



Garden Railroading News

September/October 2024 • 2024 #5 • www.GRNews.org

**Customizing
Tank Cars**

**Report: San Diego Western
Un-Regional Mini-Meet**

**Copper Rail Depot Railroad
A Northern Alaskan Railroad**

A free digital magazine produced by garden railroaders for garden railroaders



Garden Railroading News

September/October 2024 • 2024 #5 • GRNews.org

In This Issue

Specials

Featured Layout: Copper Rail Depot Railroad 9
• Ron Simpson, Proprietor
by Mick Spilsbury

Making Trains Fun: Youth Activities with G-Scale Trains 15
by Malinda Jungst

Celebrating Milestone Events: 18
A 50th Wedding Anniversary Train
by Mick Spilsbury

Loco of the Edition: EMD GP60 #2025 22
by Matt Abreu, Sacramento Valley Garden Railway Society

National Convention Car Consist Project 35
by Sacramento Valley Garden Railway Society

San Diego Western Un-Regional Mini-Meet 36
by Carla Breitner & Gary Woolard

Mixed Consist Club Interchange

Customizing Undecorated Triple Dome Tank Cars 24
by Chuck Carlson

Article from: Puget Sound Garden Railway Society *Garden Railroading* September 2024

A "Railman" Radio Tank Car 25
by Chuck Carlson

Article from: Puget Sound Garden Railway Society *Garden Railroading* October 2023

Raising My Garden Layout 27
by Jeff Damerst

Article from: North Central Pennsylvania Mountains GRS *The Shortline* July-August 2024

Plant of the Month: Mugo Pine 34
by Richard Murray

Article from: Bay Area Garden Railway Society *Trellis & Trestle* November 2018

How to Accessorize without Breaking the Bank Part 1 40
by Jared Sell

Article from: Florida Garden Railway Society *Newsletter* August 2024

Regularly Scheduled

Seen On the Tracks: Photo Gallery 3

May We Suggest: New Products & News 4

Club Corner by Bill Derville 32

Straight from the Iron Horse's Mouth: Letters 42

Affiliated Clubs 43, 44

Advertiser Index 44

Garden Railroading News Explainer 44
An Online Magazine Explainer • PDF Downloading & Magnification

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Cover Photo: A trusty 30-year old LGB Mogul emerges from the narrow Red Rock Canyon on Mick Spilsbury's Black Canyon Line operated by BS Ventures. • Proprietor/Photographer Mick Spilsbury



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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 44 for An Online Magazine Explainer

How to Download a PDF, Magnify Pages, and the "Hamburger" Icon.





Photo by Bill Derville

Above: A look back at a Halloween excursion on Allan & Kathryn Warrior's Burlington & Missouri River Railroad, modeled on the Creston, Iowa, Division of the Burlington Route. These ghosts, ghouls and gourds are headed to town for an evening of revelry before returning to the farm. • Hillsboro, Oregon

Below: Engines idle under the freight depot lights on John & Cheryl Cushman's Boulder Valley & Pacific Railway. This elevated platform railroad passes through a National Park and western ranches as it serves the city of Boulderado. • Louisville, Colorado



Photo by John Cushman



*MAY
WE SUGGEST...
Something New*

A Botanical Garden Railroad Opens for Visitors to Descanso Gardens in Los Angeles County

Descanso Gardens, a botanical garden in La Cañada Flintridge, California, now has a garden railroad designed by Applied Imagination, the company founded by Paul Busse that designs garden railroads using natural construction materials. The Descanso Railroad features model trains traveling through intricate landscapes and past train depots from around the United States, all made of natural materials. Many of the plant materials used in construction were found on the grounds of Descanso Gardens.



Photo by Dave Warburton

The garden railroad is open daily, and sometimes into the evening during special occasion lighting displays. Visitors can also take a ride-on train through the gardens with purchase of an additional ticket.

Information is at: www.descansogardens.org.

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PIKO America Celebrates History and Holidays

PIKO is offering several distinctive freight cars commemorating historical or holiday events.

Extend your Christmas train with this Christmas 2024 Reefer with a cheerful Santa waving from a scene of toys by a tree, one of several new designs for the holidays.



38966 Christmas Reefer 2024

Celebrate PIKO's 75th Anniversary Jubilee with this Reefer produced for this year's "Open House" (Tag der Offenen Tür) in Germany.



30067 PIKO TOFT 2024 Jubilee Reefer

The final installment in the PIKO series of Vintage Warbirds hopper cars is the B-24 Hopper. This latest hopper car features the Consolidated B-24 "Liberator" bomber, a workhorse throughout World War II in every theater of operations. This hopper car will be produced just once, so acquire this last hopper car to complete your set.



38968 B-24 Hopper
Vintage Warbirds Series

Among other notable warbirds that have been featured in the complete series are the P-40 Warhawk, the Spitfire, the B-17 Flying Fortress, and the F6F Hellcat.



38938 P-40 Hopper
Vintage Warbirds Series

If you haven't yet added this Halloween Mini-Mogul to your holiday train fleet, do it now before it's gone. The engine has analog sound and working smoke, and the large tender sports a colorful "spooky" scene.



38262 Halloween Mini-Mogul

Pair it with the Halloween Work Caboose from 2023, which was so popular that it got a rare reproduction.



38790 Halloween Work Caboose

More information at: www.piko-america.com

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Articles Wanted for Garden Railroading News

Email: editor@GRNews.org. Submissions are welcome. We'd love to hear from you.



Happy Holidays
to all our readers from
Carla, Mick, Bill & Steve,
the volunteers who bring you
Garden Railroading News



LGB 20215 "Stainz" Christmas Locomotive
(Details in the May/June 2024 #3 issue of GR News)

It's Time to Visit Holiday Displays

Check in your local area for holiday railroads in a nearby Botanical Garden, local nursery, shopping mall and sometimes even in a car dealership or hardware store.

Look for events on local railroad club websites and Facebook pages... and email editor@GRNews.org about railroad displays you think should be publicized.

Arizona Big Trains Operators are planning their annual Christmas Garden Railroad Open Houses around Phoenix, Arizona, from 4 to 8 pm the weekends of December 14-15 and 21-22, 2024. For updated information, go to: www.azbigtrains.org



Las Vegas Garden Railway Society will again set up a Christmas train display at Jim Marsh Chrysler Jeep, Las Vegas, Nevada, from December 23 to January 4 (closed Christmas)



Continued on Page 7

A Swiss RhB Rhätische Bahn Luxury Excursion Train from LGB

In 2025, LGB/Märklin will be introducing another Rhätische Bahn (RhB) electrified locomotive, #626, with one set of Alpine Classic Pullman Express cars available now and a second set of Pullman Express cars and a baggage car later next year. The Rhaetian Railway in Switzerland runs the Alpine Classic Pullman in the summer season from Davos to Filisur as an excursion train ride for special occasions with a journey through breathtaking Alpine landscape in vintage railway carriages.

Locomotive #626 is a class Ge 4/4 II locomotive, one of the second series ordered. These locomotives, with their 2,300 horsepower and a maximum speed of 90 kmh/56 mph, are still pulling all kinds of trains on the Rhb network. Updated several times over the years, the locomotives are now equipped with rectangular headlights and computer-assisted controls. Almost all these units are still in use. These locomotives can be seen pulling freight, commuter trains, and even the Glacier Express. This locomotive, the so-called Pullman Locomotive, has a special paint scheme. All four wheelsets are driven by two powerful motors. The locomotive is equipped with an mfx/DCC decoder with many light and sound functions. The pantographs are powered by servo motors and can be controlled digitally.

RhB #626 pulls four historic Pullman salon cars. These elegant, luxuriously equipped cars plus a baggage car run as the "Alpine Classic Pullman Express." The paint scheme and lettering are prototypical for Era V/VI. These cars have complete interior details and interior lighting, and the doors can be opened. The cars also have metal wheelsets. Cars #1141 and #1142 are currently in stores and cars #1143 and #1144 will be released next year along with the appropriate baggage car to complete your train.

More information at:
LGB.com or email customerservice@marklin.com



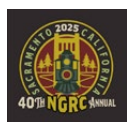
L28448 CI Ge 4/4 II Electric Locomotive, Era VI
#626 Alpine Classic Pullman Express

L36658 RhB Pullman Express Car Set #1141 & #1142



L36659 RhB Pullman Express Car Set #1143 & #1144

L40844 RhB Pullman Express Baggage Car



Time to Register for the 2025 National Garden Railway Convention hosted by the Sacramento Valley Garden Railway Society from June 18 to 22, 2025 The Website Is Open for Business at NGRC2025.org

Five full days of layout tours around the Sacramento valley, ice cream social, banquet at the California State Railroad Museum, a multiple day vendor hall and clinics at SAFE Credit Union Convention Center in downtown Sacramento — celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the first convention (Thanks, Denver GRS) by exploring the G-Scale railroads of the Sacramento Valley Garden Railway Society and the full-scale railroad history of the Golden State. Meet up with friends and check out the latest products on display.



Photo by Jeff Namba

The NGRC2025.org website is offering **Early-Bird Ticket bundles until March 31, 2025**. The various website tabs and FAQs provide dates and times. Basic registration includes layout location information, clinics, and vendor hall admission. Ticket bundles include basic registration, banquet, ice cream social, a parking pass for the banquet, and a convention car. This convention will offer both a convention boxcar AND a convention locomotive, an AML GP60. The convention locomotive is this issue's Loco of the Edition on page 22.

