

BAY AREA GARDEN RAILWAY SOCIETY

TRELLIS AND TRESTLE

JANUARY 2025



In This Issue...

- *Re-spiking Llagas Creek Plastic Ties: Part 2*, by Roger Nicholson
- *Carnivale on the Green: A Railcar Based Traveling Carnival RAIL CAR #74: BELL RINGER*, by Jim Ralph
- *Dwarf Colorado Blue Spruce*, by Richard Murray
- *Plus, all of our regular features!*

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PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVES



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Thank you to the 200+ Members who renewed on time.

We hope that the rest of you have made a New Year resolution to renew real soon.

ANNUAL MEETING: TIME TO ADD YOUR 2025 CALENDAR

Date: March 15

Yes, the 'Ides of March' so should be an interesting meeting

OPEN RAILROADS 2025

There is a consensus that we should strive to have groups of 3 or more RRs open on the same day.

We aim to coordinate scheduling to achieve this.

There is also a consensus that that open RR days should end with an opportunity to gather and meet and greet. After all, hanging out with friends old and new is one of the most enjoyable aspects of garden railroading.

We will be looking for members to host those gatherings and will be providing funds for the associated refreshments.

THE NEW BAGRS WEBSITE

Nearly 200 members have accessed to site to date and paid their dues via the site. We have helped a dozen members get access with notes about cross-tracking settings.

We remain available to help members, so don't hesitate to reach out if you need help.

LOOKING FORWARD TO A GREAT 2025

In addition to our BAGRS activities, we there is the 40th NGRC in Sacramento.

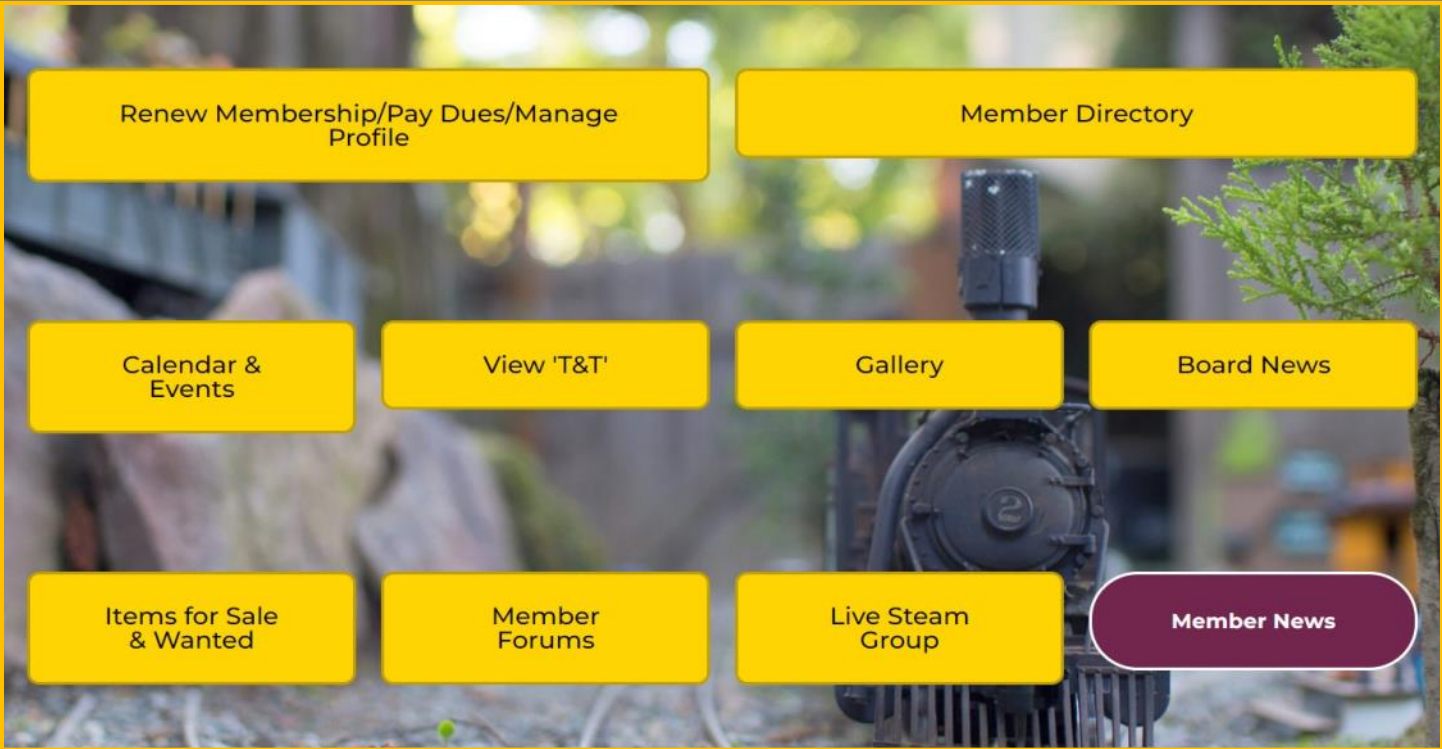
I wish you all a healthy and happy New Year.



PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVES



I hope you are enjoying the 8 members services on the new website



SOME NOTES ABOUT FOUR MEMBER SERVICES

VIEW T&T: 2024, 2023 & 2022 editions ordered from most recent to oldest with cover images to help us find editions that we want to look at again. It's also a great resource for new members!

ITEMS FOR SALE & WANTED: A 'Member Marketplace' which has been only lightly used in recent years, which is surprising given the incidence of members downsizing. Now it's easier to find, we hope it might get more traction.

MEMBER FORUMS: Another service that has been lightly used in the last few years, so lightly that we considered excluding it from the new site. In the end, we opted to give it a second life, in easier to find location.

GALLERY: 140 images of BAGRS RRs gathered over the last 3 years. It will be updated in January if we receive quality images of more BAGRS RRs. Can you spot the one image that is not a BAGRS RR?

From the Editor's Desk



Roger Nicholson lives in Union City, California, and operates the [Crystal Cove & Rose Railroad](#).

On the Cover. A logging train produces an impressive steam plume as it crosses a trestle on Jack and Pauline Verducci's *Crystal Springs Railroad* during the 2023 NGRC open house. Photo by Jeff Namba.

The "Train of Lights". My 1 1/2 year old grandson visited right after Christmas. I've been working to put together a train for him. He loves the Teletubbies, so I took an old, incomplete Hartland work caboose, 3-D printed the missing roof, added couplers, and turned it into a Teletubbie car. It turned out well, but I felt that it needed more.

On my drive home from a recent meeting of the Sacramento Valley Garden Railway Society, I happened to drive through Niles Canyon in the evening. I saw the "Train of Lights" pass by. I decided that I needed a "Train of Lights" of my own.

I also wired up a few Christmas cars that I found in storage boxes. The USA Trains car had a Christmas music board in it, which was attached to a corroded battery pack. I repaired the sound board wiring and installed a 3.7V rechargeable Lithium-Ion battery pack to run sound and all of the lights. The Teletubbie car got a lighting upgrade as well. Here is the result.



In fact, the garden trains turned out to be a *huge* hit with my grandson. During the 4 days that he and his parents spent with us, much of his time at our house was spent out in the backyard. Whenever he *wasn't* in the backyard, he indicated that he *wanted* to be out there. We alternated between running Thomas and the Teletubbie Christmas train.



We ran trains in the morning, afternoon and evening during each of the 4 days. I will hereafter be known as the "train grandpa." I seem to have all of the fun toys...

