



Garden Railroading News

November/December 2024 • 2024 #6 • www.GRNews.org



**Mendocino Coast
Model Railroad**

**The Wandering Welshman
Pub & Tank Car**

**Review: EMD GP60 Diesel Locomotive
from AML American Mainline**

A free digital magazine produced by garden railroaders for garden railroaders



Garden Railroading News

November/December 2024 • 2024 #6 • GRNews.org

Happy New Year to Train Lovers Everywhere.

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Cover Photo: A kitbashed LGB/Aristocraft snowplow clears the right of way on the Kollmann's "Landschaft Gartenbahn" which broke ground in 1998 with a European-themed railway. • Proprietor/Photographer Marcus Kollmann



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



Go to Page 36 for An Online Magazine Explainer
How to Download a PDF, Magnify Pages, and the "Hamburger" Icon.





Photo by Bob Dunlap

Above: An Accucraft K-36 is undeterred by winter conditions on Bob Dunlap's D&RGW-Foothills Branch at 7,500 feet in Colorado. The 14,270 foot Mt. Blue Sky makes an imposing backdrop. The trestle (with guard rail to avoid derailments) is handcrafted using ABS plastic. • Golden, Colorado

Below: For over 28 years, the Susquehanna Valley Garden Railway Society has been building and monitoring a 32'x 18' display for the Rocky Ridge Christmas Magic in York, Pennsylvania. Five trains inside and one outdoor train run every night from 6-9 pm weekdays and 5-9 pm on weekends November 29 to December 30. Info at <https://yorkcountypa.gov/1112/Christmas-Magic-2024> • York, Pennsylvania



Photo by Turk Russell



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Jack's Tracks A Picture Book About G-Scale Rail

Jack's Tracks is a delightful rhyming picture book about young Jack and his ever-growing G-Scale railroad. Jack keeps expanding his tracks throughout the house.

Your editor met the author, Christopher Livingstone, and his sons selling the book at the 2024 Great Train Show in Ventura, California. You might want to find a copy to inspire your own Jack or Jill.



2025 National Garden Railway Convention June 18 to 22, 2025

Register now for Early Bird Ticket Bundles to the 2025 Sacramento National Garden Railway Convention scheduled from June 18 to 22, 2025.

For more information, go to: NGRC2025.org

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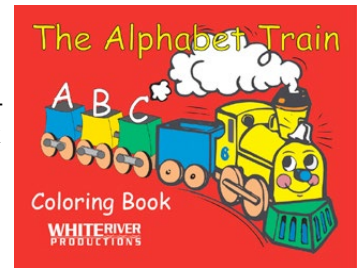
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EnterTRAINment Junction Closes, But All Displays Move to New Homes

Don Oeters, owner of EnterTRAINment Junction, announced that, when the Junction closes for the last time on January 5, 2025, the model railroad displays will stay together in two parts. Don wrote, "A group in Chattanooga has agreed to purchase all train items... the 25,000 sq. ft. train display including the control system and all extra parts and materials, the Thomas display, the outdoor electric train ride, the G scale Christmas layout, the Neil Young layout, all tools and equipment and all train related photographs in the building." A sale is pending to move the American Railroad Museum and most of the play equipment in the kids play area to another museum. Thanks to all who made this G-Scale railroad display a destination for model railroaders to enjoy for sixteen years.



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



Large Scale Train Shows & Events

Make plans to attend a train show, layout tours and/or the 2025 National Garden Railway Convention.

The **2025 Northeast Large Scale Train Show** sponsored by Amherst Railway Society will be in **West Springfield, Massachusetts**, on **May 3 and 4, 2025**. Info at: nelsts.org



The **Great Lakes Large Scale Train Expo** (formerly the North East Ohio Large Scale Train Show) sponsored by the Riverside Railroad Crew will be in **Girard, Ohio** on **May 9 and 10, 2025**; info at: www.greatlakestrainexpo.com



The Tulsa Garden Railroad Club is planning a **2025 Midwest Garden Railroad Gathering** from **June 4 to 7, 2025**, around **Tulsa, Oklahoma**. More information soon.



