



Garden Railroading News

November/December 2023 • 2023 #6 • www.GRNews.org



**A Cliff Carved
from Foam**

**A Steam Ditcher-Crane
Gets a Boom Car**

**Russian River Railway:
A Rolling Table Garden Railroad**

A free digital magazine produced by garden railroaders for garden railroaders



Garden Railroading News

November/December 2023 • 2023 #6 • GRNews.org

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Sharing our love of garden railroading.

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Cover Photo: Always Stop for a Train
Kittatinny Mountain Railroad • Proprietor/Photographer Shawn Viggiano



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Send suggestions and questions regarding Garden Railroading News to:
Mick Spilsbury, Bay Area GRS at: marketing@GRNews.org
Carla Brand Breitner, Santa Clarita Valley GRC at: editor@GRNews.org
Bill Derville, Club Corner, Advertising, Rose City GRS at: advertising@GRNews.org
or www.facebook.com/groups/gardenrailroadingenews

Editor & Layout Design Carla Brand Breitner 🌸 Web & Marketing Mick Spilsbury



Go to Page 40 for An Online Magazine Explainer
How to Download a PDF, Magnify Pages, and the "Hamburger" Icon.





Crescents of light show partial eclipse as the Moon crosses between Earth and the Sun. Circles of light show total eclipse.



Photos by New Mexico Garden Railroaders club members

Above: New Mexico Garden Railroaders set up their fall display at the Albuquerque Botanical Park on the perfect day to use a leaf-covered pergola as a pinhole camera during the solar eclipse in October. • Albuquerque, New Mexico

Below: Train time at Iaquia station back around 2006 on Richard Heisler's Mad River Short Line. Locomotive O, a steam dummy built by Mark Horovitz, is rolling in with a single trailer. The trailer was built by Richard Heisler. Station master Hunt Huntley checks the orders as Leroy Jones finishes sweeping the platform. Behind the loco a good crop of scale "apples" grow in the cotoneaster as a large bush of miniature fuchsias screen the retaining wall behind the roof of the Tuxedo Junction tower. • Eureka, California



Photo by Richard Heisler

Since the Heislers' moved in 2008, the MRSL is no more; but the dummy lives on with Glen Simpson in Paradise (CA).



*MAY
WE SUGGEST...
Something New*

Save the Date and Make Travel Plans to Tour Regional Meets and Rail Fairs in the Next Year

Start 2024 in New Zealand at the **14th New Zealand Garden Railway Convention, January 20–22, 2024**, in Wairapapa, New Zealand. Layout tours, seminars, sales tables, meals and more. For information, contact: warren.stringer@xtra.co.nz

The **Northeast Large Scale Train Show** returns to the Young building on the Eastern States Exposition fairgrounds in West Springfield, Massachusetts, on **April 27 & 28, 2024**. Info at: www.nelsts.org

The **Rail Fair at Ardenwood Historic Farm** in Fremont, California, moves to Memorial Day Weekend, **May 25, 26 & 27, 2024**, next year. In cooler weather, the steam engines can run again. The Bay Area GRS modular tracks will be there with other model railroaders. Info at: www.spcrr.org

MO-KAN Garden Railroaders will host a **Midwest Garden Railroad Gathering** over the weekend of **May 30 to June 2, 2024**. Layouts around Kansas City, workshops, vendors, swap tables and social gatherings are being planned. For info, email info@mokangardenrailroaders.org or check their website: www.mokangardenrailroaders.org

San Diego Garden Railway Society is making plans to host the **West Coast Regional Meet** in 2024. The dates will be Saturday through Thursday, **August 10 to 15, 2024**. Look for details early next year at: www.SDGRS.com

Georgia Garden Railway Society is planning a **2024 Southern Regional Garden Railroad Get-Together** for three days from **August 23 to 25, 2024**. Based around the 65th Atlanta Model train Show in Duluth, Georgia, plans include two days of layout tours and multiple large scale vendors. For more information, check www.ggrs.info

The National Summer Steamup becomes the **National Steamup Symposium** as it moves to fall in 2024. Mark your calendar for **October 9 to 13, 2024** in Lodi, California. Check www.steam-events.org for more details.

Email editor@GRNews.org with your events to share.

Family Fun with LGB

This construction starter set, complete with a circle of track, locomotive controller, and transformer, is ready for your family to set up and run straight out of the Christmas wrapping. Include the Construction Site Add-On set and your family can "play" together repairing or expanding your railroad. Märklin/LGB trains are fun for the whole family.

More information at:

LGB.com or email customerservice@marklin.com



70503 Construction Site Train Starter Set



49501 Construction Site Add-On Set



Coming Soon in GR News: Maintaining Succulents on a Garden Railroad by Marilyn Teague, San Diego GRS



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"Like" the 2023 Top Ten Photos

Mick Spilsbury, Marketing Director for GR News, is tallying the top photo and video images with the most "likes" for 2023 to publish in 2024. You still have time to "like" your favorites on GR News Facebook Groups and Instagram. See page 36 for details.

Bachmann Brings Back, and Improves, the Closed Streetcar

The Bachmann Closed Streetcar is returning, now equipped with metal gears for smooth and long-lasting operation. Streetcars of this type served North American cities from the late 1800s to the 1920s (and in some cases later). The Closed Streetcar features an operating directional headlight on each end, a fully furnished and lighted interior with seats and hanging straps for standing passengers, poseable doors, and a non-functional, but positionable, metal trolley pole. Available in blue & cream for United Traction Company and red & green for the North Pole Rapid Transit.

More information at: shop.bachmantrains.com



93944 United Traction Company #1833 Closed Streetcar

2023 Applied Imagination Train Displays Inspired by Paul Busse

Built with plant materials, featuring local landmarks. Details at venue websites.

United States Botanic Gardens
Washington DC
"Seasons Greetings" Trains annually late November through December.
2023 Display Theme: Pollinators & their Plants
New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, NY
The Holiday Train Show is open annually November through January.
Eiteljorg Museum, Indianapolis, IN
Jingle Rails is open annually November through January.

Krohn Conservatory Cincinnati, OH
A Cincinnati Holiday Tradition open annually November through January.
Columbus Main Library Downtown Columbus, OH
Indoor holiday train display open annually November through January.
Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens Rockford, IL
Exhibit open annually December through January.



Photo by Tom White 2022

Bring Christmas Cheer to your Holiday Rails with Seasonal Transport and Cheerful New Building Kits from PIKO America

The new Ornament Transport Car from PIKO America comes with a high-quality diecast vehicle and is loaded with bright ornaments to add sparkle to any holiday layout. Add the Christmas Ore Cars, featuring new original artwork, to your consist and fill them with Christmas treats. Set up ChristmasTown and include these new sturdy buildings, built from easy-to-assemble kits that include accessories such as garlands and decal sheets, to customize your "ChristmasTown" scenery. Celebrate the season with your own holiday layout.

More information at: www.piko-america.com



62268 ChristmasTown Station

62270 ChristmasTown Ornament Factory

62269 ChristmasTown Candle Shop



38787 Ornament Transport Car



38951 Christmas Ore Car, 2 Pack

G-Scale Holiday Trains On Display

Look for Christmas train displays near you at nurseries, historical buildings, city parks, malls, public gardens, community centers, historical train depots, front yards, and more. A sampling of train displays to visit is listed on page 22... or check your local garden railroad club website for nearby displays.

PIKO America Adds to your Steam Locomotive Choices

For Union Pacific fans, locomotive #103 is a saddletank 2-6-0T with lights, smoke and analog sound to circle your Christmas tree or serve as a switcher running on your railroad.



38256 Union Pacific 2-6-0T Steam Locomotive

Atchinson Topeka & Santa Fe modellers may like the Santa Fe Mini-Mogul #718 available now to go with their all-black AT&SF Mini-Mogul #728 from 2022.