We also took time to visit the Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad and ride the steam train there. Luckily, they were running No. 2 that day.



After careful consideration, however, I have determined that Billy Jones No. 2 will not fit on my layout.

And finally, witness the “bubble car” that was being towed around the Diablo Pacific Short Line at the train show in

Pleasanton a few weeks ago. I’m getting some ideas for enhancements to my “Christmas train” for next year.

I hope that your holidays were happy, with or without trains!

Roger

Note: Due to my own lateness in getting this issue ready to go, I gave our copyeditor Noella Simmons (who does a fantastic job!) the holiday off. Therefore, any typos in this issue are mine and mine alone!



Technical Tip

Re-spiking Llagas Creek Plastic Ties: Part 2

By Roger Nicholson

I've learned a bit more about re-spiking Llagas Creek track since last month. First, I want to show the two methods I am using of dealing with “broken” tie strips, where the plastic spike heads have broken off, but the tie itself is in good shape.

The first method is what I use to attach rail to my redwood trestles. Although this isn't in any way prototypical, it is effective and actually doesn't look bad at all.

First, I clip off all of the webbing holding the individual tie strips together, so that I have a collection of single ties. I then slide the ties onto a pair of rails using whatever intact plastic spike heads are still present (if any). I then spike the missing locations, and then slide the ties off of the rails and place them in a bag.

I use Titebond III and a brad nailer or stainless steel brads to hold redwood ties in place on my trestle decks. The ties are spaced so that they will accept “American style” Aristocraft Code 332 ties strips with the plastic ties inserted between the redwood ties.

As it turns out, when I removed the Code 332 Aristo track from the trestle, the redwood tie spacing is exactly correct for accepting the individual Llagas Creek “narrow gauge” ties. After sliding the individual “repaired” ties onto the rail, and pressing the plastic ties into place between the redwood ties, I also spike the rail to some of the redwood ties to hold it all in place. It works for me—the plastic ties keep the track in gauge and the redwood ties hold everything in place.



The second method is for sections of track that are mounted on flat material, such as my wooden and PVC ladder supports. In this situation I cut the tie strips into groups of 2, 3 or 4 ties. I slide the tie strip section on the rails using any existing plastic spike heads (if any) and spike all of the “empty” locations. Then I slide the tie strip off and put it in a bag for later use. The rail is attached to the wood or PVC by placing stainless steel brads through the center of some of the ties. In this case, the tie strip alone is holding the rail together and in gauge.

This seems like a lot of work—why not just buy new ties strips and dump the broken ones? That isn't as easy as it may sound. One important thing that I learned is that the rail profile of new Llagas Creek track is slightly different than that of the older track. Llagas Creeks notes this on their web site: [Tie Strips](#).

“Important if buying tie strips for older Llagas

Creek rail: *The rail profile of Llagas Creek rail changed in the past when under different ownership. That rail's base was wider than the base of our current rail and will not fit in our current tie strips. Please measure the width of your rail to confirm it will fit. Rail with approx. a 5mm or 0.197 inch wide base will fit our currently produced tie strips. We do not carry any of the older tie strips that fit the wider previous generation of Llagas Rail.” (From the Llagas Creek web site)*



So, if you have had Llagas Creek track for many years on your layout (as many of us probably do) you have the “previous generation” of rail, and *the new Llagas tie strips will not fit your rail.*

BAGRS member Ken Brody describes the process that he has gone through in order to deal with this problem:

I've had Llagas Creek track on my layout since the original construction 30 years ago. I picked it as I liked the code 250 size and the ability to bend it however I needed, which is just about everywhere on my layout. Over time, many of the spikes have been broken off, frequently when I inadvertently stepped on the outer end of the ties rather than flat-footed across the entire track where I can't entirely avoid it.

When just a few spikes were broken within a short distance, it wasn't a problem, but when an entire tie strip is done in, it is an issue.

So, my first attempt at a solution was to buy some more tie strips. However, during the interval since my original purchase, Llagas shifted its manufacturing overseas from the original “made in USA” track. After removing the damaged old ties, sliding the remaining good ties to the center of the rail length, and installing the new strips at each end, I found that the track was out of gauge in places. On closer examination, I discovered that the new tie strips had tie plates designed for rail with bases of 0.195 inches versus 0.211 on the USA-made (older) rail. Consequently, not only did this make it difficult to install the new tie strips but where I succeeded, the rail was slightly tilted as it was partly sitting on the elevated edge of the base plate. If both rails tilted the same way it wasn't a problem, but if they tilted in opposite directions the gauge was either too narrow or too wide.

You have to give Ken credit for making the tie strips that Llagas Creek Railways claims won't fit their old rail...*actually sort of fit their old rail.* Apparently, if the rails are “tilted the same way” you can kind of make it work.

However, Ken notes that this solution was not optimal, so he tried to find another solution:

My next solution was to scavenge undamaged tie strips from my trestles and bridges, make wood ties and hand-spike the rails. This had the added advantage of looking much nicer on the trestles and bridges. I also found another brand of tie strips with wider base plates and used them to replace the Llagas ties in tunnels as they aren't visible. One more solution was to buy some of the new Llagas rail to entirely replace track sections that were in bad shape or needed to be realigned anyway.

This process gained me a box of the old tie strips. Some of them had maybe only one or two good ties remaining which I used by cutting away the bad ties. Eventually, though, I began to run short on the old tie strips. Also, there were places where only a couple of ties had broken spikes and I didn't want to go through the effort of cutting out these ties and sliding the remaining ties into the gap and adding new tie strips at the end of the rail piece.

So, this solution was to scavenge different parts of the layout and rearrange them. Again, very creative out of necessity, but not very desirable. Ken's final solution was actually pretty elegant:

I then tried your method of installing metal spikes into the plastic ties as you have done. This sort of worked, but some of the spikes had a habit of working loose. This led me to one more solution. I cut some undersized ties that exactly fit into the hollow space on the underside of the old Llagas ties. That way, the metal spike goes into the wood piece and seems to hold better.



This seems like a good solution. By cutting some undersized wood ties that fit into the hollow space under each of the Llagas Creek plastic ties, you give the spikes something additional to bite into. You don't even have to glue the wood pieces in—the spikes hold it in place. I will keep this method in mind when I start replacing my PVC roadbed sections of track with the Llagas Creek track.

Finally, there are also other tie strips out there which will fit the older Llagas Creek rail quite well. Specifically, AMS AM49-101 Flex Track Code 250 tie strips will work, with the added benefit of making the Llagas Creek flex track actually flexible, very much like LGB Code 332 flex track, which can be easily “flexed.” Here is a six-foot section of 25-year-old Llagas Creek Nickel Silver Code 250 rail mounted in AMS AM49-101 tie strips. ■



