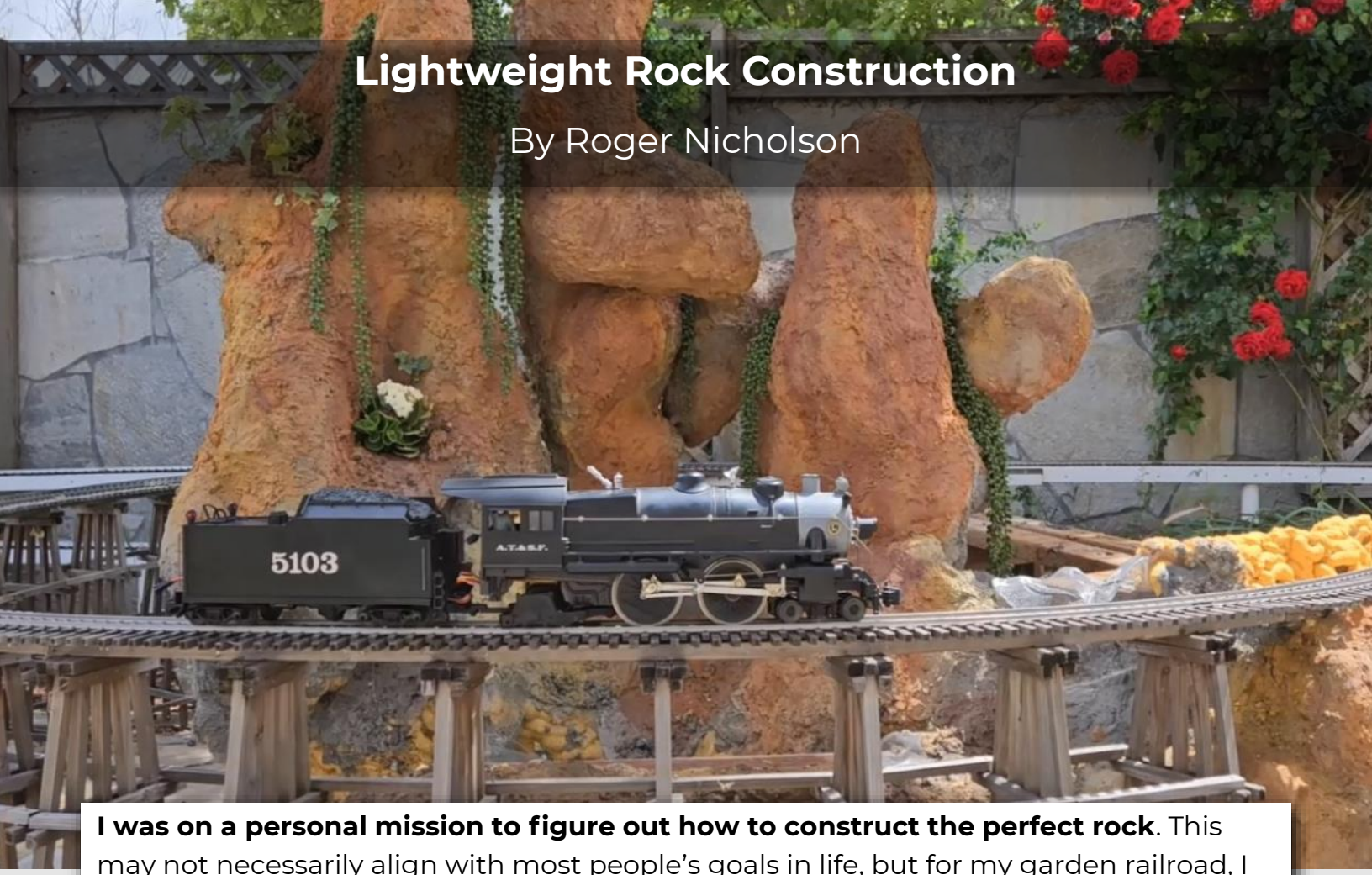
After allowing the stucco to dry for at least 2 weeks, we stained the entire mountain with the appropriate color stain

Re-painting areas with white enamel to show as snow and applying the diamond glitter while it is wet

The completed Matterhorn ■

Lightweight Rock Construction

By Roger Nicholson



I was on a personal mission to figure out how to construct the perfect rock. This may not necessarily align with most people's goals in life, but for my garden railroad, I wanted to build something in my backyard that reached for the sky, but didn't weigh a ton.

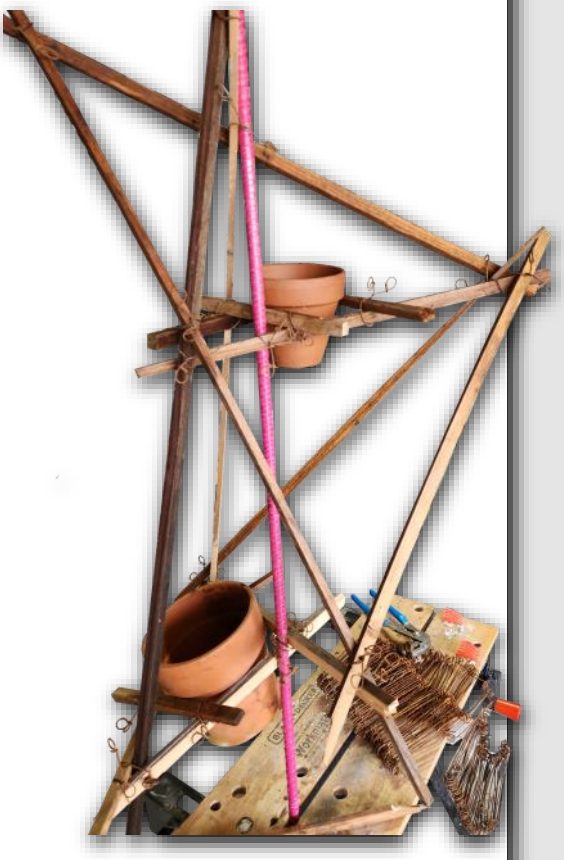
During construction of the *Crystal Cove and Rose*, I hauled in a large quantity of moss rock and various other types of rock that I had obtained for free on Craigslist. I like the look of the real rocks, and stacking them produced satisfactory results, but I could only stack the rocks so high. I could not achieve the soaring rockwork that I desired.

In my N-scale and HO-scale days, I built mountains out of screen covered with plaster soaked paper towels. It created a hollow mountain with a "hard shell" which could be stained or painted to look like rock. I decided that I wanted to achieve something similar that could stand up to the weather outdoors. Obviously plaster was not a candidate. The only logical choice appeared to be cement, but cement is *heavy*. "Hollow" and "heavy" don't really mix well.

When I watched my house being built, I noticed that all of the decorative trim pieces were actually formed of Styrofoam. The builders attached the Styrofoam shape to the house, then covered it with a couple of layers of stucco. It looks solid, but you don't want to put any weight on it. So my first attempt at building a rock involved carving Styrofoam and covering it with a variety of materials. I tried soaking rags in plastic cement and laying it over the foam shape. It didn't really provide the results I wanted, and it wasn't hollow at all.

A number of experiments finally produced a workable recipe that was both quick, hollow and strong. Here is what is needed:

- Plastic cement (I use a Riverside brand that I purchase at Home Depot.)
- Sand
- Aluminum window screen
- Expanding polyurethane foam (I use “Great Stuff”—just get the cheapest one you can find.)
- Fiberglass drywall joint tape (I’ve also used old plastic window screen)
- Disposable gloves.
- Powdered cement/stucco color in various earth tones.
- Some strips of scrap wood



Step 1: Build a framework

Using strips of scrap wood, assemble a framework to rough out the shape of your rock structure. I fasten my strips of wood together using twisted wire. In my example here, I chose to assemble my frame around a central vertical piece of pink fiberglass rebar. I also added a couple of clay pots to hold plants within the rock.

The framework does not have to be particularly strong: its only purpose is to provide something to fasten the aluminum screen to.

Step 2: Attach screen to the wooden framework

Cut some pieces of aluminum screen and start stapling them to the wooden frame. Bend the screen into interesting shapes.

Continue attaching pieces of screen until the entire surface of the frame is covered.

Step 3: Apply polyurethane expanding foam to the screen

Before you do this, put on your disposable gloves. You will be glad you did. The polyurethane foam seems to have a way of sticking to your skin or clothing without you realizing it, and once it sticks, it is *very* difficult to remove.

Once you open a can of the foam, you should use the entire can. Begin spraying lines of foam over the surface of the screen. Keep in mind that the foam will expand to several times its original size. Allow the foam to cure for about half an hour before you touch it.

Once the foam fully cures, it will stiffen the screen and make it a rigid structure. You may use a knife at this point to carve the foam if you wish. I tend to just leave it as it is without carving it.

Step 4: Apply a mixture of plastic cement and sand.

Mix one part plastic cement with one part sand, and mix in water until it is the consistency of oatmeal. Spread a thin layer of the mixture across the surface of the hardened foam.

Step 5: Embed strips of fiberglass joint tape in the wet cement.

Before the cement dries, embed strips of fiberglass joint tape in the surface. Crisscross the strips as you embed them. These strips will help prevent the cement shell from cracking. Let the cement harden a bit before the next step.

Step 6: Apply another layer of the cement/sand mixture over the surface of the fiberglass strips.

Mix up another batch of plastic cement and sand, and spread it over the surface, making sure to entirely hide the fiberglass. At this point, you can do some minor shaping of the surface to resemble rock.

Step 7: Sift on the surface various powdered earthtone cement or stucco colors

Apply one color at a time. If the cement is still wet, you can sift the powder directly on the surface. If the cement is completely dry, then I mix a bit of dry plastic cement into the color powder. It also helps to spray the cement surface with water before sifting on the color. Repeat this step for several different colors.

Use a spray bottle to get the powder wet enough so that it blends into the surface and the colors run together in spots.

Once completely dry, the color will stand up to the rain or being hit with the hose.

An interesting thing to try is to incorporate planters into the structure. You can either form a “planter” using the screen, foam and cement mixture, or you can simply incorporate clay pots into the structure as it is being built.