38238 Santa Fe Mini-Mogul

Mini-Mogul #247 and Rio Grande Saddletank #55 are available for Denver & Rio Grande Western fans.

More information at: www.piko-america.com

Websites Full of Information about G-Scale & Garden Railroads

Garden railroaders with years of knowledge to share maintain these websites full of information on planning, running, maintaining and repairing our railroads. The community thanks these dedicated G-Scalers.

Greg Elmassian constantly updates his website, posting information on all garden railroad questions as he discovers tips and info to share: elmassian.com

Paul D. Race has been posting tips on garden railroads and their construction in his primer pages since 1999: familygardentrains.com

George Schreyer's family keeps this website online. Check the "Large Scale Technical Tips" link for a history of suggestions: girr.org/girr

Accucraft UK Delivers its 1:13.7 'Diana' Kerr Stuart 0-4-0T

The Diana, built in 1909 but regauged for 2' rail in 1917, worked on Kerry Tramway in Mid Wales and then in two quarries until retirement in 1950. Various owners worked toward restoration of this little locomotive until Phil Mason brought it to the Vale of Rheidol Railway shops. The restored Diana now runs on the Amerton Railway outside of Stafford, UK.

The 7/8ths scale model is gas-fired and fitted with a water top up valve, water gauge, miniature pressure gauge and lubricator. Constructed of stainless steel and etched brass with a copper boiler, the locomotive has an enhanced level of detail made possible by 1:13.7 scale including a brake stand/gas control valve, dummy water gauges and sliding cab-sheet doors. It is gauge-adjustable between 45mm and 32mm gauges. The gas tank is concealed in the left hand side tank with the filler hidden under a dummy coal load. The Goodall top-up valve is hidden in the dummy sand pot on the boiler.

More information at: www.livesteamstation.com



7/8ths 'Diana' Kerr Stuart 0-4-0T

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LNOR Class P2 Cock O' the North

1:32, Alcohol Fired
 KIT \$7500, RTR \$9500



Shay 13T

1:20.3, Butane Fired
 Kit \$1995, RTR \$2145



Sidar 0-4-0T Diana

1:13.7, Butane Fired
 RTR \$1950



USRA Mikado Heavy

1:32, Alcohol Fired w/ 6 Free Cars
 Kit \$4400, RTR \$5500



LNOR B1

1:32, Alcohol Fired
 Kit \$3100, RTR \$3600



Tiger 0-6-0 with Tender

1:32, Alcohol Fired
 Kit \$3250, RTR \$3800



GWR 43xx 2-6-0

1:32, Butane, Green and Black
 Kit \$2695, RTR \$2895



Southern Pacific P8

1:32, Alcohol or Butane
 Kit \$3995, RTR \$4495



D&RGW C-18

1:20.3, Butane Ceramic
 \$3200-\$3600



Baldwin "Mabel" 0-6-0T

1:20.3, Butane Fired
 Kit \$1249, RTR \$1499



Ruby #1 0-4-0T

1:20.3, Butane Fired
 Black, Red, Blue and Brown
 Kit \$649, RTR \$699
 New 2022



Lawley 4-4-0

1:19, Butane Fired
 RTR \$3395



Forney SR&RL & WW&F

1:13.7, Butane or Coal
 Butane \$3200, Coal \$4200



"Train Bleu" CIWL Sleeper

1:32, Brass
 \$950/Car, \$3800/Set of 4



Allchin

1.5" Scale, Butane Fired
 RTR \$3800



L&SWR Coaches

1:32, Brass
 \$800/Car, \$3040/Set of 4 Cars



BR Mk1 Passenger Cars

1:32, Plastic body, Metal Trucks
 \$295/Car



Jackson & Sharp Coach

1:20.3, Ball Bearing Trucks, Lighting
 \$295/Car



Logging Disconnects

1:20.3, Plastic Body, Metal Trucks
 \$135/Car



Gondola

1:20.3, Plastic Body, Metal Trucks
 \$170/Car



3-Bay Hopper

1:29, Plastic Body, Metal Trucks
 \$160/Car



High Cube Box Cars

1:29, Plastic Body, Metal Trucks
 \$160/Car



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Russian River Railway Robert Pitonzo, Proprietor

Russian River Railway on a Rolling Table Base

By Robert Pitonzo,
Guerneville, California

Photos by Robert Pitonzo except when noted

I believe my first introduction to Garden Railroading began when, many years ago, my kids got me interested in one of their TV shows called "Thomas & Friends." (Well, it had Ringo Starr as Mr. Conductor!) I quickly became fascinated with the realism used with that scale of train, and admired the "garden" plantings surrounding Thomas & Friends' world. However, at the time, life and responsibilities had made other arrangements for my time, and so I had to put any hobby ideas aside for many years.

I am retired now and, while skimming through the internet, I came across some model railroads using larger scale trains and incorporating them into gardens. Inspired to become a member of two local garden railway clubs here in Northern California (Bay Area Garden Railway Society and Redwood Empire Garden Railway Society), I met with some wonderful people who, with their 20 to 30 plus years of experience, helped me to create my own garden railway.

I loved the idea of having my own daily train. The problem was I live in a tight neighborhood in Guerneville and have no yard except a short slope in the back with a creek running through—a beautiful spot, but nowhere to build. However, I was dauntless in my thinking on how to build a

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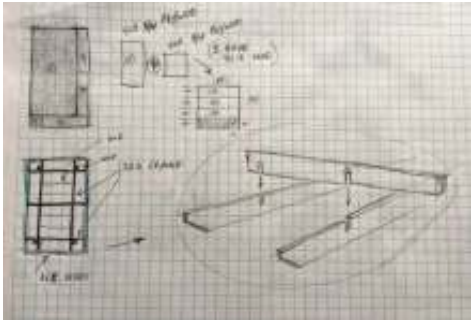


This aerial photo shows the Russian River Railway in dappled sunlight. The rolling table has been angled out from under the balcony (edge seen where lightbulb hangs) for maximum sun for the plants. The layout can be rolled completely under the balcony as well.

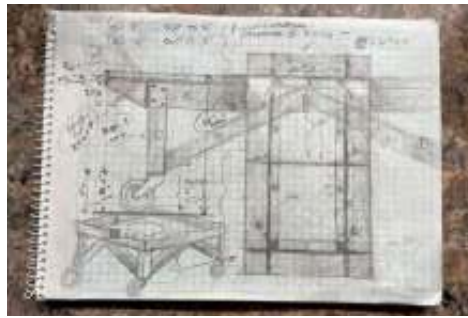


The rolling railroad fits on a patio above Hulbert Creek with just enough room to walk around all sides.

Photo by Carla Brand Breitter



Sketches for the rolling "planter box."



Heavy duty wheels support "box."



Simple figure eight—too simple.



Over-Under figure eight—too much grade.

garden railway in my yard. After much thought, I finally settled on using the patio facing the creek and utilizing the idea of a large, pool-table-like "planter box," but on wheels like an old baggage cart. I also wanted the table at waist height, to keep from bending knees all day! This way, young and old can view its perspectives.

I have a history of working as a set designer for a skit comedy group and have also been interested in diorama work, bonsai and model making, so this hobby quickly became the outlet for a large flow of creativity. I drew up plans for a box on a table and contacted a carpenter friend, Rigo. He is actually more of a craftsman than carpenter. He said, "Can do," and together we built what I had pictured.

Since I had volunteered my layout for the Bay Area 2023 National Garden Railway Convention in July, and it was January when the box on wheels was finished, I had to be quick. Needless to say, it was challenging. My house became a train home; I had engines on the dining table, figures on every counter, plastic buildings with drying glue on the deck, dirt and plants in containers.

It took three attempts to finally come to the present layout. The first two tries, I attempted a figure eight, but, having never owned a train set until now, the realities of the steep incline required put a damper on my spirit. But then, I'd go back upstairs and there was a beginner set going round and round on the table. With spirit revived, I'd go back to it, and at last, developed the current schema.

