



# Garden Railroading News

March/April 2024 • 2024 #2 • [www.GRNews.org](http://www.GRNews.org)

**Building a Steel  
Arch Bridge**

**Review: Accucraft 13T  
2-Cylinder Live Steam Shay**

**Fairplex Garden Railroad  
100th Anniversary**

A free digital magazine produced by garden railroaders for garden railroaders



# Garden Railroading News

March/April 2024 • 2024 #2 • GRNews.org

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**Cover Photo: Accucraft Mogul pulls a passenger consist past engine house.**  
Layout Steve Ciabrone, Engineer Gary Woolard, Photographer Carla Brand Breitner



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or [www.facebook.com/groups/gardenrailroadingenews](http://www.facebook.com/groups/gardenrailroadingenews)

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



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Photo by Jenny Sweer

Above: *The Easter Bunny visited Grant & Jenny Sweer's Grant Funk Railroad, leaving pastel egg-shaped boulders along the mainline.* • Owens Cross Roads, Alabama

Below: *A passenger train enters the tunnel below a hillside retreat on Don & Sue Watters' narrow gauge Lake Tahoe & Truckee Railroad.* • Los Altos, California



Photo by Mick Spilsbury



*MAY  
WE SUGGEST...  
Something New*

## USA Trains Offers New Intermodal Cars with Containers

USA Trains is again producing a wide range of 1:29 scale intermodal cars with containers. Intermodal cars come in multiple road names with multiple numbers for each line. Individual containers in 20, 40, 45 and 48 foot lengths for multiple shippers, sets of cars with containers, and sets of containers will be available.

More information at: [www.usatrains.com](http://www.usatrains.com)  
Click on "Ultimate Series Rolling Stock"



## LGB Makes Track Maintenance Easier

This model of a German track laying machine hides track cleaning wheels under a prototypical paint scheme and lettering. For American rail maintenance, the model also comes in Union Pacific livery. This LGB/Märklin model has two cleaning wheels to keep the track clean. Both wheelsets and the cleaning wheels are each driven by a powerful ball bearing Bühler motor. The loco now comes with an mfx/DCC sound decoder with many light and sound functions. Cleaning function and running sounds will work in analog operation. Cleaning wheels can be replaced as needed.

More information at:  
[LGB.com](http://LGB.com) or email [customerservice@marklin.com](mailto:customerservice@marklin.com)



21672 Union Pacific Track Cleaning Locomotive



21671 Track Cleaning Locomotive

## A Sampling of Regional Meets, Train Shows and Rail Fairs in 2024

The **Northeast Large Scale Train Show** returns to Eastern States Exposition fairgrounds in West Springfield, Massachusetts, on **April 27 & 28, 2024**. Info at: [www.nelsts.org](http://www.nelsts.org)



Bay Area GRS modular tracks will be running at the **Rail Fair at Ardenwood Historic Farm** in Fremont, California, on Memorial Day Weekend, **May 25, 26 & 27, 2024**. Info at: [www.spcrr.org](http://www.spcrr.org)



Riverside Railroaders Club sponsors the **North East Ohio Large Scale (G Only) Train Show** **June 1, 2024**, at the Warren OH SCOPE (YWCA). Info at: [riversiderr.org](http://riversiderr.org)



MO-KAN Garden Railroaders hosts a **2024 Midwest Garden Railroad Gathering** over the weekend of **May 30 to June 2, 2024** in the greater Kansas City area. Tour garden railroad layouts. Stoney Creek Hotel in Independence, Missouri, will house workshops, vendor hall, model and photo contests, ice cream social, and closing night dinner. For info: [www.mokangardenrailroaders.org](http://www.mokangardenrailroaders.org)



Finger Lakes Live Steamers welcome G-Scale railroaders to a **Garden Railway Picnic, Open Run and Trunk Sale** on **June 9, 2024**, 10am to 4pm in Marengo, New York. Info at: [fingerlakeslivesteamers.org](http://fingerlakeslivesteamers.org)



**Father's Day Summer Layout Tour** on **June 15, 2024**, from 10am to 5pm in the greater Portland area. 12 layouts will open to the public. See [rcgrs.com](http://rcgrs.com) for details.



The **National Big Train Operators Club Convention** is "Back on Track" in Bird-in-Hand, Pennsylvania from **June 15 to 20, 2024**. Details at: [bigtrainoperator.com](http://bigtrainoperator.com)



Miami Valley Garden Railway Society will be running their modular layout again at the **2024 Rail Festival at Carillon Park** in Dayton, Ohio, on **June 22 & 23, 2024**. Rail exhibits include train rides, historical and model train displays, rail vendors and more. For more information, check: [railfestival.com](http://railfestival.com) and [daytonhistory.org](http://daytonhistory.org)



Email [editor@GRNews.org](mailto:editor@GRNews.org) with your events.

## PIKO America Looks back at Two Centuries

Go back in time to the mid 20th Century or time travel further to the late 19th Century with new items from PIKO America.

PIKO has modeled the NoHAB, introduced in Europe in 1954, as painted in 2007 in Santa Fe Warbonnet colors with Strabag on the nose. Strabag Rail, a rail service company, still operates the NoHAB locomotive and periodically changes the livery for special runs and different seasons. Eye-catching details include the distinctive front cab windows, finely etched ventilation grills, and perfectly flush side "portholes." Between the two powerful engines and the finely tuned gear ratios, this model boasts excellent driving and pulling characteristics. The locomotive features various lighting functions, looks great in darkness, and features a clear impressive sound. In September, PIKO America expects shipment of the NoHAB painted in the "Winter" paint scheme, perfect for Christmas.



37451 Strabag VI NoHAB Diesel Locomotive with sound

If you are modeling Alaskan railroading, you will want to add this new train based on old prototypes to your layout. The White Pass & Yukon Railroad coaches are still listed on the roster of the White Pass Scenic Railway.

White Pass & Yukon Railroad #53 is an affordable 2-6-0 "Mini" Mogul with a pop of red, like the real line liked to do on their units. It's equipped with operating directional lighting, a powerful 5-pole precision can-type ball-bearing motor, and durable plastic ball-bearing drive wheels. It comes with a working smoke unit and analog sound, and is easily upgradeable to DCC and digital sound using a PIKO's #36220 Digital Steam Sound Kit.

Two durable wood coach passenger cars, with nicely detailed interiors, pair well with WP&YR #53. The coaches sport two new road names/numbers to add to PIKO's lineup of WP&YR livery.



38260 WP&YR Mini-Mogul #53

38668 WP&YR Wood Coach #330 Peace River

38667 WP&YR Wood Coach #308 Klondike River

More information at: [www.piko-america.com](http://www.piko-america.com)

For the latest catalog and new items brochure:  
<https://www.piko-america.com/pages/catalogs-brochures-and-flyers>

## Additional Regional Meets, Train Shows and Rail Fairs in 2024

The **SurfLiner 2024 NMRA** (National Model Railroad Association) **National Convention** will tour Southern California from **August 4 to 11, 2024**, based in Long Beach, California. Details at: [www.nmra.org/conventions](http://www.nmra.org/conventions)



San Diego Garden Railway Society will host the **2024 West Coast Regional Meet** Saturday through Thursday, **August 10 to 15, 2024**. Most layouts will be open two days to allow plenty of viewing time between visits to other San Diego attractions. August 14 will be a day of garden railroading clinics at Walter Andersen Nursery. A Farewell Luncheon on August 15 will take place at Old Poway Park, near the Poway-Midland RR, a narrow gauge steam train ride. Details and registration at: [www.sdgardenrailway.com](http://www.sdgardenrailway.com)



Georgia Garden Railway Society is planning a three day **2024 Southeast Regional Get-Together** from **August 23 to 25, 2024** including the 65th Atlanta Model train Show in Duluth, Georgia. Friday night Dinner Get-Together will be a picnic buffet at the nearby Gwinnett County Bethesda Park Senior Center. Discounted rooms available (through [ggrs.info](http://ggrs.info) website) at Embassy Suites, Atlanta NE/ Gwinnet Sugarloaf in Duluth. The 2024 Southeast Region Get-Together Car is a USA Trains 40' steel box car available for pre-order. For details and registration, go to: [www.ggrs.info](http://www.ggrs.info)



The **National Steamup Symposium** will steam up on **October 9 to 13, 2024** in Lodi, California. Details at: [www.steam-events.org](http://www.steam-events.org)



## 2025 Convention in Sacramento CA

Sacramento GRS is planning the **2025 National Garden Railway Convention** in Sacramento, California, from **June 18 to 22, 2025**. Vendor hall and clinics will be at the Sacramento Convention Center. The Friday night banquet will be at the California State Railroad Museum. Layouts will be open throughout the Sacramento area. Info will be posted soon at: [ngrc2025.org](http://ngrc2025.org)  
See next page for photos of some of the layouts.



## Print Copies of *Garden Railroading News* Are Available to Order On Demand

Print a copy on demand: Go to:  
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or

[www.blurb.com/bookstore](http://www.blurb.com/bookstore).

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\$10.90 per issue **plus shipping**. Order as a group if you belong to a regularly-meeting club and save on shipping. (Blurb.com also offers discounts regularly. Look for a coupon code when you visit their website.)