Carnivale on the Green: A Railcar Based Traveling Carnival

RAIL CAR #74: BELL RINGER

By Jim Ralph



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

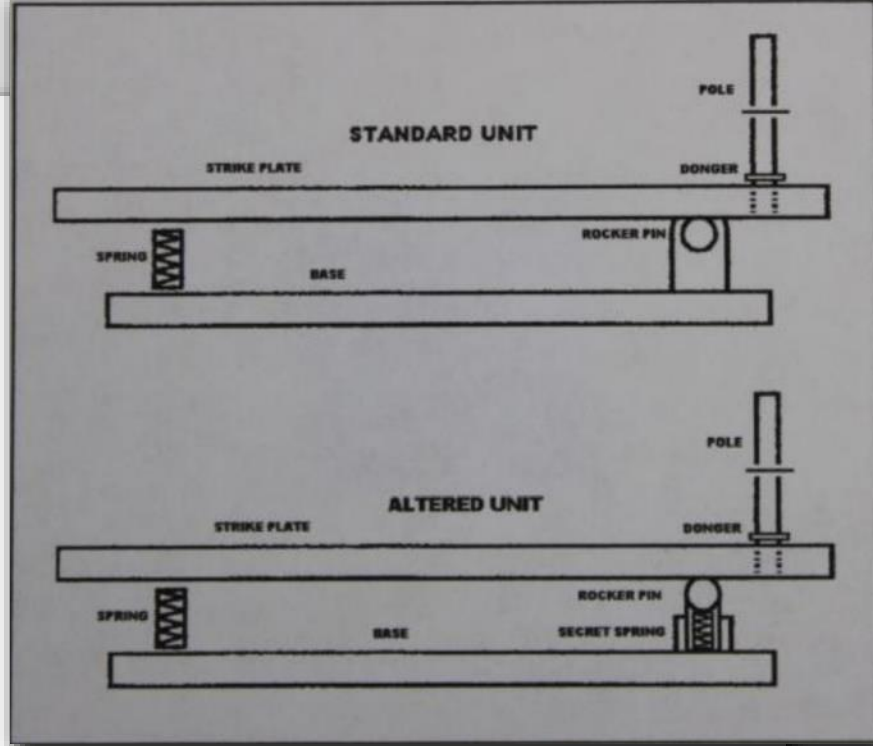
Also known as the HIGH STRIKER, this attraction has always been a standard at carnivals, which was designed specifically to profit from the male ego. Most men with strong egos, always came to carnivals with others of his peer group, or with a female he is itching to impress. The Barker would quickly single out the alpha male in the passing group, and the challenge would be made to ring the bell. The mark would usually respond quickly and step up to prove his machismo. But if he resisted, the Barker's skill and timing was always impeccable using various ploys to pull him in, usually challenging his physical ability to hit the bell.

Dollar paid, mallet in hand, only one in five players would ring the bell on the first try. Even if successful, the prize was a plastic 'trophy' key chain costing a dime wholesale, would still give the Carney a profit. With failure and ego being deflated, the mark would quickly try again. Dollar paid, ringing the bell is now a one chance in three. If this second try failed, and the mark is still determined to hit the bell, the Carney quietly takes the money. If he appears wanting to depart, the Carney will turn to the crowd announcing the player only clipped the edge of the strike plate and will be given a redo. Quietly, the Carney will suggest that by hitting just the front edge of the strike plate with enough force it will add more snap to the donger assuring a ring. Success.....crowd cheers.....ego intact. Repeat.



FRONT EDGE ADVANTAGE

Free of the illegal rigging a game of chance, the altered strike plate assembly allowed every player equal advantage, but the player has to know the trick. Besides the standard resistance spring below the strike plate, a secret secondary spring is fitted below the rocker pin allowing it to absorb some of the upward thrust resulting in a failed try. Assuring a strike in this area, a worn but visible red circle in this area attracts the players attention as the possible 'sweet spot'. It is believed that this strike plate design was unique to CARNIVALE.



THE HISTORY OF THE BELL RINGER.....TRUE

Amsterdam, Holland, 1876. Humphrey ('HUM') Dhinghah was the town's fire chief and resided on the second floor of the firehouse. Being almost deaf, and often not hearing emergency calls from the street below to his window.....not good. To get his attention, he rigged up a bell at the top of a pole allowing a hockey puck to hurl up from a strike by a mallet to an altered child's tetter-totter. Years passed, Chief Dhinghah retired, to supplement his pension, Hum setup the Bell Ringer as a game of strength at the local street fair, becoming an instant hit (A good pun). With a patent pending, he began

producing and marketing them to carnivals and amusement parks.

To this day, one might hear the catch phrase that was first spoken that day in Amsterdam.....LOOK, THATS A REAL HUMDINGER. ■



THE GARDEN DEPARTMENT

Dwarf Colorado Blue Spruce

By Richard Murray

BOTANICAL NAME: Picea Pungens, 'Globe'

COMMON NAME: Dwarf Colorado Blue Spruce

USDA ZONE: 2-8 (Down to -45 degrees F)

SUNSET ZONE: 1-10, 14-17

Description

This fantastic globe-shaped evergreen conifer is a dwarf. It is flat-topped and densely branched. The bright blue needles hold their color all year long, and the new growth is an even brighter blue in late spring. The plant provides a stunning contrast when planted among green plants. Stiff 1.5" needles point outward from the branches in all directions. Its growth rate is slow. It may eventually get to 4'x4'. The plant in the photo is 12" tall and was planted from a 2 gallon pot about 9 years ago. I prune it once a year to be sure it stays very small.

Culture

Picea pungens, 'Globe' is easily grown in average, acidic, well-drained soils. It likes full sun best, but will tolerate some light shade. It prefers rich, moist soils. Although established plants have some drought tolerance, soils should be kept consistently moist and not allowed to dry out in the early years.

It generally prefers cool climates and will struggle in the heat and humidity of the deep South. There is no serious disease or insect problem. Most often it is sold as a grafted plant. Its parent, Picea pungens, is native to the central Rocky Mountains where it is typically found growing in moist locations from 6,000 to 11,000 feet in elevation.

It is a low maintenance plant. No pruning is required unless, like me, one wishes to keep the plant very small. When pruning is necessary, it is recommended to trim back only the new growth of the current season. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats.



Uses

Use it as an accent in Asian gardens or for contrast in gardens heavy in cool colors. It looks great next to a green lawn, or it can add brightness to dark parts of the yard. It can work nicely in a rock garden. However, its real value is as a simple specimen. Don't forget that it can look terrific in a garden railroad!

Nomenclature

The genus name, *Picea*, is reportedly derived from the Latin word *picea* meaning pitch in reference to the sticky resin typically found in spruce bark. *Pungens* means sharp-pointed in reference to the needles.

Special Features

It is a North American native. Because of its many fine qualities, it has been the winner of the prestigious Award of Garden Merit of the Royal Horticultural Society. It is certainly one of my most favorite plants. ■



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.

Fall 2024 Live Steam Happenings

The Live Steam Community has had a busy Fall this year. It is a real joy to share the hobby with other like-minded folks and we always seem to have a great time.

National Steamup Symposium, Oct 9-13

There were several steamups this Fall to keep us quite busy and happy. The main event on Oct 9-13 happened in Lodi again this year. This “National Summer Steamup” was transformed into the “National Steamup Symposium” because it was no longer held in the dead of summer, thankfully! Larry Staver, the Portland-based live steamer who normally sponsors a steamup in the Fall which would have conflicted, gave his blessing to the calendar change. It was so successful that it looks like this will be permanent in the future.

The steamup is organized by six steamers, a couple of whom are BAGRS members: Bob Trabucco and Chris Coley. This group of guys put in so much time and effort every year, all as a gift to the live steam crowd. This is NOT a money making endeavor – they simply hope to break even.

The Grape Festival Grounds, where the event is now held, is a cavernous place and fantastic find for hosting us. The hall can hold many tracks and we did have many tracks so waiting for a run time was not a problem.

