

BAY AREA GARDEN RAILWAY SOCIETY

TRELLIS AND TRESTLE

OCTOBER 2023



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PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVES

BEST OPEN HOUSE FOR YEARS FUELED BY NEXT DOOR



On a lovely sunny San Rafael Sunday, Liz and I welcomed 150 adults and children to the Black Canyon Railroad, a dozen garden railroaders, and 140 guests inspired to come by our postings & messaging on NEXT DOOR. Some were retired couples but the majority were younger families with “train-obsessed” sons aged 3 to 8. Daughters came too of course, many wearing pretty dresses, which they insisted on wearing for the occasion.

All neighbors were stunned to find a model railroad in a garden in their community. Parents were delighted to share it with their children and many had walked from neighboring streets. We had a stroller parking lot!

The “train-obsessed” boys variously parked themselves as close to the tracks as they were allowed or followed trains along our 300-foot-straight main line. Parents reinforced that they were not allowed to touch the trains though the temptation was too much on 2 minor derailment occasions!

The girls were happy to participate in a scavenger hunt— “HOW MANY XX CAN YOU FIND?” Twenty items were listed starting with easy to count things and ending with much harder challenges. Question 20 was “how many people” and many of the girls got very close to the 105 on the railroad! We were even asked if the bodies in 2 coffins should be counted, making 107!

Some BAGRS Members choose not to have nonmembers at their railroads and we respect that choice. For our part, Liz & I loved every minute, watching the wonder in the boys eyes, admiring the observation skills of the girls, and meeting neighbors for the first time; neighbors who thanked us time and time again for sharing the Black Canyon Railroad. It was a fun day.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEMBER SURVEY

The Board of Directors will ask all members to complete a survey later this month. The last member survey was done several years ago and much has happened in the interim, particularly the COVID interruption to activities. The survey will seek your input about BAGRS' programs & services. Responses will guide what the Board does and does not prioritize in 2024 and 2025. So, please look out for email announcements about the survey in the second half of October and please respond so we get the broadest possible member input.

SWAP MEET

Date: Saturday November 4

Time: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Location: Accucraft Trains: 33260 Central Ave, Union City, CA 94587

BAGRS' pre-holiday Swap Meet is the perfect opportunity to acquire holiday gifts for others or ourselves! This is also an opportunity to see the latest items in Accucraft's product line and to view many of their past, classic locomotives and cars. It is particularly great for members building or expanding their railroads (or thinking of doing either) to acquire locomotives, cars, buildings and accessories at excellent prices.

Member Vendors need to register by sending an email to Mick Spilsbury at president@bagrs.org with your name and the # of tables you will bring. There is no charge, but there is a limit to the number of tables we can accommodate so best to email sooner rather than later! Also, note: You need to bring your own tables and the 'meet' is weather dependent because it's in Accucraft's parking lot.

FUTURE EVENTS

The NMRA National Convention in 2024 will be held on August 4-11 in Long Beach, California.



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Roger Nicholson grew up in Fremont, California, in a house that was located *right next to the Southern Pacific railroad tracks*, and still remembers his first Lionel train. Roger operates the *Crystal Cove & Rose Railroad*.

- **On the Cover and Featured Article. The Oakmont Dining Room Railroad**, located at *Oakmont of San Jose*, an assisted living and memory care facility. Read John Brawn's story about how this unique seasonal railroad came to be. It is quite the story, and I imagine that John could teach me a thing or two about trestle building.
- **You will notice that I don't have any photos of the September open houses in this issue.** Given that we have 21 open houses within the September and October timeframe, we have decided to devote an extra additional issue of the T&T in mid-November *just* to review all of the open houses. I've really been enjoying the fall open house schedule because there are open houses practically every weekend! I am trying to visit railroads that I have never visited before, and it has been quite rewarding. These open houses deserve more attention than a regular issue would give them space for.
- **I changed the "Open Railroads" pages format again.** Yes, I made the photos even larger. Descriptions have been condensed in order to allow the photo to be seen. I'll be using these pages in the T&T every time your railroad is scheduled to be open, but **the photos and descriptions can be updated as often as you like**. If you ever want the photo or description modified, just let me know. These are "Members Only" pages which are only visible to club members.
- **Some of you will see photos of your railroads in this issue of the T&T that you have never seen before.** You can thank Jeff Namba of the *Sacramento Valley Garden Railway Society* for those wonderful images if you were lucky enough to have him visit your railroad during the 2023 NGRC. You can expect to see more of these images appearing in future issues of the T&T.
- **The Garden Department.** Many of us have "garden railroads," but some (myself included) may be more comfortable working with the *railroad* than with the *garden*. Among other things, I will be rerunning Richard Murray's excellent features, which were previously published in the T&T as *Plant of the Month*. However, I would like to see *more* garden related articles. I might even try to write one myself, and I'm NOT a garden guy, so...buckle up.

Roger

OPEN RAILROAD—Sunday, October 1, 2023

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

Little Bear Railroad



Hays—1722 Campbell Ave, San Jose, CA

The **Little Bear railroad** was built in 2016 and was converted to DCC in 2017. In 2020 the railroad was extended by adding two small mountains with two bridges, tunnel, and trestle to get to the upper mountain loop. In addition, we planted both the old and new areas (with the expert help of Nancy Norris). The layout is about 75-feet long and 9-feet wide, with about 240 feet of track and 20 structures. All trains and structures are from the steam era. We run both DCC electric steam and 7/8th live steam on the railroad.

OPEN RAILROAD—Sunday, October 8, 2023

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

Fern Creek and Western Railroad

END OF THE LINE!

Last public opportunity to see this railroad

Park—419 Ocean View Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA

The **Fern Creek and Western** is an Fn3 (1:20.3 scale) freelance 3 ft narrow gauge railroad loosely based on the logging and shortline railroads of the Santa Cruz Mountains. The railroad runs over Birch Mountain from the backyard to the front yard, passing through many small towns along the way. The railroad shares track with the East Side Lumber Co. Railroad that has trackage rights over the FC&W to their logging branch line that leaves out of Fern Creek. Features include both geared and rod engines, two water features, two tunnels, multiple bridges, steep grades and detailed rolling stock. The railroad has an operations focus but is also set up for continuous running.

OPEN RAILROAD—Sunday, October 8, 2023

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

Russian River Railway

Pitonzo—14585 Cherry St., Guerneville, CA

The **Russian River Railway** is based on the early years of railroading to the Russian River; specifically, the Northwestern Pacific line built from Santa Rosa to Duncan's Mills around 1910. The layout is small, 6 by 9 feet, but will operate two trains in opposing directions with a small switch yard to move goods in a small hamlet similar to the area's history.