## Coming Soon in GR News: Kevin Strong Reviews the Bowande Saddle Tank Baldwin 0-6-0 Live Steam Locomotive



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[facebook.com/groups/gardenrailroadingcommunity](https://facebook.com/groups/gardenrailroadingcommunity)

[instagram.com/GRNewsimages](https://instagram.com/GRNewsimages)

[youtube.com/channel/UCmuyDnk2QRyle1QIAMFXrJw](https://youtube.com/channel/UCmuyDnk2QRyle1QIAMFXrJw)

## Accucraft/Aster Hobby Circles the World with New Engines

[Livesteamstation.com](http://Livesteamstation.com) is taking deposits on new live steam locomotives whose prototypes ran in Scotland, Japan, and the American West. The ready-to-run or kit versions are going into production at Accucraft/Aster with delivery expected later this year.

The 1:32 scale LNER Class P2 No. 2001 "Cock O' the North" served Scotland in the 1930s. This 2-8-2 steam locomotive is modelled on the prototype engine built by Doncaster Works in 1934 which featured a double-chimney Kylchap exhaust and a Lentz rotary-cam actuated poppet valve gear. Conventional Walchaerts valve gears were used on the five additional class P2 locomotives produced. This model feature 3 cylinders and inside Walschaerts with a simulated Lentz poppet valve outside the frame.



LNER Class P2, Cock O' the North

The Benkei 2-6-0 Mogul was produced by H. K. Porter in 1880 to run on the Horonai Railway in Hokkaido, Japan. These class 7100 locomotives served on Japanese Government Railways through 1917. The locomotives were virtually identical to H. K. Porter's large Class C narrow-gauge Moguls. Only the frames and wheels were widened to 42-inch gauge. The 30-inch gauge Moguls ran on the Black Hills & Fort Pierre RR in South Dakota and the Oregonian Railway in northern Oregon in the late eighteenth century. The 1:20.3 Accucraft/Aster model is available in livery appropriate for JGRw, Black Hills RR, and Oregonian Rwy.

More information at: [www.livesteamstation.com](http://www.livesteamstation.com)



Japanese Government Rwy Class 7100 H. K. Porter 2-6-0 Locomotive



American Narrow Gauge H. K. Porter 2-6-0 Class C Locomotives

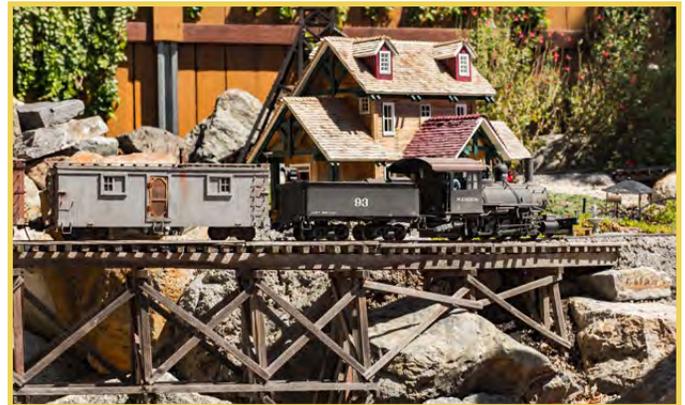
## Phoenix Sound Systems Closes; Sound Library Still Available

Phoenix Sound Systems has stopped sales and customer support for their line of locomotive sound boards. Their website remains online so that previous customers have access to their library of BigSound™ sounds for download. If you use Phoenix Sound in your locomotives, get your sound files while still accessible.

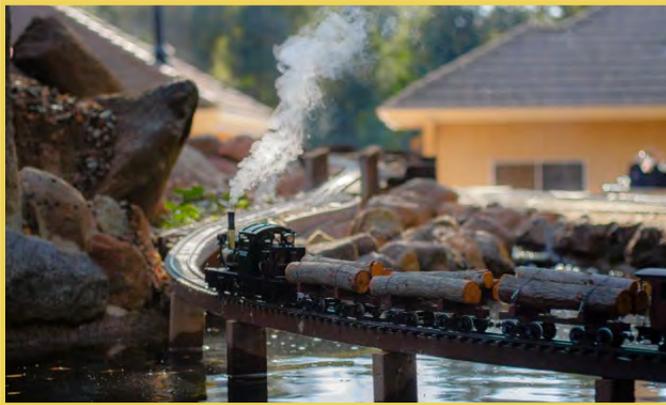


# SACRAMENTO VALLEY RAILROADS

Preview photos from the hosts of the 2025 NGRC  
**40th National Garden Railway Convention**  
**June 18–22, 2025**



Photos by Jeff Namba



## EnterTRAINment Junction Owner Looking to Retire

Don Oeters, the founder and owner of EnterTRAINment Junction [GR News featured layout July/August 2023] near Cincinnati, Ohio, is ready to retire and is looking around to see if there is a buyer.

Open since 2008, the 80,000 sq. ft. venue contains a 25,000 sq. ft. indoor G-Scale layout featuring 90 trains running on over 2 miles of track through 3 different time periods, and includes event space and a gift shop.



If you (or someone you know) would like to take over the EnterTRAINment Junction property, please contact Don Oeters by email:

[doeters@entertrainmentjunction.com](mailto:doeters@entertrainmentjunction.com)

## Portable Layout for Sale: A Town, A Circus, A Carnival

Total area 12'x26.' Large circus layout built on a trailer is 12'x20.' Carnival end is 12'x3,' town with parade is 12'x3.' Comes with all buildings, thousands of figures, and circus trains. \$25k plus invested; asking \$15k. Call Bob Videmsek at 253-222-7831. Seattle area.





# Amherst Railway Society

presents

## Northeast Large Scale Train Show



Northeast  
**Large Scale**  
Train Show

**April 27 & 28, 2024**

Eastern States Exposition  
1305 Memorial Avenue  
West Springfield, Massachusetts 01089

[nelsts.org](http://nelsts.org)



[amherstrail.org](http://amherstrail.org)

Eastern States Exposition is the home of the BIG E Agricultural Fair

## Fairplex Garden Railroad: 100 Years at the Los Angeles County Fair

### Fairplex Garden Railroad 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1924–2024: Celebrating the Past while Looking to the Future

By Rick Bremer

Photos by Rick Bremer unless otherwise noted

In the city of Pomona, the Los Angeles County Fairgrounds (now named Fairplex) sits as it always has since its inception, waiting for the annual L.A. County Fair. This year the Fair will run Thursday through Sundays May 3 to May 26 plus Memorial Day Monday May 27. In addition to the educational exhibits, animals, food, and merchandise booths, the Fairplex Garden Railroad maintains its presence on the grounds as it has since 1924. In an area roughly the size of a football field over 60 men and women volunteer twice a week, maintaining and improving what some consider a piece of Southern California history. This originally 2½", now 45mm gauge, model railroad has been in operation since 1924 and has operated in its present location since 1935. The railroad has operated every year except during World War II (1942–46) and during the Covid Pandemic. One can sense history when you enter the grounds.

Trained volunteers operate up to 30 trains which travel over 10,000 feet of G-Scale track, passing over 30 bridges and over streams and lakes. During the annual Fair, when the exhibit is fully “dressed,” there are 250 buildings, 600 G-Scale diecast cars, trucks and vehicles, and over 1,000 scale figures. In 2023, approximately 60,000 visitors toured during the fair. On the second Sunday of each month the exhibit is open for its Public Run Days from 11 am to 4 PM.

A blend of things make this garden railroad a special place. To begin with, there's the history—100 years of railroad modeling for the public (see Timeline on page 16). In addition, there is a unique combination of cooperation—with the volunteers, with Fairplex, with supporters and of course, with the public—our fans. All of these different entities work together to keep this exhibit alive and healthy.

The railroad is not a club; rather it is an exhibit of the Fairplex Programming Department. There are no dues for volunteers and Fairplex

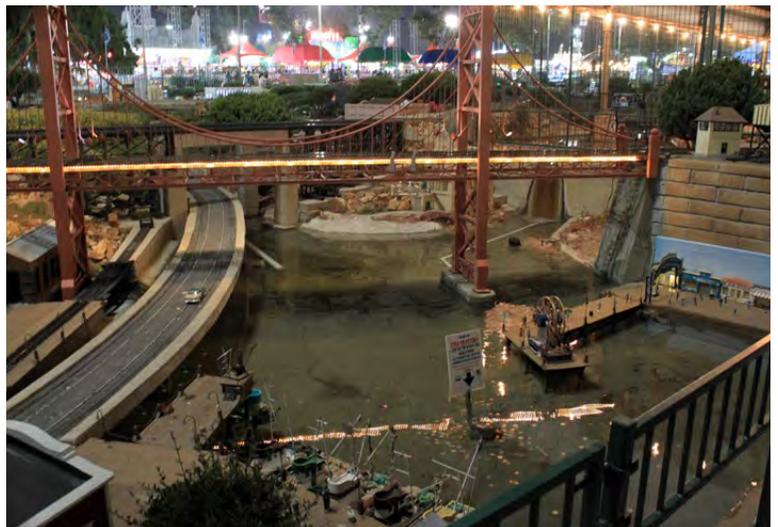
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*Mainlines near the control room include multiple switches for changing tracks. A consist of Pacific Fruit Express cars passes by an area representing early Los Angeles.*



*Scale buildings illustrate the transition from rural to urban architecture; miniature plants fill the landscape.*



*Evening under the Golden Gate. Hoover Dam spillway drops into bay with docked fishing fleet across from an amusement park pier. The highway at left used channels left when the original 2½" track was removed to guide cars; it will run again in 2025.*

Photo by Carla Brand Bretnier



*Flo's Diner at night.*



*Roy's Motel.*



*The Stafford Mill scene represents the City of Industry.*



*Oil derricks at night.*

Administration provides an annual operating budget, as well as a budget for the Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator for supervision during the Fair. Utilities are provided for, and major plumbing and electrical repairs are done by the Fairplex Facilities Department. Day-to-day repairs and maintenance are done by the volunteers.