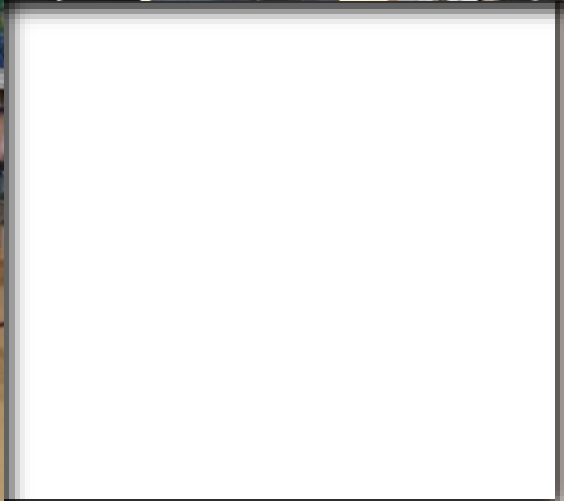
The empty hall gets transformed into a very busy place in a matter of a few hours on Wed afternoon.



The steamup is well attended by folks from other parts of the country and the world. Accucraft and Aster were both in attendance, with Bing Cheng hosting Fuji-san of Aster and one of Aster's subcontractors who does all of their sheet metal. (Aster makes their engine sheet metal out of stainless steel because stainless is less expensive in Japan than brass!)



Accucraft/Aster brought their latest prototype to show and run, a Baldwin profile 2-6-0 mogul. Here Colton Snell and Gary Woolard look over the offering with two of Aster's design engineers.



Glen Simpson and Bob Sorenson are among the many participants who like to give helpful hints to others who might ask for their wisdom.

One of the very special things which happens at these yearly steamups is to recognize those in the hobby who have given their time and efforts to promote the



hobby. As such, our own BAGRS members Richard and Melinda Murray were honored in that way this year. Both of them have given so much over the years and recognition was well deserved.

Here they are pictured with the NSS organizers.



Finally, a BAGRS icon was towed around some of the tracks at the NSS. The late Steve Shyvers, aka The Garden Gnome, was a welcome and very proud sight at this year's event.



Bill Allen Steamup, Oct. 26

Bill has been with other projects recently so he was able to host a steamup in October. It was well attended by our local club members.

Some of the early attendees, Colton Snell, Gary Whaley and Clint Baker got things rolling.



Here Colton is doing a test run of an Accucraft Canadian Pacific Royal Hudson. It ran very well.



Ron Sickler and Dennis Mead share some time as Jack Verducci passes by.



Bill Mansell ran one of his Mamod modified engines. Bill's work always performs well and is a joy to behold.

Bill Allen was ever watchful for track problems. Here he is using a rare Train-It double rail track bender to fix an issue.

The live steam guys always have a great time hanging out. Here is the group, from left to right:

Colton Snell, Dennis Mead, Seth Abrahams, Bob Trabucco, Ron Malouf, guest, Phillip Boles (in shadow), Tim Boles, Clint Baker, Bill Mansell, Gary Whaley (seated), Bill Allen, Jack Verducci, Jim Goss.

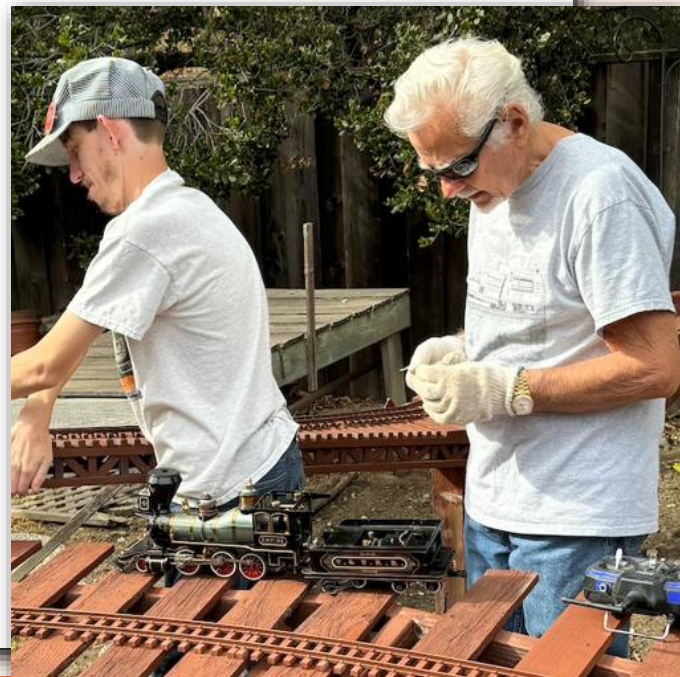


Every steamup seems to have some sort of mishap and this one was no exception. Jim Goss' beautiful mogul built by Bill Allen took a header while going through a curve. Luckily, the

engine somehow got wedged in some trackwork and never found the bricks below. Bill and Colton

are cleaning up after the debacle.

Bill is assessing the damage. The engine was not heavily damaged and will live to steam another day.



Rob Lenicheck steamup, Nov 16

And we did things up once more at the Lenicheck layout in November. The crowds were here early. Bob Trabucco and Richard Murray get their steeds fired up for the first runs of the day.



Plenty of steam plumes on this morning! Here a 1:20.3 Accucraft 13T Shay does the slow drag as Richard's Flying Scotsman speeds by.

Now let's see: I'm sure Tim Boles is saying something very important as Richard Murray and Phillip Boles are forced to listen.



An old live-steamer friend of ours, Eric Maschwitz dropped in for a bit with his son, Ry. Ry will soon be running one of Dad's engines given a bit more time. Eric is spending more time these days running 7.5" gauge trains on a layout near Modesto.

Ron Sickler watches Phillip Boles get going before he, Phillip, loses his drawers.

Phillip is preparing to run a “bargain” engine he picked up at Accucraft. He did get it to run quite well but will need a few small tweaks before hitting the mainline. There are many sizes of engines seen at steamups like ours.



Rather a crowded scene on this day. Ron Sickler enjoys the ambience.



Accucraft's new 1:20.3 13T Shay is a consistently good runner. A good starter engine for those wanting to jump into live steam!



Finally, a good crowd and good time was had by all. From left: David Shawcross, the author, Vova Tymoshchuk, Sanjaya Kumar, Phillip Boles (in back), Tim Boles, Richard Murray, can't remember, Duc Nguyen, Ron Sickler (seated), Eric Maschwitz, Jim Goss, Ry Maschwitz, Dennis Mead, Gary Whaley, Bill Allen, Bob Trabucco.

We probably won't see any more steamups til spring. Happy Holidays and a great New Year to all! ■

Dave's Corner

by Dave Frediani



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

Completing The 7/8 Scale Streetcar

Here are two views of the painted streetcar, waiting for its black striping.

Now that all the painting is finished, it's time to start on the trolley system. For the trolley pole itself, I used a black 2mm bicycle spoke, almost any length will work. You'll be cutting the spoke to the length you need for your overhead wires.



Now that all the painting is finished, it's time to start on the trolley system. For the trolley pole itself, I used a black 2mm bicycle spoke, almost any length will work. You'll be cutting the spoke to the length you need for your overhead wires.

Since my streetcar is battery powered, I have no real need for the overhead trolley system, This one is just for show.

Next for the trolley's pivoting arm, I used a piece of #199 Evergreen styrene, cutting it about 1¼ inches long and rounding the end that will pivot. After rounding that end, I drilled a 3/32" hole through the side of the rounded end to complete the pivot end. On the other end I drilled a 2mm x ½" hole and pressed the straight end of the spoke into the hole. The other end of the spoke has a nice bend from where it would normally pass through the hub of a bicycle wheel. I attached two rounded pieces of styrene to that end to act as guides, to keep the trolley pole on the overhead wires.