OPEN RAILROAD—Sunday, October 15, 2023

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

Umunhum Valley Railway & Orchard City



Dibble—210 Friar Way, Campbell, CA

Our garden features two layouts. The main attraction is in the backyard, and the bonus feature is in the front yard. The backyard is a whimsical sensory garden featuring the **Umunhum Valley Railway**, which is all about stimulating and engaging the five basic senses of sight, smell, sound, touch and taste. The layout is a loop-to-loop single track main line. The train travels through the jungle, tropics, a fern grotto, an alpine area, a tunnel, passed water features and a volcano. There are lots places to sit and watch the train. The front yard features the **Orchard City** live steam track, a 2-track loop with a minimum radius of 8 feet 6 inches. Any steamer is welcome to steam up and run their locomotive and consist around the garden orchard.

Photo by Jeff Namba

OPEN RAILROAD—Sunday, October 15, 2023

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

Loops & Grades Pacific Railroad



Doskaris—3705 Wilshire Avenue, San Mateo, CA

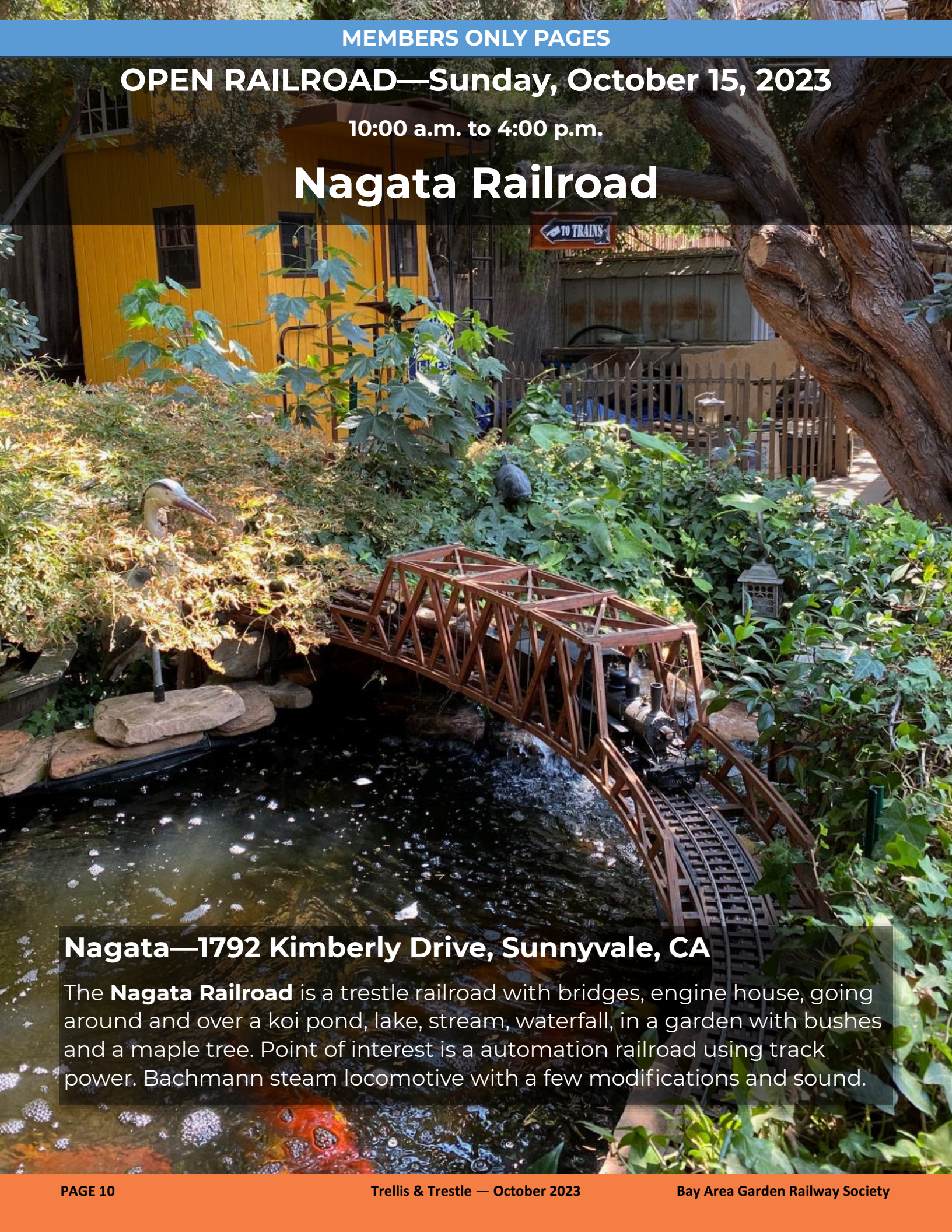
The **Loops & Grades Pacific Railroad**. I model "G", 1/29 scale standard gauge, mostly diesels, in the era roughly from 1940s through 1990s, with core railroad of Southern Pacific/Cotton Belt—including its interconnecting railroads. Layout construction started in early 2000s having progressively built it in 3 sectional areas. The outdoor area track is periodically fastened on wood or composite decking boards, mostly anchored on posts, to keep track from twisting and moving up or down.

See this railroad on YouTube: [Loops & Grades Pacific Railroad—2023 NGRC Preview](#)

OPEN RAILROAD—Sunday, October 15, 2023

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—Sunday, October 15, 2023

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

JJC&J Railroad



Ronconi—310 Chatham Way, Mountain View, CA

Welcome to the Jack, Jacob, Chiara and Joel Railroad (**JJC&J**), named after my grandchildren. The layout features 250 feet of elevated track with landscape incorporated. The theme is 1950's Americana and reflects many pleasant memories from my childhood.

See this railroad on YouTube: [JJC&J Railroad - 2023 NGRC Preview](#)

Photo by Jeff Namba

OPEN RAILROAD—Sunday, October 15, 2023

(Note the start time) 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

QuickSilver and Almaden Railroad

END OF THE LINE!

Last public opportunity to see this railroad



Zell—1120 Valley Quail Circle, San Jose, CA

The **QuickSilver and Almaden Railroad** was completely rebuilt to run really long trains. The nerve center of the railroad is a custom-built train building, which houses an extensive yard for making up and storing trains. All trains are now DCC allowing for greater flexibility in running.