I applied a fiberglass resin to the bottom of the box to seal it tight as I didn't want water damaging it when watering plants. When I

continued on next page



Testing two ovals of level track before landscaping.



Two ovals with switching yard. Just right.

tested the box for its ability to hold water, it remained water tight, no leaks! I provided a drain hole with a plug at the lowest end of the box that could be used when watering the vegetation.

I then set up bricks and stone where I knew there would be no growing plants, and I planned a small town with a small switch yard all mounted on redwood boards on top of the bricks. Solid planking covers the third of the box supporting the town, while the areas most likely to get sun for plants are on the periphery. Since my house is surrounded by redwoods, sun is scarce... good for four to six hours of mixed sun and shade. That being the case, I went to Don and Becky Herzog for miniature landscaping help. I turned nursery stock they were cleaning out to a new purpose, rolling the "planter box" out from under the upper deck to get sun to the plantings. Even so, I have been through multiple ground covers, trees and mini shrubs.

I planned a painted river that tracks would cross and just left the area open without plants, planning to paint it later. The water feature was an accident! After having planted the perimeter of the box, I went to water it all. Well, with the plug in the box, when it started filling up, it formed the river area with a pool an inch deep! I haven't needed to paint it since it fills with water... and pulling the plug drains the whole thing!

Don also had many old Pola buildings I was able to refurbish. Without the Herzogs' help, I would not be at the place I am today. With the help of many REGRS members who assisted with track laying and other detailing, the layout came together just in time for Day One convention visitors.

continued on next page



Above & Below: Model making in process.



Solid planks support town and track with gaps for plants on edges.



Bridges carry the railroad tracks over the Russian River water feature on one side of the layout.

Photo by Carla Brand Bretnier



Positioning plants (left) and river rocks (right).



Tourists and theater-goers enjoy the riverside walk. This photo was taken without water in "river" bed.

Photo by Ken Brody

My Russian River Railway is based on the old San Francisco & North Pacific Railroad that ran from Santa Rosa to Duncans Mills starting around the 1870s. Since living in the Russian River area, I have developed an interest in the old rail history of this wonderful country. The rail route through my area eventually became part of the Northwestern Pacific. The SF&NPR was used primarily for logging. Once the area was logged off, vineyards were planted and thousands came to the river towns for summers of swimming and fun. My desire was to capture that feeling of the area back then, maybe around 1900.

And so I have created a small township, fashioned after some of the businesses from that time, with two trains running on two ovals of different sizes, plus a switching yard and switcher serving the town. Both ovals include bridges crossing over a "river" with real water. The entire layout fits in a 5-foot by 9-foot footprint that is entirely planted—no artificial foliage.

Since I am modeling close to the time when the area was known as Stumptown (due to the abundance of giant redwood stumps left by loggers), I put my attention to the wine industry that was just developing. I don't have a sawmill, but, there are lumber deliveries from the local mills. I do, however, have a winery, a theater, and other businesses to entertain the tourists in town! Convention goers who came by last July were definitely charmed. 🍷

Photos continue on next page



Table-level provides a child's-eye view of passing trains.

Photo by Ken Brody



Above & Below: There are interesting details to find at any point along the railroad.



Lumber is dropped off as shoppers leave the market.



Photo by Carla Brand Breitner



Photo by Ken Brody



Photo by Carla Brand Breithner

Above & Below: *The details, signage and plants around the layout took time to develop.*



Photo by Robert Pitonzo



Photo by Ken Brody

Christmas is in the air!



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CLUB CORNER

Curated by Bill Derville, Past President
Rose City Garden Railway Society • Portland, Oregon

G-Scale clubs usually focus on activities for their members involving trains and social events. However a few clubs go further and provide a service to the community involving their trains. At Christmas time, some set up entertaining Christmas displays in public places, which exposes our hobby to people who have never seen a G-Scale train.

Our club, Rose City Garden Railway Society, builds a Christmas display for Al's Garden Center in Sherwood, Oregon. This started out as a means to get them to sell our Summer Tour books during May and June of each year. But now it has become much bigger than that. We set up our Christmas display the last week of October just before Al's holds an Evening of Lights, a huge Christmas sale. So many people attend that police are needed to direct traffic in and out of their parking lot.

It has become a great venue to display G-Scale trains to the public. People now come to the store just to see the trains every year. We built a push button that starts the train, so it only runs for two minutes before shutting off. The train doesn't run unless someone is watching.

Al's Garden Center supplies three large tables, normally used to display their plants,



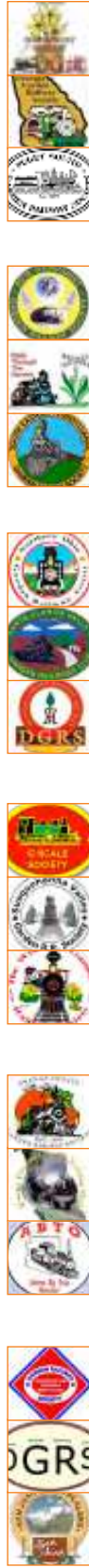
as the base for the layout. The roadbed is assembled on 6" risers. After the track is added, everything is tested before we start on the scenery. Each year, we build a different mountain scene with a tunnel using portals that were built by Joel Bragdon.

The mountains are built with wood crates and white Styrofoam food containers. We use six new snow blankets from Bronner's Christmas Wonderland (989-652-9931) in Michigan every year which Al's Garden Center buys for us, along with several bags of Dept. 56 loose snow (SKU 1032061). This snow blanket is expensive, but it separates and tears easily, making it much easier to hide seams and fill in crevices. We glue the blanket edges together using 3M 77 Spray Adhesive. (*Wear disposable gloves.*) To keep the snow blanket from sagging, we bend chicken wire shapes anchored in place by an Arrow stapler. Crumpled up newspapers are also used.

continued on next page



Share your ideas with me by email at bill@derville4.com and your club's experiences may be in a future column.





Club members add buildings, vehicles, people, and animals around the layout, and we sprinkle snow to complete the Christmas scene. Assembling the layout is a fun, one-day activity where experienced and inexperienced members work together to build a layout — joining rails with Split Jaw clamps, laying ballast, sometimes cutting rail, and creating scenes using buildings. At the end of the day, the job is complete and the train is running.



After the layout is built, AI's Garden Center employees put up a stone wall enclosing plants to keep visitors from touching the layout. AI's Garden Center also pays for any repair parts needed to keep the trains running, including our club LGB Mogul engine with the RCGRS club logo on the tender. We put fliers in a stand about our annual June Summer Tour for people to take home as a reminder.



It does take checking on the layout periodically, especially the first few weeks. We need to reverse the direction of the train each month to even the wear on the engine and car wheels. We keep a tool kit under the layout with lubricants and tools for making repairs. Usually repairs involve bits of snow blanket, and passenger car wheels need to be removed from their bolster to get the small pieces of snow blanket off the ends of the axles and out of the journal boxes. Repairs usually take less than 15 minutes.



We also leave a track cleaning car which is used daily by staff to keep the track clean. They also turn the transformer which activates the power button on and off each day.

A tear down party is scheduled for the Saturday after Christmas. The layout comes down in a couple of hours. The first step is to vacuum up all the ballast and put it in a bucket for next year. After the scenery is removed, we carefully label both ends of each piece of track using blue masking tape. We write the same letter on the ends of each two pieces that are joined together, so we will know how it goes together next year. Then we do the same labeling process with the roadbed before carting everything to the Garden Center attic, where we store all the track and equipment other than the club LGB Mogul.

This community event has turned out to be a great partnership for our club. It is one of the many ways we attract new members. Think about ways your club can introduce G-Scale trains to the public. If our clubs are going to continue to gain new members, we have to be proactive in ways that allow the public to learn about our great hobby—and your club!