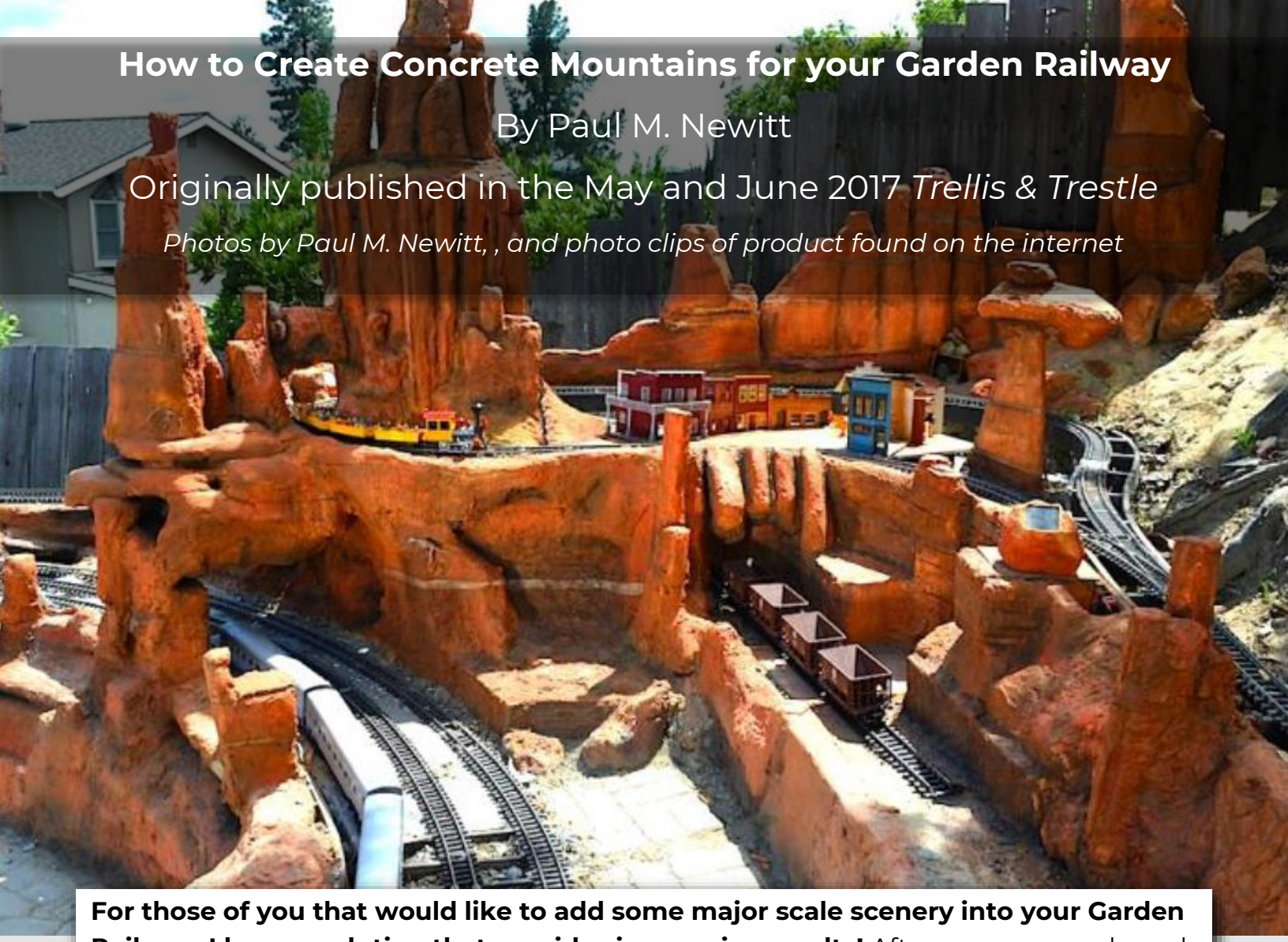
The final result is hollow, which allows you to run drip lines to the various plants, or run wires for lights (something I haven’t done yet.) In my case, I’ve even created a few “floating” rocks. ■

How to Create Concrete Mountains for your Garden Railway

By Paul M. Newitt

Originally published in the May and June 2017 *Trellis & Trestle*

Photos by Paul M. Newitt, , and photo clips of product found on the internet



For those of you that would like to add some major scale scenery into your Garden Railway, I have a solution that provides impressive results! After some research, and just "figuring it out," I worked out a list of materials and simple techniques that are fairly easy to do. This was a project that I took on with literally no previous knowledge about concrete, and with some research I was able to make this work. I watched online videos of how people made garden art in concrete and chicken wire, which led me to this procedure. There was very little information out there to make realistic mountains for garden railways. I did some research on what the best type of concrete (cement) would work for our project. We ruled out stucco, since it would not allow the casting of rock detail, and mortar is too thin for this application. Plastic Cement has no rocks in it (unlike regular post hole concrete), and so, it would work best for our particular project. This is just one more suggested method that may work for you, and here is our final result!

The finished example as shown above was built for Kermit Paul's "Lone Pine and Tonopah RR—Garden Division"

We began by choosing:

—“Plastic Cement”, which is available in 94 lb. bags

—“Play Sand”in 50lb. bags

—Buckets to mix Plastic Cement

—A mixer attachment for a (cordless) hand drill

—Trowel

—Candy Scoop

—Dust Mask

—Big rubber gloves

—Safety goggles

—Work gloves

—Garden hose with a good nozzle.

You’ll also need:

—1-1/2” by 4 x 8 foot sheets of R-Tech insulation panels (the type with chrome film on one side)

—Rolls of “Poultry Mesh” (Chicken wire)

—U-Shaped Fence Nails (about 1” long overall).

To texture the concrete, you’ll need Aluminum Foil, and cans of “PAM” cooking spray.

And….You’ll need a working table and a tarp, because this can get really messy!!

As an added note, this is hard work, but fun at the same time. You’ll notice that there's a learning curve to how you mix, and then apply the cement, but you’ll quickly get the hang of it. The final effect is so awesome that you’ll want to do more of it!!

But before we began, I made a scale paper concept model to figure out the size and location of the various-shaped rocks for the layout, and to see how the trains would look running through them at different angles.

I began by cutting the foam insulation to the desired shape with a small fine-toothed handsaw. For larger rocks, I used the 1-1/2” thick foam, although it’s available in thinner sizes. Construction adhesive (foam compatible) is used to stack the foam pieces together. Long sheetrock screws also work well to hold the pieces together.

Once you’ve shaped the foam pieces, and they are in place, then cut the chicken wire and wrap the foam pieces. Use the U-shaped nails to hold the wire in place. While wearing work gloves, press the chicken wire as close to the foam as possible (this will help when applying the cement).

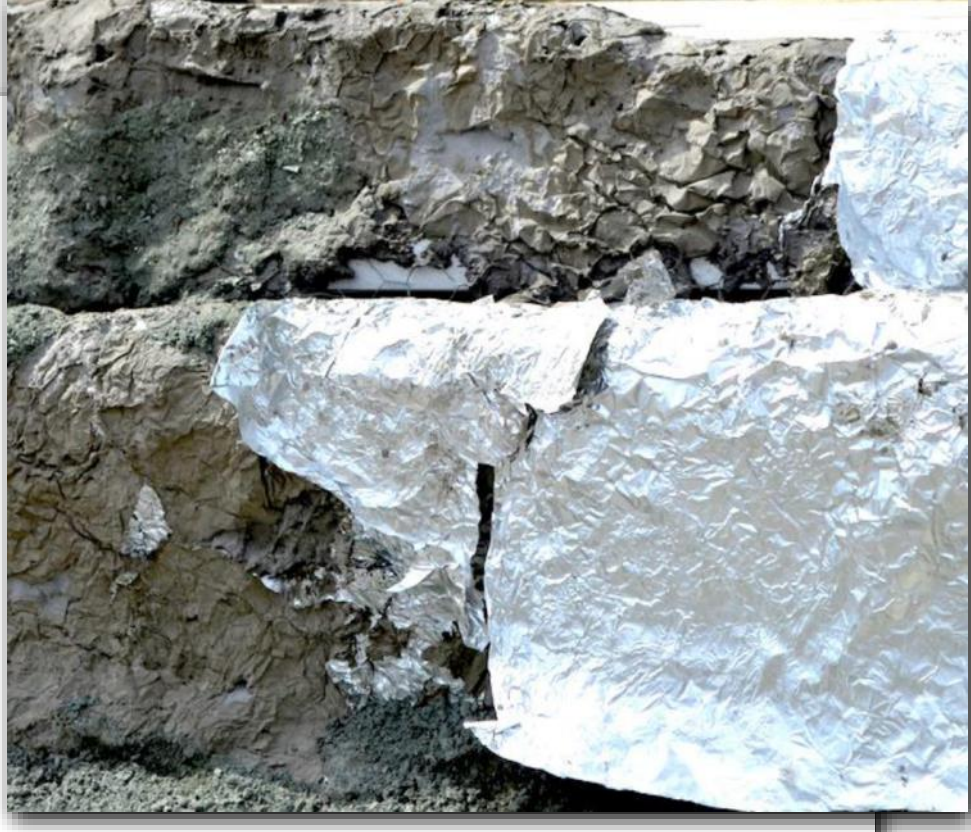
If you want to make things “BIG,” you CAN with this method! Although . . . if you work with large sections, they can become very heavy and will need support. We had to support this six-foot tower with an internal steel pipe that was previously set into a post hole with regular concrete (so it would not tip over!). Tomato plant vine supports work well (upside-down) as a basic structure for the foam when making towers.

Here is part of the completed foam and chicken wire assembly, ready for an application of Plastic Cement. Note the tourist Mine Train, that’s already in operation!!

When working the foam next to your track, remember to measure all clearances for passing (i.e. long passenger cars!) rolling stock. Allow an extra half-to-full inch for the eventual thickness of the concrete beyond the foam.

First, take all safety precautions, and I suggest wearing a protective face mask, and rubber gloves. I began with a little bit of water from the hose into the bottom of the bucket. Then, with an aluminum candy scoop, I measured THREE scoops of Plastic Cement into the bucket, followed by TWO scoops of fine sand (which is a bonder with the cement). I added more water, then more of the same mixing ratio of material. I mixed it all with a wood stick in the bucket, then used the metal mixer attachment (on the electric hand drill) to bring it to a consistency like that of a milk shake!! (for very warm days, make it a little thinner). You'll get the hang of it once you begin applying it to the foam and chicken wire and see how well it sticks!

When applying the plastic cement, you'll have to first press it through the chicken wire to the foam. The trick is to cover everything, so it covers the wire. If not, you can come back with a second coat later. As shown here, you'll want it to be "sticky" so you can manage it. Work quickly, because (depending on how you mix it and the temperature), a half-bucket will give you about 10–20 minutes overall working time.



Here's a trick! Take a 2' by 2' piece of aluminum foil, and crumple it up (tightly for more detail, less crumpling for larger appearing rocks). Spray some PAM Cooking Spray onto the inner surface of the foil, which will act as a release to make it easy to remove later. "Squish" the foil into the sticky cement for more control over the look you want. After about 2 hours, you can carefully remove the foil, so it can cure quicker.

For smaller castings, just pour the Plastic Cement mix into a crumpled foil mold (with a good raised lip on the edges), and set aside to cure in 12–24 hours. Remember to first spray some "PAM" cooking oil (as a release after curing) into the mold first.

For our main tower, we had to make several large geologic sections. I made a trough from some scrap wood, sealed with foam ends and duct tape. Next, I set several pink foam pieces loosely to create recessed detail. Aluminum foil is then set into the trough. Since we wanted random detail, we just moved the pink foam pieces around for each casting setup.

Next, I took some chicken wire and twisted it up for use as "tiny rebar" to hold the pieces together. Electrical wire and fence nails were set into the concrete to tie these pieces together onto a frame that made up the tower.

Here are the final castings, ready to install onto the frame structure for the main tower. Different sizes and shapes are good!

The tube frame, with more chicken wire will hold the tower together. Castings can be arranged like this to help make mountains in sections, then assembled on your layout.