Here's the start of the trolley pole.



I used two pieces of an old link and pin coupler and glued them to the base, for the trolley pole to rotate on. Then using an Accucraft coupler pin and cutting off its handle, I pushed the pin through the coupler and the newly made trolley pole end, so that the trolley pole can now rotate.

Here's the finished trolley system, ready to be installed.



The trolley system was built of mostly strips of styrene I had laying around.

Here's the trolley system installed on my streetcar.



Here's my streetcar with it's black striping tape, that I used to separate the two colors. I purchased the striping tape from O'Reilly Auto Parts. The tape comes in a few different widths, I chose the 1/8" width. The cost of the tape was only \$3.99 for 40'.



Here's the streetcar that I copied from the Narrow Gauge gazette, July/August, 2014.



I had a tough time changing some of the measurements to fit my needs, and still maintaining the 7/8 scale outside measurements, along with getting the right roof radius to match the ones I remembered riding on in San Francisco, growing up.

Some of the best parts in this article was all the work the author put in his short line Traction Company Railway system. Although a few things may have been out of scale a bit, the article was great, and full of all kinds of ideas. With all the buildings and scenery and even a car barn, complete with work shop and control center. If you get a chance check it out. ■

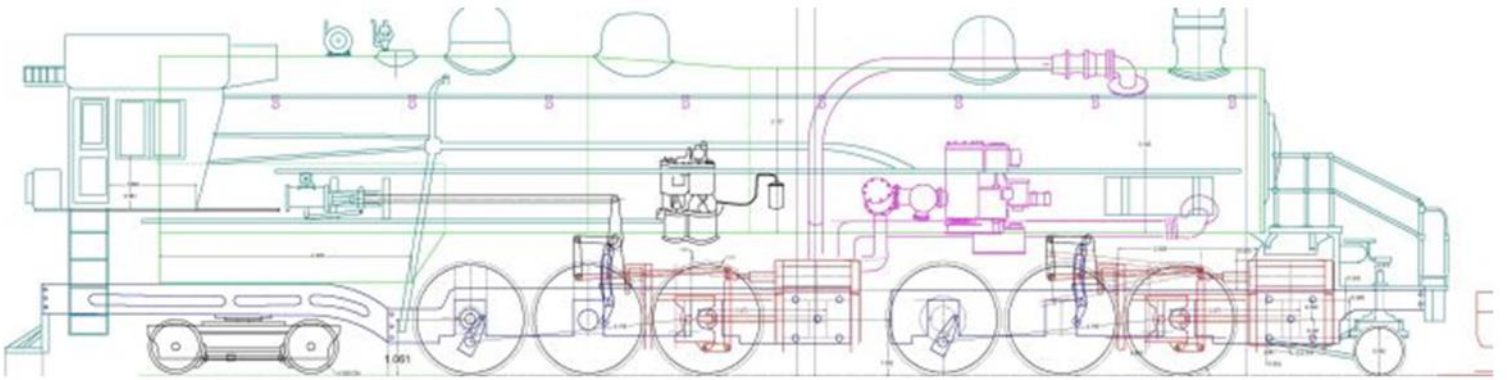
East Devil Hills Modeling Group

by Henner Meinhold

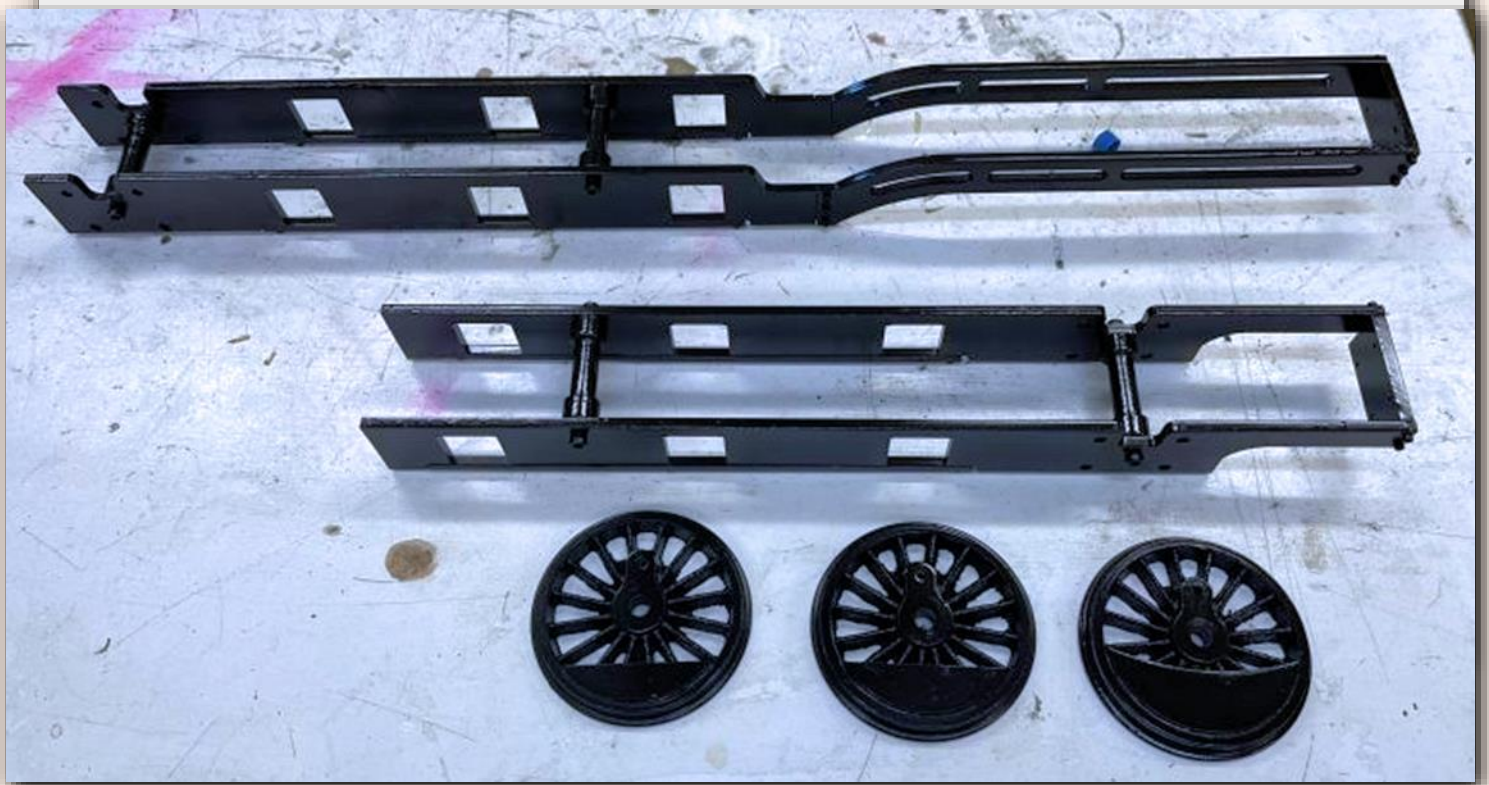


Henner Meinhold resides in Berlin, Germany. The *East Devil Hills Modeling Group* meets regularly to create, collaborate, and share incredibly machined models.

Bill Allen started a new project. This will become an older version of the SP Cab Forward with the “Flat Face”.