Photo by Jeff Namba

OPEN RAILROAD—Sunday, October 22, 2023

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 22, 2023

10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Note the closing time)

Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes Railroad



Providenza—16 Drakes Cove , San Rafael, CA

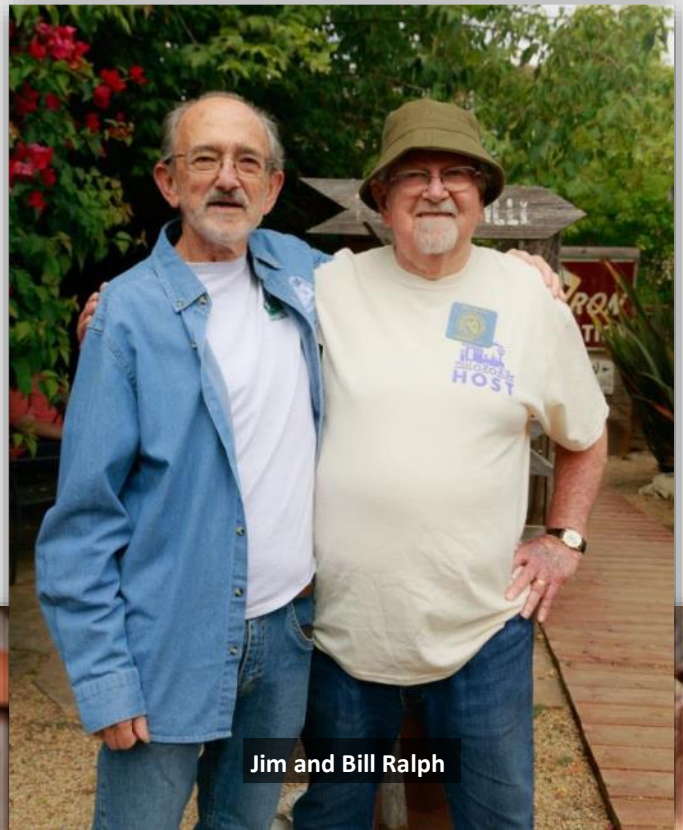
The **Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes Railroad** models this prototype Maine 'Two Footer' in Proto20.3n2 with a 30 mm track gauge. The railroad centers around the town of Strong, Maine, with its structures scratch built. Locomotives and rolling stock is kitbashed to accurately model the prototype.

An Overview of NGRC 2023

Text reprinted from the SVGRS *Valley Flyer*, August 2023

Text and photos by Jeff Namba

Suzy and I spent a very busy eight days in the Bay Area attending this year's National Garden Railroad Convention. The Bay Area Garden Railway Society (BAGRS) laid out a packed schedule that featured a wide variety of garden railroads, some meet-and-greet events, the vendor hall/modular layout venue, and several afternoon/evening clinics. At some point throughout the convention, we saw fellow SVGRS members Stephanie & Phil Huntingdale, Mary & Bob Dean, Laurie & Doug Post, Cathy & Cory Chew, Janene Powell & Dale Lambert, Matt & Jerry Abreu, Mark Janzen and Jim Ralph. Jim was actually one of the layout hosts—he brought his Carnivale train and sideshow cars to display at his brother Bill's Knott's Berry Farm -styled layout. Talent runs deep in that family!



Jim and Bill Ralph



Porcupine Gulch Railroad—Fremont, CA



Our objective at NGRC, of course, was to see as many layouts as time would allow. I think BAGRS did a commendable job in organizing each day's layouts to be within a manageable distance from each other. Still, we weren't able to see them all; admittedly it's because I take far too much time looking around and taking lots of pictures to allow for that.

Diablo Creek Railroad—Danville, CA



Mystic Mountain Railroad—San Jose, CA

But among the ones we *did* see, there were some real gems. Whether running steam or diesel, track-powered or battery-powered, through deeply forested hillsides or barren deserts, on a simple loop or a dramatically realistic switching yard, it seems every location had its own distinct flavor.



M&H Foothill Railroad—Pleasanton, CA



Miniature Plant Kingdom Railroad—Sebastopol, CA

The social activities were just as varied. The BBQ at the Herzog's Miniature Plant Kingdom was fun and the food was delicious. Unfortunately Mother Nature turned up the heat that day and finding shade became the priority of the afternoon. A few days later, we boarded the bus to Felton to ride the Shay at Roaring Camp and enjoy another fine BBQ dinner, thanks to Bachmann Trains!



Diablo Creek Railroad—Danville, CA



Mystic Mountain Railroad—San Jose, CA



Then the next day LGB sponsored the Ice Cream Social just before the opening of the vendor hall. Guests had their hand scooped ice cream served up on a choice of brownie, blondie or donut! And there were lots of extra toppings and sauces too.

Porcupine Gulch Railroad—Fremont, CA



OS&F Railroad—San Rafael, CA

At each of these events we sat at large tables, which enabled us to meet a lot of other attendees and we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. There were also two other sponsored events that we missed: a 4th of July reception/fireworks viewing that USA Trains put on, and the Convention Banquet by Accucraft.