The Sacramento Valley Garden Railway Society invites everyone to the **2025 National Garden Railway Convention in Sacramento, California**. Layout tours, clinics, vendor hall and more will be happening from **June 18 to 22, 2025**. Early registration is open now. More information at: ngrc2025.org



Georgia Garden Railway Society welcomes the **2025 National Big Train Operators Club Convention** based in **Helen, Georgia**. Convention activities are being planned for **July 13 to 18, 2025**. More details to come at: bigtrainoperator.com



The **2025 National Steamup Symposium**, a gathering of live steamers, will be held **October 8 through 12, 2025** in **Lodi, California**. Details at: www.steam-events.org



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@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



It's Time to Visit Holiday Displays

Save this list and add your notes for visiting next year, look for events on local railroad club websites and Facebook pages... and email editor@GRNews.org about railroad displays you think should be publicized.

To find displays in public gardens around the country built with natural materials and maintained by Applied Imagination, check their exhibition schedule at: appliedimagination.co/exhibition-schedule.

Las Vegas Garden Railway Society has again set up a Christmas train display at **Jim Marsh Chrysler Jeep, Las Vegas, Nevada**, from **December 16 to 28, 2024** (closed Christmas) [Date Correction].



The Railroad Garden in **ABQ BioPark** is 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



At **Rocky Ridge Christmas Magic** in **York, Pennsylvania**, trains run inside and outdoors on weekend nights from **November 29 to December 30, 2024** from **6-9 pm weekdays** and **5-9 pm** in a display built by the **Susquehanna Valley Garden Railway Society**. Info at: yorkcountypa.gov/1112/Christmas-Magic-2024



Long Island Garden Railway Society will be running 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



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 6**. (closed Christmas)



Rose City Garden Railway Society
Portland, Oregon

Coming Soon in GR News: Report on the 2024 Southeast Regional Get-Together Layouts



Accucraft/Aster Test the Benkei Prototype at the National Steamup Symposium

Accucraft brought multiple representatives to the 2024 National Steamup Symposium in Lodi, California, last October. In addition to Bing & Lulu Cheng and Cliff Luscher, Susumu Fujii, head of Aster, and several members of the design team for the upcoming Benkei Mogul 2-6-0 came to demonstrate the latest prototype. Miwa Amauchi, CEO of Amauchi Industry, which is doing the steel fabrication for Aster/Accucraft for this project, translated comments from observers on the prototype engine for principal designer, Hiroyuki Yamaguchi.

Info can be found at: livesteamstation.com



Left to Right: Cliff Luscher, Bing Cheng, Lulu Cheng



Larry Staver and Fujii-san discuss the Benkei.



Colton Snell and Gary Woolard discuss the Benkei prototype with Maiwa Amauchi and Hiro Yamaguchi.

Photos by Carla Brand Breitter

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Mendocino Coast Model Railroad • Proprietor: MCMR&HS



A Redwood Empire G-Scale Gem

By Mick Spilsbury

Proprietor: Mendocino Coast Model Railroad and Historical Society

Fort Bragg CA

Photos by Mick Spilsbury unless otherwise noted

The Mendocino Coast Model Railroad (MCMR) in Fort Bragg on the Northern California Coast is an extensive indoor/outdoor G-Scale railroad with dedicated weather-protected maintenance space. From November to March, Fort Bragg ‘enjoys’ temperatures in the 40s and 50s and 58 days of rain, so the indoor facilities are a must!

The railroad is a tribute to the people who harvested the ‘Big Trees’ along the Mendocino Coast, a dangerous form of employment—and logging the trees was just the first risk-laden step. Railroads were built in far from ideal conditions. The men and women in the logging industry and those serving its workers built the small towns that still dot the Mendocino Coast.