After the castings were secured, more concrete was applied into the gaps to make the tower solid.

More foam and chicken wire was added to make it look like a “real” iconic Monument Valley type of geologic “tower”!

The metal tube at the top is part of a moving rock feature we added with a gear motor, hidden inside the mountain!

A close up of “Widowmaker Arch,” a precarious-looking feature that is actually very secure, cemented into place. Note the gold soil that was pressed into the wet concrete. This is a very effective technique!

This was the mountain as it appeared before the main tower—and paint! We wanted a typical southwestern-looking “burnt-orange” color for the rock.

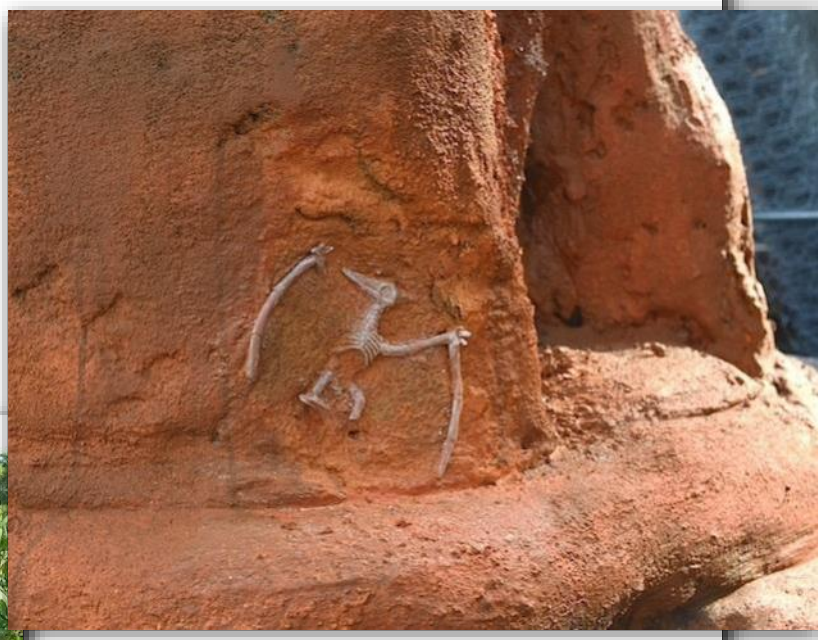
The first paint test was too strong, as we found that bright rockwork was not a one-coat solution!! This was WAY too bright!!

The solution was to knock down the brightness with a “MOCHA” (Chocolate Milk -Coffee color) wash. This was done by first painting the rock with a peach color, covered with random splotches of red here and there. Black paint was applied into the cracks and crevices to accentuate depth and detail. Most importantly, use “Exterior House Paint” in FLAT latex. The same paint is used on stucco on houses. It’s very durable!!!

I’m brushing the mocha paint right onto the rockwork, and then with a water-soaked towel, pressing the paint into the nooks and crannies, and wiping it off of the high spots.

A convincing effect is to brush paint on strata colors in a medium gray (before the Mocha wash). Use masking tape to get a fine line to suggest actual scale strata!! Note in this photo the use of fine “quarter minus” garden soil that was pressed into the wet concrete. It also can be painted later, if you wish.

Dinosaur fossils are made by pressing plastic toys right into the wet concrete!! This texture was obtained by wiping a large wet sponge over the concrete as it’s setting up.



Here is the finished effect! The mocha wash tones everything down, creating a spectacular look in color as well as a very realistic flat texture!!

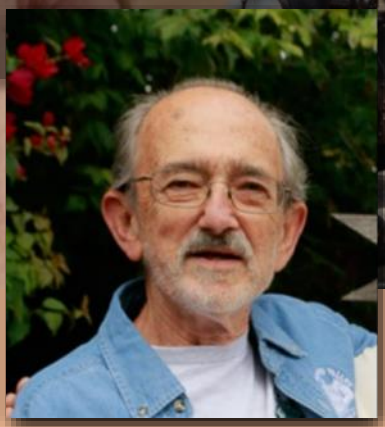
In another area, we wanted to use different colors, like that in the Sierra Foothills. For the blue color, I first brushed on a medium blue, then drybrushed over a light blue color. After it dried, I again used the mocha wash over everything. The trick is to BLEND all your scenery colors so they look natural. Our approach is to create a large-scale railroad with HO-scale scenery techniques!

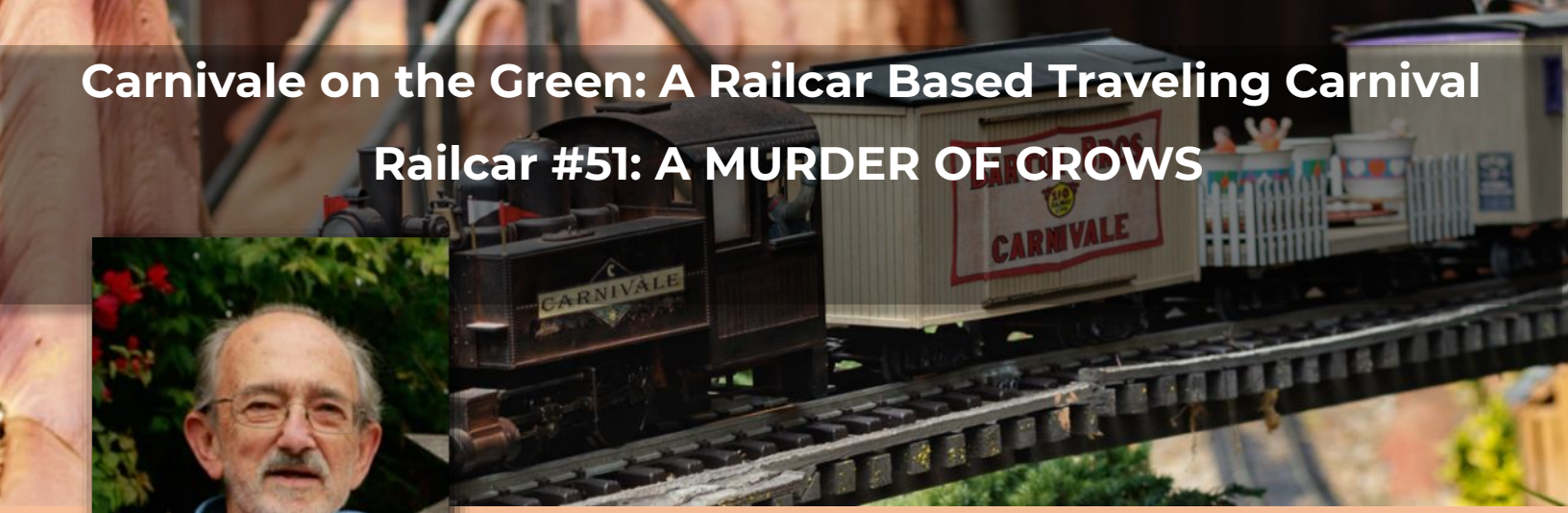
Lastly, for a tunnel feature, I first scratchbuilt the portal out of wood, then painted it with acrylic craft paint. I then sprayed it with three coats of Rust-Oleum clear satin to seal it. After 14 months, it still looks great!

My hope is that these guidelines may inspire you to create some cool scenery for your Garden Railway! At this writing, we're adding the Swiss Alps on Kermit Paul's layout, including a Matterhorn! ■

Carnivale on the Green: A Railcar Based Traveling Carnival

Railcar #51: A MURDER OF CROWS



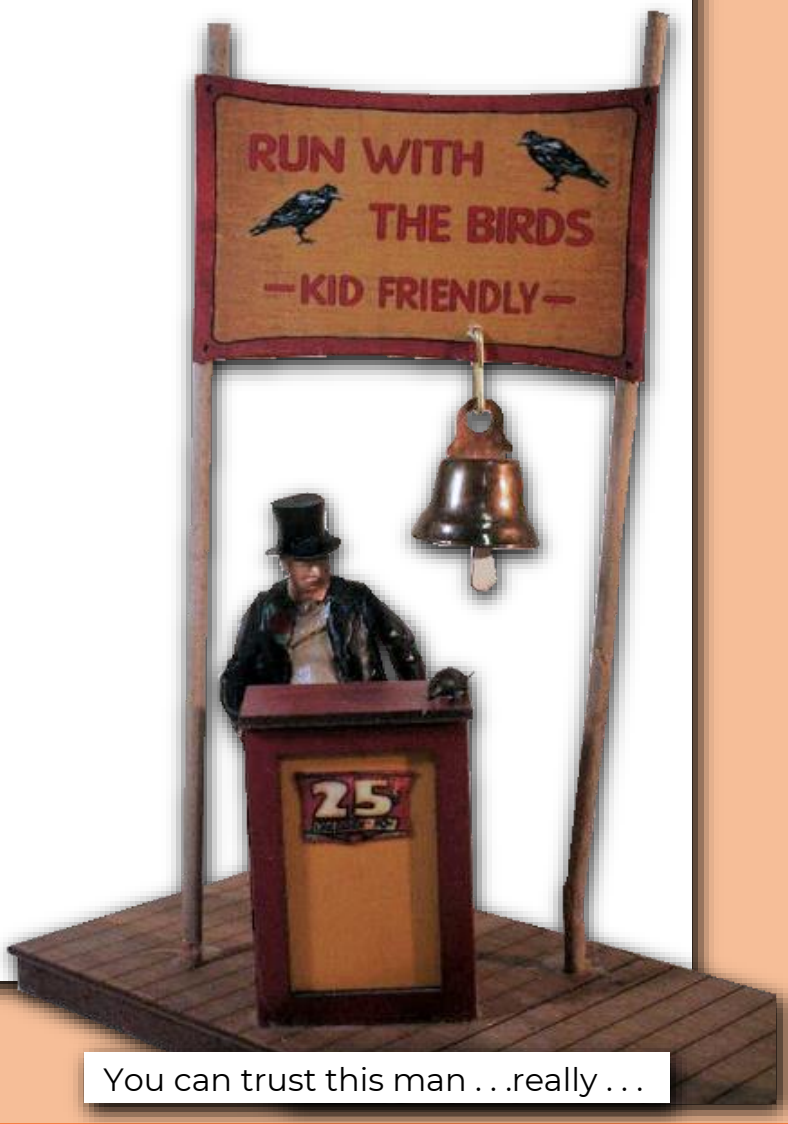


Jim Ralph is a member of the *Sacramento Valley Garden Railway Society*, and is the brother of BAGRS member Bill Ralph.

This month's railcar, story, and photos captures a tragic moment in time of a hot summer day in 1963 just outside Fargo, North Dakota. CARNIVALE was open for business. This horrific event began with the ringing of a distant bell. The air was suddenly filled with the sounds of running and screaming kids. From that moment on the expression a 'collection of crows' sadly received a new moniker.