The speaker for the banquet is Bret Iwan, the official voice of Mickey Mouse, Disney Artist, and Restorer. Bret became the fourth official Mickey voice in 2009, a role first performed by Walt Disney himself. He began his career as an illustrator and designer; skills he called upon to do this convention's box car and locomotive livery. Bret has a passion for steam locomotives and was active on Knott's Berry Farm's Ghost Town & Calico, currently consults with the Nevada Northern in Ely, Nevada, and is restoring the mining locomotive and tourist cars that Tommy G. Thompson ran as an excursion in Anacortes, Washington.



Model makers and photographers are invited to enter the convention model contest. Categories include: Engines (Diesel, Electric, Steam), Rolling Stock, Structures, Diorama, 3D Printing, Railroadiana (craft items), and Garden Railroad Photo. And there will be a Best of Show award. In addition, Making Trains Fun will be hosting kids' clinics where they can decorate a USA trains flat car, enter it in a youth model contest, and take their flat car home with them.

For more information, go to: NGRC2025.org



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Coming Soon in GR News: Review of the AML EMD GP60



Large Scale Train Shows & Events

On your way to the 2025 Sacramento National Garden Railway Convention, plan to make a month of large scale train plans. The **2025 Northeast Large Scale Train Show** will be in **Springfield, Massachusetts**, on **May 3 and 4, 2025**. The **Great Lakes Large Scale Train Expo** sponsored by the Riverside Railroad Crew will be in **Girard, Ohio**, **May 9 and 10, 2025**; information at: www.greatlakestrainexpo.com. The **2025 Midwest Garden Railroad Gathering** will be **June 4 to 7, 2025**, around **Tulsa, Oklahoma**.

Christchurch Garden Railway Group is hosting the **15th New Zealand Garden Railway Convention** in **Prebbleton, New Zealand**, from **February 6 to 8, 2026**. Layout tours currently include fourteen railroads, and registration includes the vendor hall, clinics, and two evening buffets. For information and registration form, email [Iain Collingwood](mailto:Iain.Collingwood@nzgrc2026@gmail.com) at: nzgrc2026@gmail.com



The Nashville Garden Railroaders have set dates for the **2027 National Garden Railway Convention**. Plans are being made for activities from **Memorial Day, May 31 to June 5, 2027**. More details to come under Upcoming Events at: nashvillegardenrailroaders.com

NASHVILLE AREA GARDEN RAILROADERS



More Holiday Displays to Visit

To find holiday displays in public gardens around the country built and maintained by Applied Imagination, creators of the Descanso Railroad shown on page 4, check their exhibition schedule at: appliedimagination.co/exhibition-schedule.

The Railroad Garden in ABQBioPark will be lit up for the River of Lights festival in **Albuquerque, New Mexico**, **5 to 10 pm from November 30 to December 30, 2024**. For ticket information, go to: riveroflights.org



Rose City Garden Railway Society has set up their Christmas train display (described in the Nov/Dec 2023 GR News Club Corner column) at **Al's Garden Center, Sherwood, Oregon**, and it will be running through **January 3**. (closed Christmas)



Rose City Garden Railway Society
Portland, Oregon

Long Island Garden Railway Society will be setting up their modular train layout inside the **Cradle of Aviation Museum, Garden City, New York**, from **December 21, 2024 to January 1, 2025**. (closed Christmas & Mondays) For information, go to: www.ligrs.org



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Copper Rail Depot Railroad • Proprietor: Ron Simpson

The Northernmost G-Scale Garden Railroad?

By Mick Spilsbury
Proprietor: Ron Simpson
Copper Center AK
Photos by Mick Spilsbury
unless otherwise noted

During our month in Alaska, Liz & I discovered a garden railroad in Copper Center, Alaska—population 329, latitude 61.9603 degrees—where the sun is visible for 19 hours, 45 minutes at the summer solstice and 5 hours, 9 minutes at the winter solstice. Other places at this latitude include far northern islands in Canada, the Faroe Islands and Sweden, home of a *GR News* affiliate railway in Värmland. The parallel also goes through Greenland & Yakutsk. So, unless there is a garden railroad in Fairbanks, Alaska, this could well be the northernmost garden railroad in the Americas.

Liz and I were able to find Ron's Railroad Empire through the Copper Center Historical Museum, a small, low-key museum managed by local enthusiasts. We had seen references to a model railroad in Copper Center and the kind gentleman at the museum gave us directions to the railroad. We expected to find an indoor HO model railroad. Instead, we found a very extensive indoor/outdoor G-scale railroad.

continued on next page



Trains run on multiple overhead tracks around the perimeter and on platforms above the seating area of the bar.



Chitina Railroad Station sits along the rails behind the bar; a tap for Alaskan Brewing Co. Ale fits in as "outdoor" advertising.



Tracks run inside the bar and through tunnels to a raised railbed and other buildings on the property.



The proprietor, Ron Simpson, owns and runs a cabin style lodge, Uncle Nicolai's Inn, as well as the Copper Rail Depot Saloon in Copper Center, which is renowned for its salmon fishing. Ron has been into G-Scale railroading for many years and has a very large inventory of locomotives, cars, custom-built buildings and accessories. Ron used to be a member of the Rose City Garden Railway Society and a subscriber to *Garden Railways*. When *Garden Railways* disappeared, he surmised that garden railroading was disappearing too. He was happy to learn that garden railroading continues and that *Garden Railroading News* has filled the void created by *Garden Railways'* demise.

Ron's G-Scale railroad starts in his bar before proceeding outside. The railroad is based on the Copper River & Northwest Railroad, which operated between Cordova on the Southwest Alaska Coast and the Kennecott Copper Mine from 1911 to 1938. Before exploring the railroad, some history is appropriate.

In the summer of 1900, prospectors Clarence Warner and 'Tarantula' Jack Smith were exploring the east edge of the Kennicott Glacier, where US Geological Survey geologist Oscar Rohn had predicted copper would be found. They observed that Native Americans in the area had arrowheads of pure copper. A Native American Chief was persuaded to divulge the source of the pure copper in exchange for supplies that he and his people needed to survive a particularly brutal winter. Ron's lodge is named after Chief Nicolai.

Samples from their discovery, the "Bonanza Mine Outcrop," revealed up to 70% pure chalcocite, one of the richest copper deposits ever found. There was just one problem. The copper was 200 mountainous miles from the coast and without a way to transport the copper to market, it was worthless.



The steam engines above and below are a sampling of Ron's locomotives. Dash 9s and SD Mac 70s run in the diesel era fleet.



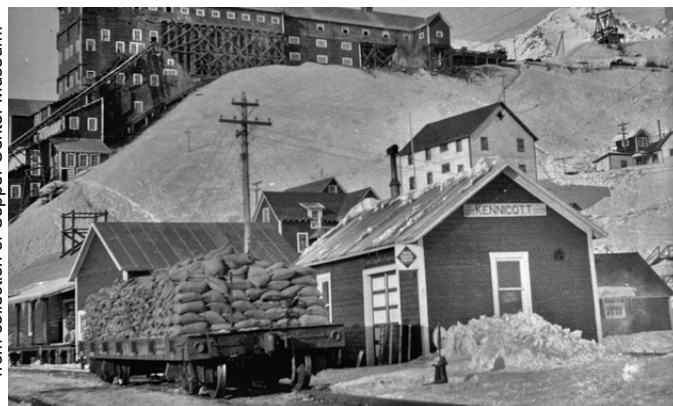
Some said building a railroad from the coast, across mountains, powerful rivers and moving glaciers would be impossible. Others thought otherwise. Wealthy families, the Havemeyer's and Guggenheim's, collaborated with J.P. Morgan and his family, forming the Alaska Syndicate to build a railroad and develop the mines. In the fall of 1907, the Alaska Syndicate hired Michael J. Heney, builder of the White Pass & Yukon Railroad. For the next four years his crews worked relentlessly, building roadbeds and bridges through 196 miles of difficult terrain at temperatures down to 40 degrees below zero. Many sections of the railroad had to be rebuilt numerous times, and Mr. Heney succumbed to

continued on next page



In 1910, crews worked from both sides of a 238 foot deep gorge to complete the Kuskulana River Bridge to transport copper from the Kennecott Mines.

Historical photos for comparison to models: from collection of Copper Center Museum.



Kennecott Rail Depot with the Concentration Mill on the hill.

tuberculosis in October, 1910. One year later, just ten days after the railroad was completed, the first train left Kennecott filled with \$250,000 worth of copper, \$8,277,368 in today's dollars!

It took 30 years to exhaust the reserves of pure copper during a period when the price of copper was very favorable. Mining ended and the railroad closed in 1938 when the price of copper plummeted and the quality of mined copper lowered. However, the investors got a handsome return, extracting \$200 million worth of copper and making profits of about \$100 million. So, the staggering cost of \$25 million (\$778 million today) to build, repair and operate the railroad was not a problem.

Ron Simpson is keeping this fascinating history alive. The majority of his 1,000+ feet of track is outdoors, exposed to the ravages of Alaskan winters, just like the Copper River & Northwest Railroad. He has scratch-built all the structures of the Kennecott Mine, and wisely they are protected from the Alaskan climate. The original steam set-up of the Chitina Local Branch of the Copper River & Northwestern Railway to Kennecott Mine expanded to include modern diesel engines as the layout grew beyond the beer garden.

continued on next page



1:24 scale model of Kennecott Rail Depot and Hospital with the Concentration Mill on the hill.