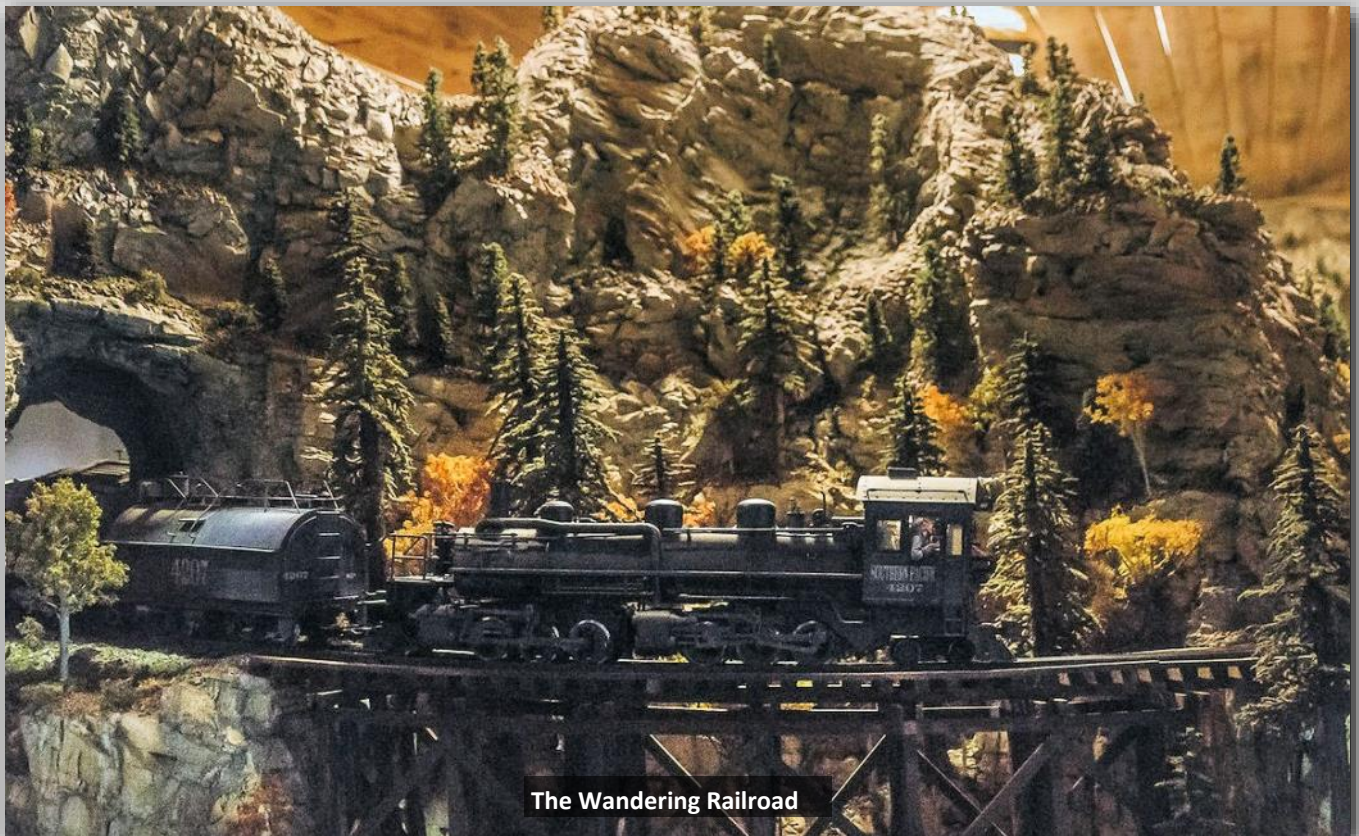


ET&WNC Railroad—Forestville, CA



Del Oro Pacific Modular Railroad

I took a stroll through the vendor hall and saw plenty of G scale trains and accessories available from all those companies we know and love. Judging by the parade of attendees carrying armloads of stuff back to their rooms, it was apparent there were bargains to be had. Several modular layouts were running, including the Abreus' *Wandering Railroad*.



The Wandering Railroad



Crystal Creek & Rock City West Railroad (The Westie Line)—Santa Rosa, CA

I can't report much about the clinics; we only attended a few of them. I think that's probably because by the end of each day we were either at one of the social functions, greeting folks at the Sacramento Valley Garden Railway Society 2025 booth, or were pretty tired.



Umunhum Valley Railroad—Campbell, CA



ET&WNC Railroad—Forestville, CA



QuickSilver & Almaden Railroad—San Jose, CA

So after eight days, several hundred miles, several thousand photos and who knows how many calories later, we arrived back home, tired but happy to have been there. Clearly an event like this only comes together with an abundance of people power. It's not too early for us as a club to start thinking ahead to NGRC 2025!

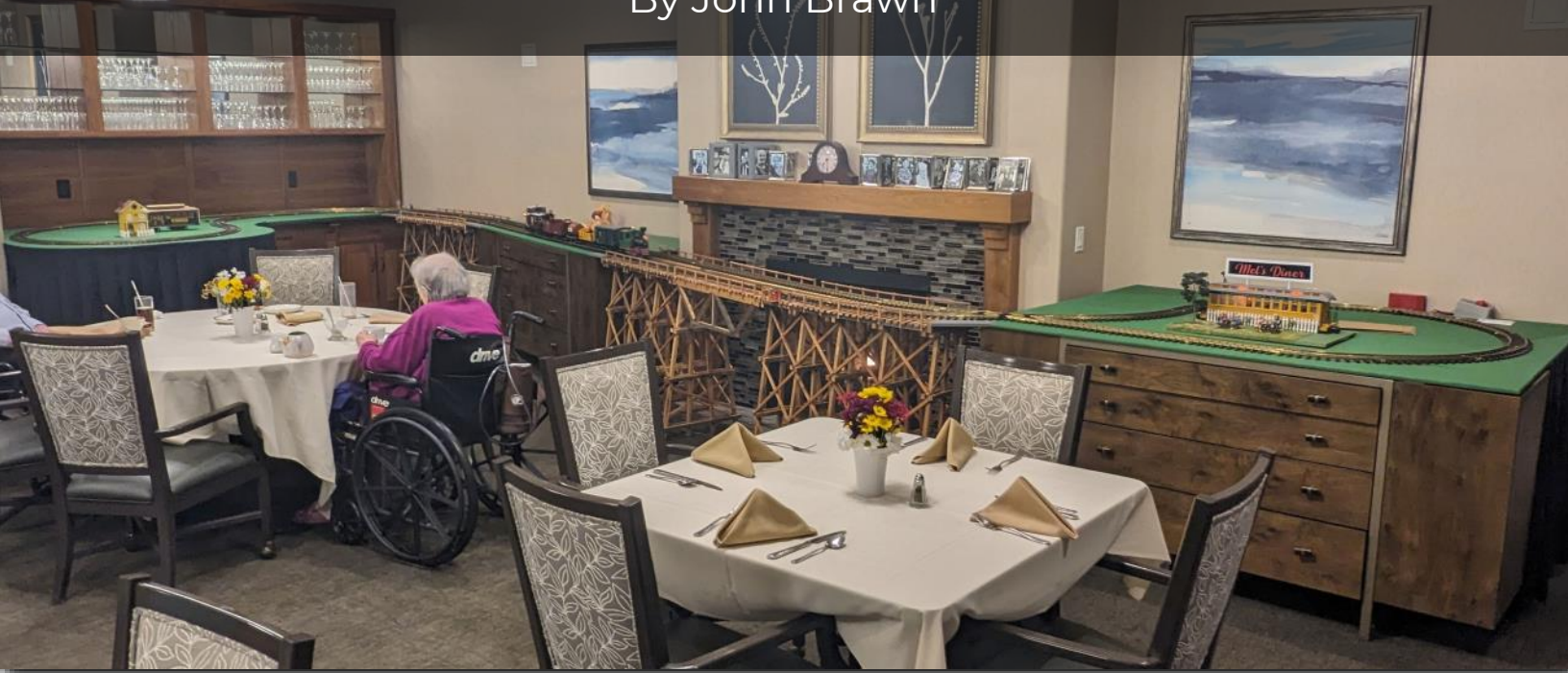


Durango & Jasper Garden Railroad—Pleasanton, CA

The Oakmont Dining Room Railroad

Oakmont of San Jose: Assisted Living and Memory Care

By John Brawn



I've been working since May to build an indoor layout for my father's assisted living community, *Oakmont of San Jose*. Here's how it happened...

My wife, Joy and I had installed a temporary garden railroad in the raised flower bed of the facility's atrium for Easter Sundays most years since 2018. It was a “forgiveness instead of permission” kind of thing, where we used our code to sneak into the place after hours and installed the train on Saturday night between 9 p.m. and midnight. Then the next morning I'd show up at 7:30 a.m. on my way to church and start the train running. This was roughly a rectangle, with about 56 feet of track including a large LGB plastic bridge, a wooden covered bridge and a painted wooden freight terminal. The train had bunnies all over it, with a larger Easter bunny engineer. It was generally a freight train carrying little Easter baskets, Easter eggs, flowers, and other appropriate stuff. Then on Sunday night we'd “break in” again to take it all away, and on Monday when people got up there was no trace of the railroad.