This is a true story. True.*

That fateful day began many years earlier with the birth of son Alfred to Emma and William Hitchcock . . . and a second, surprise twin brother. Unable to care for two children, the Hitchcock's put up the second twin for adoption. A young carnival couple by the name of the Bodegas, unable to have children, happily adopted the second twin. Asking the yet unnamed child's name, the Hitchcock's simply replied that "he's not Alfred." Being just partially fluent in English, the Bodegas misunderstood that their boy's name was Alfred. At that moment a parallel universe was born

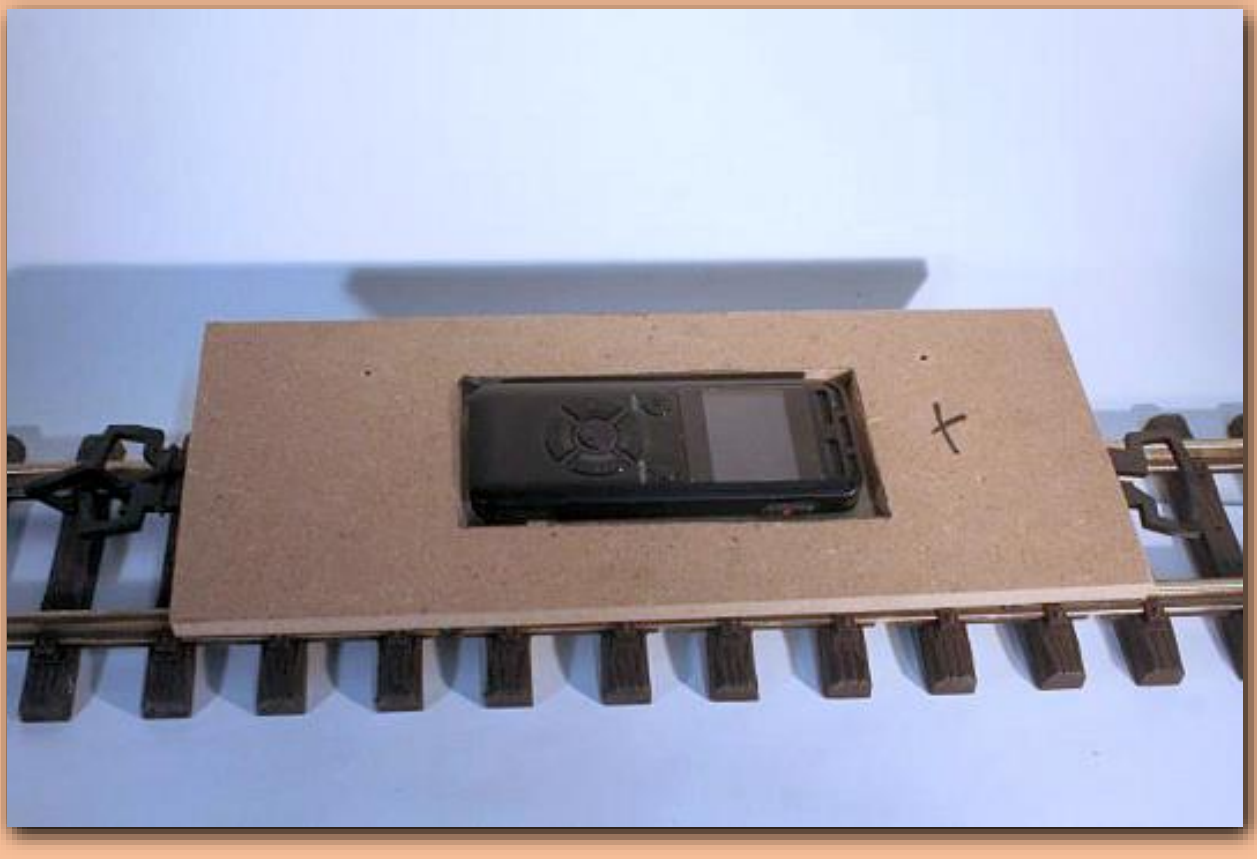


You can trust this man . . .really . . .

Not knowing of the existence of a twin brother, each boy began living their separate lives in their own parallel universe. As the years passed Alfred went on to study filmmaking while Alfred took over his adopted parents traveling petting zoo at their passing. Alfred officially entered the entertainment business years later with his first feature motion picture and at the same time Alfred also entered the entertainment world with his now fine-tuned petting zoo exclusively featuring trained crows that could be held, petted, hand-fed and would speak words and phrases (I think you know where this is going). Alfred had an arrangement with the Carneys that operated the 'adults only' railcars where his attraction served as a handy child watching service while the parents would visit the nearby 'adults' only railcars. With the ringing of the Bodega School bell by Alfred, the nearby parents were notified to retrieve their kids. All seemed well.

The twins' parallel universes collided that fateful day during Alfred's movie premiere of THE BIRDS in the Bodega School where the movie was filmed. During the showing, the now infamous scene when a massive gathering (now Murder) of crows had taken over the Bodega school grounds and the teacher rang the school bell for recess. Bad move. Bad. At that exact moment, two thousand miles away in Fargo, Alfred rang his bell. Bad move. Bad. And it is a known fact that in parallel universes when 'FOR WHOM THE BELL CROWS' . . . it is not good.

Hidden in the floor boards of the railcar is a nook housing a mini sound recorder. Recorded on it is a loop recording of a cawing crow.



Note . . . Some common sayings were born that day;

- A bird in the hand.
- Eat crow.
- As the crow flies.
- Crow bait.
- A poke in the eye.
- Pecking order (ringing of the bell).
- Come fly with me.
- Who let the crows out? (not dogs)

*This is a true story. True. It's not. This is a phrase I stole from the quirky film producers, the Coen brothers, who would put it at the beginning of each FARGO TV episode. ■

All Steamed Up

by Rob Lenicheck

Rob Lenicheck has been involved in the live steam hobby for about 20 years, modeling in 1:20.3. He has scratchbuilt multiple engines and converted others to his passion: running coal-fired locomotives.

Lenicheck Steamup, Aug 31, 2024

The BAGRS Live Steam always seem to have a good time at our gatherings and Sat, August 31, was no exception. The temperature was great and the sky was blue, a perfect day for good steam plumes. And around 20 live steamers were in attendance.

Of course, there is always time for catching up after a good summer's vacation. Here Chris Gathard explains the mystery of life to Bill Mansell (standing) and Jim Goss (seated).

Here Ron Sickler, Dennis Mead, and Steve Heselton share some hot air.

While it can be an enormous amount of fun, running a live steamer does require some prep work. There are four basic yet simple things to replenish when getting ready to run:

- Oil the mechanism
- Fill the boiler with water
- Check and fill the lubricator (since steam is drying, the cylinders need constant lubrication when running)
- Fill the butane tank with fuel

Here are Ron Sickler, Jim Hague, and John Nicoles doing just that.

As is Steve Heselton, here getting his stable-to-the-hobby engine, an Accucraft Ruby, going.

As is Ron Sickler with his coal-fired 7/8” scale Emma. He seems to still have the ability to see close-up without the eyeglasses that most of the rest of us need. How does he do that?

Jim Goss is the proud owner of several of Bill Allen's scratchbuilt beauties, this one being a model of an 1880-vintage mogul (2-6-0). Of course, it ran flawlessly.

In the middle of the steamup, Henner Meinhold, a BAGRS member who now lives in Germany, placed a Zoom call to the gathering. Sanjaya Kumar tries to get the tech working on Ron's cell phone. A Saturday morning Zoom call is a normal event for some of us—a way to exchange new ideas and techniques or simply

Bill Mansell patiently awaits his scratchbuilt “project” engine to build up steam. You might notice that the layout is flat and without much interest. Besides the fact that small-scale live steam engines prefer dead flat track, the author prefers to spend his time building engines rather than landscaping the layout.

Another fabulous engine which made an appearance was Sanjaya Kumar’s Skookum, built by Bill Allen. The prototype of this engine currently resides at the Niles Canyon Railway.

Finally, Jack Verducci brought his 12-yr-old grandson, Giacomo, to the steamup. He obviously has been well taught by grandad in the subtleties of running live steam. His Ruby and a Shay were handled with much professionalism. Great to have some “young blood” getting introduced! ■

THE GARDEN DEPARTMENT

Japanese White Pine

By Richard Murray

BOTANICAL NAME: Pinus Parviflora, “Adcock’s Dwarf”

COMMON NAME: Japanese white pine

USDA ZONE: 5 (down to -20F)

White pine is native to Japan and Korea. It is an evergreen conifer that may reach 90’ in the wild, but usually much shorter in cultivation. Oval, reddish brown cones (2–3” long) can be solitary or appear in clusters, remaining on the branch for up to seven years. Grayish black bark is smooth on young trees but develops fissures and scales as the tree matures. Needles appear in bundles of five.

The variety "Adcock’s Dwarf” is small. It might reach 3' tall and wide after 25 years. The specimen in the photo is about 14 years old and has had little pruning. It is usually very dense, although the specimen pictured above is not. Needles are short, and are glaucous, meaning bluish green or grey green, with the underside being white. Early in life "Adcock’s Dwarf” grows as a bun-shaped plant and only later becomes more pyramidal.

The plant should be grown in well-drained soils. It needs only a moderate amount of water. It likes full sun and cool summer climates. It does not like the heat and humidity of the deep South. It is tolerant of many soil types, even poor soil.

"Adcock’s Dwarf” was discovered as a witch’s broom in the 1960s at a nursery in England, and was named after its propagator, Graham Adcock. Witch’s broom is a mass of short branching on a conifer that results from a single bud that has had a spontaneous mutation. The origin of the phrase witch’s broom is German, which means "the broom of a witch.” It is so named because the dense mass of shoots growing from a single point resemble a witch’s broom. The origin of witch’s brooms is not well understood but may result from chemical exposure, radiation, viruses, insects, or climatic conditions.

Occasionally, a witch’s broom will produce seed or pollen cones that carry a unique DNA. If one propagates seedlings derived from witch’s broom cones, worthwhile plants may result. “Broom hunting" is a popular past time among nurserymen and is the source of many desirable plants.

As is true of all Japanese pines, "Adcock’s Dwarf" adapts well to pruning and shaping. Its small size and small needles make it a good candidate for bonsai, rock gardens, and garden railroads. ■

Dave's Corner

by Dave Frediani

Dave Frediani lives in Sonora, California and, among his many talents, constructs 7/8 scale rolling stock.