The Kennecott freight depot and the town as modeled with a painted scenic backdrop of Alaskan mountains on the back wall.



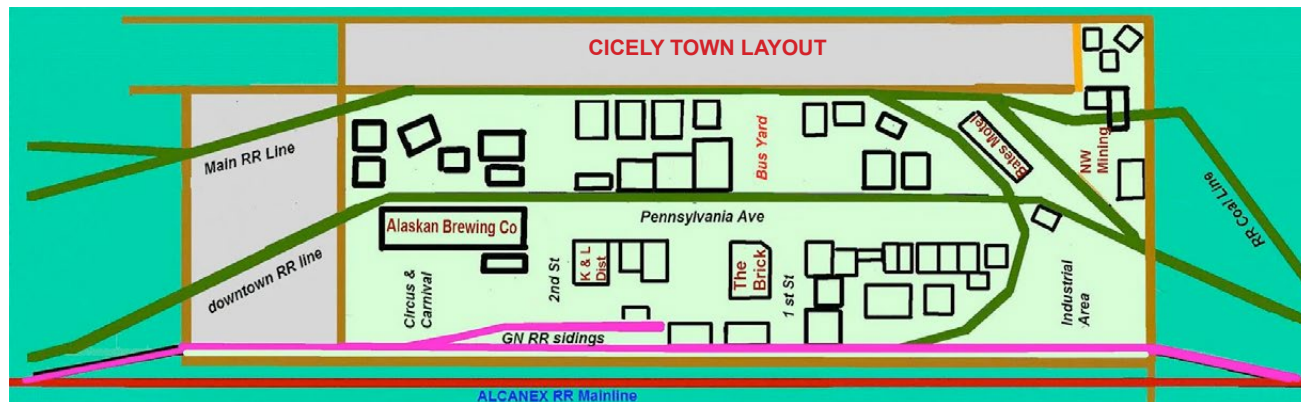
The outside sections of track are raised at various heights with walkways for viewers to visit Kennecott and Cicely.



In 2001, the original indoor-outdoor layout circled the bar, then ran around the outside beer garden to the Kennecott Mill covered annex.



The existing line includes approximately 1,500 feet of running track plus 200 feet of sidings extending 280 feet by 120 feet.



In a separate building, Ron has scratch built numerous structures from *Northern Exposure*, the popular, Emmy-awarded, comedy drama that aired for six seasons from 1990 to 1995. Ron's G-Scale depiction of the town of Cicely is so detailed and so extensive that taking it all in is a challenge. If we lived a tad closer, we would return many times to find more details.

Along with the fictional rural Alaska town of Cicely, Ron added the outdoor Great Northern (GN) Mainline, incorporating the ALCANEX-Alaska-Canadian Extension Railway System, based on a 120+ year-old proposal that would have connected the American stateside railroad system with the Alaska Railroad, then continue on to Nome where an 88 mile bridge or tunnel would cross the Bering Sea to tie in with the Trans-Siberian Railroad. The story of this mainline allows Ron to run multiple road names on his tracks. The ALCANEX fleet is dominated by Dash 9 engines, but also includes SD-Mac 70s on the expanded modern railway system.

All of Ron's roughly three dozen engines are powered by battery and controlled remotely. There is no power in the tracks due to the size and complexity of the system. During the winter, the locomotives park on overhead rails, waiting in the cold of winter for yet another summer season.

continued on next page



The Brick Tavern, where many Northern Exposure scenes were shot, is a centerpiece of the Cicely Northern Exposure layout.



Multiple train tracks crisscross Cicely near the Bates Motel.



K&L Distributing supplies beverages to the town.



Simpson's Automotive services any make of car.



LGB has a shop on Pennsylvania Avenue in Cicely.



A line-up of Great Northern FA-FB units with Alaska RR SD Mac 70s on the GN Mainline outside the Cicely Town enclosure.

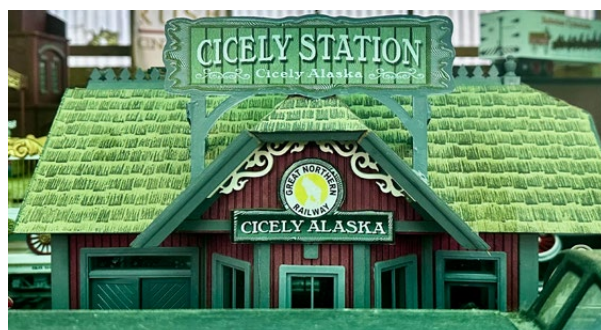
Liz and I would be happy to discover that there is another publically accessible garden railroad that is farther north than this one, but that discovery would in no way diminish our excitement and pleasure at discovering this railroad. We loved meeting Ron and seeing his railroad empire. It was one highlight of a multi-highlight four weeks in Alaska.

We also drove a 60-mile unpaved road to view the Kennecott Mine today. It is still remote!

Model Railroad Info at: <https://www.unclenics.com/alcanex>
More Model Railroad Info at: <https://www.unclenics.com/blank-3>



Log cabin homes appeared in Northern Exposure.



Cicely Station provides an alternative to flying into town with a bush pilot as seen in Northern Exposure.



Diesels travel around the ALCANEX mainline.



Diesel Photos by Ron Simpson



*Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark is inside Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve in Alaska.
Info at: <https://www.nps.gov/wrst/learn/historyculture/kennecott-mines-national-historic-landmark.htm>*

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Making Trains Fun: A Program to Promote Youth Activities with G-Scale Trains

By **Malinda Jungst**

Photos by Malinda Jungst unless otherwise noted

My husband Steve and I first hosted youth clinics during the 2021 National Garden Railroad Convention (NGRC) in Nashville, TN. In the years that followed, we helped with youth clinics at the 2022 NGRC in Denver, CO and the 2023 NGRC in Santa Clara, CA. In 2024, we held youth clinics at the Northeast Large Scale Train Show in West Springfield, MA and the Southeast Regional Gathering in Atlanta, GA. Over the years and events, the overwhelming interest and support we witnessed was amazing. We could see there was definitely a need to continue having youth clinics to get children — and their parents — involved in the G-Scale train hobby.

So Steve and I decided it's time to name the program: "Making Trains Fun." The children gain knowledge and skills on how to hold and carefully handle a train car, and they get to use their creativity. The goal is to build the children's and parents' interest to help grow the hobby.

These clinics are being held at various conventions and train shows, where children can have hands-on experience with a flat car and build a load. Also, at some shows, we provide a G-Scale building for the children to paint; then they can choose from many detail accessories to create their own diorama. After the children have finished creating the load on the flat car, they have the opportunity to see their flat car run on a modular layout.

The children get to take their flat car and/or building home with them. The youth clinics have children participating from ages 6 to 16 years old. Some are already familiar with G-Scale trains and garden railroading, while others are not.

For the children and parents, where this is their first experience with G-Scale trains, we provide them with a handout on getting started in the hobby. The children use their creativity to express their thoughts and talents, and have responsibility for their items they take home.

continued on next page



Start with a flat car and add boxes, pallets and more.



A flat car becomes a circus animal car.



Parents and kids all got involved at a 2023 NGRC clinic.



This small shed gets detailed at the 2021 Nashville clinic.



We would like to host youth clinics several times each year at various locations across the USA. We have three events confirmed for 2025: the Northeast Large Scale Train show on May 3 and 4, in West Springfield, MA; Great Lakes Large Scale Train Expo on May 9 and 10 in Girard, OH; and at the 40th National Garden Railroad Convention from June 18 to 22 in Sacramento, CA. We are also looking at a couple of other regional train shows for next year and these will be announced once they are confirmed.

We are extremely grateful to Mr. Charlie Ro, Jr at USA Trains who is partnering with us to provide the flat cars used by the children. His encouragement and gracious support of the program is very much appreciated. From the first time we discussed youth clinics with Mr. Ro in 2021 and at each event since, he has given his full support and encouragement to continue with these youth clinics.



The children choose detail items from bins of figures and bags of parts prepared ahead of the clinics.

Photo by Carla Brand Breitner

In addition, RLD Hobbies, R&P Railroad, Trainz.com, melovetrainz, G-Scale Junction, Missouri Locomotive Co, and Train Installations have donated items for the youth clinics. At each event, multiple individuals have been very supportive and work closely with us to donate items and help during the youth clinics. We would like to thank all of you for your time, donations and support.

We have a website: www.makingtrainsfun.com, where we have a schedule of events, a gallery of pictures showing the youth at work, and the story of how this all began.

continued on next page



Photo by Carla Brand Breitner

Wrapped loads can be personalized with pens and stickers.



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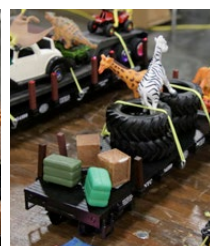
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A 50th Wedding Anniversary Train

by Mick Spilsbury

Liz and I celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary this year and I unveiled a 50th Wedding Anniversary Train at our anniversary party in front of Liz and sixty of our closest friends. But let's start at the beginning. No, not the beginning of our marriage, but at the beginning of the train project.