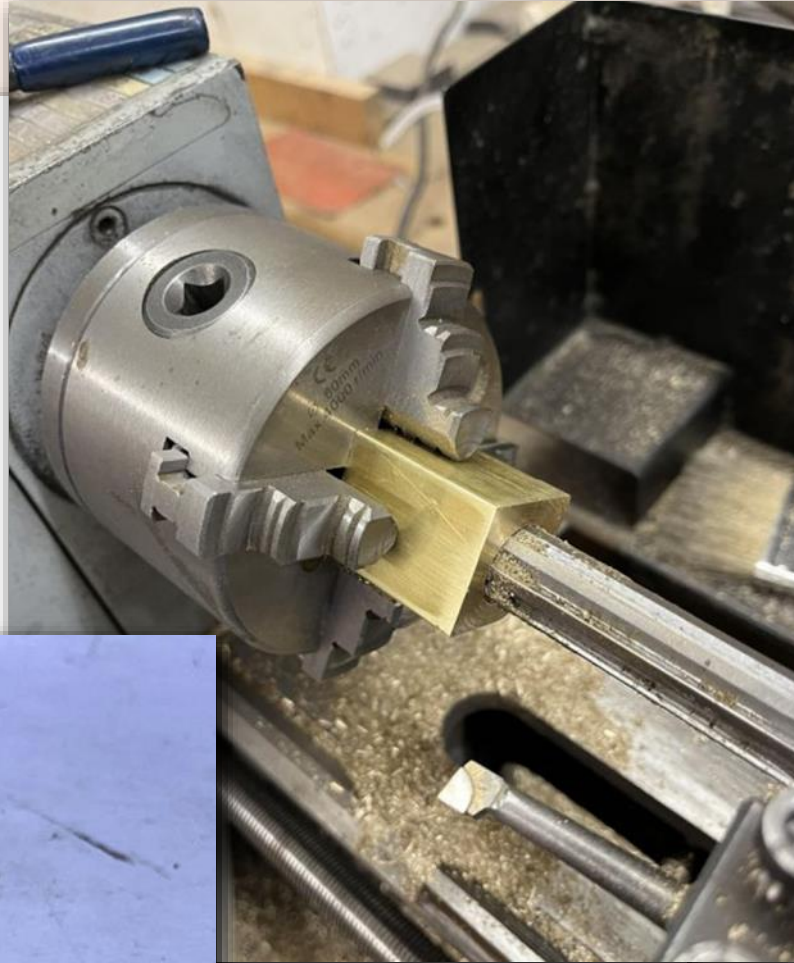


The frames have been CNC cut by Dennis. The wheels are from Walsall and have already been turned and profiled.



He is now working on the cylinders. The following picture shows an embryo cylinder chucked in the lathe and being reamed for a smooth bore.

Here are the front and rear cylinders with the appropriate covers.

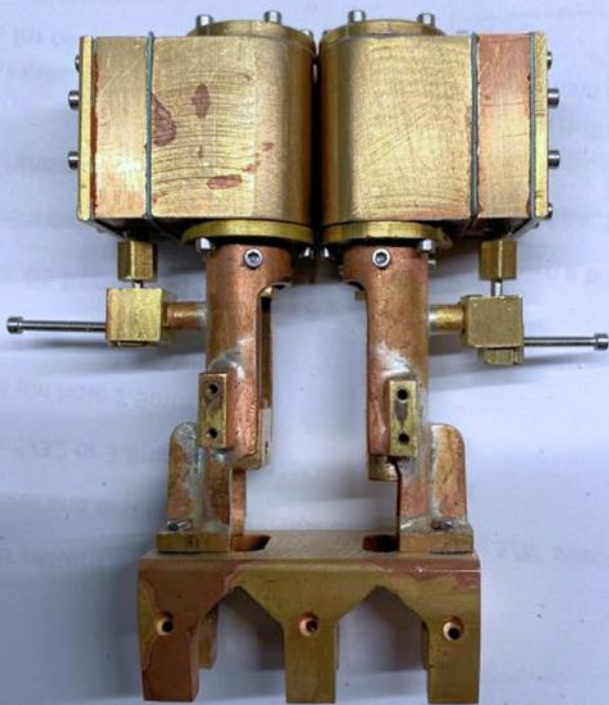
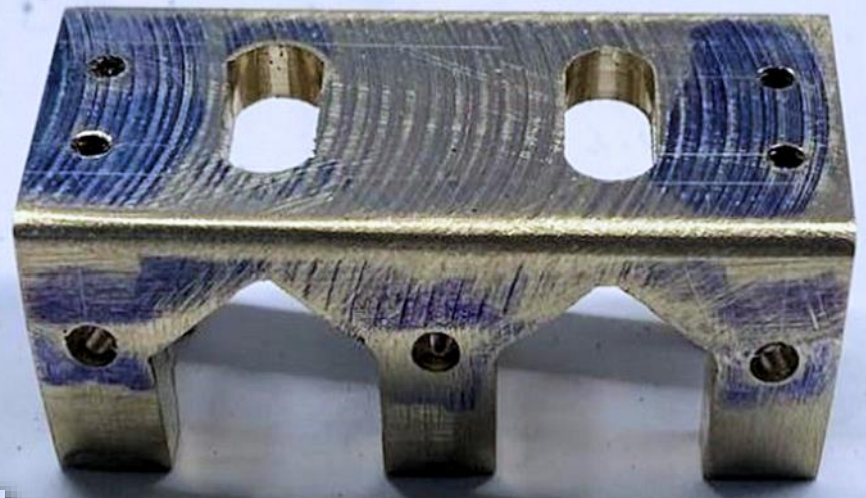


Dennis also CNC cut the side rods with flutes



Ron Malouf continued with the engine of his Shay. He tackled the very complicated lower "casting" for the engine bracket. It is milled out of a solid piece of bronze with the Sherline mill, quite a daunting task.

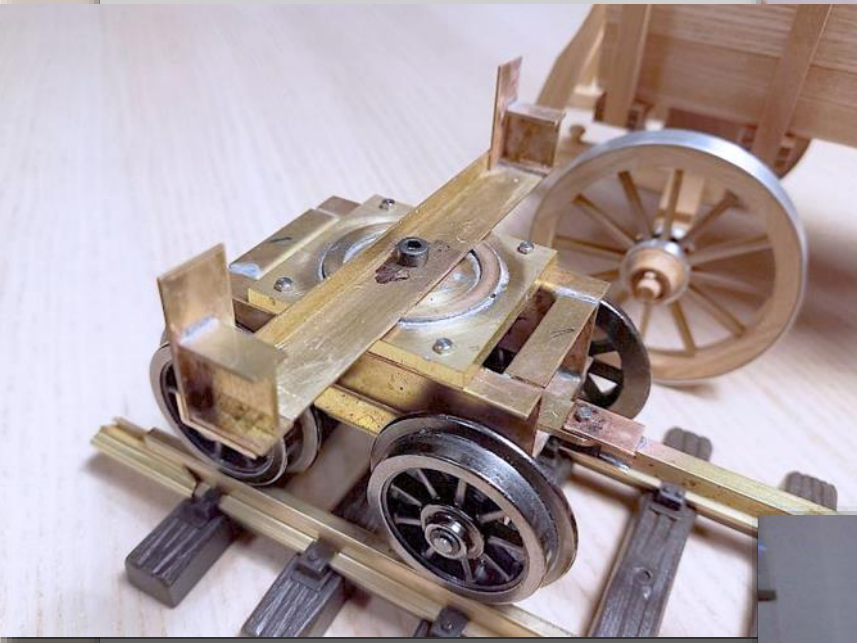
The well advanced engine build.