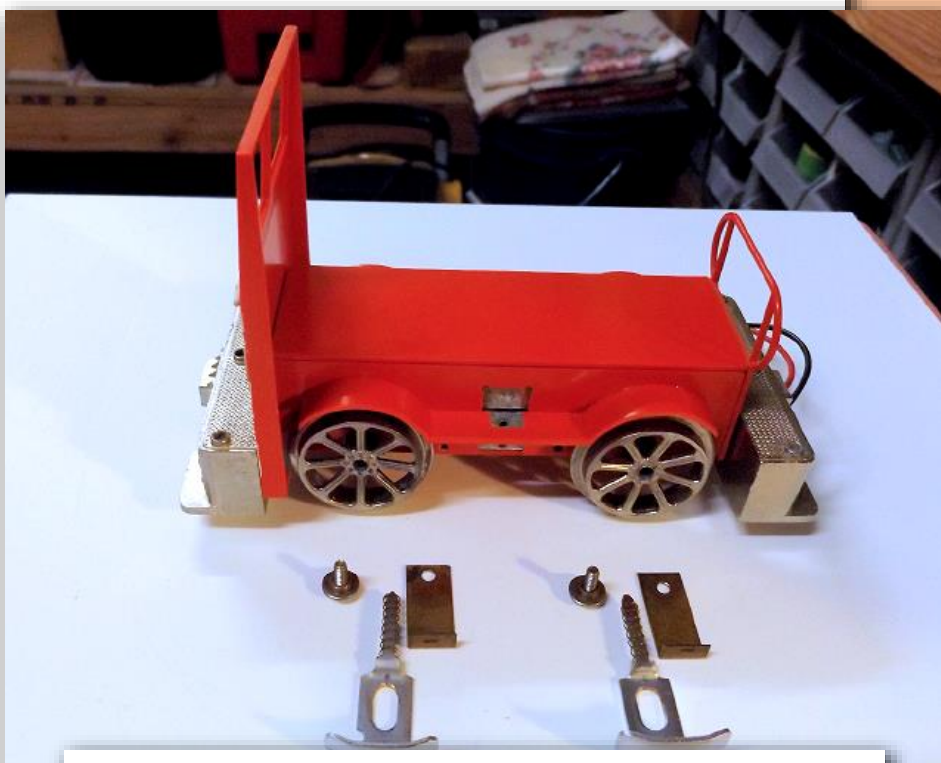
A MODEL DIE CAST SPEEDER

While I was going through my junk box of spare parts looking for some parts that I needed for another project, I came across some Model Die Cast Speeders in pieces and a lot of other parts for them. As it turns out, one of my friends used to do some machine work for Model Die Cast, and instead of paying him, they offered him spare parts to fool around with and somehow I ended up with them. I never turn down parts, and they may sit around months or even years, but I usually find a use for some of them.

Between my other projects, I found myself fooling around with these speeders and trying to find all the right parts to assemble one or two of them.

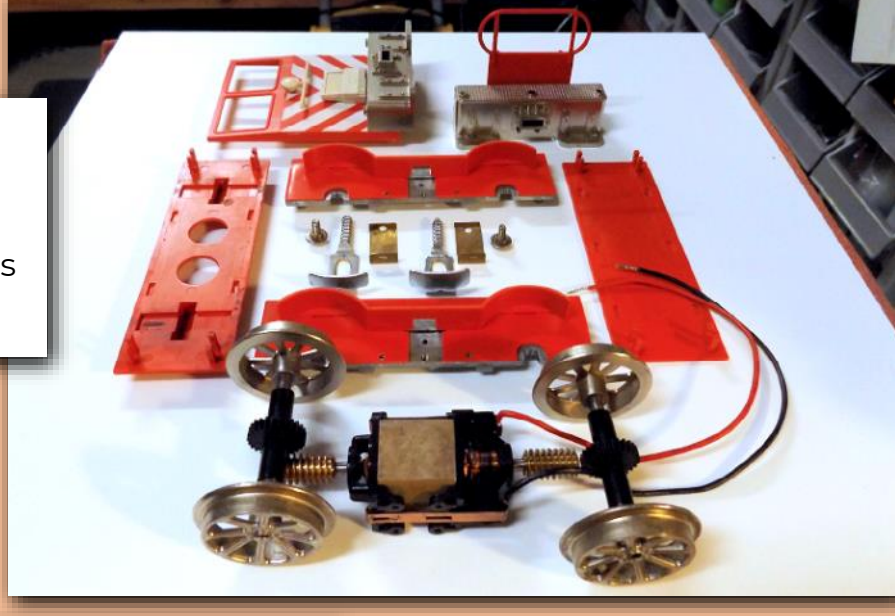
After finding enough parts to assemble two of the speeders, but only finding one motor, it was time to see what I could come up with. I remember seeing others running these speeders in the past and I wasn't that impressed with their performance, they had problems keeping power to the tracks.

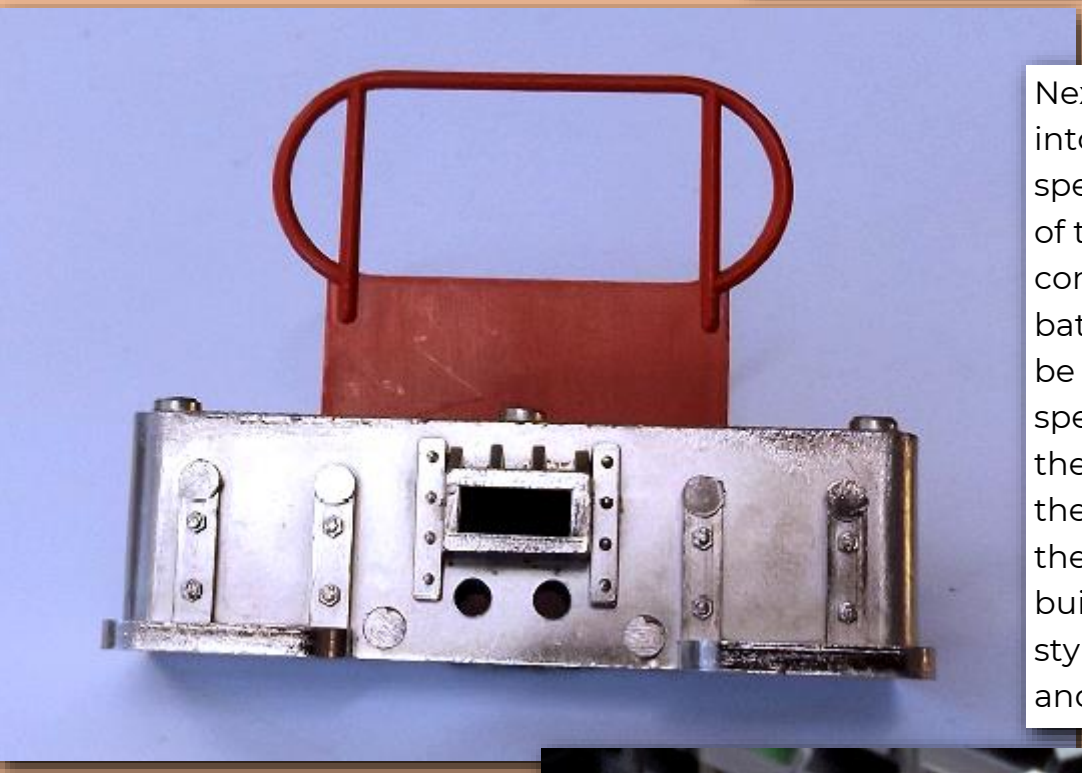
The first thing I did was remove the electrical shoes from each side of the two speeders, and then disassemble them. That was easy to do, since all the parts just snap together. Before I got too serious with this project, I knew that the speeder had to be battery powered with an R/C controller because I don't have track power. I only run live steam or battery-powered trains on my tracks.



This view shows the electrical shoes removed

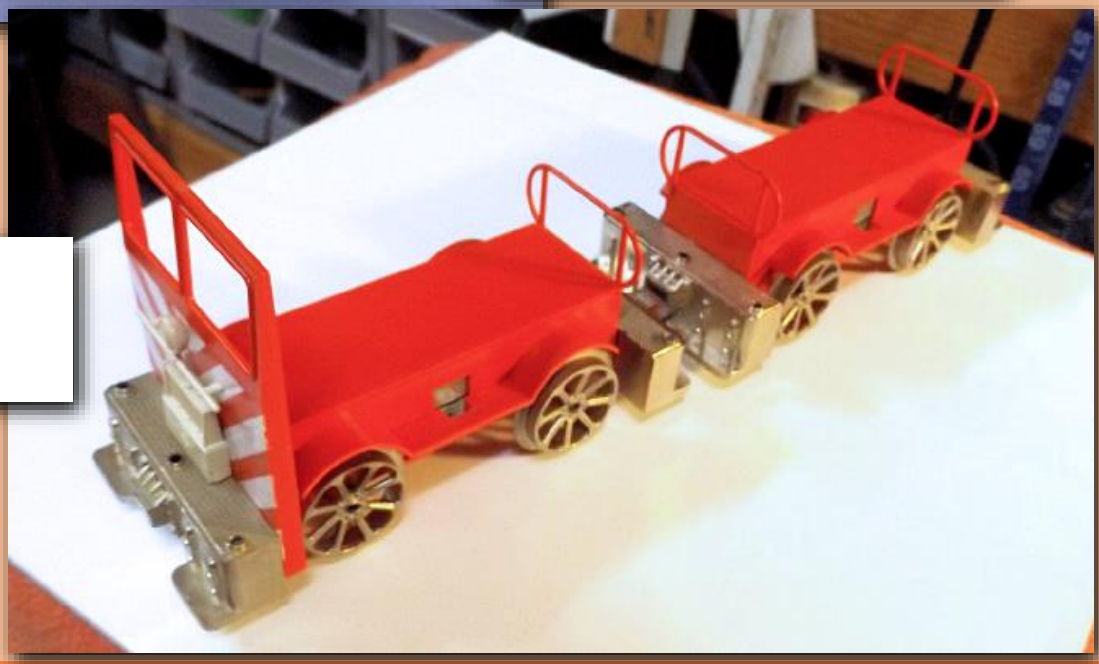
Here's one of the speeders completely disassembled and you can also see the new wires soldered to the motor block and the electrical contacts to the wheels removed.



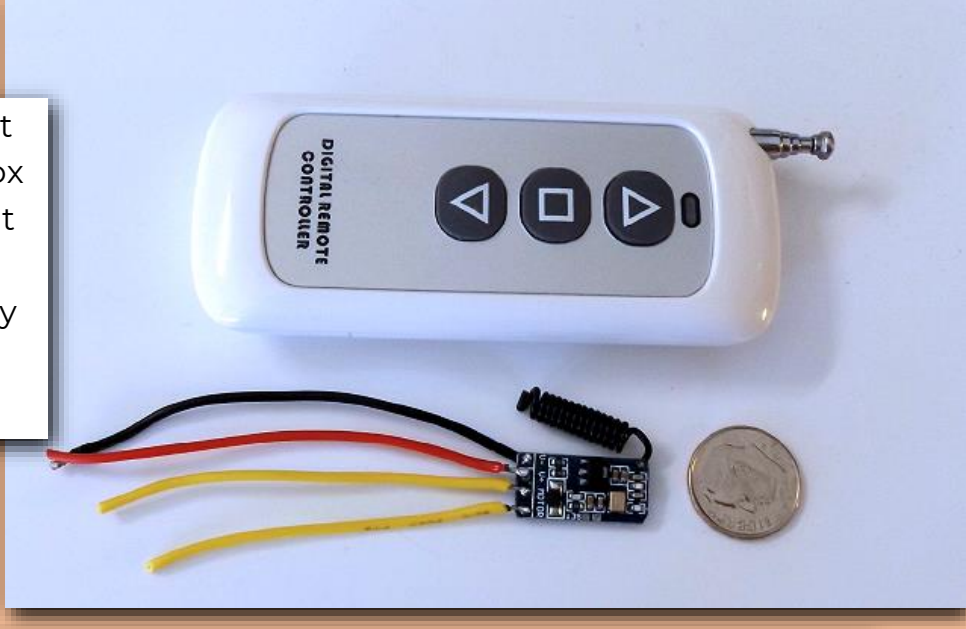


Next I drilled two 7/64" holes into the rear bumper of the speeder and the front bumper of the trailing speeder to connect the speeder to the battery and R/C unit that will be installed in the trailing speeder. I was going to install the battery and R/C unit inside the trailing speeder without the motor, but decided on building a toolbox out of styrene to hold the battery and its R/C unit.