Another area in which Fairplex supports the exhibit is through The Learning Center at Fairplex, the educational arm of Fairplex. TLC manages our volunteers and provides passes and parking for the fair. TLC also manages all donations to the Garden Railroad and makes sure that donated funds are used solely for the enhancement of the railroad. This includes cash donations from visitors, donations from annual Supporters and donations from individuals.

The relationship with Fairplex is a two-way street. Administration gets thousands of free volunteer hours to maintain the exhibit each year and the volunteers get to participate in a world-class exhibit where they can learn new techniques in the many areas of garden railroading. They have an opportunity to operate large personal and "house" trains and have the ability to share the experience with visitors. The volunteers' strong social bond and the support from Fairplex Administration are a big part of the ongoing success of the exhibit.

At the layout, management is done by a Leadership Team consisting of Coordinator Rick Bremer, Assistant Coordinator Jim Busch, Scenes Director Kathy Ring and Mountain Director John Collins. The Coordinator serves as the liaison between Fairplex and the volunteers, manages funds, supervises construction and provides scheduling and supervision for the annual fair. Assistant Coordinator Busch is in charge of all trains, electrical systems, train control and layout lighting and operations related construction and maintenance. This includes repair and maintenance of the bridges, track, and roadbed. Director Ring is in charge of all scenes which include buildings, cars, and small scale people. She also has to oversee the continued upkeep of the many buildings as well as adding new scenes and details. The Mountain Area is basically a layout within a layout, and Director Collins maintains supervision over it all: electrical, trackwork, new buildings and trains. John is also one of the original volunteers who helped maintain the layout when Fairplex assumed control in 1996. He is also a source of historical information.

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*Refinery at dusk.*



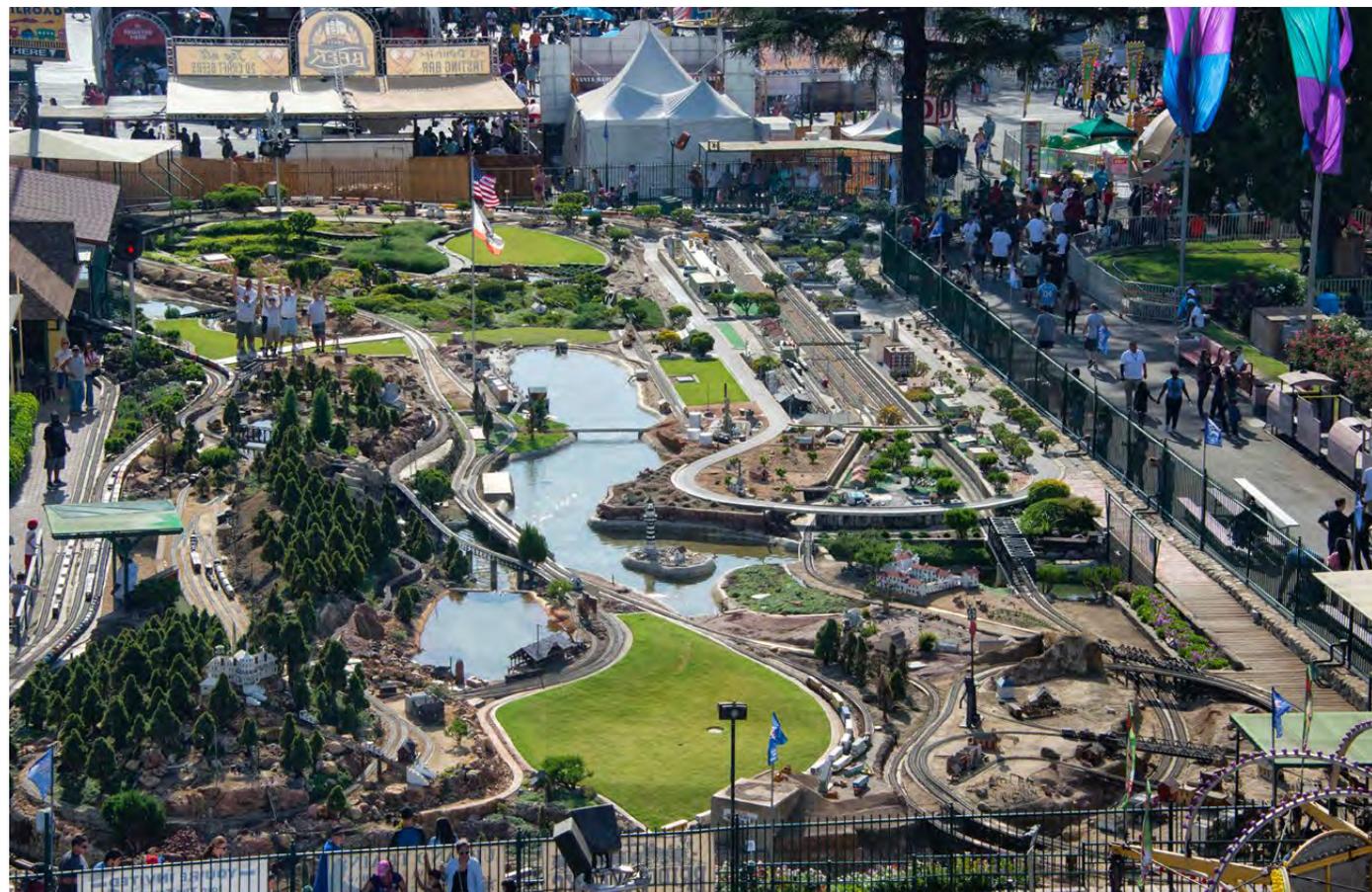
The Operations Department is what controls the trains. There are two mainlines, each approximately 600 feet long, and an inside folded dogbone which is approximately 1,200 feet long. Sidings and yard leads contribute to add up to another 7,600 feet. The switch yards contain several hundred feet of track and are separated into two yards, with 8 tracks in the A yard and 5 tracks in the smaller B yard. The main lines are powered by very basic but powerful hand-built power supplies which produce up to 25 amps at a maximum of 24 volts of pure DC. The switch yards have their own power supply. There are also 14 additional single line shuttles which are powered individually by Bridgewater Mag-Mate 100 power supplies and feature an automatic back and forth motion for trains and trolleys. There are 40 turnouts which are primarily USA 10' diameter Premiere Line switches. Although shipped with electric controls, our crew converts each switch to pneumatic operation. Each converted switch features a piston which, in addition to directing electrical power thru the switch, activates a microswitch that changes an LED indicator in the cab to show red for diverting and green for mainline travel. Some manual turnouts may be found on the Mountain.

In the control room or cab, a 16" x 98" control panel displays an accurate track pattern of the layout. Each line is divided into blocks and an operator can turn a block on or off to assist in moving trains. LEDs indicate the presence of a train and its travel and direction. There are also LED indicators to show the status of each of the switches on the layout.

*continued on next page*



*Rick Bremer, John Huie next to control panel.*



*Photo by Shirley Goodwin*

*Fairplex Garden Railroad Aerial View. Mountain area lower left. Interactive Western town area lower right. Pomona historical town along fence on right. Jurupa Mountain Discovery Center 'Dino Mountain' interactive area upper right.*



Steam engines used include USA Trains Hudsons, FEF Northern and a Big Boy 4014. USA Docksiders are used in our Western Interactive area. Diesels are primarily from USA Trains with all of the USA fleet represented. Fairplex-owned equipment includes a 20-car Military train, a set of USA PFE reefers, a set of USA 40-foot tank cars and many assorted freight cars. A full USA Daylight passenger set is operated in the evening pulled by a set of USA Trains Southern Pacific Daylight ABBA diesels. Volunteers may operate personal trains provided they pass the test of operating for 2 hours without problems and that all cars have metal wheels. Several California Zephyrs, Heavyweight Passenger consists and other personal trains can be found as well with a variety of mixed freight consists rounding out the roster.

The Mountain features 500 feet of track including a pass-through yard with team tracks and 5 sidings. This area has its own power supply and control station. The Mountain primarily operates steam trains but some early era diesels also appear. Rolling stock reflects mining and logging operations but the area also contains some historical scenes including the Echo Mountain House and the attached working funicular, and the California Lumber mill which has a detailed interior.

To be an operator for the annual fair, volunteers must complete many hours of training under a seasoned operator. Training takes place during the monthly Public Run Days and trainees are given tasks that simulate typical operations which are used during the fair.