Today even I have something to contribute. As I like quirky prototypes, I found a picture of an early "Road/Rail" vehicle. This is a horse drawn wagon sitting on two trucks for rail transport. The trucks were obviously crudely built by the village black smith using bits and pieces of steel/wood lying around. The contraption survives on a preserved field railway in Schlanstedt/Germany. A friend of mine rode his racing-bike close to 40 miles to take photos and measurements. Here he is seen investigating the trucks .



The front and rear trucks.



The wagon on the trucks

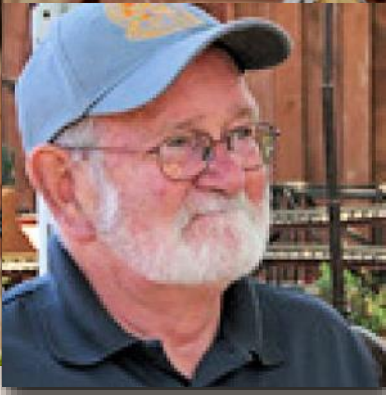
The contraption will be a suitable companion for my Hit&Miss loco (sorry for the less than perfect picture)

I wish you all a healthy and successful 2025! Henner ■



Railroad Snippets

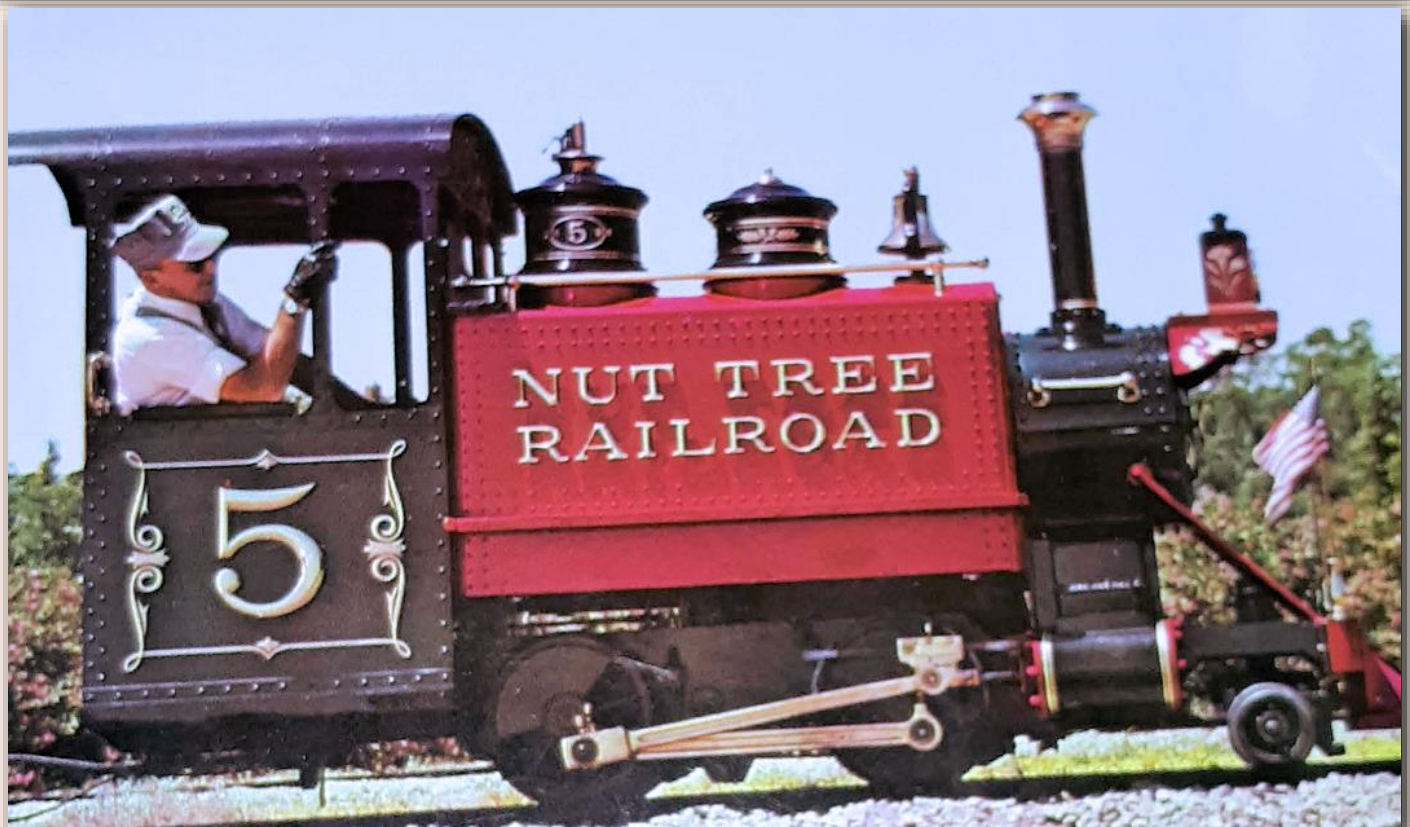
By Bill Ralph



Bill Ralph operates the [Porcupine Gulch Railroad](#), and knows a thing or two about amusement parks and postcards.

BUD'S TRAINS

Wendell “Bud” Hurlbut was a designer, builder, entrepreneur, amusement ride manufacturer and pioneer kiddieland park operator who made a lasting impact on the theme park industry. The talented mechanical engineer built and sold small scale ride-on trains to street corner and neighborhood parks that were springing up in Southern California in the 1940’s. The popular 14” gauge internal combustion engine trains, designed to appear as steam locomotives complete with open gondola cars with bench seating, could also be found at the The Pike in Long Beach, Santa’s Village in the San Bernardino, Hobby City in Anaheim and in his own mini park in the parking lot of a grocery store in El Monte, CA. Hurlbut trains were also being operated in Northern California at the Stonestown Shopping Center, on the roof of the San Francisco Emporium, and in Vacaville transporting passengers between the Nut Tree Airport and the Nut Tree Plaza.



Hurlbut traded several of his trains for a vintage 1896 Dentzel carousel that he put into storage for a future amusement park that he hoped to build on land he owned in Los Angeles. On second thought, he convinced Walter Knott to allow him to construct a concession across highway 39 from the farm with the classic carousel and a signature train ride circling a man made lagoon. The success of the 1959 roadside attraction led to an Antique Auto Ride and six themed ride concessions in Knott's Berry Farm's Fiesta Village designed, built, owned and operated by Bud's Hurlbut Amusement Co. Next came the amusement industries first iconic "dark ride" in 1960, The Calico Mine Ride with six classic Hurlbut trainsets.

Hurlbut was finally able to design, build, and operate his own kiddieland, Castle Amusement Park, in Riverside in 1976 using retired rides from Knott's Berry Farm. Hurlbut Amusement Co. was bought by Western Train Co. in 2011 and continues to provide parts and service for the score of Bud's trains still in service, as well as offering a new line of "Hurlbut Minitures" original classic trains. ■

Nut Tree Railroad No.5 Postcard from the collection of Bill Ralph





Trellis & Trestle

FROM THE ARCHIVE

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November 2003

Those pesky LGB turnouts, by John S. MacDougall

It is well known that the LGB 1600 turnouts have a problem with derailments and my layout, which uses 15 of them, is no exception.