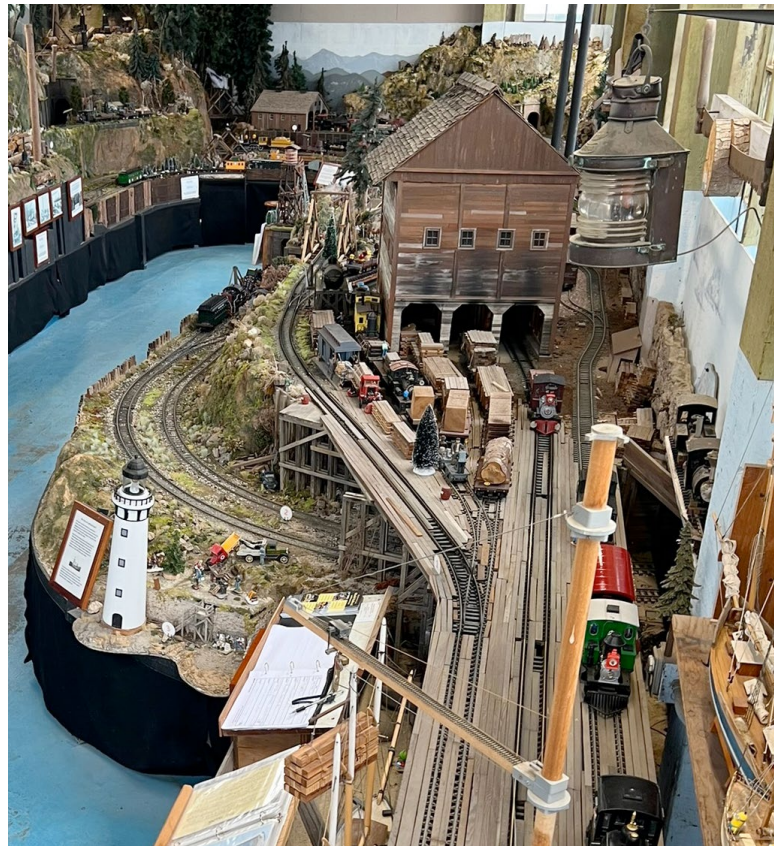
In the heyday of the logging industry that built San Francisco, railroads ran into the woods and fed mills at every river mouth from Gualala to Westport, 75 miles of rugged coast. At the peak of logging, 40 railroads ran from the coast back into redwood groves to deliver massive sections of trunks to the mills. Milled lumber was loaded on boats in many places which did not merit being called harbors. Schooners transported the mills’ products to market from these hazardous ‘doghole’ harbors.

Members of the Mendocino Model Railroad & Historical Society who maintain the railroad are steeped in the county’s logging history. They maintain the railroad so others can understand the risks and deprivations that men and women endured to supply timber to the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond.

continued on next page



Detailed modeling abounds on both the outside loops and the indoor raised Mendocino Coast Model Railroad.



The indoor railroad fills the old Carpenter's Barn on the grounds of the Skunk Train Fort Bragg railyards.

Photo by Don Landers III



Historical Photos from Mendocino Coast Model Railroad & Historical Society

Logging trains from the redwoods brought logs to mills along the Mendocino Coast; lumber shipped to San Francisco .



The MCMR is set between World War I and World War II. It is not based on a specific railroad but certainly captures the scenes, sights, and sounds that were seen at that time. Baldwin, Shay and diesel locomotives haul giant sections of redwood trunks. Steam donkeys are seen in the higher elevations of the railroad.

Multiple trains run at multiple levels, disappearing frequently behind rock formations and through numerous tunnels. It is a challenge to work out where a disappearing train will reappear.

Trains pass a breathtaking number of exquisitely detailed dioramas depicting all manner of activities that would be happening around a logging railroad. Locomotives are serviced, a derailed loco lies in a gully, logs are lifted and lowered, fog overhangs a valley, milled planks are loaded on cars, and equipment is in service all over the layout.

The club's President, Chuck Whitlock, shared that the club has 83 members, though 20 or so do most of the work on the railroad and other members chip in. Three members from the United Kingdom visit for a week most years to help. The webmaster is based in New York.