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*Full Switchyard.*



*Operating funicular on Echo Mountain.*

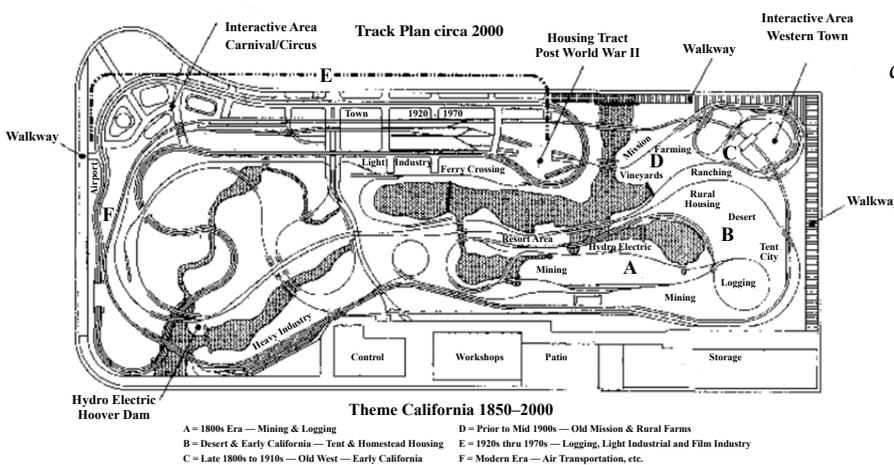


*California lumber mill.*



*A mixed freight passes the Mountain station.*

Photo by Christopher Garcia



*Large letters identify visitor-controlled trains in interactive areas.*



Photos by Carla Brand Breithner

Under the direction of Kathy Ring, the Scenes department works all year to keep the exhibit up to par. New buildings are planned and volunteers are provided with the materials for construction. Buildings are primarily made from urethane foam Precision Board® material which can be formed, shaped and machined to show different surfaces and textures. All building doors and windows are computer-designed and 3D printed. The buildings are painted and lighting is installed. Other buildings may be older plastic kits and a few, including our large powerhouse, are cast from concrete.

Some buildings are constructed in cooperation with a Supporter, a company or person who provides an annual donation for the continuation of the layout. These may be accurate models of

the Supporter's business or may represent a scene from a period in time. Other buildings represent local landmarks. Pomona buildings include the Masonic Lodge, the Fox Theatre, the Mayfair Hotel, and the Southern Pacific Pomona Station, a metal building built in the 1950s currently undergoing restoration.

Supporters are key to the success of the Fairplex Garden Railroad. This support can be acknowledged in several forms: a scale building, a billboard advertisement, a train car, or even a special train. One example, the Credit Union Train, consists of 24 cars, each car provided by and advertising a specific credit union. Started in 1999, this train is a joint venture of the Garden Railroad and the Richard Myles Johnson Foundation, which uses generated funds to promote their philanthropic activities. Another special train is from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. Each car has a message from a specific union local. A mixed freight of different cars advertises specific businesses.

In 2017, Coordinator Rick Bremer reached out to John Huie, who operated the Garden Railroad from 1968 to 1996. Working together, Huie and Bremer approached Fairplex regarding the original 1/2" scale trains stored in a basement on the fairgrounds. After consideration, Fairplex Administration agreed to moving the trains to Mr. Huie's 1/2" scale layout. The trains remain Fairplex property to be operated in conjunction with the Fairplex Garden Railroad operations. It is hoped that visitors can enjoy these historical trains for years to come.

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*Building with wood (Above), Precision Board®, and 3D printed items.*



*The Mayfair Hotel and the Fox Theatre in Pomona are a few of the local landmarks along Main Street.*

Photo by Carla Brand Breitner

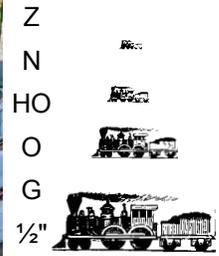


*The Credit Union Train draws attention. Supporter structures include Valley Vista Services (City of Industry) and Welding Certification Center (Pomona). Oasis Camel Dairy (near Ramona) has a billboard and camel camp.*



Several of these 1/2" scale trains have been restored and will be operated on a special track at the 2024 Los Angeles County Fair. The County Fair is the highlight of every year at the Garden Railroad. Currently held in May, the fair runs for 4 weeks Thursdays through Sundays from Cinco de Mayo and including Memorial Day. This is the FGRR's main event and the layout is at its best. Every volunteer dedicates 30 hours of time per year with many giving twice that amount. Visitors may tour the inside of the layout from 11AM to 8PM and watch trains from the fence after that. Some volunteers who have moved out of state even come from Utah and Arizona to participate.

The 2024 LA County fair will be a special one for the Fairplex Garden Railroad Volunteers. The 100th year celebration will feature a variety of displays. An 8-foot 'train birthday cake' will feature a wooden cake with 7 levels and a train of each modeling scale operating on each level. Around the base, a true 1/2" scale track will feature some of the historic trains from the early years of the railroad. Visitors will be able to follow the history of the railroad with wall posters from each decade. Finally, an 8-foot display case will feature the historic trains from the past as well as an entire 3D printed train as a nod to the future. For a donation, visitors can choose a collectible, such as a commemorative pin or shirt. The fair promises to be a special one and all are welcome to come visit us during this historic celebration!!



Multiple scales will run on the Birthday Cake above, including 1/2" scale examples like 3751 below.



Open to the public on the second Sunday of each month and every day of the Annual Los Angeles County Fair. Info at: [fgrr.org](http://fgrr.org) and [lacountyfair.com](http://lacountyfair.com)



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LARGE  
SCALE



# BETHLEHEM STEEL 100-TON 3-BAY HOPPER

From the 1960s to the present day, the Bethlehem Steel 100-Ton 3-Bay Hopper has endured as one of the most popular cars for bulk material transportation. Built to convey coal, stone, ore, or ballast, the 100-Ton 3-Bay Hopper is a perfect addition to diesel-era freight consists. Bachmann's 1:29 Scale Bethlehem Steel 100-Ton 3-Bay Hopper comes in a variety of well-known paint schemes, and features operating AAR couplers and blackened, machined metal wheels.



PENNSYLVANIA POWER and LIGHT #296  
Item No. 93651



NORFOLK SOUTHERN #146753  
Item No. 93653



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Photo from John Huie collection



Photo from Fairplex GRR Volunteers collection

**1920s – Early Years:** The Garden Railroad had its origin as a display of the Pomona Boys Model Yacht Club in a tent at the Los Angeles County Fair in 1924. Model yachts were on display in a temporary pond promoting public interest in the development of the Puddingstone Reservoir and Recreation Area. Mr. Herman Howard, a local shop teacher, built and added a trolley car in ½" scale and, with his brother Homer, built a railroad circling the pond. The trains and trolley would go on to become the outdoor scale railroad. Buildings on the right were constructed by the Girls Model Club of Pomona.

**Late 1930s—Continued Development:** Originally, the outdoor layout was a square, 100' by 100'. As the years went by, the Howards added buildings, more track, and a system to control the trains. Santa Fe Railway became the sponsor of the garden railroad as part of the 1937 display. Mr. Howard and his students built many Santa Fe locomotives and rolling stock over the years. Two 3700 Northern's were built in 1937. Santa Fe FTs, NW-2s, and E-1A & B were also built.



Photo from Fairplex GRR Volunteers collection



Photo from Fairplex GRR Volunteers collection

**1930s—A Big Move:** Over the years, the display outgrew the tent. Mr. Herman purchased materials at his own expense and had his shop students construct as class projects ½" scale models of engines and train cars from plans provided by railroad companies. In 1935, Fairplex reserved an outdoor space as a permanent location for the ½" scale outdoor miniature railroad. Located between Building 4 and the Grandstand, the layout featured trains that were powered by storage batteries. The layout consisted of a single mainline that traversed the allotted area with additional short lines featuring the original Red Car trolley and a switch engine shuttling freight cars back and forth. The mainline train was a copy of Union Pacific's first streamline train, the M-10000, shown in ½" scale in the next photo from 1938. *[A G-Scale model of the M-10000 is this issue's Loco of the Edition on page 20.]*

In the photo above, owner Herman Howard works on the model of the Grand Canyon El Tovar Hotel in 1940.

**1940s—A Wartime Hiatus:** The Los Angeles County Fair was closed during World War II from 1942 to 1947 when the U.S. Army took over the fairgrounds. The grounds were used for war production and as a prisoner of war camp for German and Italian officers.

Following the war years, the outdoor miniature railroad resumed its operation during the 1948 Fair, the first fair since the war. The railroad continued as a display of the Santa Fe Railway, including such features as the El Tovar Hotel and the Grand Canyon Santa Fe Station.

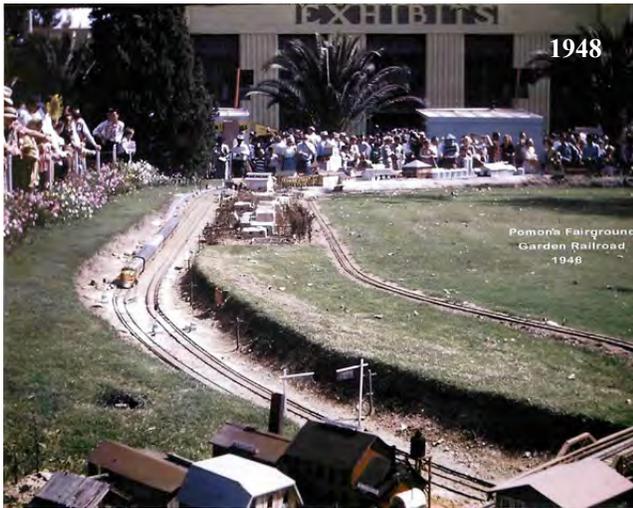


Photo from Fairplex GRR Volunteers collection

**1950s—New Railroad Sponsor:** In 1950, the railroad gained a new sponsor in the Southern Pacific Railroad. A completely new model passenger train of the Sunset Limited (seen exiting tunnel below Mr. Herman's crew in photo below) was constructed for the 1950 fair. The next year, the layout was expanded to its present size of 100' x 300'. Up until this time, the displays were powered by storage batteries recharged by small generators. The increased size of the railroad also increased electrical demands, so Southern Pacific donated a large generator that had been used in passenger car service to power the layout.