Inspiration to produce the wedding anniversary train came from two sources. I had seen an advance copy of Lawrence Slater's article about a 2024 Graduation Train which *GR News* published in the May/June 2024 #3 edition, and thought it was a great idea. A few months earlier, I saw a diesel/passenger car train produced by Matt Abreu to promote the Sacramento 2025 National Garden Railway Convention. As the image below shows, the train was festooned with images of Sacramento.



A diesel pulling the Sacramento National Garden Railway Convention promotional train with images of Sacramento.

I was very impressed. Then I was inspired; themed trains, images on trains, using trains to celebrate big events, a combination that I could use to celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary.

Our anniversary party was in July, and I started planning my 50th wedding anniversary Train in March. The first step was straightforward, but time-consuming. Three years ago I inherited three passenger cars that did not fit my railroad, three cars that had stayed unused until they were transformed. Their dull green and gray exteriors became gold ex-



teriors with black accents. The cars were disassembled to facilitate the change, and a combination of spray and hand painting was used. Once the cars were disassembled, it was clear that the interiors had to be renovated also. Dull seating became royal red seating.

The lighting in the cars was pre-LED, unnaturally bright, and did not have the electrical components to operate going both forwards and backwards. LED lighting was installed with bridge rectifiers to ensure lighting in forwards and reverse. Transparent orange acrylic sourced from Tap Plastics that I have used in other cars and buildings to emit a more realistic light was installed.

I had determined from the outset that the outside of the cars would be decorated with images of the most important moments in our 50 years together, which was the most challenging part of the project.

Images needed to be captured on metal for durability. I could not source images printed on metal in the small sizes, so I designed two photographic montages in a standard size for images printed on metal. Spacing between the images allowed for cutting the images to size.

As I had never done this before, I (wisely as it turned out) ordered a test print of one montage and set

continued on next page



Interior view of a combine car shows ① the red seats and ② lighting set-up. ③ Weights were added over the wheels to keep the cars running smoothly.

Photo montage example for printing on aluminum.



about getting advice on how to cut out the individual images. I got lots of conflicting advice! For example, my friends back in the UK suggested cutting them out with Stanley's Fat Max Aviation Clippers, but that didn't work out so well. It was next to impossible to cut the images precisely with Fat Max (and fat fingers). A great garden railroading buddy suggested wandering down to the local FedEx store and surreptitiously using one of their powerful guillotine paper cutters. I didn't even try that!

Instead, I purchased a Bosch Jigsaw and, although it did not cut with laser precision, it got the job done. The images were then glued on the cars with E-6100 glue from Tap Plastics, an adhesive I have used with great success all over my railroad. The E-6100's thicker non-sag formulation that won't slump or run, allowing for maximum control. Even so, images were glued in horizontal mode, then left to cure under small lead weights for 24 hours.

I also needed two signs, one announcing the purpose of the train for one of the passenger cars, and one for the tender of the locomotive that would pull the train. Both signs needed to be metal for compatibility with the images printed on metal. I had both signs made by FastSigns because I have worked with them before on G-Scale signs. The sign announcing the purpose of the train was glued to the middle passenger car on both sides.



Two combine cars recall major life events and memorable vacation experiences.



The sign announcing the new name of the locomotive, 'The Baroness' was fixed to both sides of the tender. Why 'The Baroness'? Because in the mythical Black Canyon RR backstory, the railroad and everything it serves is owned by 'Baron Spilsbury' who has been with his wife, 'Baroness Spilsbury' for 50 years as well. Naturally 'The Baron' had the good sense to name the loco after his beloved 'Baroness.'

Finally, I decided to add a caboose to the consist, primarily because I had

continued on next page



A C&S Mogul is now The Baroness, BS Ventures Loco #50.



The caboose recalls our courtship, traveling around the Greek Islands on a tiny budget!

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two small metal images that did not fit on the combine cars. Like those cars, the caboose needed the same upgrading as the passenger cars. However, I just could not bring myself to paint a caboose gold, so it got a bright red livery.

I chose my most reliable battery-operated LGB 'Colorado & Southern' Mogul to become "The Baroness." It is not 50 years old, but *has* been running faithfully for 30 years. It was track powered for 20 years and converted to battery power with Phoenix sound and AirWire control in 2015.

It was now early July, two weeks before the wedding anniversary party. Unlike many railroad projects (model and real) this project had to come in on time, so test runs were conducted when Liz was not at home. At first, they did not go well! The three passenger cars were prone to derail at more complex parts of the track. I observed that they wobbled more than

my LGB passenger cars and concluded that there was a weight distribution problem. So, the cars were reopened and small weights, the type that are placed on car wheels, were placed above the trucks under each of the cars in the consist (*as seen in the open car image on page 18*). I also replaced the old Bachmann trucks with new LGB trucks. After those modifications, the train ran smoothly on subsequent test runs.



A successful daytime test run around the Black Canyon Railroad's 300' mainline.

Thus, four months after starting the project and one week before our anniversary party, the Wedding Anniversary Train was ready, and Liz still had no idea that it was coming!

At the party, guests and Liz were summoned to the front yard of our home, where my railroad is situated, by our son, Michael, and daughter, Emma, who masterminded the entire party. Liz and our guests heard the train first as it made its way out of

continued on next page

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the switching yard, then saw it as it emerged onto the main line. It was greeted with amazement, applause, and much photo taking.

All that was great, but, most importantly, did Liz like it? Yes, she did! While Liz does not participate in garden railroading, she immediately recognized the amount of work that had gone into the Wedding Anniversary Train running behind a loco named for her. She told me that she loved it, kissed me and hugged me (and for once did not ask how much a train cost!) The hours of planning, customizing and problem-solving were all worthwhile.

The party was wonderful. The train was just one small element of the party, but an element that can be run and run again, bringing back memories of a sensational celebration orchestrated by Michael & Emma, enjoyed by so many friends, and loved by Liz and me.

Video of 50th Anniversary Train
facebook.com/1275974180240414
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More on the Black Canyon Mining
& Drinking Company Railroad at:
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At dusk, Liz first saw the 50th Wedding Anniversary Train. It was a moment to remember.

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EMD GP60 #2025 Customized for the Sacramento 2025 National Garden Railway Convention



Southern Pacific and Atchinson, Topeka and Santa Fe railroads, both of which served Sacramento, ordered the majority of General Motors Electro-Motive Division's GP60s. This 4-axle diesel-electric locomotive, built between 1985 and 1994, introduced a trio of microprocessors to replace wiring circuits and relays that monitor and adjust engine functions, the cooling system, and more. These "third-generation" engines continue to serve BNSF and Union Pacific on short runs. The GP60 was the last of the "General Purpose" locomotives as the railroads went with more powerful six-axle locomotives for mainline service.



Photos by Jeff Namba

The team behind the 40th National Garden Railway Convention heard people asking for a locomotive to pull the convention cars they have been collecting over the years. Sacramento Garden Railway Society is proud to introduce the 2025 NGRC custom AML American Mainline/Accucraft GP60 diesel locomotive. The graphics and paint were designed by Bret Iwan, a Disney artist as well as the official voice of Mickey Mouse. Bret will also be the keynote speaker at the convention banquet at the California State Railroad Museum on Friday, June 20, 2025.

The engine will soon be available for pre-sale on the convention website. There will also be a matching PS-1 box car available.



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Customizing Undecorated Triple Dome Tank Cars

Article & Photos by Chuck Carlson

I'm a collector of Triple Dome Tank Cars by Aristo-Craft. I have 26 of them now, but the ones I wished Aristo had made were the Gulf Oil and Skelly Oil. You would have to grow up in the 40s, 50s and 60s and live in the Midwest to have heard of these oil companies. Recently on eBay, there were two different listings for Aristo-Craft undecorated Triple Dome Tank Car kits. I purchased both for, you guessed it, making a Gulf and Skelly Triple Dome Tank Car.

With a lot of research, I found Gulf Oil had three schemes: white/orange, silver with just logo, and black with logo. I decided on the white and orange scheme. The Skelly was a little harder to find; I could only find images of a single dome car with blue ends, white body, and a red stripe up and over the dome in the middle. Skelly's colors were red, white and blue.

I was able to find some logos of both that I downloaded as jpegs, but the bulk of the decals were my own creation. I used Microsoft Publisher for making the decals. A subtle thing Aristo-Craft's Lewis Polk did in numbering his tank cars: he used the part number of the car as the particular railroad car number, i.e. ART-41603 was the Santa Fe car number 41603. Considering this, and that the undecorated kit was ART-41600 and I'm making two of them, I decided to number the Gulf Oil car 41600-1 and the Skelly car 41600-2. For the rest of the decaling, I just made up the lettering and numbers.



First step was to paint the Gulf car the white and orange color scheme. I found the orange satin that matched the Gulf logo at Lowe's and the white satin was a no-brainer.

Masking off the body, I painted the ends with the orange; when dried, I masked the ends and painted the body Satin White. The tank tops were painted with satin orange while the undercarriage was painted black.



I also found the Skelly matching red and blue colors at Lowe's. Again masking off the body, I painted the ends with the blue; when dried I masked the ends and painted the body Satin White.



Now the fun part. I masked the whole body off just leaving the domes showing, and painted them red. The tops, ladder, and undercarriage were painted the blue while the straps were painted red.