This year I made a fateful decision to clean up the train during the dinner hour. I'd done two temporary train layouts on Saturday, and run a train in my own front yard on Sunday, and by Sunday evening I was pretty tired. Unfortunately, one of the residents of Oakmont had invited his two sons and their families to come see the Easter train after dinner. They both drove some distance to get there, and the whole family was pretty upset that the train wasn't there after dinner.

This gentleman and seven other residents demanded a meeting with the executive director to "complain" about the train. As I understand it, their grievances boiled down to three things: 1) They wanted the train to appear for *more* holidays than just Easter, 2) They wanted it to *stay* running for several days at a time so that family and friends could come see it, and 3) they wanted it *inside* the facility, preferably in the dining room so that they could enjoy it while eating irrespective of the weather.

The request was forwarded to me, and I started thinking in late April about how to accomplish a garden railroad display in Oakmont's dining room. After several hours of careful measurements and trying different ideas I finally came up with a setup that would run across three of the pieces of furniture in the room, cross in front of the fireplace, and fill an L-shaped corner from the main entry door to a side door at the back of the room. I got the executive director, the activities director and the head chef to agree to give up 2 to 5 feet of space along those two walls to display a train layout. Then I started building. I needed 15 feet of trestles and bridges to jump the gaps between the furniture!

I had lost my backyard fence in the February storms, and I

collected a bunch of 30-year-old redwood fence planks. My trestle and bridge plan used over 1,000 pieces of wood, and I felt I was making reasonable progress until I cut into a finger on my table saw. That injury has healed very well, but it caused a 7 or 8 week delay in construction. Totaling my car, and having it stolen from the repair lot caused some additional delays.





I finally hauled all the pieces to the facility last Monday afternoon and started the assembly. It went better than I could have hoped for, and by Monday night I had a cable car running around a loop comprised of 55 sections of LGB sectional track, from 41 mm to 1200 mm, totaling about 102 feet. Curves include R1 (4 feet diameter), R2 (5 feet) and R5 (16 feet). Power is supplied by a starter kit power pack.



The assembly, followed by running a couple different trains during the dinner hour last week, was a success, and I went into the facility today expecting to take it all down and store it in space reserved for the layout in Oakmont's furniture storage room until the week prior to Halloween. But unbeknownst to me, *forty two* residents had put their name on a request to keep the train running until after New Years without a break. The dining crew also got in on the act and told the Executive director what a positive impact it was having on the residents who ate there, as well as their families/visitors, and even guests taking tours of the facility and thinking about moving in. One potential resident kept slipping away from his daughter and grandson who were on a tour of the facility, so that he could go back to the train and take pictures and videos that he was sharing with his friends and remote family members. When they caught up to him, in front of the train, he said that he'd seen half a dozen places already and none of them had anything like the railroad, and he wanted to live at Oakmont!

So after all the pushback from residents and staff, the Director made the decision to keep the railroad running at least into January, and to support decorating it for Halloween, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years before it got put away waiting for Easter and then 4th of July next year.

A letter is going out this week from the Director of Oakmont to the residents and their families. It is basically asking for three things: To let the community know about the train, invite them to come see it, and especially to ask people for help getting little objects together to more fully "decorate" the railroad.





I've also had some fun making a trackside "Mel's Diner" out of an old passenger car. My dad's name is Mel, and the railroad is in the dining room where he lives, so it seemed fitting. The interior lights show the diners inside (with food, beverages, tableware, etc.) and the big sign flashes on for a second and then off for a second like a 50s neon sign. Talking to three residents this evening, they all had a different "favorite" thing about the diner, and neither of the other two had noticed any of the three things they mentioned.

The idea of working for a few hundred hours and donating a couple of thousand dollars in material to help an assisted living facility reach out to their residents, families, and visitors with a G gauge railroad may seem somewhat unusual, but I've since learned that there are other assisted living facilities that have done this as well.

I'd like to let people know that they are welcome to visit the railroad between 9:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. on any day of the week without calling ahead. Folks can sign in at the front desk, and then take the elevator to the 3rd floor and head to the dining room in the far, right corner of the building as they exit the elevator (follow the signs in front of you as you exit the elevator.) **It's a good idea for BAGRS folks to wear their name tags to let the facility know that they are interested in the train. The address is 917 Thornton Way, San Jose, CA 95128**

Also, I'm sure some BAGRS folks have figures, buildings, and rolling stock that they never use anymore. **I'd be very happy to coordinate any donations of garden railroad "stuff" to Oakmont's indoor garden railroad. Please contact me by email or phone, which can be obtained from the BAGRS website member directory.**

THE GARDEN DEPARTMENT

Dwarf Alberta Spruce

By Richard Murray

BOTANICAL NAME: *Picea glauca*, "Alberta Globe"

COMMON NAME: Dwarf Alberta Spruce, "Alberta Globe"

USDA ZONE: 3-8 (down to minus 30 degrees)

SUNSET ZONE: 1-6, 15-17

This is a miniature version of the most common of all railroad plants, Dwarf Alberta spruce, (*Picea glauca*, "Conica"). It looks like a Hershey Chocolate Kiss. It tends to be squat at the base and somewhat pointed at the tip. It is extremely slow growing, maxing out at 1/2" per year. It has a very tight and compact growth. It likes full sun but tolerates some shade. My specimen has grown in an area that gets only about 40 percent sun. In spite of getting a limited amount of sun, it has always looked healthy and dense. To make things a bit more difficult for my plant, it was planted underneath a pine with large roots. My "Alberta Globe" is about 15 years old and only about 8" tall. With full sun and no root competition, someone else's plant would grow a bit more. Except for some pruning the first couple years to raise the skirt, it has not been pruned in 13 years. Whereas the "Conica" variety was discovered in 1904 in its native area, Canada, the "Globe" variety was discovered in 1968 at a nursery in Holland.



The plant is best suited for cold winters and cool summers. The plant likes acidic soil. It also likes good air circulation since its dense foliage can trap moisture. The plant struggles in areas with high heat and humidity. Although the plant needs little care, some specimens suffer from spider mites that may kill the plant. Alberta spruces need water. Water at least weekly during the dry season. More frequent watering is necessary when the temperature rises. My little guy gets watered 3x/week during the summer.



ALL STEAMED UP ...

Richard Murray has been the BAGRS coordinator of live steam events for many years, and has written many articles about plants. A retired dentist, born and raised in San Francisco, Richard is married to Melinda Murray, and operates the *Greenhills Railroad*, which was featured on the cover and centerfold of *Garden Railways* magazine.

Ardenwood

Where in the Bay Area can you pet some goats? Perhaps you want to watch some chickens, sheep, rabbits, and cows walk about. Maybe you have the urge to visit a large Victorian House. Do you want to look at some historic farm equipment? Have you ever wanted to help harvest some crops that were once common in the region like corn, wheat, and hay? How about taking a live steam ride and watching some monarch butterflies flutter through a eucalyptus forest? All these wonderful activities are available at the Ardenwood Historic Farm in Fremont. There's something for everyone to enjoy while spending a lazy day wandering about this restored historic farm. The almost 300-acre homestead dating back to the 1850s remained in the family until the 1970s.