While members tend to the railroad for their own pleasure, they also welcome members of the public at no charge, though, of course, donations are welcome. Given that the layout is located at the Fort Bragg terminus of the Skunk Railroad, passengers who have enjoyed a full-scale ride can drop by conveniently. When they do, they get to enjoy an eye-popping display of trains operating in meticulously detailed settings, and on dry days impressive locos operating outside.

Visitors also get an understanding of the scope of the Mendocino logging industry and the can-do spirit of the men and women who made it happen.

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Trains run on multiple levels on multiple tracks.



Scenes along the rails depict logging activities at all stages between tree and mill.



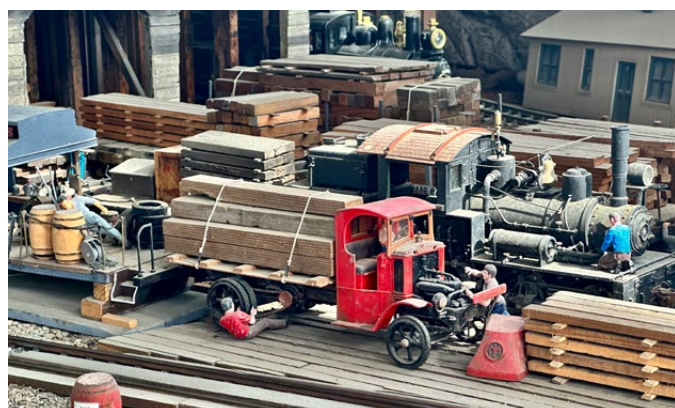
Steam trains are serviced at this engine house.



A pulley system is set up to lift this massive log onto logging flats at one of the logging camps served by the railroad.



A tourist train is serviced before setting out for adventure.



At the mill, loads of finished lumber are secured for shipping.



An abandoned boiler lays in a gully next to a cabin community.



The dioramas extend outdoors. A marvelous roundhouse and turntable scene is just one highlight.

continued on next page



The area adjacent to the turntable is jam-packed with details—non-working locos, passenger cars, tools, wheels, barrels and some pieces of equipment that stumped me. A ranch field is equally captivating. Train tracks use portals in the Carpenter's Barn to run on outside tracks and easily come inside for storage.

A large, level, raised oval 4-track layout completes the railroad's outdoor facilities. It is a great area to watch multiple locomotives and their payloads moving along at prototypical speeds and past more dioramas.

Still images don't do this area justice. In fact, still images don't do the indoor operations justice either. That is why I have posted a video called "2 minutes of action from the Mendocino Coast G-Scale Model RR" on the GR News YouTube channel at https://youtu.be/IZj_Ce5bzGc

continued on next page



Skunk Train loco #65 parked alongside the MCMR oval loop.

Photo by Ken Brody



CWR #63 passes a stop on the outside loop.



Non-working equipment is stored in this area near the roundhouse.



Multiple trains catch the eye on the 4-track oval.



The outside layout includes a livestock loading stop.

Photo from Mendocino Coast Model Railroad & Historical Society



Train enters portal to inside tracks.

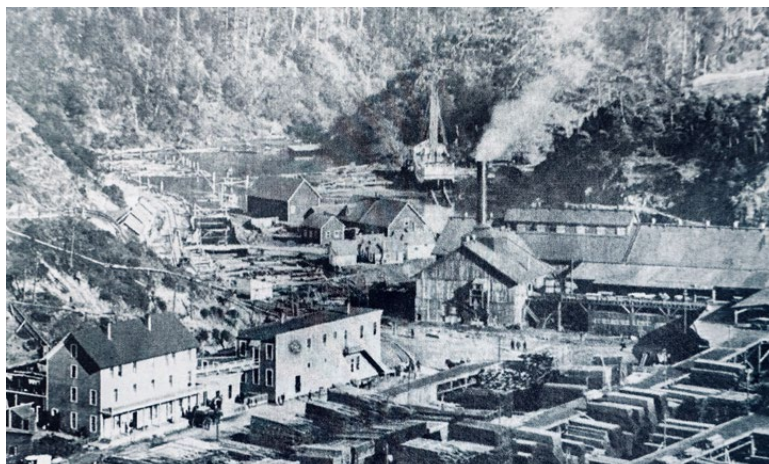


A new lift bridge provides inside access to this 4-track oval affectionately known as the Ain't Goin' Nowhere Railroad.