View of the assembled speeder and its trailing speeder.



This view shows the type of R/C unit that will be installed into the toolbox on the trailing speeder. The R/C unit is smaller then a dime and cost about $7.00, and will be powered by a 9-volt rechargeable battery and should run for over an hour.



The rechargeable batteries can recharge within 20 or 30 minutes. If you have a pair of these batteries, you could run all day. The rechargeable 9-volt batteries use the same charger as most cell phones, and usually come in sets of two.

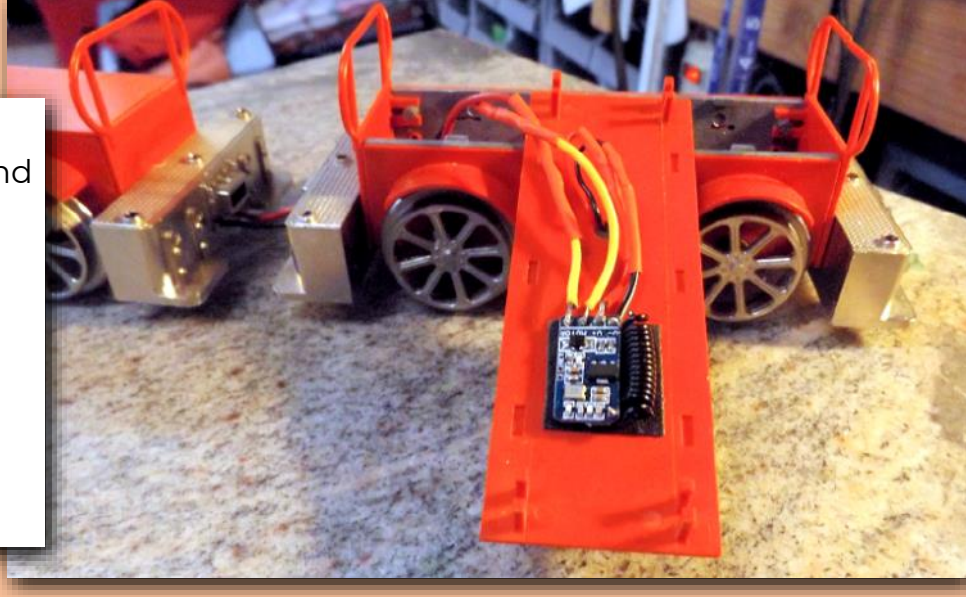
Now it's time to build a toolbox for the trailing speeder that will hold the battery and its R/C unit. The toolbox will be built out of 1/8" and 1/16" styrene. Since I already invested $7.00 for an R/C unit and about as much for a rechargeable battery, I didn't want to invest anymore in this project, so back to my scrap box of styrene, I go.

This view shows the start of the toolbox. The ends are built of 1/8" styrene and the side panels are built of 1/16" styrene. I also used Evergreen #188 strips to add strength to the insides.

View of the almost completed tool box. The two pieces that make up the non opening doors and the last piece above the doors are built of 1/16" styrene. All the outside pieces of the tool box have simulated wood grain and planking.

The toolbox can easily be lifted off the speeder, leaving the R/C unit and battery, which are mounted to the original top plate of the speeders body. I still need to install door hinges.

This view shows the R/C unit mounted to the bottom of the top plate of the speeder.



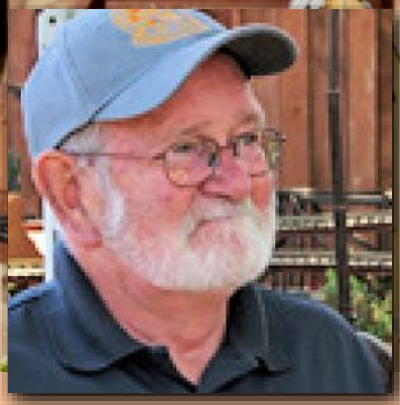
This view shows the rechargeable battery mounted on top of the top plate of the speeder.

View of the almost finished speeder

I still need to do a few finishing touches on this project, but you can see what you can do for just a $ 15.00 investment. A project like this could be a great project for the kids. I've seen these speeders at train shows and everyone passes them by. Take a chance, it may be fun. ■

Postcards from the Past

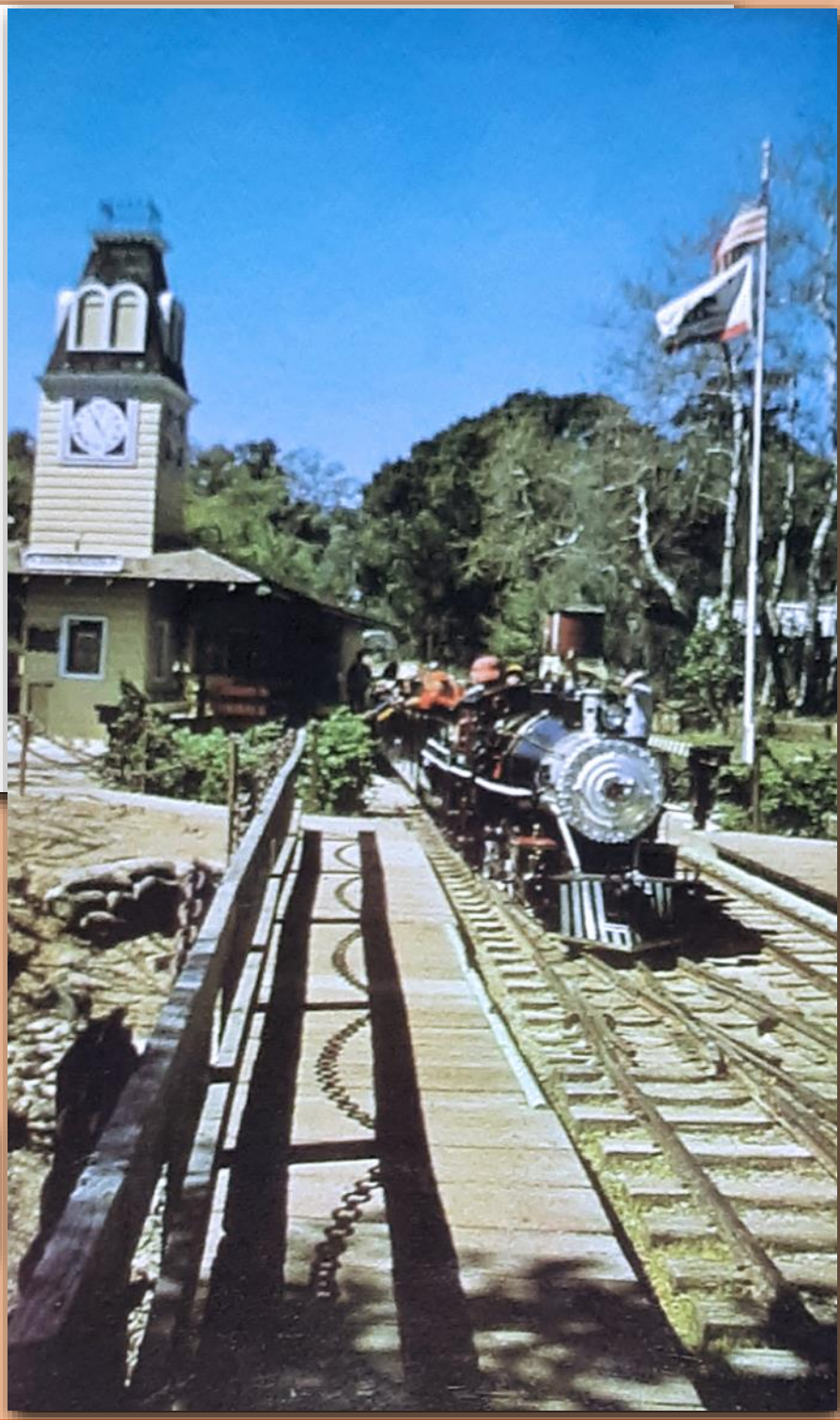
By Bill Ralph



Bill Ralph operates the *Porcupine Gulch Railroad*, and knows a thing or two about amusement parks and postcards.

BILLY JONES WILDCAT RAILROAD

William Jones began a lifelong career in steam railroading at the age of thirteen in 1897 as a roustabout with an unromantic job of wiping down South Pacific Coast Railroad narrow gauge locomotives in the Santa Cruz Mountains at Boulder Creek, California. Hardworking “Billy” was promoted to fireman at age seventeen and soon to engineer working on the first standard gauge portions of the Southern Pacific Railroad that had acquired the South Pacific Coast Railroad.



Circa 1975 Postcard from the collection of Bill Ralph

Ultimately, Jones was handling the prestigious SP Coast Daylight run between San Francisco and San Luis Obispo, while making a home in Los Gatos with his wife Geraldine and three children on a nine-acre prune orchard they called “The Ranch.”

During one of his layovers in San Francisco in 1939, he spotted an old rusty locomotive in a scrap metal warehouse awaiting shipment to Japan for scrapping. The loco turned out to be a one-third scale engine built in 1905 that ran for decades and thrilling thousands on the Venice Miniature Railway in Venice Beach, California. He purchased the historic amusement park artifact for $100 as a family project with his boys, transferred it to Los Gatos, nicknamed it “2-Spot,”’ and set about returning it operating condition. Tragically, his only two sons were casualties of World War ll, however Jones completed the restoration in 1943 with help from railroad buddies and began operating 2-Spot over his mile long “Wildcat Railroad” at no cost to the general public every Sunday in memory of his sons.

Walt Disney’s quest for advice and information regarding the proposed construction of his “Mickey Mouse Park” and his visits to Knott’s Berry Farm, Greenfield Village, Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, Playland at the Beach and Children’s Fairyland are well documented, so it’s not surprising that he also spent time in Los Gatos with Billy Jones and the Wildcat Railroad. By the early 1950s, Jones had accumulated a collection of rolling stock and five Venice Beach 18” gauge stream locomotives that peeked Walt’s interest and an offer of $50,000 for the lot. Jones rejection of the offer was a surprise; however, it helped convinced Walt to build his own railroad at a larger and more realistic 5/8 scale, and not settle for a “zoo train” kiddie ride.

Walt Disney and Billy Jones became good friends and Jones was on hand at Disneyland in July of 1955 during the first week of operations as an engineer on the Santa Fe & Disneyland Railroad’s C.K. Holliday and E.P. Ripley locomotives. Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad has been lengthened in recent years, operates a combination of steam, diesel and electric locomotives, installed a restored 1915 Carousel and Wurlitzer band organ, and has been entertaining families for more than 80 years. ■

This railroad is located in Oak Meadow Park in Los Gatos and is currently operating on its Fall Schedule: Saturday & Sunday: 10:30 am–4:30 pm. For more information, check out their website here: Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad and W.E. "Bill" Mason Carousel

East Devil Hills Modeling Group

by Henner Meinhold

Henner Meinhold resides in Berlin, Germany. The *East Devil Hills Modeling Group* meets regularly to create, collaborate, and share incredibly machined models.