Fortunately, I was able to get Publisher to match the orange and blue colors, so all the decals were done in orange and blue, except for the end caps decals that were done in black or white. I used both clear and white decal paper from Micro-Mark and the Decal Setting Solution in applying the decals. When all the decals were dried, I sprayed the whole tanker with a clear acrylic satin to seal the decals in.

I finished putting all the grab bars, straps, stirrups, and trucks back on and wow! Nice looking Gulf Oil and Skelly Oil Triple Dome Tank Cars.



A "Railman" Radio Tank Car

Article & Photos by Chuck Carlson

There are times when I'm sitting on the bench running several trains on the layout and thinking, "I would enjoy having some music playing." This got me thinking about how I could add Bluetooth/FM/AM radio outdoors and on the railroad. I've been seeing this mini unit kit advertised on Rockler Woodworking's website, www.rockler.com, and wondering how I could incorporate it in the railroad. The more I thought about it, I visualized it in a Tank Car with the speakers at both ends. So I purchased the radio unit and dug out an old Tank Car that I hadn't used in twelve years. First I took the hand rails and ladders off.



Kit picture from rockler.com

I removed the flat bed and thought about where I'd put the control unit. I chose to place the radio template in the center of the body just below where the platform and rails would be.



Putting a 1 7/8" Forstner Bit in the drill press I commenced to drill the outside circles on both ends of the template. Be very careful when drilling this that you have the tank body perfectly flat and level with the bit. Only drill enough that you don't completely break through the tank body (else the bit may take the body for a spin). Take a Dremel tool with cutting disk and cut through on the straight lines; then finish cutting through the circles.



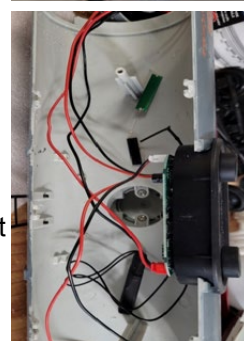
This is what the body will look like when you finish cutting. I used a file to smooth out the edges. Now take the radio unit and test fit it in the hole. You may have to cut and file to get the unit to fit in all the way. After fitting, take the radio out and pull the ends off the tank body.



Next drill holes in the two end caps of the tanker for the speakers, one of which has a rechargeable battery attached to it that recharges through wiring from a USB port in the control panel. I made my own paper template for hole placement. Drill each hole with a 1/8" bit and remove any burrs on the inside. I used silicone glue to attach the speakers into the end caps. I let the silicone dry overnight.



Next I broke the two halves of tank shell apart. The antennas have a sticky pad on them; peel off the protector and place one of the antennas on the top of one side of the dome and place the other antenna on the opposite side of the dome. Lay the end caps on each end. Now hook up all the wires to the main unit, carefully put the two halves back together, and snap the end caps on. Secure the control unit to the body; I used a small piece of two-sided tape to hold the control unit in place.



Fasten the tank shell back onto the car platform and reattach the hold-downs and rails. I next plugged in the battery charging USB cord to the face of the radio and turned on the radio. (You can use the radio while it's charging.) I carry my tank car radio around with me wherever I'm working, normally it's in the shop.



Enjoy the sounds.
Keep running trains.

Shawmut Car Shops' Jeff Damerst has written a series of articles about raising his layout in the North Central Pennsylvania Mountains (NCPM) Garden Railway Society newsletter, *The Shortline*. Your editor has adapted the articles from *The Shortline* to share Jeff's experience.

Raising My Garden Layout

By Jeff Damerst

My railroad is small because my backyard is small. There is enough room to get the lawn mower by on each side. I always wanted to have a layout with 8-foot diameter curves, but it is not possible, so 5-foot curves are the largest that would fit. The layout is eighteen feet long and six feet wide. The roadbed was built on 2x8-foot pieces of wood with wood chips on black plastic sheeting which sometimes controlled weeds in the railroad footprint. Track was screwed together at the rail joiners and also screwed into the railbed. After years of lying on my stomach to put screws back in place in the spring, I concluded that I should raise my garden layout.

NCPM member Lou Geschwindner came up with a nice plan on how to do it, and I asked my friend Todd if he could build it. Todd came up with a slightly different plan using Lou's measurements. Now Todd isn't into trains, yet, but last month I gave him a boxcar (shown below) describing his business.

First I would remove the track. Then the plan was to cut the wooden



2020



2024

Jeff Damerst's ground level garden railroad became hard to maintain, so he and a friend worked out a table-top replacement for Jeff to enjoy.

roadbed into sections. Todd would build a base, and we would put the sections back on the base and plate them back together.

However, as I got the track off the wood, I discovered the wood had split in a number of places and needed to be replaced, so I sent Todd an e-mail to build the raised layout completely his way.

I removed and stored the structures in the shed. I leave my structures out all year round, so some of the buildings are not in great shape. Almost every year I need to glue the roofs back on with clear silicone caulk. Several of the structures are

Tractor Supply bird houses which are really cool looking when you look at each side close up.

I decided to buy new track and ordered a box of five-foot diameter curves, a box of 24-inch straights, and a box of 12-inch straights. At that point I wasn't planning on putting the switches back, but George Poknis suggested I would miss having them. So when I put the track down, I used the best switches from my collection.

Todd showed up Thursday evening with pressure-treated wood for the job: two 12-foot lengths of 4"x4"s, fifteen 5/8"x6" by 12-foot boards, and a stack of 2"x6" by 12-foot planks.

continued on next page



Track removal revealed split wood roadbed. Buildings could use repair.



This customized business boxcar is an example of Jeff Damerst of ShawmutCarShops.com's detail and decal work.



Split wood roadbed in a bed of wood chips.

He used an auger to drill four post holes down below the frost line, finishing each hole with a post hole digger by hand. Todd cut the treated wood 4"x4" posts to fit in the holes and stick up above the ground about four feet, and temporarily used 1"x3" boards to hold them properly spaced. He filled the holes with dirt rather than pouring concrete in the holes.

Next he took 2"x6" boards and connected them to the posts. He first cut pieces to span the width across the posts on the ends as shown on right. To level the end boards, Todd screwed a 3/4-inch screw partially into the post at the height he wanted for the bottom of the end boards. Then he placed the end boards vertically on the screws, made sure all was level, and screwed the boards onto the posts. He then screwed one plank from end board to end board in the middle to keep everything square. That was Thursday evening's work.

Saturday morning Todd began to put the layout base together. He took two 12-foot boards and, using the screw method on each side of the posts, he rested a board on the screws until he was sure that it was level. Then he screwed them into the posts on both sides. He did the other side the same way. Then he cut the posts off at the level he wanted them to be with a saw. He screwed two middle boards between the end boards and made spacers to strengthen the structure.



Digging post holes.



Making sure posts are level and upright.



Attaching end board to post.



End board & temporary middle spacer in place.



Adding spacers.



Base structure for table layout with spacers added for strength.

continued on next page

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At this point, Todd took a break and went home for a few hours. He came back that afternoon, bringing some end pieces to curve around the table edge that he had made from plywood. He had taken a circular saw to cut slots $\frac{1}{4}$ inch deep every $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches along the length of the board so that he could bend the plywood around the ends. He soaked them in water before he came to the house so they would bend easier. He had four pieces. Two were cut to connect the corners and give support. He needed my help as we bent around the entire end piece (I just held the piece at the right height) and he screwed them to the end beams—perfect fit.

We did this on both ends and Todd added vertical supports as he went. He took a piece of 2"x6" board and cut it to fit between the two center boards. Then he wondered how to cut the curved piece to support the ends. I suggested holding the

board under the curve section and drawing a line on the board. We went down into the basement and used my bandsaw to cut the curve. Todd then screwed one curved support on the inside of the curve and one on the outside. This would anchor the end board in place when he built the top. If you look closely at the picture below, you can see the curves in the middle of the piece he cut.

continued on next page



Curved plywood wraps table end.



Base structure completed with spacers and supports all in place.

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Monday evening, Todd showed up with his 3-year-old grandson Henry. He brought some black fabric adhesive tape which he said anyone building something out of treated wood should apply on top of the wood, as the acid in the wood would eat metal such as aluminum. He put it on top of the railroad vertical supports to keep rain out of the top of the wood. He had Henry press down on the tape and Henry did a great job.

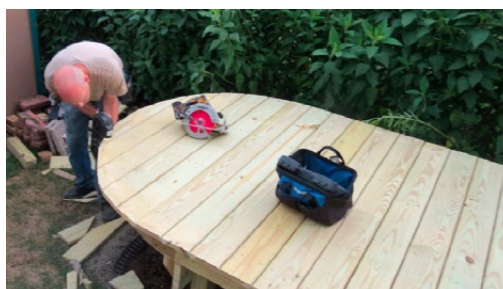
Tuesday night Todd came back and cut the $\frac{5}{8}$ "x6" by 12-foot boards for the top of the base. Todd started setting the boards on the base from the center of the table. He screwed in the outside edges, but used a nail gun to put threaded nails in the middle. He gapped every board three-eighths of an inch from its neighboring board so water would flow through the boards.

Next Todd trimmed the boards around the base, so they stick out $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches on each side and cut the curve to match.

I added a shelf under the railroad to hold my power pack when I run trains. The metal shelf holders are covered with silicone to keep them from rusting, and the wood is covered with duct tape and clear plastic for protection. To run, I will plug in the



Table top boards are placed with a $\frac{3}{8}$ " gap using screws on the edges and nails into center boards. Black tape for water protection can be seen on the support boards.