Photo by Don Landers III



Photos from Mendocino Coast Model Railroad & Historical Society



Above: Albion mills; Below: Schooners Landing along Albion Flats



Mendocino Coast.

A visit to Mendocino County could be a lovely post-NGRC 2025 adventure. If that might be of interest, you can contact me at marketing@GRNews.org for more information.

PLANNING A VISIT

The Model Railroad is open from 10 am to 2 pm on most days when the Skunk Train has scheduled trains running. A ticket to ride the Skunk Train includes admission to the Model Railroad. Casual visitors are encouraged to make a charitable donation. The Model Railroad website includes a current calendar of dates open and hours of operation: mcmrhs.org

For other information about the railroad on the dates you are planning to visit, email: 1mcmrhs@gmail.com. And you will want to check out the schedule for the Skunk Train (and bike rides) at www.skunktrain.com.

In addition to riding the Skunk Train, a leisurely drive along Highway 1 from Elk to Rockport would enable you to see some of the alarmingly steep rocky inlets that were once 'doghole' harbors. A drive along Highway 128 from Navarro to Highway 1 takes you through the redwoods that once populated the entire Mendocino Coast. You could also grab a paperback of past images of the Mendocino Coast and compare what you see today with those images, like the comparison (left) of Albion during the height of the logging industry & Albion today

If you spend time in the town of Mendocino, you will experience a bygone era—Victorian houses, grand and not so grand, no Starbucks, no fast-food outlets, one gas station, good independent dining and coffee options—and crows that act like the place belongs to them. By comparison, Fort Bragg seems like LA!



Liz Spilsbury and Cruiser pose alongside the Skunk Train.



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— By **Richard Murray**

Botanical Name: *Chamaecyparis pisifera*, 'Boulevard'

COMMON NAME: Japanese false cypress,

Boulevard false cypress, Blue moss cypress

USDA HARDINESS ZONE: 4 through 8 (down to 25°F)

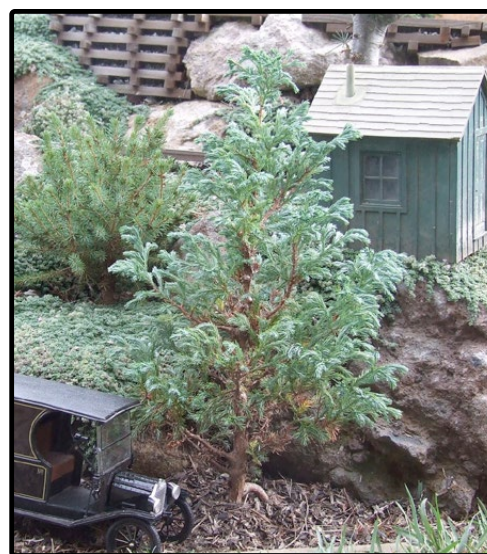
Description

'Boulevard' is a dense pyramidal semi-dwarf evergreen conifer. This popular plant boasts soft, billowing mounds of blue-green foliage on heavily branched stems. The foliage looks like it has the typical prickly juniper foliage, but it is actually very soft to the touch. It is also desired for its bluish foliage and is best utilized as a contrast to other colors in the landscape. The blue-green foliage is showy and holds its color well through winter.

It grows at a medium rate typically reaching 5 to 6 feet tall in 10 years and then slower for decades until it may mature at 12 feet tall. However, it can be easily pruned to maintain a much smaller size. The plant in the photo is a few years old and about 20 inches tall. Several years later some branches became a bit woody. It was heavily pruned, and the plant currently looks once again much like the photo. 'Boulevard' can obviously be maintained at any height one wishes.

Cultivation

Its preference is for any moist, well-drained soil in full sun to part shade with protection from windy conditions. It is regarded as heat tolerant. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution.