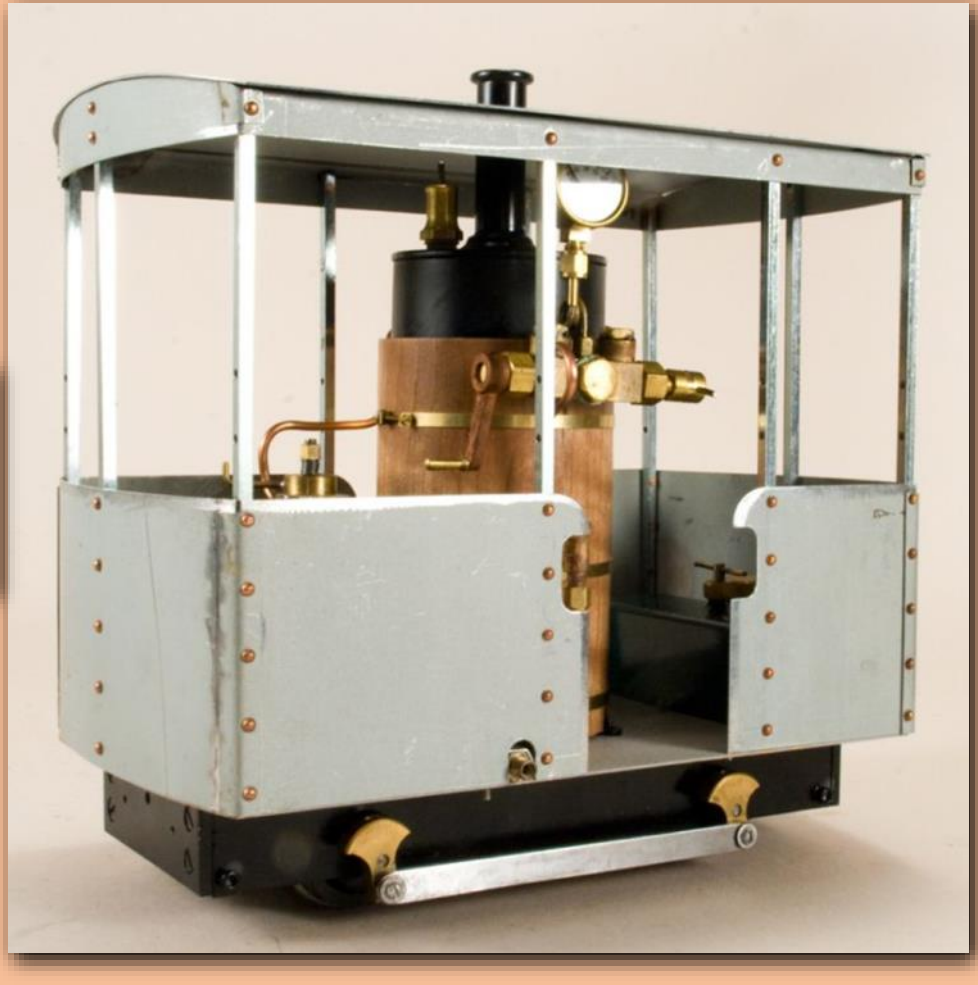
Another interesting contribution by Marc Horovitz. For his tram loco he needed half round beading which had to be bent at a sharp radius. First he had to make the beading using a draw plate. The plate has cutouts in D-shape decreasing in size. The annealed copper wire is drawn through these holes, starting with the biggest one.

Next he designed and built an ingenious device to form the bends. It is made up from a brass block with a stop and a rotating device with a pin, which catches the beading.

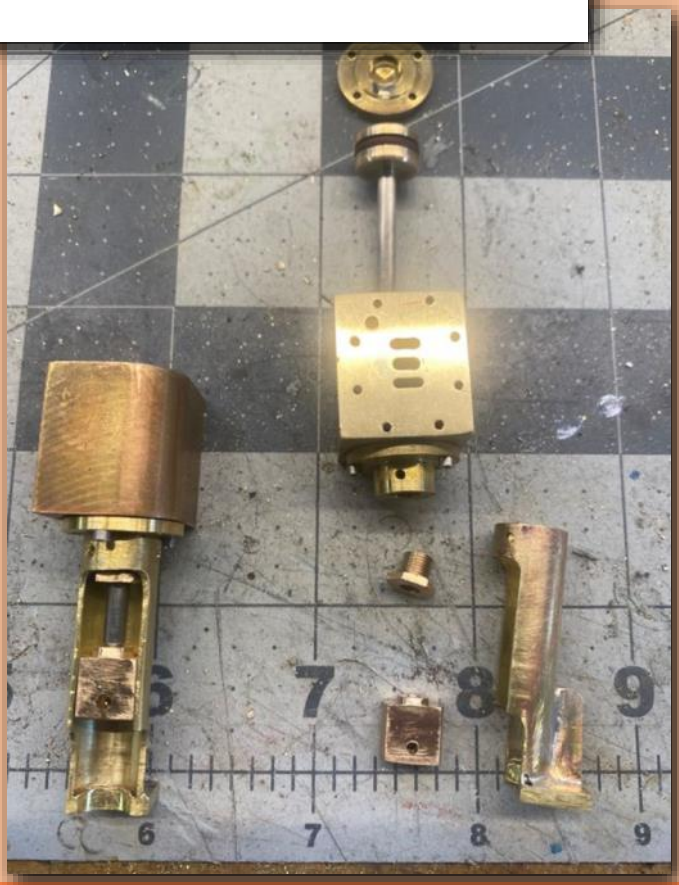
The beading is put against the stop, the handle inserted and rotated.

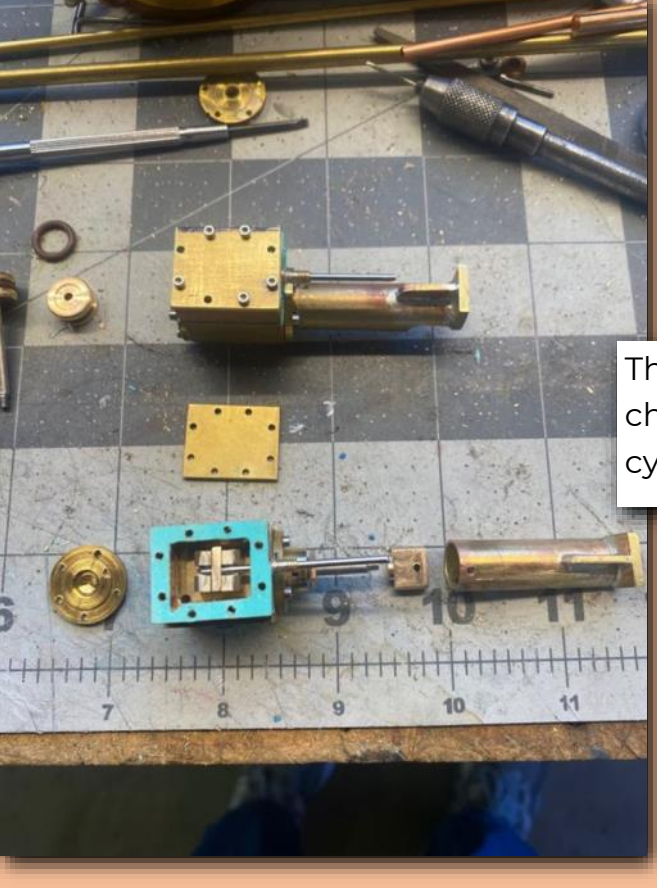
Here the finished bent with a perfect radius.

Of course these parts will now be installed on the loco, which already looks beautiful and is almost finished.



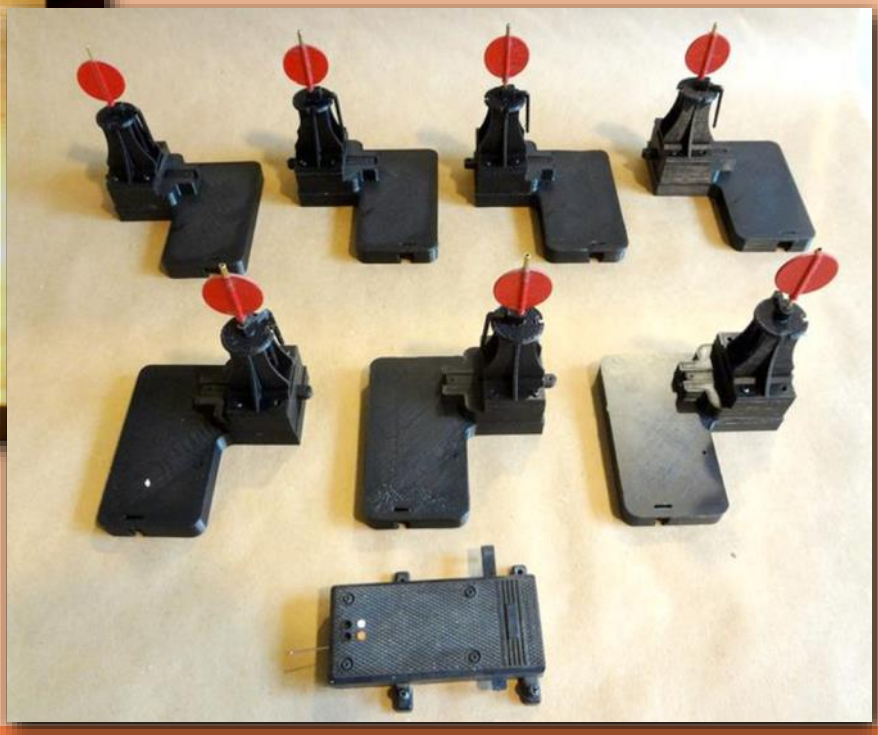
Ron Malouf worked on the engine of his Shay. The parts were machined on his Sherline mill. Machining the crosshead. The finished crosshead inserted into the crosshead guide together with various cylinder parts .





The slide valve, valve chest, and a finished cylinder.