Photo from John Huie collection



Photo by Bob Martin, Valley Times collection, Los Angeles Public Library

**1960s—An Abrupt Change:** In 1958, Mr. Howard sold the railroad to Herman Templin and his wife Lois; the Templins operated the layout for eleven years. Tragically, Mr. Templin was electrocuted while preparing the layout for the annual fair in 1968. Mrs. Templin, her daughter, and a close friend, John Huie, made sure that the railroad would run during the 1968 and 1969 fairs.

**1970s—A New Beginning:** In 1971, the Los Angeles County Fair took title of the railroad. Mr. Huie was then contracted to operate and maintain the layout. Mr. Huie began major improvements. The locomotives were rebuilt with heavy-duty motors to pull multiple cars. A concrete road base was installed under the tracks, giving the tracks better stability. Huie also designed and constructed heavy-duty power supplies which are still the main source of track power today and deliver a very pure direct current. He later designed and installed a block signaling system which featured scale railroad signals that operated in a realistic manner.

**1980s—Upgrades Continue:** In the eighties the railroad was officially named The Ganesha Junction after an actual full-sized railroad junction located about 500 yards southeast of the exhibit on the old Pacific Electric Railroad. During this time, the railroad boasted over 4,000 feet of track and featured Mount Shasta and a model of the Pitt River bridge.



Photo by Carla Brand Breitter

In the photo above, G-Scale track circles circus scenes that became one of the first interactive areas where kids could control a train from along the fence. Trains carried a large letter to identify the power pack running that train.

**1990s—Changes, Changes:** The nineties saw big changes to the layout again. The Los Angeles County Fair Association became Fairplex. Fairplex approved changes in scale and equipment for the miniature railroad, partnering with the Southern California Garden Railroad Society to operate a G-Scale layout. Members brought their own trains and buildings for the 1996 fair.

In 1997, the exhibit name was officially changed to The Fairplex Garden Railroad and the Fairplex Garden Railroad Volunteers organized under supervision of the Creative Department. Mr. Robert Toohey was the first Coordinator. This is the group that maintains and operates the layout today.

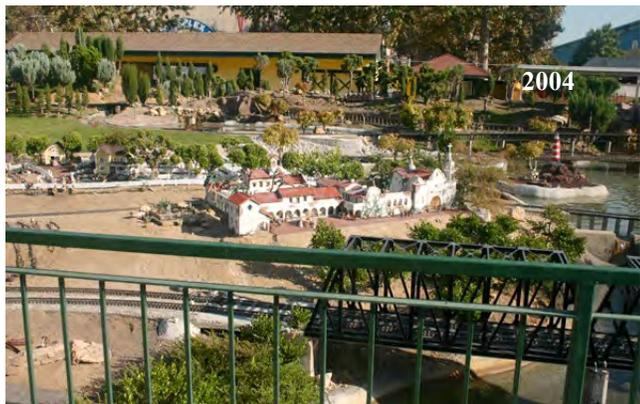


Photo by Carla Brand Breitrner

**2000s – Into the New Millennium:** The new millennium saw big changes to the layout. For the first time, the public was invited to tour the inside of the railroad, assisted by volunteer docents. The mountain area was developed with a separate operating station. Many of the scenes that you see today were developed, including the many reversing lines and the two interactive areas where visitors can operate trains from outside the fence. Huell Houser filmed an episode of *Visiting* on September 5, 2006 and the railroad was featured in the October 2007 issue of *Garden Railways* magazine.



Photo by Carla Brand Breitrner

**2010s – New Leadership:** In 2012, Mr. Rick Bremer assumed the role of Coordinator, a title that he holds today. Scene expansion continued. The Garden Railroad again achieved national prominence when, in 2012, the nationally televised PBS show *Tracks Ahead* featured the Fairplex Garden Railroad in Episode 8 of Season 8.



Photo by Carla Brand Breitrner



2020



Photos by Rick Bremer

**2020s – A Big Challenge:** With the spread of the Coronavirus in 2020, the Garden Railroad was again forced to close to the public in March. For six months, volunteers worked at home and stayed in touch by sharing greetings, messages and project photos via Zoom. In September, 4 volunteers were allowed to come on to the exhibit to work for 4 hours, once each week. Clearing the six foot weeds took nearly a month! Volunteers could return with COVID screening in 2021. During this time much of the electrical wiring was upgraded and the entire switchyard was rebuilt.

**2024 – The Garden Railroad Today:** One only needs to look around the exhibit to see how the hard work of the FGRR Volunteers has maintained this historical display. Over 60 volunteers work twice a week (with many doing additional work at home) to maintain this railroad for the public's enjoyment. The exhibit is open to the public on the second Sunday of each month and every day of the Annual Los Angeles County Fair. Info at: [fgrr.org](http://fgrr.org) and [lacountyfair.com](http://lacountyfair.com)



Photo by Rick Bremer

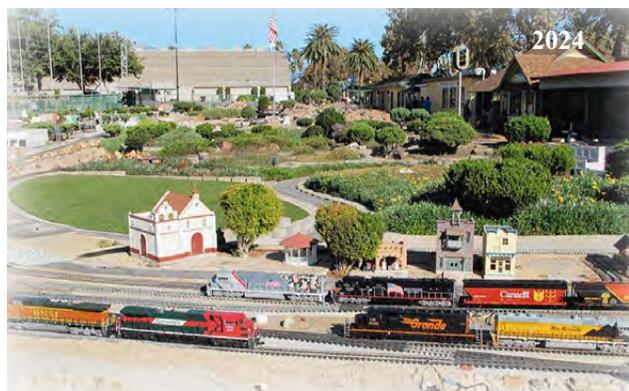


Photo by David Stewart





## LOCO OF THE EDITION

Best displayed in Two-Page View.

## Union Pacific M-10000 with articulated consist by Pete Comley

I enjoy scratch-building 1930s era trains in 1:32 scale, especially those with art deco styling. The Union Pacific M-10000 is one such train—and perfect for making a model. Although it ran as a three-car set in service, it was originally conceived (and exhibited at the Chicago World's Fair in 1934) as a four car set that included the Overland Trail sleeper, and that is the version I have modeled. A combo power/baggage/railway post office locomotive pulled passenger cars riding on shared, articulated bogies for a smooth ride. Built from aluminum, *The Streamliner*, aka *The City of Salina*, ran between Kansas City and Salina from 1935 to 1941.



I drew up each car in a CAD file as a one-piece steel sheet metal part that had the windows and other profiles laser cut. The sheet was then rolled and bent over a steel pipe (photo 1) to form a complete tubular shell (photo 2).

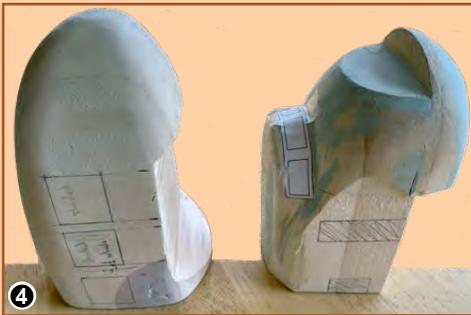
The train is articulated, and the four cars run on just five trucks (photo 3) that are compensated and have nylon bearings for low running friction.

*continued on next page*





A USA Trains power block drives the front truck and 14.4V Li-ion batteries give well over an hour of running time.



The front and rear of the train have complicated shapes, so I made those from basswood and finished with Bondo to make a smooth paintable surface (photos 4 & 5).

The headlight and famous vertical searchlight were made from glass balls with an LED to light them (photo 6). All the cars have interior LED lighting which makes for great night running.

The distinctive and delicate front grille was expertly made as a 3D print by my colleague Chris Coley and gives the final touch to the project.



Submit your scratch built, modified, weathered or detailed—unique in some way— loco. Send your photos and write-up to [Editor@GRNews.org](mailto:Editor@GRNews.org) or [Marketing@GRNews.org](mailto:Marketing@GRNews.org).



# CLUB CORNER

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

The subject of this Club Corner Column is club bylaws, the least fascinating subject for most people that I have written about so far. But if you are a club officer, you should know and understand your bylaws. They are the foundation on which the club operates. They should designate what officer positions are in your club, the length of their terms, defines the job duties of each position, how vacancies are filled, and how board members can officially resign or be removed from office by membership vote during their term in office.

Bylaws also define your club's legal status. Is your club a non-profit 501C3, or a non-profit 503C7, or simply a social club without legal standing? If you collect dues from members and handle money, a club should have legal standing with the IRS.

Official 501C3 organizations are exempt from paying federal taxes. But they also must have a dedicated mission. Most 501C3 model railroad clubs exist as educational organizations. Their purpose is usually to educate members and the public about their hobby. Their activities must then support their mission, and not financially benefit any of the members. This restricts what these clubs can spend club money on.