Here Todd is rounding the corners to match the curvature of the base.



Shelf below table top easily holds USA Trains power pack.

power cord to an outside outlet on my deck, and attach the track wiring I store in a small outdoor outlet box.

Time to lay my new track!

All the track sections are screwed together to carry power to all the

track. I used a powered drill with a star bit and a box of screws that the acid in the treated wood will not affect to screw down the track and the structures.

continued on next page

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A small town anchors one end of the layout, and there is room to add an industry or coal dealer served by the center sidings. Bumpers will be added on the sidings soon.



I now have a long mainline, a passing siding, two long sidings in the center and two short sidings next to the town. All the switches are manually thrown since I can reach them easily from the power pack.

I bought (and built) a PIKO kit from Train World for a single stall engine house. It is a beautiful kit with a wood grain molded into the plastic. The engine house fit perfectly on a short siding by the town.

I have several structures—a PIKO gas station and a church, two large Aristo houses and passenger station, and four North States birdhouses—in my new town. The birdhouses look like actual buildings; I glued the removable chimneys in place to keep critters out. The mountain is a water pump cover from Lowe's.

My goal next year is to add miniature plants such as trees and shrubs and stain the wood to appropriate colors such as a green color where I want grass and gray for roads. It is so much easier to maintain a railroad that is not sitting on the ground!

THE LEADER IN TRACK POWER





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Articles for *Garden Railroading News* are welcome. *GR News* would like to share the story that guided your plans when you built *your* railroad and your how-to tips. Send your *Tale of the Track/How-To* to editor@GRNews.org with illustrating images.

If you are interested in a wider platform for short videos or photos of your garden railroad, Contact Mick Spilsbury at marketing@GRNews.org to share them on *GR News* YouTube, Instagram or Facebook.

Videos less than 3 minutes are ideal.
www.youtube.com/channel/UCmuyDnk2QRy1e1Q1AMFXrJw

CLUB CORNER

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

In the last issue, we began exploring why clubs lose members. I looked at ways to retain members who are leaving due to the first two reasons on the list of ten: 1. Losing interest in the hobby, and 2. finding the hobby too expensive.

This month I will tackle reasons three and four:

3. Lose interest in the club
4. Don't like the club any more

Losing interest in the club could be due to losing interest in the hobby, which we covered in my July/August column. But if they are still interested in the hobby, it is time to look deeper into club activities and politics.

Perhaps those leaving have a personal beef with somebody else in the club. Maybe they disagree with some club policies and decisions, or simply dislike the leadership. Or maybe they find club activities and meetings boring and uninteresting.

Some people may dislike the leadership in the club. Try to find out why people feel this way. Encourage them to run for office or volunteer to head a committee or project. Get them involved rather than being negative detractors. If they don't like something, encourage them to do something to fix it. If they don't like a club policy, encourage them to make a motion at the club business meeting to change it.

Be open with club board meetings. Allow and even encourage members to attend board meetings. Welcome input. Publish the minutes of every board and membership meeting on your website or send them out to all members via email. Communication is the grease that keeps the wheels going.

Try to measure the interest club members have in club activities. Maybe the club has nothing to offer them that is interesting. You could do a club survey, but just talking with people or calling inactive members on the phone will probably give you better feedback. Think about how to generate club enthusiasm and participation.

Boards should discuss how to generate interest. Be proactive. Don't just wait for members to drop out. When members do quit, call them and find out why. You will probably learn a lot, and maybe just the call shows enough interest that the person may choose to continue their membership.

You can keep track of the reasons people quit by starting with the 10 reasons members leave in the July/August column and keeping a tally of the reason(s) ex-members give for leaving. Over time, there may be a trend that can be addressed. We keep our clubs healthy when we retain our members.

Our clubs are all volunteer groups with a common interest in G-Scale trains. Everyone brings a different personality to the club, as well as different interests and skills. Otherwise, meetings would be really boring. We learn more from people who are different from us than those that are like us. Diversity is a good thing.

This is great except when some people end up irritating others in the group because they either talk too loudly, are too boastful, too domineering, or rude, openly disagreeing with people more than is useful. It is natural to have people that irritate others in any large group, and it requires a thick skin not to be upset at some things that are said by other members. When we react, we aggravate the situation. Tolerance is the best way to defuse a volatile situation. But sometimes it gets elevated to a higher level, and something needs to be done to stop it.

Continued on next page



Club members work together to set up a train display for a day.

Photo by Carla Brand Breithner

Back issues of Garden Railroading News are available for free to everyone on our website: www.GRNews.org/archive.





This is a duty of leadership in a club, a task many club officers abhor. Who is at fault, or is it just the clash of personalities? How many people does it affect, and is it likely to continue? Will it cause people to quit the club? If it is only one person that is objecting, maybe the problem lies with the one objecting to the behavior. Be careful and don't jump to conclusions.

It is best to start with someone constructively talking to the person about their behavior. Often how they say something is more powerful than the words they used to say it. Try to get the person to see what it is like to be on the receiving end by being empathetic.

But if this doesn't work, on rare occasions, someone needs to be asked to leave the club. This is much easier in an organization or business where removing a troublesome employee is the obvious thing to do and no one would question the authority for firing someone. But volunteer organizations are very different, and mishandling a situation can divide or even end the existence of the organization. So be careful.

Check your bylaws for how to evict a member for poor behavior. Our club has never even thought of evicting anyone, but our bylaws layout the rules for doing this if needed.

"The Board of Directors, upon the affirmative vote of sixty percent (60%) of all directors in office at that time, may terminate the membership of a Member with or without cause. The Board shall give the member at least thirty (30) days written notice by first class or certified mail of the termination. Upon written request from the Member, the Board may give the Member an opportunity to appeal such termination, orally or in writing, not less than five (5) days before the effective date of the termination. Thereafter, the decision of the Board shall be final and shall not be reviewable by any court. Any such decision will not preempt subsequent decisions by the Board to terminate said membership."

"Except as otherwise required by law or these bylaws, any voting right of a Member and any other rights conferred upon a Member shall cease immediately upon termina-

tion of such Member's membership in this Corporation."

Hopefully, you will never have to ask someone to leave to prevent many others from leaving instead. But it is a good idea to incorporate such language in your bylaws just in case. After ending someone's membership, the other members need to be told what action was taken and why. Do not keep people in the dark. Gossip spreads rumors, and sometimes the actions and reasons get distorted. It is important to explain the action that was taken to keep harmonious relations among the remaining members. Encourage discussion, and if people disagree with the action, listen and learn from the discussion. Talk about how it could have been better handled. Sometimes people don't like what was done, but they have no suggestions on how it could have been handled better. This usually leads to acceptance.

If your club is faced with members leaving, the problem should not be ignored, or the club will suffer a major decline in membership, or even find that no one is interested in keeping the club going.

The best way to deal with irksome people in your club is through examples of stellar behavior. Be a good member yourself. Be considerate to others, help others when they need it, and avoid reacting and getting mad. We all want to see our clubs harmonious and working together to promote this great hobby, creating friendships and having fun.

I am always happy to hear your thoughts about club retention. You can email me at bill@derville4.com.

RED POPPY COMMUNITY GARDEN RAILROAD COOPERATION GUIDELINES

1. Club activities are fun; participants have fun.
2. Always listen to each other, both the good and bad. No detail is too small to discuss.
3. Everyone is a team player.





Plant of the Month

— By Richard Murray

Botanical Name: *Pinus mugo*

COMMON NAME: Mugo pine

USDA HARDINESS ZONE: 2A through 7B

Pinus mugo is a popular dwarf conifer with dark green needles on dense branches. It's a useful slow-growing evergreen perfectly suited for rock gardens.



With great age and lack of pruning it can get to be 4 to 5 feet in the San Francisco Bay Area. With pruning it can be kept much smaller. The specimen shown has had its candles (new shoots) trimmed once a year. The plant is now about 14 years old and is just 12 inches. Normally, *Pinus mugo* is a round mound with branches starting at ground level. This specimen has had its lower branches trimmed away. Also, it is usual for the plant to have multiple trunks starting at the ground level. This specimen was selected at the nursery because there happened to be one trunk that could be selected as a main trunk.

Mugo pine does best in well drained loams, but is also somewhat tolerant of clays. Avoid poorly drained wet soils. It likes full sun, but prefers the cooler summer climates of the Bay Area and not the hotter desert summers. Of the small conifers, this is the one that is the easiest to grow.

It is native to the mountain ranges of central and southern Europe. It was first introduced into Denmark in 1798 and has been widely grown in Europe commercially since 1860.

There are a number of varieties of Mugo pine, some larger and some smaller. I prefer the smaller varieties. Supposedly, 'Gnome' is the smallest, but I have found that the 'Paul's' variety, developed by Lone Pine Gardens in Sebastopol, California, is just as small.