On page 17 of this issue, you can see how I built the large rock cliff at the center of this year's layout by carving Styrofoam.



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Using Hot Wire Foam Factory Tools to Make a Cliff

By Bill Derville, Rose City Garden Railway Society

As I discuss in my Club Corner column on page 14, the Rose City Garden Railway Society has constructed a Christmas display for AI's Garden Center in Sherwood, Oregon, for over ten years. Each year it is a little different, and this year we wanted to add a rock cliff since tabletop layouts look better with some topography. Flat surfaces are boring. Trains look better running through mountains.

I set out to carve a two-foot-high cliff from pink foam board, which can be purchased in 8'x4'x2" sheets from stores like Home Depot. I started by cutting several pieces of 2" thick pink form board and stacking them on a 4'x2' base board to create an irregular rocky profile, gluing them together with Foam Fusion adhesive glue purchased from Hot Wire Foam Factory (hwff.com).

HWFF also has several tools that can be used to quickly contour edges and make every surface irregular and jagged. The tool melts the foam as it cuts it. Large pieces can be cut with a hot wire tool. Fine details are cut with a tool that looks like a fine tipped soldering iron. All tools plug into a transformer that regulates the current and heat, but usually I used the tools on the highest heat setting. *Remember to work in a well-ventilated area when melting foam.*

The cliff was glued together in layers. I glued two or three layers at a time and clamped them together with bar clamps, or placed heavy objects on them for 24 hours. Then I carved valleys into the layers before adding additional layers. Once the full shape was achieved, I finished carving all surfaces.

continued on next page



Bill Derville carves cliff top edge into styrofoam layers.



Cliff shape taking form.



Weighting down new layers.



Tools used on cliff.



Cliff sprayed with granite-colored paint.



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Next the surface was painted. Since the structure would be used inside, I used white latex house paint. *Never use a solvent based paint directly on styrofoam; first coat it with latex or acrylic primer. Solvent or petroleum based paints or glues will destroy the styrofoam on contact.* If UV protection were needed, I would have painted it with HWFF Exterior Foam Coat. Next time I will try their All Purpose Foam Coat, recommended for interior projects.

Although we were creating a snow scene, the cliffs looked too white. Real snow never covers all the rocks on vertical surfaces. So, I took the cliff to Warner Swarner, the club expert in coloring and weathering everything on a railroad. Warner had a can of Rustoleum Granite spray which we tried with surprisingly good results. After shaking the can thoroughly, it took less than five minutes to complete the job. We added more spray to depressed areas to make them darker.

I bought some Woodland Scenics liquid water from our local hobby shop and poured a small amount down the cliff's crevice to look like a dripping waterfall once the paint had dried. I will probably add a second layer of liquid water next year, as the waterfall is not yet obvious to the viewer.

After everything dried, it was ready to install on the layout. It made a great addition and we built a town at the top of the cliffs which gave the display greater height. This encourages visitors to circle the layout to be able to view both sides. The cliff adds interest to our display.



Bill shows the finished cliff with waterfall before installation.



A town sits above the cliff as the train passes by on a trestle.

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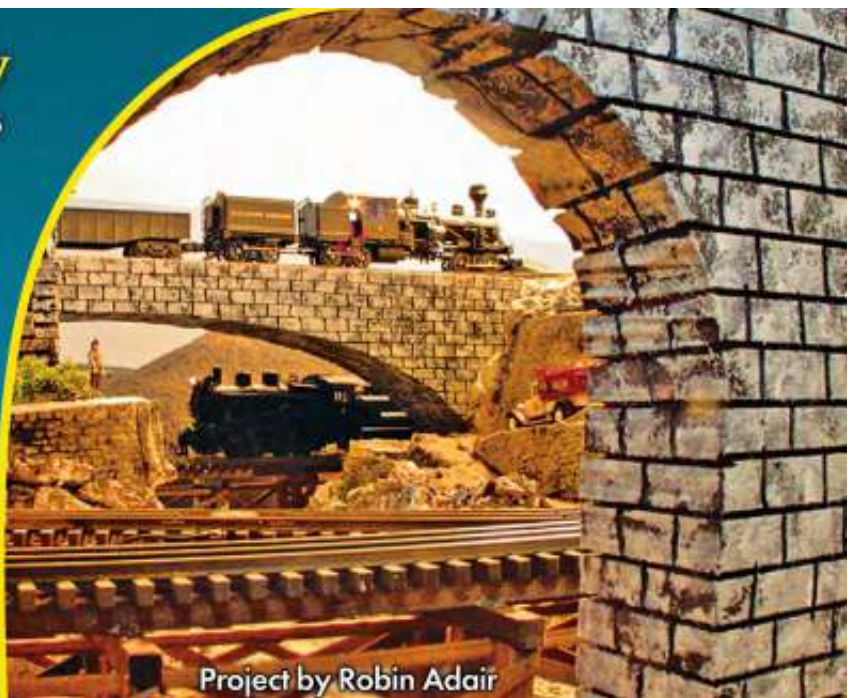


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LOCO OF THE EDITION

AH&D Model J Steam Ditcher-Crane by Bob Scherzinger

I have always been fascinated with steam shovels and cranes. Maybe a consequence of reading *Digger Dan* by Patricia Lynn (1953) as a child and saving my allowance to buy Tonka Toys' first track-mounted steam shovel with chain rigging (1957). The steam shovel just had more directions of motion than dump trucks. I was therefore interested in owning the 1:20.3 scale AH&D Model J Ditcher by *The Car Works* for my garden railroad. After several years I finally found an excellent condition boxed unit for sale.



American Hoist and Derrick (AH&D) began producing their light steam shovel named the American Railroad Ditcher in 1905. The steam ditcher was primarily used by railroads to clear drainage ditches along the right-of-way, but was also used for any maintenance and construction chore needing a power shovel, including grading cuts, barrow pits, coaling, and clearing rock slides, snow, and avalanches.

Light locomotive crane work could be lifted by the shovel in the up position by hooking a sling to the center tooth of the bucket, but heavier lifting required removal of the shovel and rigging the boom as a typical locomotive crane. Hoist line rigging could be single or two-part at the load block. When extended reach was required with lighter loads, an auxiliary jib/boom

could be attached to the crane boom at the shovel trunnions and extending beyond the hoisting line. Crane work included tie and rail handling, light wrecking after a derailment, and general work train service. The unit could also be rigged to accommodate a clam shell bucket and pile driving leads.

AH&D produced the actual steam ditcher in two models. The more common Model E ran on two lengths of paired rails resting on the deck of a standard gauge flatcar. Since the center-to-center spacing of rail pairs was greater than narrow gauge flatcars, the Model J was developed for narrow gauge using the same superstructure as the Model E on the chassis of AH&D's self-propelled log loader, riding on a pair of rod-connected 4-wheel trucks.