All expenditures must be to further the education mission. They must file a form 990-T with the IRS electronically each year. Income not related to the education purpose must be reported and is taxable over a defined amount.



Our club in Portland, Oregon, is a 503C7 non-profit social organization, not a 501C3, which means we file federal income taxes annually, but we actually pay very little if any income tax. This allows members and the board to spend their money as they see fit as long as it does not financially benefit specific members or officers. But most expenses can be deducted for tax purposes from both types of organizations. If your club is thinking about changing your legal status, I suggest contacting an attorney.

All bylaws usually define when annual meetings are held, and what constitutes a quorum. A lot of clubs have inactive members, so getting a quorum at a meeting can be hard. The quorum in our club is only 10% of the membership. Bylaws should also define how members need to be notified of a club meeting, how many days before the meeting this notification must take place, and what percentage of those present must vote in favor of changing bylaw provisions. It defines who is officially a voting member (tricky with family memberships), whether absentee or proxy ballots are acceptable, and how and when someone can be terminated from membership (usually for not paying dues).

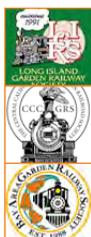
Usually, bylaws do not designate committees or special interest groups. These are created and handled by officers, board of directors, volunteers and interested members. All organizations in our hobby are democratically run and operated. Majority rules. If not, people leave.

*continued on next page*



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





Money matters should be stipulated by bylaws, including who can sign checks, and how many signatures are required for large amounts (we require two signatures for checks over \$500), and how much the board can approve without membership approval.

Finally, there should be a clause of non-discrimination and no personal financial benefit to individual members or officers. There should also be a clause to keep member information private and not used outside the club.

Not every club needs formal bylaws. If your club works very informally and doesn't elect officers or charge dues, then you probably don't need them. These clubs often have leaders that suggest things and even organize activities. Voting is usually by mutual agreement. The focus of these clubs is getting together to run trains in people's back yards and share railroad adventures.

If your club has bylaws and you haven't reviewed them or don't even know where they are kept, I suggest you find them and review them. We keep them posted in the members only area of our club website. You may want to make some changes to update them and make them relevant to how your club currently operates. They may even need to be created, completely rewritten, or amended. If you are thinking about hosting a regional meet or a national convention, rebuilding train modules or doing other tasks requiring a lot of money, or other major club events, bylaws govern how such things are approved and financed; you should know what procedures your bylaws spell out. They are your constitution. But let your bylaws only restrict those things that need restricting. Remember, this is a fun hobby, and all members need to work on keeping it interesting, but still fun. 🚂



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# Accucraft 2-Cylinder 13-Ton Class A Shay

## A Live Steam Locomotive Product Review

By Shawn Viggiano

Back in June 2023 Accucraft announced that they were going into production on a new 2-cylinder 13-Ton Class A, straight boilered, live steam Shay locomotive. Years back Accucraft produced a similar 2-cylinder Shay as both an open cab and a closed cab version. Unlike the previous open cab version, the new 13-Ton Shay has a more prototypical appearance. One of the most noticeable differences is the smaller diameter boiler and the shorter body on the new Shay, giving it a charming look compared to the older version.

The gas tank is located in the bunker, which also has a water bath to help with better pressure on cooler days. The new 13T Shay is gauge adjustable from 45mm to 32mm track. This makes the model fit for the 16mm as well as the 1:20.3 scale crowd.

Accucraft's new 13-Ton Shay is based on Lima Locomotive Work's 13-2 Class A, 2-cylinder, 2-truck Shay. One of the smallest Shays produced, the 13-2 was a very popular industrial engine in the United States, but was also used in other countries around the world in a variety of gauges. The Shay was developed by Ephraim Shay in the early 1870s using a flatcar as a base. Once Ephraim came up with a locomotive that worked, he brought his idea to Lima Locomotive Works in Lima, Ohio. By the late 1870s, Lima was producing the Shay in many configurations. It became the most popular steam locomotive used in logging and mining industries all over the world.

The Shay is a geared locomotive that has an offset boiler, and is powered by multiple cylinders placed vertically on one side of the locomotive, usually the right side. The cylinders drive a longitudinal shaft that is geared to the axle via bevel gears, which in turn propel the engine. All the trucks on a Shay are powered, making it ideal to operate on the rough track and steep grades typically



*The Shay on the Kittatiny Mountain Railroad. A water bath around the gas tank in the tender helps cool weather running.*



found on logging and mining railroads. They were also geared to run at much slower speeds than a typical rod engine, making them much better pullers. The Shay came in many configurations, from the smaller 10-ton 2-truck Shay to a 162-ton 3-truck Shay which still runs on the Cass Scenic Railroad in West Virginia.

Accucraft/Aster's model of the 13-2 is based on drawings made by David Fletcher from a surviving Australian prototype. The loco is of brass and stainless steel construction, and measures 16.8 inches in length, 4.5 inch width and 6.6 inches height. It will run on a 48 inch minimum radius. It is butane fired, has a simulated Stephenson valve gear, safety valve, a lubricator, water gauge, blowdown valve, and a Goodall valve.

*continued on next page*



*Newer 13T Shay on left vs older Open Cab 13T Shay on right.*



*Older left vs newer on right.*

The Shay comes in two build options, either as a kit or ready to run, and in three different colors: black, green (both with a satin finish) and a 1908 lined black that has gloss black to the superstructure and a satin finish to the chassis. That version also has a deep gray 'planished iron' boiler jacket finish, giving it a blueish tint. All three colors have a cab interior and window frames in a dark brown with stained real wood end beams. The metal running boards have simulated wood grain, the trucks are fully sprung. The Shay also comes with two stack types, a short shotgun stack and a diamond stack, as well as a nice coal load in the bunker. If you prefer wood you can add your own wood load on top of the coal load.

Accucraft's earlier versions of the small Shay used an oversized, out of scale boiler in order to increase run times. This version adds a fake T-boiler in the cab to provide more water capacity while keeping more visible boiler dimensions to an accurate scale. The design also provides for a 32mm gauge option by fixing the cog to the axle and not the wheels. This design was inspired by Gordon Watson's Shays from the early 2000s, and the smaller gauge is very popular internationally.

When I received my Shay in the mail and opened up the package, I was not surprised at how well it was packed, as Accucraft has always done a fantastic job when it comes to packaging their live steam products. The Shay was packed in foam and wrapped onto a wood board. The Shay comes with an instruction booklet and a really nice assembly illustration book. The front cover is worthy of framing and would make a great display on the wall. Also in the package were Allen keys, a syringe for

*continued on next page*



*Just a few of the many details on Accucraft's new Shay.*



*The large boiler hidden in the cab.*

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*After the initial unpacking, a bit of assembly is required.*

filling the water tank and a smaller syringe for filling the oiler, as well as white gloves to protect one's hands (a typical Aster touch).

There were two smaller boxes that contained the front and rear trucks. This helps protect the trucks from being damaged during shipment as trucks tend to be the weak point during the shipping process. After unwrapping the main engine, I easily attached the rear and front trucks using two screws supplied, and attached the drive shafts. Trucks can only work one way, so mixing them up would be difficult as the drive shafts would not line up.

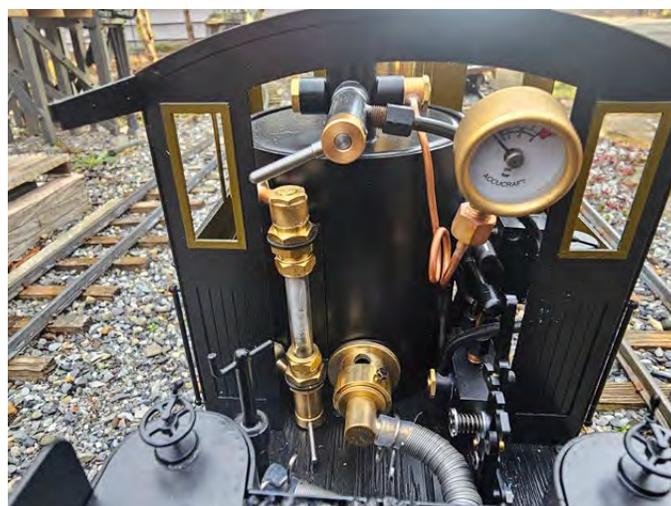
The Shay comes with the shotgun style stack attached, but I replaced mine with the diamond stack supplied. The diamond stack does not come with a screen on top like the previous version Shay, but one could easily add a screen to the stack. The nut holding the stack was tough to get off because of the tight space inside the smokebox. A small pair of needle point pliers did the trick loosening the nut. I hand tightened the nut to the diamond stack to make removal easier.

The Shay is highly detailed with a round headlamp (nonoperational), tool box, nonoperational whistle, a bell, rivets, link and pin coupler pockets, and all the piping that would be found on the prototype. The roof easily comes off and is secured by a metal wire on hinges.

My first day firing up the Shay was less than ideal, but a good opportunity to see how it performs under colder conditions. The temperature was in the low 40s with a light wind. I first lubricated all the moving parts, added oil to the oiler, and filled the gas tank with butane. (A propane/butane mix would have been better for the colder conditions.)