Given the least bit of encouragement, certain engines and cars will consistently derail. In fact before I worked out a fix, there were pieces of equipment that just couldn't be allowed out in public. So what is the problem?

One web-writer claims that the curved part of the turnout is not to gauge and pads up the rail to reduce the gauge.

Actually this fix only serves to help the wheel jump the frog gap and it not a reliable cure. Careful measurements show that the turnouts are no more out of gauge than any curved piece of LGB track. So gauge is not the problem.

Take a look at the three images of **Figure 1** which shows a right hand turnout with a pair of wheels at the point where derailments occur.

You can see that there is a rather wide gap in the rail going through the frog and that, when the wheels are at this gap, the near wheel is just entering the guard rail. In fact if there is any tendency to drift up, the right hand wheel will ride up on the guard rail and probably slip up.



Figure 1a: Wheels on the curve are entering the frog area and guard rail simultaneously.

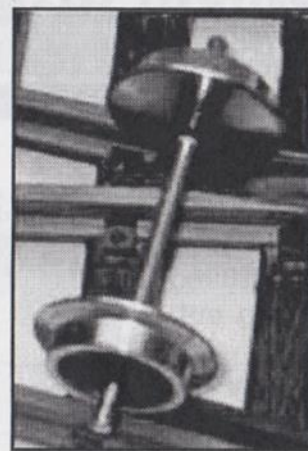


Figure 1b: Upper wheel has drifted up into the gap while the lower wheel is starting to ride up on the guard rail.



Figure 1c: Derail is complete and the wheels are now following the straight rather than the curve.

Moreover, in an attempt to reduce a dip in the left wheel while going through the frog, LGB actually has a shallow bottom on which the wheel rim rides. So, with frog, guard rail and gap, LGB actually encourages a derailment.

So what should be done is to encourage that the wheel to follow the curve? This can best be done by extending the guard rail and narrowing the guard rail to rail gap, and what I have done is work out a way to do this easily with minimum disruption to service.

I first tried several ways to extend the plastic guard rail and all failed. Then I got the idea of making the guard rail out of a real piece of curved rail. The final result is shown in Figure 2.

A new longer guard rail is made from some stock curved LGB rail and soldered to a brass plate. The old plastic guard rail and its attachments are ground off and the new rail is riveted to the ties. Spacing is set by using small pieces of regular rail inserted in the gap upside down (and removed after riveting).

To get the guard rail close enough to the regular rail the flange is filed down on the rail side. The rivets are one-eighth inch copper "pop" rivets so there is no problem with corrosion.

It takes me about an afternoon to make and install five new guard rails. All my turnouts are now equipped this way and there are no more problems. If you have to work on locations all the work is done from the top side and while it may be a bit more difficult to execute, field assembly is quite possible. ■

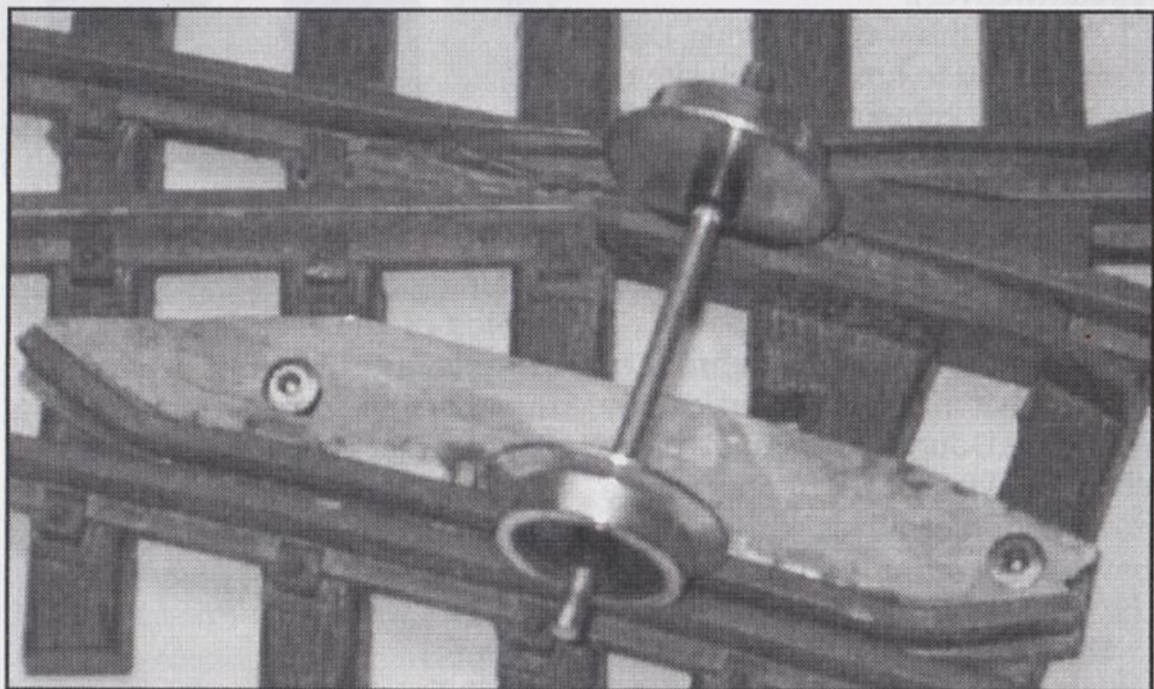


Figure 2: The extended guard rail encourages the wheels to follow the curve.



40th Anniversary

National Garden Railway Convention

June 18 - 22, 2025

SAFE Credit Union Convention Center - Sacramento, CA

The 2025 NGRC site is now live. You may sign up now for the Ice Cream Social on Thursday, the banquet at the California State Railroad Museum on Friday, and purchase your convention car and/or convention engine as soon as possible before they run out.

<https://www.ngrc2025.org/>



MEMBER UPDATES

From Roger Nicholson:

I mentioned previously that a good amount of track and buildings have migrated from Ray Turner's *Mystic Mountain Railroad* to my own *Crystal Cove and Rose Railroad*. I have removed all of the Code 332 track on my lower loop and am preparing to transport it to my dad's house in St. George, Utah for use in his layout construction. The process of installing the Llagas Creek Code 250 track is in progress. It is a slow process as I make adjustments to existing trestles to accommodate the new trackwork, but it progressing well.



Right now, buildings are scattered about the yard in random places. This will eventually change as I work on repairing each one and deciding where each will ultimately live.

Arguably, the most challenging items to accommodate are the two 6-foot long steel bridges from the *Mystic Mountain*. Well, I've figured out where they will ultimately go. Here I have set them in place on top of my existing PCV ladder, which has had the Code 332 track removed. ■



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—November 2024](#)

[Central Ontario Garden Railway Association—Autumn 2024](#)

[Denver Garden Railway Society Newsletter—December 2024](#)

[Gold Coast Garden Railway Society—July 2024](#)

[Puget Sound Garden Railway Society—November 2024](#)

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[Sacramento Valley Garden Railway Society—December 2024](#)

[The Garden Whistle New Zealand Large Scale Newsletter—November 2024](#)

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

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THE LAST PAGE



The Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad located in Oak Meadow Park in Los Gatos offers rides around the park. The locomotive on the left is No. 2 and was built in 1905. No. 5 is a more modern replica. Two diesels also provide service when the steam locos are not being used. The train ride as well as the carousel next to the train station are a great activity for the kids or grandkids.

TRELLIS AND TRESTLE

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