Historical Photos on the Denver Rio Grande Western



RD005-003

by Donald E. A. Rogers
7/28/1935 • RD069-061

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Richard L. Dorman Collection

The 1:20.3 ditcher came rigged with the shovel arm and bucket installed. I was interested in a locomotive crane, so some modification was in order. First, it did not include a load block, the pulley system for lifting loads, for the crane option. I found an acceptably

continued on next page

AH&D Model J Steam Ditcher-Crane continued

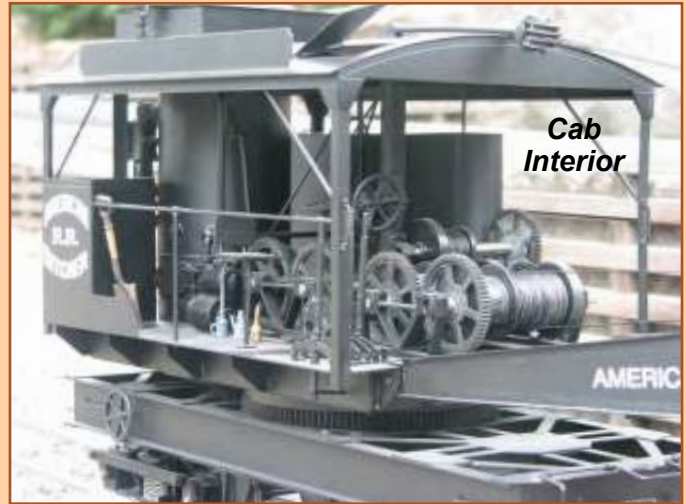
sized load block with rotating sheave on Etsy from a gal who had found it in her grandfather's "stuff." I removed the shovel and rigged the unit as a locomotive crane with a two-part hoisting line at the load block. The original boom hoist rigging came as a two-part line although the sheaves are present for the actual six-part line, so rerigging was required to fix that. All the rigging appeared to be standard cotton button and carpet thread (tex 45/.0094"), so I replaced the rigging with the largest UV-resistant polyester upholstery thread readily available (tex 270/.0231"), the closest possible to the 5/8" wire rope (.0308") that was actually used.

The scale model is track-powered and can make all the motions expected of a power shovel or crane. AMS couplers were added to link to a boom car and a repurposed tender. The story of building and detailing a boom car can be found on page 31 in this magazine.

Lastly a few necessities; a scoop for feeding coal to the boiler and oil cans and a tallow pot for lubricating the equipment and wire rope.



Load Block & Sheave



Cab Interior

The effective use and maintenance of their equipment was important enough to AH&D that they produced a little black book entitled *Ditcherology; The Science of Ditching and Ditcher Maintenance* in 1919. Previous to *Ditcherology*, AH&D published *Building a Railroad* in 1914, which discussed all aspects of building and maintaining track and right-of-way using their ditcher.

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A Sampling of Christmas G-Scale Railroad Displays in Public Places

December 2023 (Admission may be required.)

Ocean City Train Show

Ocean City Music Pier
between 8th & 9th St on Moorlyn Terrace
Ocean City NJ
Dec 2 & 3, 10am to 4PM
South Jersey GRS Holiday Train Display

Cradle of Aviation Museum

Charles Lindbergh Blvd, Garden City NY
Dec 23 2023 to Jan 1 2024 (closed
Christmas & Mondays), 10am to 5PM
Long Island GRS Modular Display

Rocky Ridge Christmas Magic

Rocky Ridge County Park
3699 Deining Road, York PA 17406
Nov 24 2023 to Dec 30 2024
(closed Christmas Eve & Christmas)
6-9PM Weekdays; 5-9PM Weekends
Susquehanna Valley GRS Display

Christmas in the Village

Dakota City Heritage Village
4008 220th St W, Farmington, MN 55024
Dec 2 & 3, 9 & 10, 3 to 8PM
Minnesota Garden Railway Society Display
by Don Bolt in the Library Building

Lake Metroparks Farmpark

8800 Euclid Chardon Rd (Rt 6)
Kirtland OH 44094
Nov 24 to Dec 29 (closed Mondays,
Christmas Eve & Christmas)
9am to 5PM
Northern Ohio GRS Christmas Train Display

Christmas at the Junction

EnterTRAINment Junction
7379 Squire Ct, West Chester OH 45069
Nov 18 2023 to Jan 2 2024
(closed Thanksgiving & Christmas)
10am (Noon Sunday) to 6PM (or 8PM)
Miami Valley GRS Assists with Display



Northern Ohio GRS Christmas Train Display in 2022

Carillon Historical Park

Transportation Building
1000 Carillon Park Blvd, Dayton OH
Nov 21 to Dec 29 (closed Thanksgiving, Christmas
Eve, Christmas)
12PM to 9PM
Miami Valley GRS Holiday Train Display

35th Annual Christmas Show

Cross Orchards Historic Site
3073 F Road, Grand Junction CO 81504
Dec 9 to Dec 30 (weekends only)
10am to 4PM
Grand Valley Model Railroad Club Display

Jim Marsh Chrysler Jeep

8575 W Centennial Pkwy
Las Vegas, NV
Dec 18 to Dec 30 (closed Christmas)
Las Vegas Garden Railway Society Display

Al's Garden Center

16920 SW Roy Rogers Road
Sherwood OR 97140
Nov 4 to Dec 31 (closed Christmas)
9am to 6PM
Rose City GRS Holiday Train Display

Banning Residence Museum

401 East M St, Wilmington CA 90744
Dec 2 (12noon-4PM), Dec 3 to Dec 31
(Tuesdays to Sundays, closed Christmas)
Tours 12:30PM, 1:30PM, 2:30PM, 3:30PM
Southern California GRS Display in Family Room

Roger's Gardens

2301 San Joaquin Hills Rd.
Corona del Mar CA 92625
Nov 1 to Dec 31 (closed Christmas)
9am to 8PM
Orange County GRS Train Display

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SDGRS News - September 2023

Succulents are a Great Choice for Garden Railroads Part 1 By Marilyn Teague

Let's talk about the "garden" part of garden railroading. A well thought out garden design can add interest to your railroad, minimize maintenance, and provide additional opportunities to enjoy the hobby. If you visited our latest garden railroad display at the San Diego County Fair, you saw first-hand how succulents can complement and enhance a model railroad layout. Succulents are ideally suited for San Diego's warm, semi-arid conditions, although certain succulents can be grown in cooler climates if precautions are taken. Pay close attention to the plant information tags; choose those rated for your local temperatures and sunlight conditions. You may also consider planting your succulents in shallow pots to move inside under grow lights during the colder months.

Succulents have become a favorite among local gardeners for their low maintenance requirements and visually striking appearance. They come in an endless variety of shapes, colors, and sizes, making them perfect candidates for a garden railroad layout. Some of the advantages of succulents over other plant choices include:

Low Maintenance: Succulents are known for being resilient and adaptable to various environmental conditions. This hardiness makes them ideal for outdoor garden settings where they can withstand heat, drought, and moderate exposure to the elements. Their minimal care requirements mean you can spend more time enjoying your garden railroad and less time tending demanding plants.

Space Efficiency: Since succulents generally have shallow root systems, they don't require large pots or deep planting areas. They can be easily moved as your layout is changed. This space efficiency is particularly good for incorporating them into compact garden railroad designs.

Aesthetic Diversity: From the green paddle-shaped leaves of the common jade plant to the beautiful burgundy rosettes of an *Aeonium arboreum* 'Zwartkop', succulents offer a variety of shapes, colors, and textures. Their unique appearance adds character and variety to your garden railroad, helping you create the perfect desert scene, a lush garden paradise, or beautiful forested mountains.

continued on next page

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Succulents continued

Choosing the best succulent species to complement your garden railroad will depend on the theme of your layout, exposure (shade/part shade/full sun), and personal preference. While no two railroads are the same, there are numerous succulent species that could be appropriate for your layout. These are just a few of my favorites:

Forest Scenes

Bonsai Crassula (right)
Miniature Pine Tree (left)

Bonsai Crassula (*Crassula sarcocaulis* 'Ken Aslet') is a small tree-like succulent with dark stems, medium green leaves and small pink or white flowers in the summer. Bonsai crassula is heat and cold tolerant (to about 10° F) and can grow to 12 to 18 inches tall and wide.

Miniature Pine Tree (*Crassula tetragona*) is an upright succulent with woody brown stems and crossed pairs of green leaves. White flowers come out in the summer. This plant prefers full sun, is easy to propagate from cuttings, and can grow to approximately two feet tall.



continued on next page

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Succulents continued

SDGRS News - September 2023

Adding Color

Aeonium arboreum 'Zwartkop' is an easy to cultivate shrub-like succulent with bold, dark burgundy rosettes growing up to 6–8 inches in diameter. This *aeonium* prefers full sun but can tolerate light shade as well. They can reach 3 to 4 feet tall and often go dormant in the summer.