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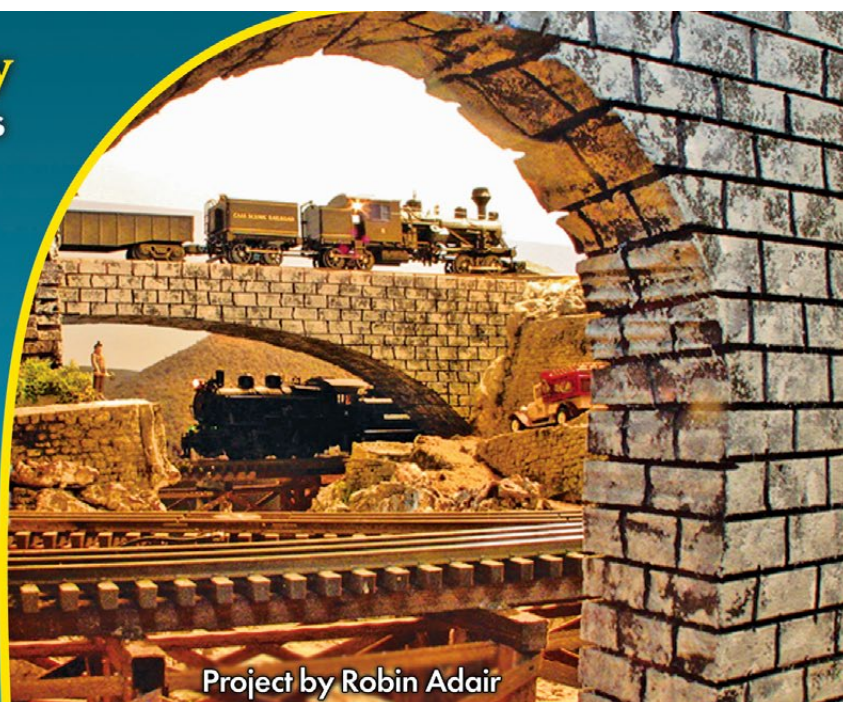


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Project by Robin Adair



Sacramento Valley GRS is on a Mission: Can You Help?

We Are Looking to Run a Consist of National Convention Cars at the 40th National Garden Railway Convention

June 18–22, 2025

The Mission

To celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the 1985 Denver National Garden Railway Convention, Sacramento Valley Garden Railway Society is gathering National Convention Cars from every National Convention to date that had a convention car. *Why?* To form a consist of National Convention Cars to run at the 2025 National Convention in Sacramento and future National Conventions.

How you can help!

Many cars have been gathered, but seventeen conventions are not represented. Your information can help fill the gaps.

If you know that there was no convention car for one or more of the conventions listed to the right **OR** if you have one of the missing cars and are willing to donate or sell it/them at a reasonable price, please contact Matt Abreu by email at: runtrains@yahoo.com or by text at 916-224-9080.

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THE SAN DIEGO WESTERN UN-REGIONAL MINI-MEET

A Report by Gary Woolard & Carla Brand Breitner

Photos by Carla Brand Breitner

San Diego Garden Railway Society had only received around 25 registrations a month prior to their August Western Regional, so they chose to cancel clinics and gatherings, refunding all who had signed up. A number of layout hosts chose to still open their railroads over the weekend and welcomed registrants and San Diego GRS club members to view their railroads. Around sixty visitors enjoyed taking their time to visit with owners and each other as they toured eight layouts in two days. Folks from up and down the West Coast enjoyed San Diego's great layouts and a perfect weather weekend.

THE RAILROADS

Mike & Kathleen Florio's **Who Said It Wouldn't Be Fun RR:**

Mike and Kathleen packed a lot of railroad into a constrained space, incorporating two loops, one point-to-point, and a small coal mine circle with multiple trains running. There are highly detailed dioramas to be found throughout.



Bob Treat's **Snow Creek Railroad**

One of the best-known layouts in the hobby, Snow Creek Railroad's meticulously detailed modeling and scenicking inspire awe. This ever-evolving layout currently emphasizes 'point-to-point' operations on the railroad.



Continued on next page

RAILROADS OF THE SAN DIEGO WESTERN UN-REGIONAL MINI-MEET

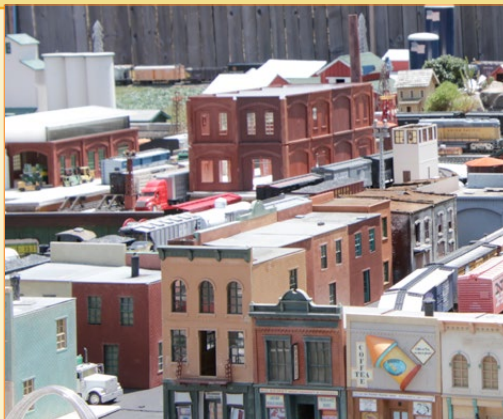
Gene & Kim Cook's Bonita Valley Shortline

Bonita Valley is a mature layout that has added longer runs and details over the years. The gardening, stone work, tunnels, and track plan are carefully designed to allow running trains to disappear and reappear throughout the layout.



Andy Kann's Mountain Valley Railroad

This extensive layout is track powered on three levels. It incorporates major landscaping, two rivers, waterfalls, mountains, bridges, and rural industries, as well as a town on a raised platform. A new spur is being added extending the mountain line along the fence.



Continued on next page



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RAILROADS OF THE SAN DIEGO WESTERN UN-REGIONAL MINI-MEET continued

Curtis & Sandi Roecks' Fallsbrae Garden Railroad

Curtis and Sandi Roeck's Fallsbrae Garden railroad is a large and impressive demonstration of Curtis' "RR Concepts" control system, which allows complex operations of multiple trains on traditional DC-powered layouts. We counted at least a dozen trains running during our visit. Sandi also has her own Disney and fantasy-inspired layout.



Claude & Collette Mueller's Swiss Valley Railroad

Inspired by their native Switzerland, Claude and Colette model the railways and landmarks of Lake Geneva and the Alps. A koi "lake" tops a hillside of switchback rail lines.



Continued on next page

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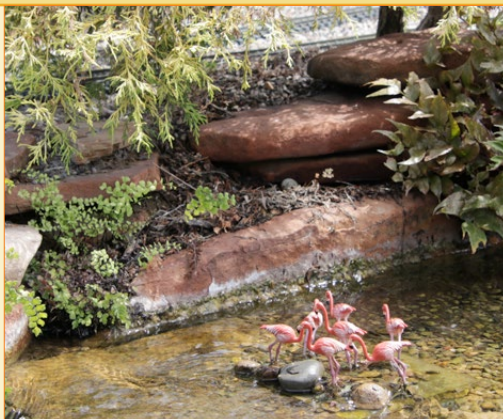
Chula Vista Live Steamers

For a change of pace, railfans could take a ride on the Chula Vista Live Steamers, a public railroad in Rohr Park that's been running since 1974. Celebrating its 50th anniversary, Chula Vista Live Steamers serve as educational entertainment for both kids and adults alike.



Walter Andersen Nursery Railroad

This 4,459 square foot railroad in Poway features 1,400 feet of track in multiple track-powered loops, crossing creeks and ponds with fifteen bridges. Bonsai and miniature plants are on display, as well as trains and towns of all eras.



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Garden Railroading: Budget Friendly Edition

How to Accessorize without Breaking the Bank — Part 1

By Jared Sell, Davenport, Florida

We all know the many jokes about either having a bank account or having a garden railroad, but we are here to show you that you can have both! In a Letterman “Top-Ten” style [Ed. Note: in two parts], we will talk through tips and tricks—some of them familiar, some new to you, and some completely out in left field — for building budget-friendly accessories.

Tip #10 - Stack of Pipes

Perfect for a warehousing area, railyard, or even abandoned along the side of the track. Best part about this accessory is that it’s free! The “pipes” are the cores from dog poop bag rolls, pictured below.

The poop pick-up bags come wrapped around the plastic tubes. For those without dogs, any dog owner likely throws away one of these a week. Pictured here on right are the “pipes”—



stacked, glued, and ready to go for your layout. If you are looking to give it a little more authenticity, place them on 1/2” wooden square dowels.



Tip # 9 - Wood Timbers/Squares

When driving by train tracks, you will often see stacks of discarded railroad ties or even a fresh pile ready for installation. This one is a “keep it simple” method. For under \$20 online, you can purchase (60) 12”x1/2”x1/2” square wooden dowels. Cut them up into 3” lengths and add some stain —voila! Railroad Ties!



Looking to fill in around buildings? Try some 1/2” wood cubes. Most dollar stores sell 36 packs for \$1.25. Throw some stain or paint on it and you have the perfect G-Scale sized crates. Super simple, but an effective filler.

(Continued Next Page)



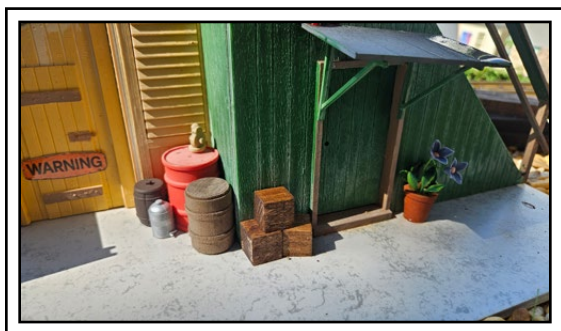
Tip #8 - Wireless Speakers

Ever wanted to add sounds to your engines but can't afford to convert all of them? What about cows mooing from the cattle car? Or train station announcements? If yes, then this is the way to do it. For \$20 online, a mini-wireless speaker can do this. These speakers can be as small as a 1" cube, so very easy to hide anywhere. You place the audio track on a micro-SD card and away you go! The battery lasts about 8 hours and the volume can be heard about 15' away on max volume.