Ardenwood is exactly where the BAGRS live steamers spent the Labor Day weekend. The ambiance of an old time farm was a great background for our old time live steam engines.

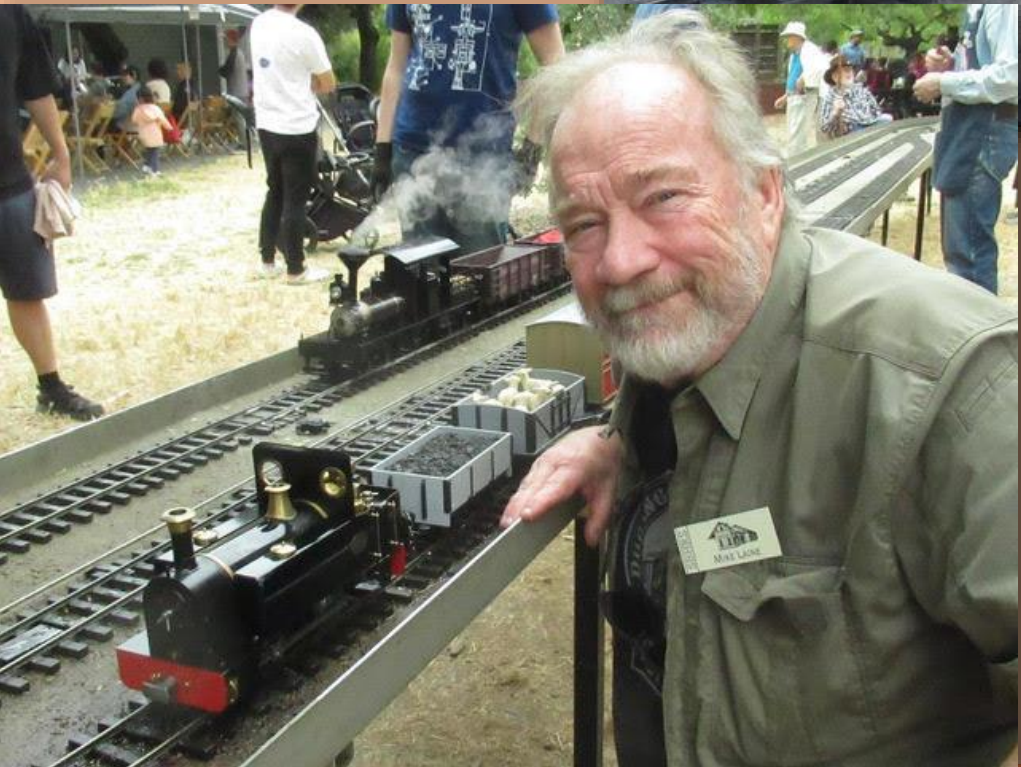
Two of our visitors were Bill and Missy Mansell. Missy is recovering nicely from some medical problems. Michael Laine has been missing from steam activities for a year while he was out of the country. He is so happy to be back that he is talking about hosting a steamup at his house. Chris Gathard is a rather new member and has volunteered to be a driver to haul the trailer when needed. He hauled the trailer for the first time when he pulled the trailer to Ardenwood. He is such a new driver that I didn't yet have a set of keys for him! THANK YOU, Chris!

Colton Snell showed off another one of his many engines. In addition to the Ruby that he brought, he also brought his newest addition, a 7/8ths Accucraft 0-4-0 Wren. Colton bought the engine "out of box." That can mean somebody returned it because of a defect, or it could be that something happened in the warehouse to cause the box to be lost. In any case, Bob Trabucco inspected it and found no defects. Therefore, Colton got a good price.



Ron Sickler inspects his Regner Heisler

The well maintained 4-6-4 Accucraft Canadian Royal Hudson is owned by Bob Trabucco



Michael Laine's Roundhouse "Millie" is a potboiler—meaning it has an open flame



Dennis Mead fiddles with his old style Mamod. That's a radio capacitor on his flat car.

This GS-4 is owned by Seth Abraham. The boiler door fell off as he took it out of the box, but it ran perfectly.



Colton Snell and his newly purchased 7/8ths Accucraft 0-4-0 Wren.



The author's Mason Bogie 2-6-6



Chris Gathard's Ruby with a scratch built tender



Rob Lenicheck fills the firebox with some coal





Gary Whaley checks out his Accucraft Shay.

Los Altos

On September 16-17, the Los Altos History Museum welcomed visitors back for the first two day Train Days event since COVID. I believe that the BAGRS live steamers have been running trains there since the very first Train Days back in 2008. Through the years there has been much excitement generated among kiddies and their parents, who owned trains in their youth. Everyone enjoys watching live steam trains puffing clouds of steam while running around the track with a rake of cars. As has been usual, the live steamers had the premier location on the brick courtyard. We answered questions and promoted BAGRS. Many promotional postcards were handed out. One visitor quickly handed me the \$40 membership fee and filled out an application. He had even cancelled his plane flight to see our steam trains. "Build a railroad and they will come."

Colton Snell, a relatively new member, has begun to accumulate quite a collection of engines. At the last event he showed up with a newly purchased Accucraft 7/8th Wren. This time he showed up with a newly purchased 1/32 Accucraft 4-4-2 Adams Radial. William Adams' design was based on an earlier 4-4-0 design, but the new 1882 design had an added trailing radial axle to support an enlarged coal bunker. The enlarged coal bunker was also designed for extra water storage in addition to the water storage of the side tanks. With a short wheelbase and a guiding bogie the engine was rather maneuverable on tight curves, a feature that was to ensure the survival of some of the class later on. One example ran until 1990. Currently, it is exhibited as a static display and was painted black for an event in 2019.

Dennis Mead brought an Accucraft 1/20.3 Saxonian 1K 0-6-0. It has a long history. Starting in 1881, numerous narrow gauge lines were opened in the Kingdom of Saxony. For this purpose the Royal Saxon Railways ordered 39 small 3 axle tank locomotives from the Saxon Machine Factory. During the next eleven years an additional 5 engines were built. After the first World War five locomotives were given

as war reparations to Poland. Sadly, all of the Saxonian 1K locomotives were scrapped in 1964 after about 80 years of service. From 2006-2009 a unique project was realized in the Free State of Saxony: the faithful reproduction of the Saxonian 1K, Saxony's first narrow gauge locomotive. Since there were no existing engines, the reproduction of the engine required the use of old and new drawings. 800,000 EUR were raised. The Saxonian 1K 0-6-0 once again runs proudly and significantly increases the tourist attractiveness of the Saxony narrow gauge railways.