Name and Place Origins

Its parent plant is native to the Japanese islands of Honshu and Kyushu, where it grows to 50 to 70 feet tall and 5 feet in diameter. The genus name comes from Greek kyparissos meaning cypress tree. Pisifera comes from the Latin word pissum meaning pea and ferre meaning to bear, in reference to its bearing small cones. 'Boulevard' was found as a sport of one of the larger pisifera cultivars by Boulevard Nurseries in 1934.

Uses

When it is young, it can be grown in containers. At any age it may be used for rock gardens, foundation plantings, hedges, or as a single specimen. 'Boulevard' makes a colorful backdrop for other plants or for filling a corner or screening a view. Since it responds well to training and shearing, a well-sculpted specimen can become a great focal point in the garden. Can it be used in garden railways? You bet!

Summation

This plant is cold resistant, heat resistant, and it has no significant pests or diseases. Just plant it, sit back, and enjoy its softness and blue-green color.



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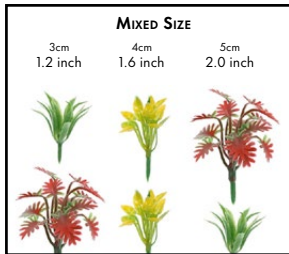
How to Accessorize without Breaking the Bank — Part 2

By Jared Sell, Davenport, Florida

Presenting Jared Sell's Top Five tips and tricks for building budget-friendly accessories.

Tip #5 - Fake Plants

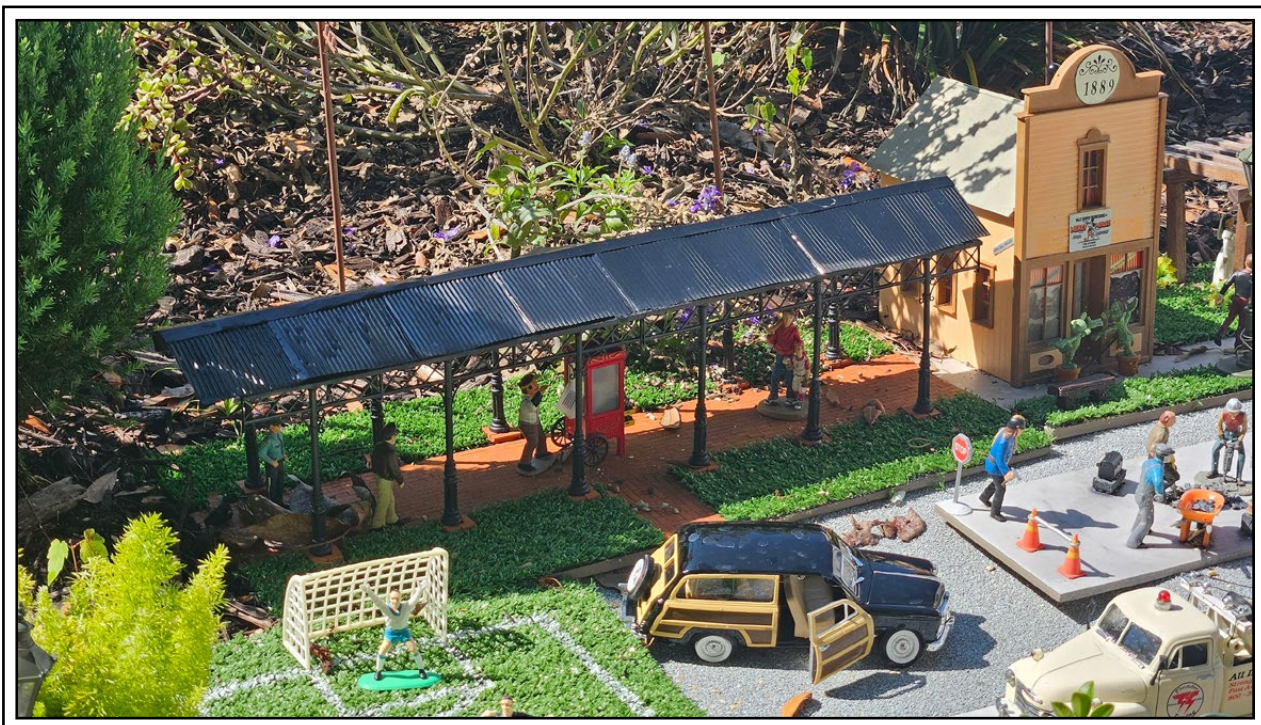
Another great internet find, 90 mini artificial plants for \$10! But how can you use artificial plants in a garden railway? Well, sometimes real plants are impractical or even impossible. Many Pola and Piko buildings have little window planter boxes, perfect for this application. To add another layer of realism, tuck a few of these in and around various buildings. These become the desired weeds, taking the clean cut perfection out of building modeling.