Fire Sticks with Dwarf Carpet of Stars (Ground Cover) in background



Aeonium Zwartkop with Narrow Leaf Chalk Sticks (Vertical Filler) in background

Fire Sticks (*Euphorbia tirucalli* 'Sticks on Fire')

form a large shrub of loosely branching vertical stems. The stems change colors from light green to yellow/orange to bright red as the seasons change. They can grow up to 4 to 8 feet tall and can be pruned as needed. This plant prefers full sun and does well in poor soils. *NOTE: The sap from this plant is corrosive. Take care to avoid exposure to skin, eyes, and pets.*

Ground Cover

Dwarf Carpet of Stars (*Ruschia lineolata* 'Nana') is a hardy succulent that grows as a blanket of green, crisscrossed, fleshy, 3-angled leaves. Small pink or purple flowers show up in spring or early summer attracting local pollinators. It is often used as a lawn alternative and thrives in full or part sun. (See background plant rimming patio in photo above left.)

Vertical Filler

Narrow Leaf Chalk Sticks (*Senecio cylindricus*) is a shrub-like succulent with slender gray-green upturned leaves that circle the stems forming tufts at the ends. These plants grow up to 2 feet tall and can spread up to 5 feet wide. They are very drought tolerant and do well in full or partial sun. This *senecio* is a fast grower and easy to propagate. (See background plant in photo above right.)

continued on next page

Succulents continued

SDGRS News - September 2023

Desert Scenes

Short-leaved Aloe (*Aloe brevifolia*) is a low growing, clumping aloe featuring short, fat, toothed leaves. The short-leaved aloe forms tight rosettes that spread horizontally. While mostly green overall, the leaves can turn red in direct sunlight. They prefer full sun and can get from 1 to 2 feet tall and wide.

Zebra Plant (*Haworthiopsis fasciata*) is often considered an indoor plant, but it also does well in protected, shaded outdoor areas. They'll grow up to 5 inches tall and form clumps up to 8 inches wide. Leaves are dark green with raised white stripes on the outside.



**Zebra Plant with
Short-leaved Aloe in background**



Dune Gasteria

Dune Gasteria (*Gasteria acinacifolia*) is drought and shade tolerant and does well outdoors. It has thick, stacked leaves that are typically green, but Dune Gasteria will turn red in bright light. It will grow approximately 12 inches tall and wide. This gasteria will produce a long stalk of pink/orange flowers that are favored by hummingbirds.

Now that you're intrigued by the idea of adding succulents to your garden railroad, you'll want some tips to make the process easy and successful. Stay tuned for Part 2 of this article in the next issue of *Garden Railroading News*.



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BEING NEIGHORLY TO SUSTAIN GARDEN RAILROADING

by Mick Spilsbury, GR News Marketing Director



DOOM & GLOOM BEGONE!

We hear it at every convention, every club event, pretty much every time garden railroaders get together. **Garden Railroaders are getting older and out of the hobby. We cannot recruit new members. We are a dying breed. The hobby is doomed!** It's becoming 'conventional wisdom.' The problem with conventional wisdom is that it often becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, and will be unless we let more people know about garden railroading, because no one gets into something they don't know exists.

Roving railroads, exhibitions at county fairs and other events, posting great videos on YouTube—all help to get the word out that garden railroading exists, but none of them have the power of getting people in front of an operating garden railroad live and in person.

When people see an operating garden RR for the first time, it's a magical experience. There are locos operating outdoors with realistic sounds, some even belching real steam. There are buildings, trackside scenes, real plants, lights, trackside sounds, and water features. People cannot believe their eyes. They had no idea that people built model railroads outdoors in their yards, let alone with so many cool features, and they tell us that they are "amazed," "impressed," and "jealous!"

30-something and 40-something visitors also get to see that what we have and do is a far cry from the model railroads they grew up with. They get to see the new technology that our vendors have been developing and delivering for the last twenty years.

Some of us have been inviting neighbors to see our railroads for years, but now there is a way for more of us to do it efficiently and effectively.

nextdoor

NEXTDOOR

Nextdoor is a social media platform for neighborhoods where neighbors post questions for each other, like, "where can I find a reputable car mechanic?" Neighbors also post news of events.

I have been posting my open railroad days on Nextdoor for 18 months. My open railroad in September this year drew 175 adults and children. Only 15 of them had seen a garden railroad before. Small boys were mesmerized by the trains. Young girls enthusiastically counted livestock cars, animals, and miniature people around the RR in a scavenger hunt designed for them. Almost every adult visitor said they were amazed because they had no idea, no clue that model trains could run outdoors.

I was not the only one deploying Nextdoor in September. Another member posted his opening on Nextdoor for the first time and welcomed 100+ visitors. Bay Area Garden Railway Society Director, Roger Nicholson, was on hand and observed the same "we never knew" reactions at that railroad.

continued on next page

BEING NEIGHBORLY TO SUSTAIN GARDEN RAILROADING CONTINUED

EARLY RETURNS

Bay Area Garden Railway Society had 20+ railroads open over seven weekends in September and October. Some used Nextdoor to invite neighbors. Others used emails and flyers. In total we estimate that 300+ non-garden railroading families enjoyed the sights and sounds of a garden railroad for the first time. As word has gone out about the number of visitors that a few of us in BAGRS have enjoyed, more BAGRS railroad owners want to know how we got so many visitors!

Between late September and early November, Bay Area Garden Railway Society got a dozen new members, well above what we normally see at that time of year. So, yes, we believe that opening railroads to neighbors will help to sustain our membership.

GOING FORWARD

We know that some garden railroaders have concerns about inviting people they have never met to see their garden railroads. We respect that, but here is some good news about Nextdoor.

It's free.

It's easy to use.

You can customize neighborhoods that receive news about your open railroad.

In my area, there are more than 30 Nextdoor bite-size neighborhoods.

I can post to just my immediate neighborhood or a selection of the 30+ neighborhoods.

Our Nextdoor visitors to date have been delightful. They faithfully sign our guestbooks. They monitor their children's behavior. They have all been people we were happy to meet, most for the first time. Word about my garden RR is now all over our immediate neighborhood, on 'Mommy' sites and at the local dog owners' gathering point. Hundreds of people in our neighborhood now know that garden railroading is a thing!

We recognize that garden railroads that are candidates to be opened to neighbors, must have certain characteristics:

A big enough viewing area, clearly separated from the railroad.

Easy ingress and egress.

Sufficient parking nearby, though many neighbors will walk to the open railroad location.

No fall and trip hazards.

And, of course, we need railroads that are designed for reliable running of a couple of trains.

Identifying railroads with appropriate characteristics whose owners are happy to welcome neighbors can be challenging, but every club probably has candidates.

THE BOTTOM LINE

We have to let more people know that garden railroading is a thing, that it exists, that it's a creative outlet, that it's outdoors, and that it's shareable and fun. Getting people in front of an operating garden railroad is by far the most impactful way to showcase the magic of garden railroading. Only a small percentage of those exposed to an operating railroad will get into garden railroading, but we only need a small percentage to defy the conventional wisdom that garden railroading is doomed.



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Locomotive Crane Boom Car

Bob Scherzinger



The American Hoist and Derrick (AH&D) Model J Ditcher which is this issue's "Loco of the Edition" (see page 20) was a versatile maintenance of way vehicle. The steam ditcher was typically outfitted with one or two auxiliary cars; a tender from a retired steam locomotive to augment the onboard water tank and coal bunker as needed, and a boom car to stow the shovel arm and bucket as well any necessary tools and supplies. The boom car is the subject of this article.

Boom cars act as an idler car for locomotive and wrecking cranes to protect the crane boom from other rolling stock when the crane is coupled within a train. Additionally for locomotive cranes, the boom car provides support for the crane boom when not in operation to relieve tension on the boom hoist rigging. The boom car also provides storage space for equipment, tools, and supplies.