Ron Sickler brought an Accucraft Climax and a Regner Heisler. He loves them both. Tim Boles brought an Accucraft Iuki 0-4-0 and an Accucraft Michigan-Cal Shay. Both ran nicely. Jim Hague brought a Roundhouse Forney. I hadn't seen one of those for several years. It was my very first engine back in the year 2000. The problem with my model was that the front truck along with the steam chests were articulated. The connecting steam hose had to be flexible and needed to be replaced a couple times year, a procedure that was a pain in the neck. Later models corrected this problem.

Rob Lenicheck ran a coal fired Rio Grande Southern #74, a 2-8-0 consolidation which he scratch built about 3 years ago. Consolidations became most railroads' choice as their main power from the second half of the nineteenth century through the second decade of the twentieth century, a span of fifty years. Because of their moderate size and decent power, many 2-8-0's have been restored by various tourist railroads and various museums.

There were several instances when I was in the right spot at the right time and was able to photograph some impressive steam plumes. See photos below.

This live steam meet at Los Altos was the last scheduled one with the club track until the Annual Meet on March 9, 2024. In the meantime, if you want to host a steamup, contact me at steamer060@sbcglobal.net

Seth Abrahams' GS-4 Daylight wins the prize for best steam plume of the year.



The gang levels the track. It takes almost as much time to level the track as it does to assemble it.



Jim Goss smiles in front of his kit built engine and cars. Nice paint job, Jim.

Steve Heselton's coal fired engine never ceases to amaze with its steam plume



Bill Manzell's Dai Bach scratch built single oscillating cylinder engine. Note its whimsical engineer from England.



The author's Adams Radial 1/32 built by Accucraft has its pop valve suddenly release. Note the open mouth surprise of the lady in the background.



This Roundhouse Forney is owned by Jim Hague



Dennis Mead owns this Accucraft 1/20.3 0-6-0 Saxonian 1K.



Bob Trabucco unloads his Accucraft 1/20.3 C-19 from its carrier.

This 1/32 Adams Radial is now part of Colton Snell's growing collection of engines.





DAVE'S CORNER

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

WORLD WAR ONE OBSERVATION CAR

I haven't had a chance to finish working on my Irish Motorcar, so I thought I would share another project from my past. It started a few years back when a fellow live steamer asked if I would build him a freelanced 7/8 scale Observation Car from after World War I. The car was part of the Fort Benning Railroad in Georgia, which was primarily built for the transportation of personnel and supplies for practicing trench warfare.

In 1918 a two-foot gauge railroad was built that consisted of 27 miles of track, 18 locomotives and over 200 pieces of rolling stock—the railroad lasted until 1946. The original observation car was built for VIPs to observe troop training and was the only one of this type ever built. The railroad is gone now, sold off to a sugar plantation in Cuba, and the only part that still remains is a display at the Fort Benning, which consists of one 2-6-2 Davenport Locomotive and the unusual observation car.

The only requirement was to shorten the car from the original scale length, so that it would closely match his other sugarcane cars that I built for him in the past. The car was built from 1/16" and 1/8" styrene and Ever Green Plastic strips. I also used two trucks with metal wheels from Accucraft Trains and hardware from Ozark Miniatures.

I thought this would be the only one of these cars that I would ever build, but as always, I ended up building three more in 7/8 or 1:13.7 scale and one in 1:20.3 scale. I also included photos of two other military cars that I've built to go with my 7/8 scale observation car, an open air troop car, and a covered troop car. Hope you enjoy seeing them.



Corner view of the 7/8 scale observation car

Side view of the 7/8 scale observation car



7/8 scale observation car with open air troop car

Open air troop car





7/8 scale covered troop car under construction

7/8 scale covered troop car under construction



7/8 scale covered troop car almost finished

1:20.3 scale observation car that now lives in Massachusetts





EAST DEVIL HILLS MODELING GROUP

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

Bill Allen has recovered from his accident and continued work on his "Trojan." As the engine was already finished, he now works on the tender. He usually tackles this task last, as he does not like building tenders ;-). Nevertheless, they also always look fantastic. Here are some steps of the build:



First he has to form endless rows of rivets. This is done in the drill press with a punch/die along a strip of brass as a guide. The spacing is controlled by holes in the die block, in which the previous rivet is located.



The ends of the side walls are rounded



Soldering up such a structure with large surfaces is pretty challenging. Avoiding distortion needs some experience. Bill uses Stay-Brite as solder



Almost done



There is a beading around the edge. Bill cuts a slot into a 1/16" copper tube. He uses his huge but very precise professional table saw for this job. Not something for the faint hearted



Though this loco was an oil burner it had a fence on top of the tender. Here it is being attached



Rob Lenicheck continued boiler work on his Darjeeling. Closing up the gaps at the bottom of the firebox is always a puzzle



Almost finished



Marc Horowitz finished his beautiful Pechot-Bourdon. The gray color and the lining look fantastic.

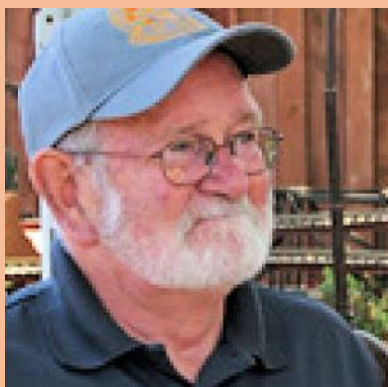




Rob also sent me a picture of one of his coal-fired locos at the Los Altos steam-up



Dennis Mead made an adapter fitting for Jim Goss for testing his locos on compressed air. He used a Schrader valve from a car tire