Tip #4 - Soda Cans/Take Out Containers

A free and plentiful material that can be used for a lot. But to use it, you do need to purchase a tool. A paper crimper (Fiskars is recommended) with a metal barrel can turn any ordinary soda can or tin take-out food container into a scaled piece of metal. Turn it into building siding, roofing, scrap metal, and more! A little bit of paint and aging make this into a versatile accessory. Remember to protect yourself when cutting metal! For the soda cans, I first poke a hole in the top and bottom, then use a scissors to cut all the way around. I square up the sheets of aluminum and carefully run them through the crimper from there.

(Continued Next Page)



Tip #3 - High-Top Tables

A personal favorite are these high top tables. Located at each of the restaurants in the village, these tables are very cost effective. Glue a 1 3/4" bolt and a 2" washer together, add some caulking to the washer hole to fill it in (a paintable outdoor caulk is needed), some spray paint, and you are ready to go! Glue them to your ceramic tile and the guests in your village are ready to enjoy good food!



Tip #2 - Fairy Lights

Lighting your village can be a labor intensive task. For the couple of times we entertain at night (with trains), this became our go-to for that magical evening touch. Battery-operated Fairy Lights can be a quick and easy way to light all of your buildings in a matter of minutes. At approximately \$1 per strand, these lights can be switched on and placed inside windows, doors, or even tucked behind accessories. The glow adds warmth and depth to your buildings and requires minimal effort to install and remove. The batteries are replaceable and will get you around 8 to 10 hours of usage. For extra fun, buy them in different colors for the holidays and add them to your trains.



(Continued Next Page)

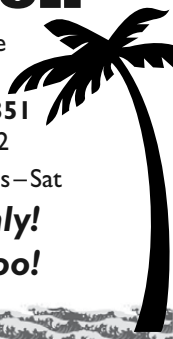
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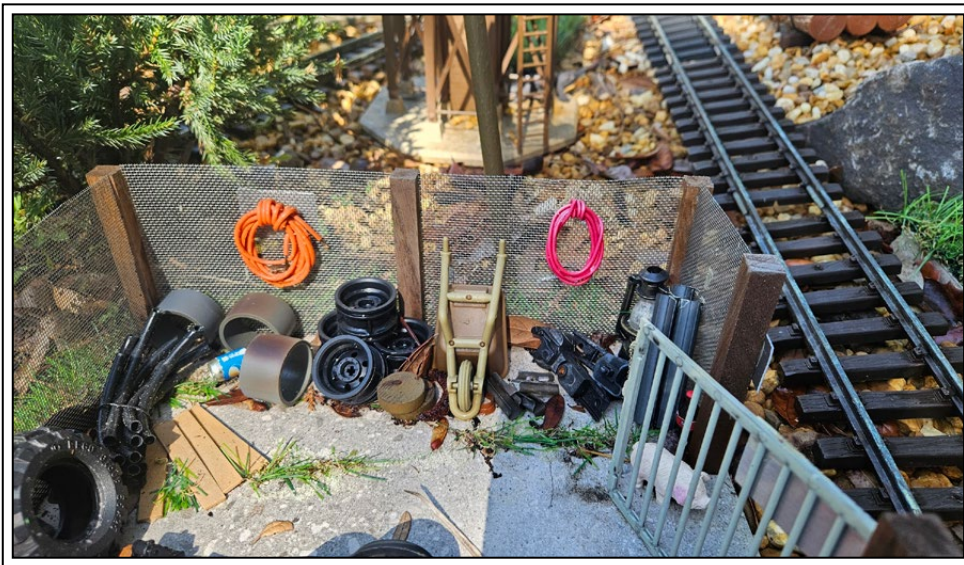
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**And Finally, Tip#1! Train Pieces!
Wheels, Couplers, Wire, and Whatever You Have Laying Around!**