Tip #7 - Ceramic Tiles

One of the most common questions from visitors is 'what do you do in a hurricane?' For our village, each building is glued to a 1/4" ceramic tile that has coloration like concrete. Home Depot and Lowe's carry a few options, most cost around \$1 per square foot. These provide a fantastic weighted base to glue your buildings, accessories, and figures to. If a big storm is coming by, they are easily removable and keep everything contained.

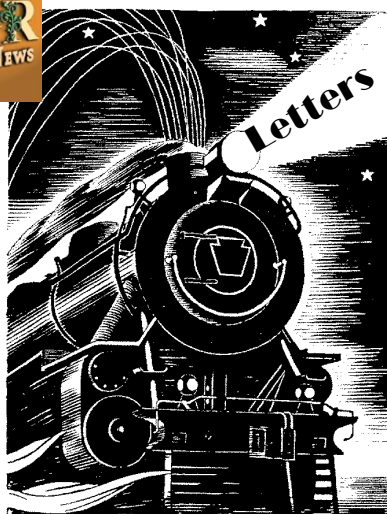


Tip #6 - Dollar Gravel

Earlier, we mentioned dollar store accessories. When exploring their Arts and Crafts sections, these 1 lb bags of gravel jumped out. Perfect for coal yards, making ore car inserts, or just adding some detail on building edges. They can be difficult to glue together, so patience placing them is needed. Stack some of your 1/2" square dowels to make bunkers and pile in the gravel to make your own coal yard.



Ed. Note: Next issue of Garden Railroading News, we'll bring you Jared Sell's top five tips. While you're out shopping this holiday season, keep your eye out for decorations and toys that are G-Scale. Measure one of your favorite figures against a credit card you always carry, and use the credit card as a "ruler" to gauge whether something you see will fit on your railroad. Always remember, buy it when you see it!



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.

Congratulations— Big Time— To the staff of GR News

I can recall our club (Rose City GRS) fall dinner in 2020 when Bill Derville stood before the club and proposed "something" like an e-Newsletter. He was asking for club member opinions and backing for such a project. Needless to say, we were all in favor of his idea. Possibly members of other clubs were developing the same idea at the same time, but the key item here is that they got together and combined their strengths to make their idea a reality.

While preparing for this year's RCGRS Summer Tour on Saturday of Father's Day weekend. I was short on operators, so Bill Derville managed to find two volunteers at a local HO club who were willing to run trains for me during the tour. One of them spent an hour or so here familiarizing himself with the layout. As we talked, I mentioned the *Garden Railroading News* newsletter. He had never heard of it. After he left, I sent him an email with the link to the GR News web page. A short time later he replied that he had received my email, had checked out the GR News web page and that he felt like it was a longer, more informative and better publication than the *Garden Railways* magazine was during its final days and that he would mention the GR News to his other HO club members.

Bill has reminded us to *always tell vendors that we heard about them via the GR News*, but can this be a two way street? Can we ask on-line vendors to help spread the word about *Garden Railroading News* by providing them with inserts to be placed in product shipments to customers, or is that too complicated/intrusive/costly.

Tom Gaps
Beginners-Clinic@rcgrs.com
 Milwaukie OR

Thanks for passing on the compliment, Tom. Hope you continue to enjoy GR News as we start our fifth year. Thanks for spreading the word. We will look into your vendor insert idea to get the word about Garden Railroading News to more of the G-Scale community.

Yours, Carla Brand Breitner, Editor

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Affiliated United States Clubs by State as of 10/28/2024

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

AK	Alaska Garden Railroaders	MI	Lakeshore Garden Railway Club
AL	North Alabama Garden Railway Club	MN	Minnesota Garden Railway Society
AR	Greater Hot Springs Garden Railway Society	.....	Minnesota Friends of Garden Railroad & G Scale
.....	Northwest Arkansas Garden Railway Society	MO/KS*	MO-KAN Garden Railroaders
AR/OK/MO*	Ozark Garden Railroad Society	MO/AR/OK*	Ozark Garden Railroad Society
AZ	Arizona Big Trains Operators	NC	Apple Valley Model Railroad Club
.....	Central Arizona Model RR Club	.....	Gibsonville Garden Railroad Inc
.....	Gadsden Pacific Div. Toy Train Operating Museum	.....	North Carolina Garden Railway Society
.....	Oracle Community Learning Garden Kid's Railroad	.....	Piedmont Garden Railway Society
.....	Sun City West Model Railroad Club	NE	Rivercity Railroaders
.....	Tucson Garden Railway Society	.....	Starry Night Railway
.....	VDO Garden Railroad Club	NH	New Hampshire Garden Railway Society
.....	West Valley Garden Railroad Society	NJ	New Jersey Garden Railway Society
CA	1:32 Scale Group	.....	South Jersey Garden Railway Society
.....	Bay Area Garden Railway Society	NM	New Mexico Garden Railroaders
.....	Central California Coast Garden Railroad Society	NV	Las Vegas Garden Railroad Society
.....	Del Oro Pacific Large Scale Modular Railroaders	.....	Northern Nevada Garden Railroad Society
.....	Diablo Pacific Short Line	NY	Central New York Large Scale Railway Society
.....	Fairplex Garden Railroad Volunteers	.....	Finger Lakes Live Steamers
.....	Gandydancers	.....	Genesee G Gauge Railway Society
.....	Gold Coast Garden Railway Society	.....	Hudson Valley Large Scale Railroad Club
.....	Mendocino Coast Model RR & Navigation Co.	.....	Long Island Garden Railway Society, Inc.
.....	Orange County Garden Railway Society	Western New York Garden Railway Society
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.....	Sacramento Valley Garden Railway Society	Columbus Garden Railway Society
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.....	Santa Clarita Valley Garden Railroad Club	Riverside Railroad Club
.....	Santa Fe & Butthead Cove RR Train Group	OK	Central Oklahoma Garden Railroad Society
.....	Shasta Garden Railway Society	OK/AR/MO*	Ozark Garden Railroad Society
.....	Southern California Garden Railway Society	.....	Tulsa Garden Railway Club
.....	Upland Garden Railroad Society	OR	Cascade Crossing Module G-Scale Group
CO	Denver Garden Railway Society	.....	Medford Garden Railroaders
.....	Grand Valley Model Railroad Club	.....	Northwest "G" Railroad Club
.....	Mile High Garden Railway Society	.....	Rose City Garden Railway Society
.....	Northern Colorado Garden Railroaders	PA	Lehigh Valley Garden Railroaders
CT	Boothe Memorial Railway Society	.....	North Central Pennsylvania Mountains GRS
.....	Central Connecticut "G" Gaugers Modular Club	.....	Pennsylvania Garden Rail Society
.....	CT "G" Scalpers	.....	Pittsburgh Garden Railway Society
D.C./MD/VA*	Washington, Virginia & Maryland GRS	Southeastern Pennsylvania Garden Railway Society
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.....	Tradewinds & Atlantic Railroad, Inc	North Texas Garden Railroad Club
.....	West Florida Railroad Museum	San Antonio Garden Railway Engineer Society
GA	Georgia Garden Railway Society	.....	Sun City TX Radio Control Modelers Club
IA	Central Iowa Garden Railway Society	UT	Color Country Model Railroad Club
ID	Southern Idaho G-Scale Railroad Society	.....	Utah Garden Railway Society
ID/WA*	Inland Northwest Garden Railroad Society	VA	Piedmont Railroaders
IL	Chicago Area Garden Railway Society	.....	Tidewater Big Train Operators
.....	LGB Model Railroad Club of Chicago	VA/DC/MD*	Washington, Virginia & Maryland GRS
.....	Midwest RAILS (Railroaders Active In Large Scale)	WA	Emerald Heights' Garden Railroad
IN	Illiana Garden Railway Society	WA/ID*	Inland Northwest Garden Railroad Society
.....	Indiana Large Scale Railroaders	.....	Puget Sound Garden Railway Society
KS/MO*	MO-KAN Garden Railroaders	WI	Kenosha Garden Railroad Society
KY/OH*	Greater Cincinnati Garden Railway Society	.....	Wisconsin Garden Railway Society
LA	Greater Baton Rouge Model Railroaders		
MA	Amherst Railway Society		
.....	Rusty Rails & Rotten Ties		
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Bridgewater	31	PIKO America	7
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EnterTrainment Junction	16	RCS of New England	21
GardenLines.net	17	Reindeer Pass	28
Garden Trains Annual	20	RLD Hobbies	26
Gary Raymond Wheels	38	Shawmut Car Shops	28
Great Lakes Train Expo	31	Split Jaw Products/RailClamp.com	20
G Scale Graphics	19	Sunset Valley Railroad	38
G Scale Society – UK	42	Train Installations	39
Hot Wire Foam Factory	34	Train World	30
J.S. Woodcrafts	29	Trainz.com	29
LGB America/Märklin	8	Valley Train Station	29
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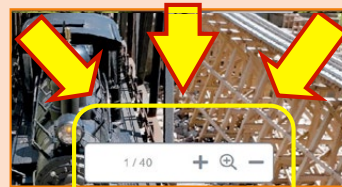
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Affiliated Clubs outside the US by Province & Country as of 10/28/2024

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 Club
.....	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