POSTCARDS OF THE PAST

From the collection of Bill Ralph

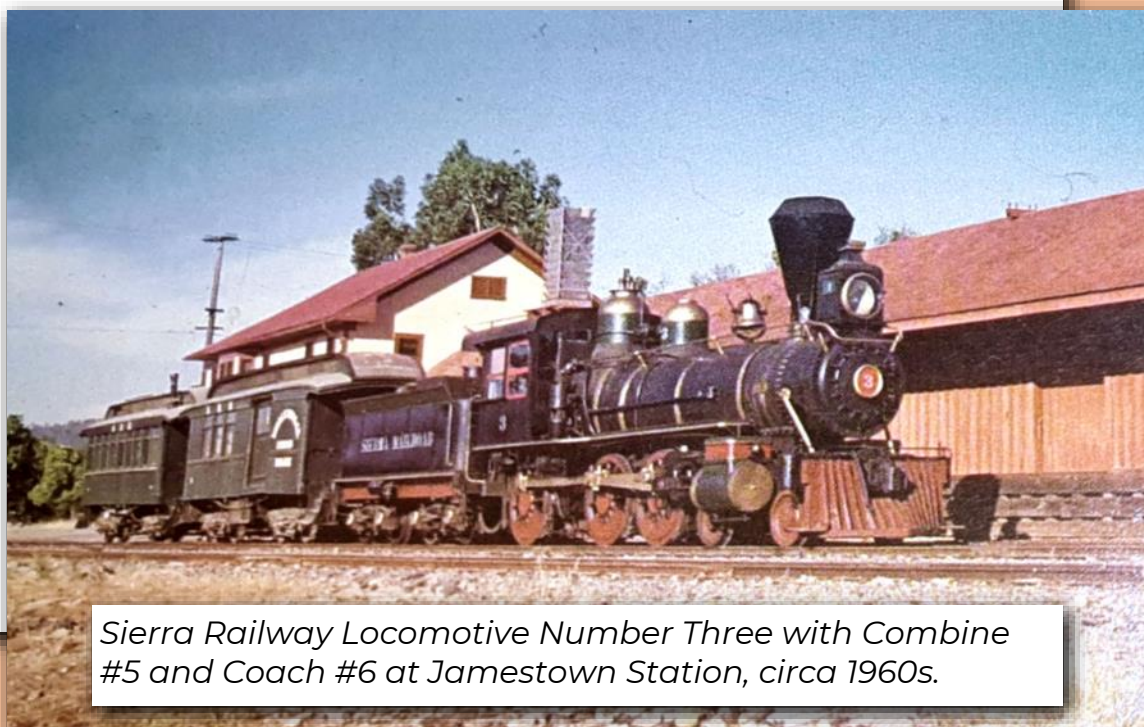
Retired from the publishing industry, **Bill Ralph** knows a thing or two about amusement parks and postcards. Bill operates the *Porcupine Gulch Railroad*, located in Fremont, California.

SIERRA RAILWAY COMBINE #5 and COACH #6

Operators of the Sierra Railway called upon the Holman Company of San Francisco in 1902 to build two custom “shorty” cars for the newly constructed Angels Branch Line. Passenger and Mail Combine #5 and Passenger Coach #6 were specially designed to handle the twisting tight curves, steep climbs, and multiple switchbacks of the Stanislaus River Canyon on the nineteen-mile-long standard gauge right-of-way connecting the Sierra Railroad yards in Jamestown with the mining town of Angels Camp. The olive green cars, pulled by one of the Sierra’s Shays, Heislors or rod locomotives, were part of the branch line’s daily consists for more than twenty years.

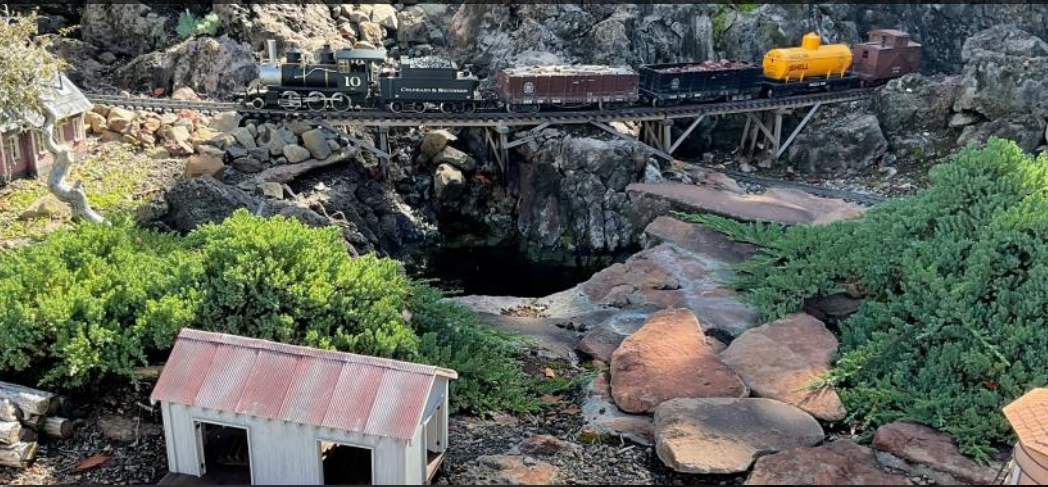
When the mines began closing and the Angels Branch was abandoned, Combine #5 and Coach #6 took on new roles appearing in dozens of western movies in to the 1950s behind Sierra’s storied steam locomotives. Between 1963 and 1970, the iconic duo appeared in the credits of all 222 episodes of TV’s *Petticoat Junction* as well as in prominent roles in many of the show’s stories.

The diminutive cars were routinely used in *Little House on the Prairie* and in scores of western episodes of *Death Valley Days*, *Gunsmoke*, and *Bonanza*. Between movie and television gigs, Sierra Railway Combine #5 and Coach #6 are on display in the century old Jamestown Round House at Railtown 1897 State Historical Park.



Sierra Railway Locomotive Number Three with Combine #5 and Coach #6 at Jamestown Station, circa 1960s.

MEMBER UPDATES



Paul Jacobs has provided some photos of his very scenic and detailed railroad, the *Saratoga Branch of the C&S*, which modeled to represent a branch of the Colorado & Southern and Denver & Rio Grande.



From Ron Malouf. The last project series in the magazine, *Steam in the Garden*, was a Consolidation 2-8-0 locomotive by Les Knoll. It utilized a boiler and fuel system from Roundhouse Engineering, drivers and valve gear from Walsall Model Industries, and parts from other suppliers. It could be built with outside or inside frames. I chose the latter. Here is a photo of my locomotive and tender. It steams great and I've converted it to radio control.

MEMBER UPDATES



Ray Turner hosted an operating session on August 19, 2023.



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MEMBERS ONLY PAGES

MEMBER BULLETIN BOARD

Including recent entries from "Items for Sale by Members"

- **From Dan Turgeon:** I have acquired 6 Wild West Rodeo rolling stock but missing the LGB 24251 Wild West Forney Steam Locomotive & Tender. If anyone is no longer using their Wild West loco and wants to part with it, please reach out to me. I plan to run a RailPro Battery train like my other GR trains. # 67413706. See member directory for contact info.
- **From George Nagata:** Wanted: USA Train Power #RPT10. Please email me. See member directory for contact info. Thank you, George
- **From Mike Paterson:** Dennis Mack, a long time member of the Sunnyvale District, has closed his railroad and has a large selection of rolling stock and track for sale. In the coming weeks, Dennis will be publishing more information. He is looking now for interested buyers for individual items. Contact him via email, and see member directory for contact info. Mike
- **From Jim Goss:** I have Stainless Steel Switches: 2 "Y" Switches: 1 Right Hand and 1 Left hand Switch. Make offer! Jim Goss. I live in South/East San Jose. See member directory for contact info.
- **From John Brawn.** If you have any figures, buildings, and rolling stock that you would like to donate to the Oakmont indoor railroad, please contact me. See member directory for contact info.

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THE LAST PAGE



Roaring Camp's Spring Canyon "corkscrew" trestles are still impressive, even 47 years after a spectacular fire destroyed both of them in 1976. The ruins of the old trestles remain as a monument to what once was.

TRELLIS AND TRESTLE

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