I filled the boiler with 240ml of water and took out about 40ml of water to leave space for the steam to build up. It took a few tries getting the burner to light... but

*continued on next page*



*The pressure gauge and sight glass are easily readable. The sight glass has a blow-down valve.*

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I found that leaving the smoke box door open was key to keeping the fire lit until the boiler warmed up. I also had to adjust the air collar to allow more air flow. The gas tank occupies a bunker in the tender which can hold a water bath, but I didn't add water initially; I wanted to see how hot the boiler would get, but I found adding hot water later improved the fire in the burner. It took a little longer for the Shay to get up to steam because of the colder conditions but, once the safety valve popped, I was ready to see how it performed. After rolling it back and forth to remove any cold water in the cylinders, the Shay took off, pulling a load of two log cars (real logs were used) and a caboose. The Shay handled my slight grades with ease and the sprung trucks helped keep the Shay from derailing on my frost-heaved track work. I ran the Shay until the gas ran out, topping the boiler off using the Goodall valve a few times. The average run time is 25 minutes using the Goodall valve. This will vary depending on temperatures and how hot one runs the fire.

My second run was done at the Scranton Steam Up on an indoor track. Performance was better since I was not fighting colder temperatures. It took less time to get to steam and I was able to keep better pressure. On this run, I was pulling three log cars and a log loader.

Overall I'm very pleased with the performance of the new Accucraft Shay, and it will be a great addition to my logging railroad. Running should improve over time as the Shay breaks in. Like all the other Accucraft engines I own, this will no doubt give me years of trouble-free running. Today there is only one known 13T Shay of this design left in the world, now preserved but in nonoperational condition at the Nambour Museum, Australia. Thanks to David Fletcher and Accucraft/Aster, many modelers can enjoy the scale model of the 13T Shay on their railways all over the world. ✂



*The Shay takes up its duties on the Kittatiny Mountain Railroad.*



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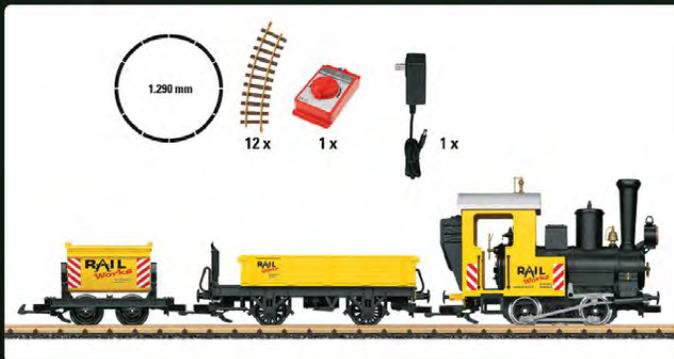


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## The Safety of Steel Project One Arch Bridge

By Patrick McConnell

When my brother and I first started our outdoor railway in 2009 at ages 10 and 14, we gave no forethought to how long it would last. Who could have predicted that 14 years later, we would still be going at it strong? However, many of our wood structures, specifically bridges and tunnel portals, did not fare so well along the way. So when we recently rebuilt our entire railway, we planned everything with longevity in mind. That meant changing some building materials.

Henry Ford once touted, "The safety of steel from pedal to wheel," referring to the steel rod/cable-actuated brakes in his automobiles. Although this statement reflected his vehement opposition to hydraulically-actuated brakes, which very quickly became an industry standard, ol' Henry had the right idea with material choice—steel. I figured, if I generously oversize the material used, steel structures should give us trouble-free operation for many years. Over the years, we have used  $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2}$  inch cedar lumber to construct most of our structures, so I simply replaced this with  $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2}$  inch square steel tubing (1/16 inch in wall thickness).

The first project was an experiment to see how difficult it would be to build small structures with steel and, more importantly, if we liked the finished result. So I chose to build an arched bridge very loosely based on the Crooked River railroad bridge in Oregon. As an interesting sidenote, I got to see this bridge in person, by accident, when I was hiking the Pacific Crest Trail, shortly after starting this project (Photo 1).

As you will see from the pictures, I greatly simplified the design and construction, and opted to go for the 'overall look.' I started by ordering two 20 foot sections of  $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{16}$  inch steel tubing. I then measured the pre-existing gap in our new concrete roadbed, and used the dimensions to draw the space on paper and draft the bridge.



Photo 1 *Crooked River Railroad Bridge.*

*Continued on next page*

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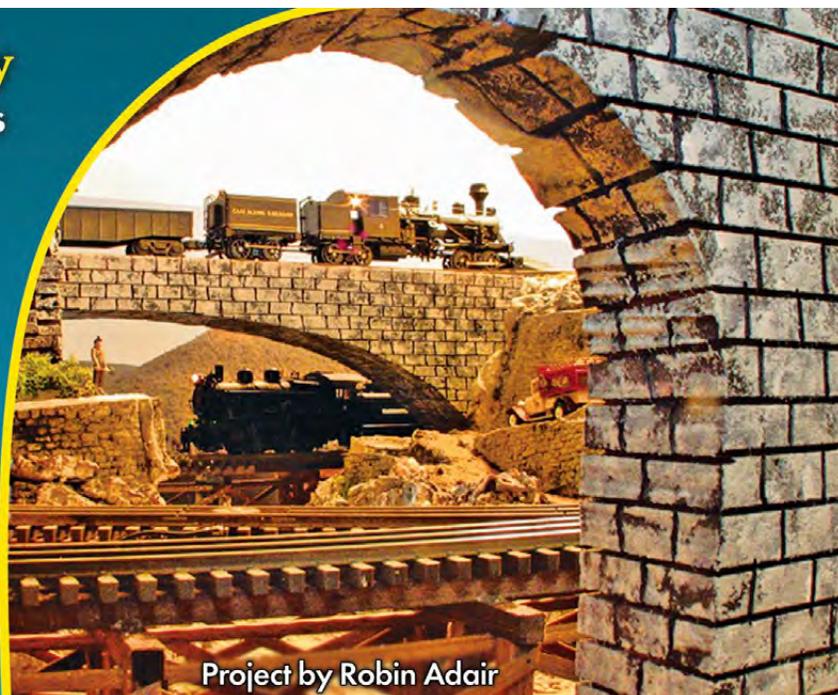


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Project by Robin Adair

Instead of creating the arches from individual straight pieces, I curved the tubing to the desired shape. I could have had the steel shop roll out the arches, or had a local fabrication/automotive shop with a material roller perform the same task, but I opted for a less orthodox, far less scientific method. An old wagon wheel in the yard provided a good diameter to bend the tubing around (Photo 2). Simply clamp one end and work the other. Notably, the wheel was a significantly smaller diameter than the desired arch because the steel will tend to spring back using this method. I used a long length, 8 feet, to do one bend, so I could get two arches out of it. I also left enough length on either end that would get cut off due to not getting a consistent bend using this method. After some reflection as I type this out, I would recommend having the material rolled by the supplier or a fabrication shop.



Photo 2 *Unorthodox method of bending the tubing.*

After the length was bent to a satisfactory curve, I carefully cut two arches out to fit the gap in the concrete roadbed (Photo 3). It should be mentioned that this bridge was tailor-fit to a pre-existing gap in the concrete roadbed, therefore each piece of the bridge was individually measured and fit into place. Some fine-tuning was required to get the arches to match.

Next I built the top rails, which are just two lengths of tubing with footings on all four corners. The footings support the whole



Photo 3 *Test-fitting the first arch.*



Photo 4 *Checking the beginnings of one side against the drawing of the gap to be spanned.*

bridge; the ends of the arches would simply float in decomposed granite in the streambed.

With the top rails and arches sitting in place in the concrete roadbed, I cut and tacked into place the first (center) support between each top rail and arch (Photo 4).

A note on welding: I won't be providing many details on my welding practices during this project. I am a novice welder and anyone looking to start should be seeking advice from a more experienced welder. I used a gas wire-feed welder which is fairly simple to use. With such small material, I kept the voltage low to prevent burn-through and tacked the whole project together before doing final bead welds. Always make sure you have good grounds!

*Continued on next page*

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Photo 5 Using a carpenter's square to line everything up. Note the tack welds.



Photo 6 Cutting some of the shorter cross braces.



Photo 7 Fitting the cross braces.

I now had the beginnings of two separate sides. From there, I added the rest of the vertical supports for each side of the bridge. For this, the use of a carpenter's square was crucial to ensure that all the vertical supports were perpendicular to the top rails (Photos 5 & 6). As you will notice from the pictures, all the pieces are simply tack-welded into place. I did not do a final bead-weld until the end when all the pieces had been fit. That was the end of the easy part.

Next came the diagonal braces in between the vertical supports. While I'm sure that a lot of time and patience could have been devoted to determining the exact angles on paper, the imperfect and tailor-made nature of this bridge meant that I'd have to make adjustments regardless, so I employed a Sliding T-Bevel, some eye-balling, and a fair bit of trial and error to fit each individual cross brace (Photo 7). Ultimately, once I got a rhythm down, it went fairly quickly. Before I knew it, I had two complete bridge sides. All that was left was to connect the sides with some simple cross pieces.

I chose to let the bridge weather naturally, and after a heavy winter, it's starting to look the part. In California's dry foothill climate, I have no con-

cerns about rust taking its toll on the steel or the welds holding it together. However, one could easily paint or powder coat such a structure for protection in harsher climates.