I started my boom car with an Accucraft AMS D&RGW 6000 Series 30-foot flatcar.

The first addition to the car was side boards. Side boards are needed to retain the tools and equipment. I used scale 4x6 stakes notched on three sides to fit into the stake pockets and 4x12 side boards. Though side boards were commonly the full length of the car deck, I cut the side boards short at each end to allow typical access to the car deck via the strap steps. Side boards were bolted to the stakes with two #00-80 x 1/2" brass hex-head bolts with washers and nuts. Stakes were predrilled using a small drill press and then used as the template for drilling the side boards. I distressed the top edges to simulate being hit by the equipment.

Continued on next page





Boom Rest

The second addition to the car was the boom rest. For this I used a scale 14x14 cross beam supported by a 14x14 and an 8x14 on each side. This construction, located near the "A" end of the car, gives enough height for a boom angle of approximately fifteen degrees. Boom hoist rigging experiences its highest stresses when the boom is level, or even worse, the boom rotates to a negative angle (boom end sheave below the pivot point). Thus, storing the boom at an angle above the horizontal reduces the wire rope stresses (crushing) at the drum.

Storage of equipment is primarily the shovel arm with bucket. The standard gauge AD&HD Model E Ditcher traveled on rails on its own flat car, so the shovel could be stowed attached to the boom or on a boom car. Since the Model J was a self-propelled unit, there was no space to stow the shovel when not in use or when traveling. Historical photos show

the shovel stowed either attached to the boom and resting on the boom car or removed and stowed on the boom car. If a clamshell bucket was to be used, it would also be stowed on the boom car. Due to the extent of accessories for pile driving leads (bottom braces with platform support floored with 2x decking, structural braces, 1500 lb. drop hammer, pile cushions, etc.), a separate flat car was probably used to transport this equipment.

Storage of tools and supplies provided the most fun for this modeler. One of the benefits of 1:20.3/Fn3 scale is the level of detail that is possible and the parts available to accomplish it. I started with a pair of tool boxes on cribbing near the "B" end of the car. Some of the tools that are tossed on the car deck would probably be stored in these boxes, but for the sake of interest and conversation, I decided in favor of tool clutter.

Continued on next page



A End

B End



General tools and supplies included wrenches for the shovel arm pivot bolts, adjustable wrenches, a couple of different sized sledge hammers, a couple of engineer's hammers (short handled sledge hammers), a prybar, an oxy-acetylene welding setup, and various lubricants for the equipment and the wire rope. Besides the bolts on the shovel arm, amongst the clutter is a backup pair.

Tools supporting the ditcher include a spade, a flat-bladed shovel, a pick axe, and a single bit-axed axe.

Tools and accessories supporting the locomotive crane include three eye-hook wire rope slings, a couple of chain slings with end rings for attaching to the bucket teeth (single use from the center tooth, paired use from the outer teeth), a couple of snatch blocks, two sizes of bolt-type anchor shackles, a load hook for a whip line, a lifting beam with 6-foot spread, and a couple of tether lines.

The Model J steam ditcher did not have outriggers, though it did have two blocking/jacking points each side for stability if needed. I included two sizes of screw jacks and cribbing for use at these points. Cribbing consists of several two-foot and three-foot 6x12 blocks stowed at the "A" end of the car.

Regarding the shackles, the larger size came without pins and the smaller size came with brass pins to be cut to length. Neither came with holes in the lugs, so the lugs had to be drilled. #0-80 $x\frac{1}{2}$ " brass hex-head bolts (#52 or a 1/16" drill bit) with nuts were used for the large shackle pins and #00-90 $x\frac{3}{8}$ " brass hex-head bolts (#55 drill bit) with nuts were used for the small shackle pins. When drilling the shackle lugs, insert a piece of wood or plastic into the jaw the same thickness as the jaw width to prevent deforming the shackle.

The spreader beam (in Mid Section) is constructed of a pair of back-to-back 7/16" (C9) channels sandwiching .080" thick bail and pin plates. The bail has an elongated hole for sliding over the crane hook. A large size bolt-type anchor shackle, as discussed above, is attached to the pin plate at each end. The above referenced spread is center-to-center of pin plates.

Continued on next page



A End



Mid Section



B End



Regarding the oxy-acetylene welding setup, the setup is made for 1:18 scale and the tanks come with both caps and gages. Research found that the shorter acetylene tank was very close in size to a 145 cf acetylene cylinder but that the tall oxygen tank was too tall for even the largest capacity cylinder. The tall tank was shortened $\frac{3}{8}$ " to the size of a 300 cf cylinder using a small miter box and a razor saw.

On occasion, I find the opportunity for a sight gag that I cannot resist. Hopefully you can find this one. I stumbled upon it, and though much later in time than my 1930s era railroad, I realized that it could decrease my maintenance labor costs significantly. It is also very compact when dormant. [See page 38]

A final note: To not damage the car deck, I attached the tool box cribbing, the boom rest, the wood cribbing, and the oxy-acetylene welding setup rack to the car deck using Micro-Mark *Detail Tack*. I also used the tack to attach the adjustable wrenches and oil cans to their elevated locations and to attach the screw jacks to the deck so they remained upright.



(Below) Denver Rio Grande Western Historical Photo



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MISSING STEP by Duke Snyder

Sometimes when we buy used locos or rolling stock, parts may be broken or missing. Never a reason to shy away from used, as that brings the price down and it's usually an easy fix.



On my recent purchase, my USAT GP30 NYC loco was missing two lower steps. Weapons of choice... some .060 Styrene the same depth as the step: 3/16", a sanding board and a hobby knife.



I make it just slightly oversize and sand it down to a perfect fit. Very easy, just take your time and check often. A drop of CA glue along the back side and edges, the step is replaced.

A dab of flat black paint and all is good!



Finished and ready for revenue service.

You can drill a bunch of tiny holes in the replacement step or score it with a hobby knife to simulate the thread marks of the original and real ones.

This is super **EASY** and I actually have a few in service and so far nobody has called me out about them!

Enjoy your railroads, my friends!

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TOP SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS YEAR-TO-DATE (PHOTOS)

GR News remains active on social media with over 6,000 'followers' on Instagram, YouTube, and its two Facebook Groups. This year we have been posting a combination of still images and videos. Let's take a look at the 4 photos and 4 videos that you have 'liked' most.

Our top 4 PHOTO POSTS through Oct. 31 cover the breadth of the USA from Eric Schade's line in Maine to Bob Dunlap's line in Colorado and onto Don Herzog's and Bob Guinan's lines in California.



Railroad: D&RG Foothills Branch RR
Photo by Owner: Bob Dunlap CO



Railroad: Miniature Plant Kingdom
Owner: Don Herzog CA Photo by Jeff Namba



Railroad: Winnegance & Quebec RR
Photo by Owner: Eric Schade ME



Railroad: Deer Island RR
Owner: Bob Guinan CA Photo by Mick Spilsbury

On the next page, we share the top 4 VIDEO POSTS through Oct. 31. Still images from the videos that we publish here cannot do justice to them. That is why we share the date they were published on Instagram.