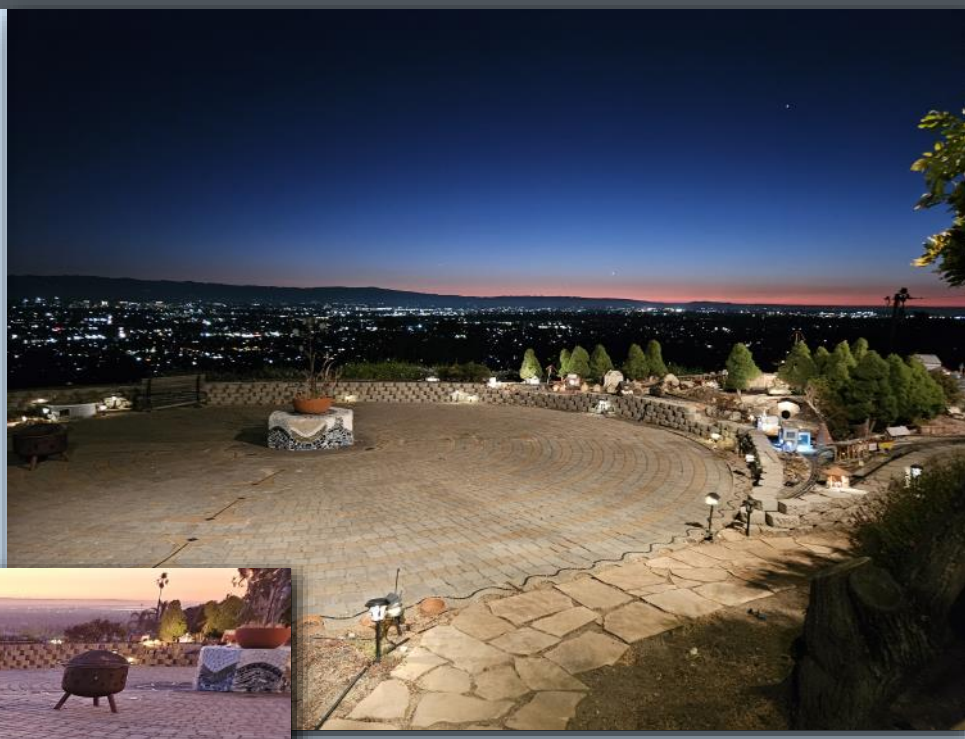
Dennis helped out Robert Burrill and 3-D printed a batch of switch stands for him. Here the individual components and the assembled switch stands. ■

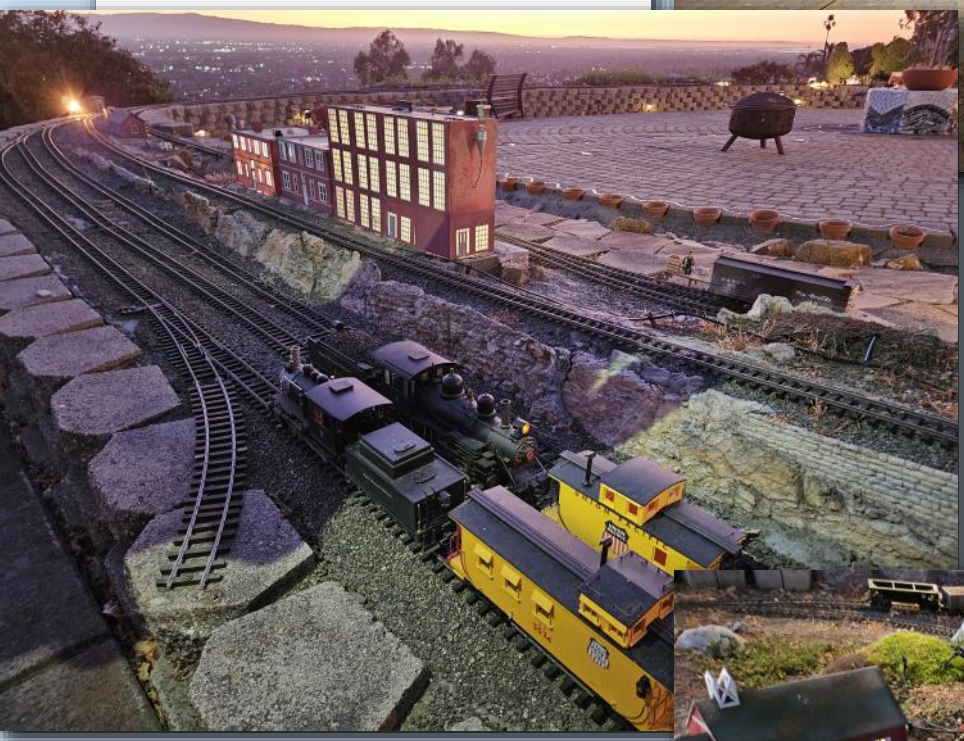


MEMBER UPDATES

From Ray Turner:

There was a nighttime operating session on the Mystic Mountain Railroad on September 4, 2024. The evening weather was absolutely perfect at about 70 degrees and no wind. The lights of San Jose provided a stunning backdrop to the session.





MEMBER UPDATES

From Larry Silverman:

Here is a YouTube video of the 2024 open house for the Tri-Valley Railroad:

Tri-Valley Garden Railroad-BAGRS 2024

BULLETIN BOARD

THREE DAYS, TOUR NINE GARDEN RAILWAYS

The **Central California Coast Garden Railroad Society** is delighted to again participate as part of the regional **2024 Central Coast Railroad Festival**.

The Central Coast Railroad Festival is a broad-based festival in both San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties coordinated by the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum that encompasses railroading of all types with an emphasis on the picturesque central California coast. A cooperative spirit is developed among all participating organizations to promote their mutual well-being and to expand interest in all things rail!

Festival participants are invited to explore nine distinctly different large scale model railroads, including two new garden railroads, over three days of the event.

Please share the attached bulletin with friends, family and neighbors who would appreciate the creative efforts of our members.

We hope you all will attend a scheduled open day, show your support and share your passion for large scale trains in the garden with those you meet.

We look forward to hosting you **October 4–6**!

GARDEN RAILWAY CLUB NEWS

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. We provide links here to the most recent editions that have been made available to us. For other clubs wishing to obtain a copy of the latest BAGRS *Trellis & Trestle*, please contact **Roger Nicholson** at communications@bagrs.org

Central California Coast Garden Railway Society—September 2024

Central Ontario Garden Railway Association—Autumn 2024

Denver Garden Railway Society Newsletter—September 2024

Gold Coast Garden Railway Society—July 2024

Puget Sound Garden Railway Society—October 2024

Redwood Empire Garden Railway Society—September 2024

Rose City Garden Railway Society—August 2024

Sacramento Valley Garden Railway Society—September 2024

The Garden Whistle New Zealand Large Scale Newsletter—September 2024

Garden Railroading News—July/August 2024

The 2025 NGRC 2025 will be hosted by the Sacramento Valley Garden Railway Society.

Website coming soon at ngrc2025.org

BAGRS BOARD AND CONTACT INFORMATION

ROLE	NAME	EMAIL ADDRESS
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Treasurer	Larry Silverman	treasurer@bagrs.org
Membership	Ray Turner	membership@bagrs.org
Live Steam	Rob Lenicheck	rlenicheck@yahoo.com
Director	Richard Murray	steamer060@sbcglobal.net

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

BAGRS FOR SALE BY MEMBERS

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, bagrs.org. Log in is required.

BAGRS ONLINE PHOTO AND VIDEO LIBRARY

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

Click on "Go to Google Photos" if offered.

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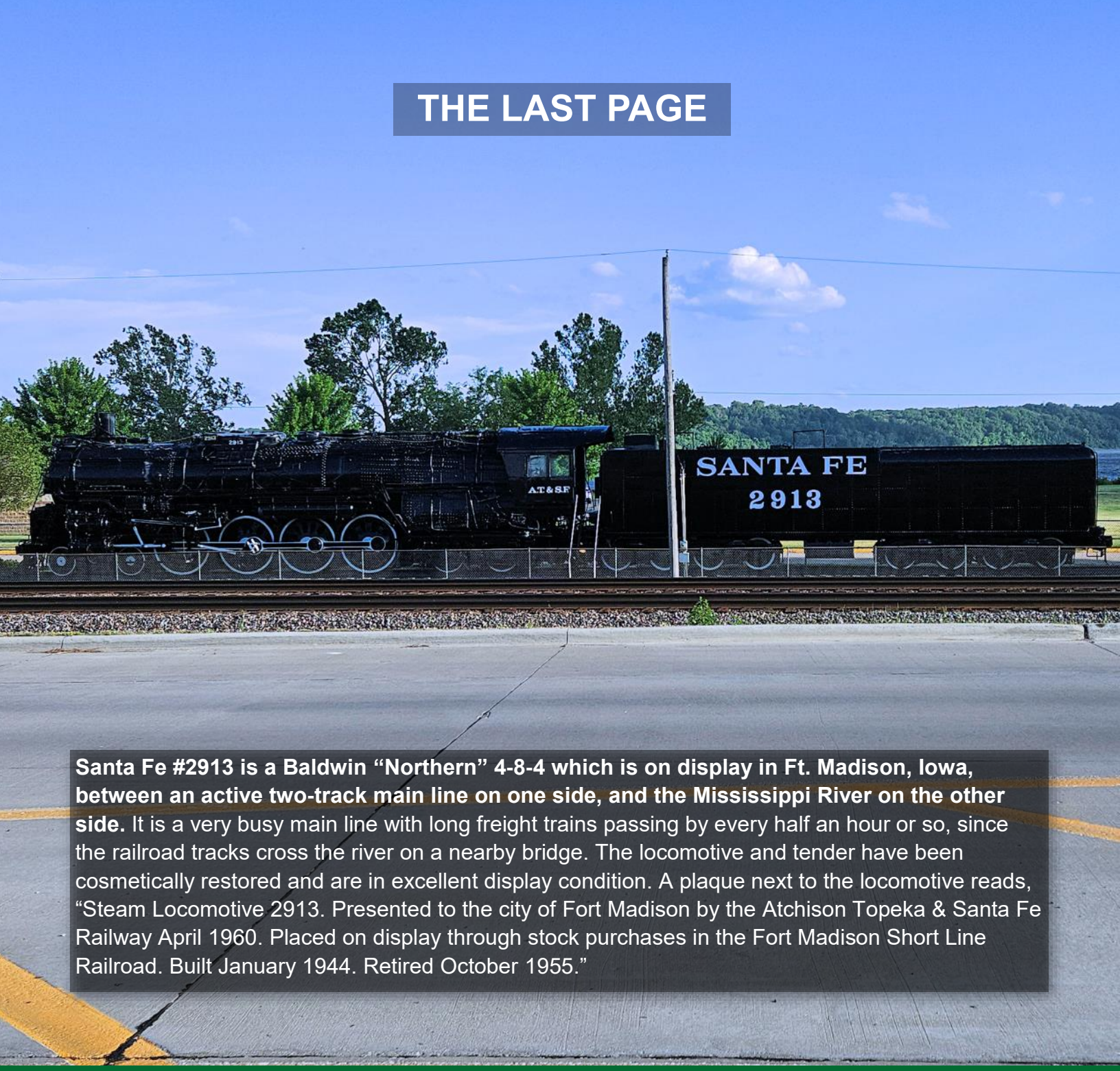

Santa Fe #2913 is a Baldwin "Northern" 4-8-4 which is on display in Ft. Madison, Iowa, between an active two-track main line on one side, and the Mississippi River on the other side. It is a very busy main line with long freight trains passing by every half an hour or so, since the railroad tracks cross the river on a nearby bridge. The locomotive and tender have been cosmetically restored and are in excellent display condition. A plaque next to the locomotive reads, "Steam Locomotive 2913. Presented to the city of Fort Madison by the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railway April 1960. Placed on display through stock purchases in the Fort Madison Short Line Railroad. Built January 1944. Retired October 1955."

TRELLIS AND TRESTLE

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