I am very satisfied with the end result. I have always wanted an arched bridge since the railway's inception and I feel that this fills the bill nicely. Even though the ends of the arches just float and only the four footings on the top rails support the structure, it is rigid enough to support my 175 lbs. without flexing. On to the next project.



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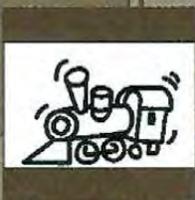
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— By Richard Murray

Botanical Name: *Picea pungens* 'Globe'

COMMON NAME: Dwarf Colorado blue spruce

USDA HARDINESS ZONE: 2–8 (down to -45° F)

SUNSET ZONE: 1–10, 14–17



### Description

This fantastic globe-shaped evergreen conifer is a dwarf. It is flat-topped and densely branched. The bright blue needles hold their color all year long, and the new growth is an even brighter blue in late spring. The plant provides a stunning contrast when planted among green plants. Stiff 1.5" needles point outward from the branches in all directions. Its growth rate is slow. It may eventually get to 4 feet x 4 feet. The plant in the photo is 12" tall and was planted from a 3-gallon pot about nine years ago. I prune it once a year to be sure it stays very small.

### Cultivation

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

deep South. There is no serious disease or insect problem. Most often it is sold as a grafted plant. Its parent, *Picea pungens*, is native to the central Rocky Mountains where it is typically found growing in moist locations from 6,000 to 11,000 feet in elevation.

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

### Uses

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

### Special Features

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

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— By Richard Murray

Botanical Name: *Picea abies* 'Pumila'

COMMON NAME: Dwarf Norway spruce

USDA HARDINESS ZONE: 3 (down to -40° F)

### Growth Habit

*Picea abies* 'Pumila' is a slow growing dwarf cultivar of Norway spruce. Lower branches typically spread outward, but upper branches spread upward. It tends to grow significantly more outward than up. It typically grows as a dense flattened globe with green needles. After ten years of growth, a mature specimen can measure about 1.5 feet high and 4 feet wide. It has an annual growth rate of about 4 inches per year. In the photo next column, my plant has been sculpted over the last dozen years to show off a number of pads. It has grown much more slowly than what is listed as average. It has also grown more vertically than horizontally, just the opposite of what the books say. However, it does exhibit the same dense light green needles that the books describe.

### Cultivation

'Pumila' is best grown in average, acidic, evenly moist, well-drained soils in full sun. It performs well in rich sandy soils. It prefers cool summer climates, and often grows poorly south of USDA Zone 7. My plant is certainly south of zone 7.



Plants will struggle in hot humid climates. Established plants have some tolerance for dryish soils. Pruning is not normally needed. Maintenance of the plant is low. It tolerates air pollution and is usually described as resistant to deer.

### Origins & Nomenclature

The mother of 'Pumila' is native to the mountains of northern and central Europe east to the Urals, where it can occasionally grow to 200 feet. It has been widely planted in cool and temperate regions of North America where it typically matures to a much shorter 40 to 60 feet tall. 'Pumila' is just one of many cultivars. In excess of 150 cultivars, mostly dwarf, have been named over the years. Cultivars can be very difficult to distinguish. 'Pumila' is an old standby in the nursery trade, seen in cultivation since the mid 1800s. R. Smith of the United Kingdom first described it in botanical literature in 1874.

The genus name is reportedly derived from the Latin word *pix*, meaning pitch in reference to the sticky resin typically found in spruce bark.

Most spruces have sharp pointed needles. The exceptions are the spruces with the name, *abies*, which refers to their soft needle similarity to the genus *Abies* (fir).

### Uses

*Picea abies* 'Pumila' can be used as a small specimen, for rock gardens, borders, foundations, or, of course, in garden railroads.



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## Marcus Kollmann: BUILDING TIPS FOR OUR OUTDOOR BUILDINGS

We go to a lot of expense buying our building kits. We put a lot of time and trouble into building these kits. Then weather and animals play their part. My plastic (and a few resin) buildings live outside 365 days a year on our railway. And this year, one extra day. PIKO buildings are made of thinner plastic than POLA kits but seem to last just as long. Winter doesn't seem to affect them very much. A roof will occasionally warp in summer. Typically, animal damage is limited to broken chimneys, downspouts, eaves troughs, and fences. Time and weather, on the other hand, take care of the rest of their demise.

Some of my buildings have now been outside for 25 years and required repainting/rebuilding once or twice with repairs along the way.

We want these buildings to last as long as possible so, here are some of my top tips:

- 1) After using liquid glues (which weld the plastics together) like FALLER Expert (the company which makes the POLA kits) or FALLER Super-Expert or UHU Plast (this used to come in a tube with POLA kits), I reinforce all interior joints with Amazing GOOP Household adhesive as the plastic glues just don't hold up over the years. I used to use exterior grade silicone or caulk but they don't hold to the plastic well enough over the years.



FYI, these liquid glues can be purchased at Westend Trains  
 - <https://www.westendtrains.com/>

*continued on next page*

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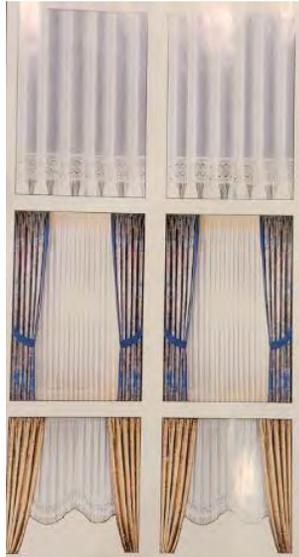
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2) I no longer use the plastic “glass” which comes with the kits. The PIKO plastic “glass” is more like a thin film which yellows and becomes brittle very quickly outdoors and the POLA plastic “glass” is much thicker but yellows after about five years. I have used Lexan (Plexiglass available at Home Depot) and real glass for about the last 15 years. The glass is siliconed in place after the frames are glued in.

3) Thermal laminate the paper “curtains” which come printed on sheets with most kits. Cut out the individual curtains and space them out on the laminate sheet about 3/4” - 1” apart so the curtains can be cut out of the laminate sheets while keeping all four sides sealed with about 3/8” - 1/2” of laminate. The laminating keeps the moisture away from the paper curtains and they last forever. Use a UV resistant laminate and they won’t yellow. Install them with silicone around the window frames after the glass is on.



Original Sheets



3 Individual Laminated Curtains

4) Lastly, I generally (but not always) glue the doors shut to keep the mice out.

I hope this helps your buildings stay together and looking better longer.

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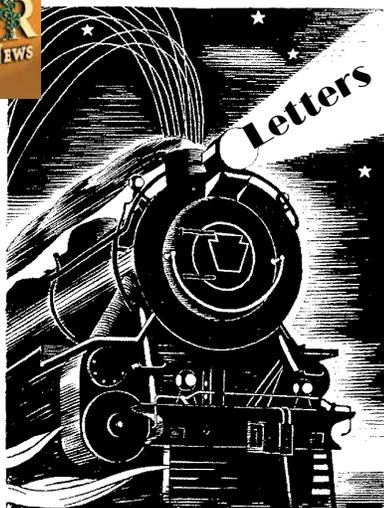
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## STRAIGHT FROM THE IRON HORSE'S MOUTH

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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.

### Not So Simple to Wire a Blunami Shay

Carla, The article by Dave Smith is about a simple product swap from an old RC control system to a new one. To title the article Installing Blunami in a Shay is very misleading to someone who has never converted a Shay to radio control from track power. As a professional installer, I have converted many Shays from track power to R/C. There are many electrical issues to be considered Here are some of the pitfalls:

1. The trucks must be disassembled to disconnect the pickups on the trucks from the motor in the trucks. The pickups assemblies in the trucks must be removed. This process may vary as Bachmann, in its infinite wisdom, wired some Shays with the motors connected directly to the track

pickups (2 wires going up into the engine) and others with 4 wires up into the engine (2 for power pickup and 2 going back to the motor for speed control). There is a circuit board in the firebox at the bottom of the engine where all of the wires terminate. In R/C the motors **MUST** be connected to the BLU-4408 to control engine speed.

2. All of the lighting wiring also terminates in the firebox and must be extended and rerouted to the BLU-4408. This is not an easy task as the new wires need to be routed through the body and frame of the engine. Bachmann never expected an end user to open the firebox and work on the printed circuit board. All of the wires are installed with a minimum of slack in the wiring making it very difficult to move enough to work on.

3. A power/charge switch and a charging jack for the battery(ies) must be installed somewhere accessible to the operator. There are other factors that complicate a FULL conversion from track power to radio control. Perhaps your author of the article could write an addendum or second article to clarify for the readers about how complex it really is. Basically none of the wires he hooked up are resident in the tender on a stock Shay.

Bob Ferguson  
 Garden Railroad Supply Company  
 Martinez CA

*Hi Bob, Sorry for the misleading cover blurb. Dave Smith's conversion to R/C happened years ago, but I would welcome an article explaining track to R/C conversion. Articles can be submitted to: [editor@GRNews.org](mailto:editor@GRNews.org).*

*Yours, Carla Brand Breitner, Editor*

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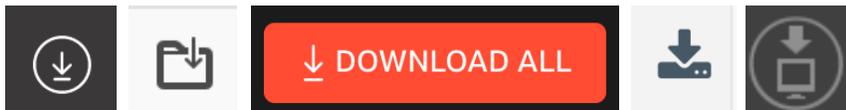
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