You can check them out in Instagram at [#grnewsimages](https://www.instagram.com/grnewsimages)

TOP SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS YEAR-TO-DATE (VIDEOS)



This video of a Shay on Bob Guinan's Deer Island RR was shot by Mick Spilsbury (Posted 10.31.23)



This video of a consist on Bob Dunlap's D&RG Foothills Branch RR was shot by John Cushman (Posted 5.6.23)



This consist crossing a waterfall on Mike Dibble's Umunhum Valley RR was shot by Roger Nicholson (Posted 7.27.23)

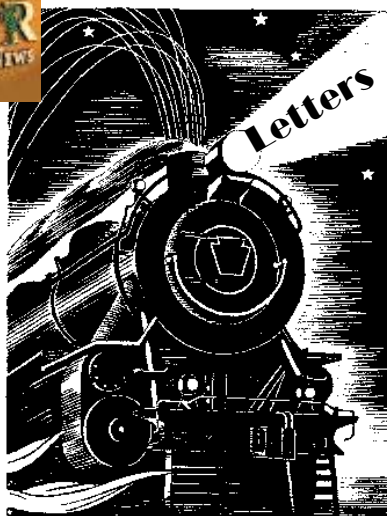


This video of a passenger consist on his Black Canyon RR was shot by owner Mick Spilsbury (Posted 9.22.23)

As a certain Missourian said, "***It ain't over 'til it's over,***" so any of these top 4 photos and top 4 videos can be bumped by posts in November and December.

If you want to be a bumper, post on GRNews Facebook or share an image/short video with us at: marketing@grnews.org

When we announce the final Top 2023 Posts in the first 2024 edition of *GR News*, we will also recognize garden railroaders who consistently posted great content across social media channels. It will come as no surprise to anyone that **Shawn Viggiano** (Facebook) and **Roger Nicholson** (YouTube) will be two of them, but who will join them?



STRAIGHT FROM THE IRON HORSE'S MOUTH

Letters to the Editor should be sent as e-mails only to Carla Brand Breitner at:
Editor@GRNews.org

Letters will then be addressed accordingly and/or passed on to the author for further edification. Unless marked otherwise, letters to this publication are assumed to be submitted for print. Please include your name and club affiliation. Please note that we may not be able to print all letters, though we will try to respond to them. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We are unable to answer requests for information about specific products or systems; these are best addressed to the appropriate manufacturer.

Out-of-Period Mystery Maintenance Helper

Please advise location of sight gag in its dormant stage mentioned in Boom Car article as I have not been able to identify it.

Carla Brand Breitner
 Editor, *Garden Railroading News*

Not to give it away immediately, in all the photos, what is the one item that is not explained until the sight gag paragraph? It shows in the first photo and the A-end/B-end photo at the B end, but most clearly in the enlarged B-end photo. It is the object below the tool box adjacent to the shovel bucket.

It is a collapsed pit droid from Star Wars and the Mandalorian. I have an erect one that I sometimes put in the ditcher or helping in a locomotive. It catches the older kids eyes immediately as

do the dogs I put out on the tender deck, the caboose platform, and sometimes at an open boxcar door for the younger kids. The really young children may not quite get excited over a train, but they all know and love dogs.

Bob Scherzinger
 Rose City Garden Railway Society



I thought the sight gag had to do with the "hatch-turtle" on the deck by the toolbox, but could not identify it. In its collapsed shape, the pit droid blends right in to the flat car as well as it "camouflages" in the movies/TV series when it is scared.

Carla Brand Breitner
 Editor, *Garden Railroading News*

Photos Welcome for Seen on the Tracks

A G Scale Realistic Scene Photo Gallery

Please send uncompressed photo (with caption information describing the scene, rolling stock, railroad name & proprietors, location, and photographer's credit) to: Editor@GRNews.org; photos may also appear on the **GR News** website and social media.

Affiliated Clubs outside the US by Province & Country as of 11/15/2023

CANADA

AB	Northern Alberta Garden Railroaders
.....	Rocky Mountain Garden Railroaders
BC	Black Mountain Railway Club
.....	BC Society of Model Engineers
.....	Fraser Valley G-Scale Friends
.....	Greater Vancouver Garden Railway Club
.....	Vancouver Island Garden Railway Club
ON	Bluewater Railroaders (formerly Ontario's West Coast GRS)
.....	Burlington Model Railway
.....	Central Ontario GR Association
.....	Golden Horseshoe Live Steamers
.....	London Garden Railway Society
.....	Ottawa Valley Garden Railroad Society

COUNTRIES BEYOND NORTH AMERICA

AUS	Garden Railway Club of Australia Inc.
.....	Australian Model Railroad Assoc QLD
.....	Australian Model Railroad Assoc VIC
DE	Club der LGB Freunde Rhein Sieg e.V (Monchengladbach/Rheydt)
NZ	Auckland Garden Railway Group
.....	Christchurch Garden Railway Group
.....	Locos, Lads & Lasses
.....	Waikato Garden Railway Group
.....	Wairarapa Garden Railway Group
.....	Wellington Garden Railway Group
SWE	NTJ, Nässets Trädgårds Järväg (Varmland)
.....	Sveriges Tradgardsjarngar (Stockholm)
CH	US G-Scale Friends Switzerland
UK	G Scale Society United Kingdom
.....	Kent Group: G Scale Society

Affiliated United States Clubs by State as of 11/15/2023

* Club/Society includes members from multiple states and is listed under each state.

AL	North Alabama Garden Railway Club	MD.....	Mason Dixon Large Scale Railroad Society
AR	Greater Hot Springs Garden Railway Society	MD/DC/VA*	Washington, Virginia & Maryland GRS
	Northwest Arkansas Garden Railway Society	ME	Maine Garden Railway Society
AR/OK/MO*...	Ozark Garden Railroad Society	MI	Lakeshore Garden Railway Club
AZ	Arizona Big Trains Operators	MN	Minnesota Garden Railway Society
	Central Arizona Model RR Club	MO/KS*	MO-KAN Garden Railroaders
	Gadsden Pacific Div. Toy Train Operating Museum	MO/AR/OK*...	Ozark Garden Railroad Society
	Oracle Community Learning Garden Kid's Railroad	NC.....	Apple Valley Model Railroad Club
	Sun City West Model Railroad Club		Coastal Carolina Garden Railroad Society
	Tucson Garden Railway Society		Gibsonville Garden RailRoad Inc
	VDO Garden Railroad Club		North Carolina Garden Railway Society
CA	1:32 Scale Group		Piedmont Garden Railway Society
	Bay Area Garden Railway Society	NE	Rivercity Railroaders
	Central California Coast Garden Railroad Society		Starry Night Railway
	Del Oro Pacific Large Scale Modular Railroaders	NH.....	New Hampshire Garden Railway Society
	Diablo Pacific Short Line	NJ	New Jersey Garden Railway Society
	Fairplex Garden Railroad Volunteers		South Jersey Garden Railway Society
	Gandydancers	NM	New Mexico Garden Railroaders
	Gold Coast Garden Railway Society	NV.....	Las Vegas Garden Railroad Society
	Mendocino Coast Model RR & Navigation Co.		Northern Nevada Garden Railroad Society
	Orange County Garden Railway Society	NY.....	Central New York Large Scale Railway Society
	Redwood Empire Garden Railway Society		Finger Lakes Live Steamers
	Sacramento Valley Garden Railway Society		Genesee G Gauge Railway Society
	San Diego Garden Railway Society		Hudson Valley G-Scalers
	San Joaquin Valley Garden Railway Society		Long Island Garden Railway Society, Inc.
	San Leandro Historical Railway Society G&O Rwy		Western New York Garden Railway Society
	Santa Clarita Valley Garden Railroad Club	OH.....	Buckeye State Garden Railroaders
	Santa Fe & Butthead Cove RR Train Group		Columbus Garden Railway Society
	Shasta Garden Railway Society	OH/KY*.....	Greater Cincinnati Garden Railway Society
	Southern California Garden Railway Society		Miami Valley Garden Railway Society
	Upland Garden Railroad Society		Northern Ohio Garden Railway Society
CO.....	Denver Garden Railway Society		Riverside Railroad Crew
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	Mile High Garden Railway Society	OK/AR/MO*...	Ozark Garden Railroad Society
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DE	First State Model Railroad Club	PA	Lehigh Valley Garden Railroaders
	Shore Line Garden Railroad Club		North Central Pennsylvania Mountains GRS
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