We all have a box of couplers, wheels, and extra wire laying around, so let's put them to use! Little wire spools can be used to look like extension cords. Couplers can be placed out to look like a junk pile or stacked on the 1/2" wooden dowels waiting for installation. Take a few sets of wheels, age them to look rusted, and place them on wood dowels to help enhance the railyard. The junkyard (pictured below) is made up of leftover pieces from the various village projects. Dollar store sand, screens from windows, stacks of couplers, wooden dowel posts, Lego tires and hubcaps, pieces of artificial turf from a free sample, spools of wire, and all placed on a 12" tile that was accidentally dropped and glued back together.



Hopefully all of these tips and tricks can help you round out your garden railway. A little bit of time and creativity and you can make some unique pieces that will be exclusive to your garden. Happy railroading!

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2024 Christmas Car

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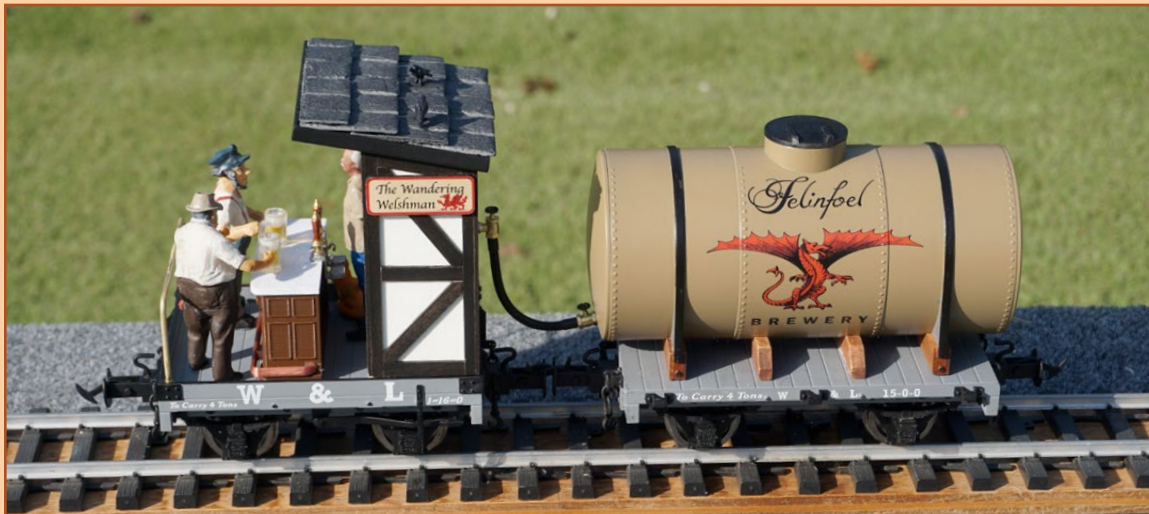
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CONSIST OF THE EDITION

The Wandering Welshman Pub & Felinfoel Brewery Tank Car by Jeff Williams for Ann Stephens

"The Wandering Welshman" pub-on-rails is the most recent "load" I made for a 16 mm/ft (1:19) scale Welshpool and Llanfair "goods train" consist owned and operated by my sweetheart Ann Stephens, a live-steamer and life-long railfan like me. Ann has been running a long string of empty goods wagons for a few years and asked me to make some loads suitable for her early 1900s era consist. The Felinfoel Brewery tank car came before the pub, lettered for an actual brewery in southern Wales.



After sending a photo of the tank car to our friend Neil Rose in England, he suggested that a pub built on a flat wagon to connect to the tank car would be a fun project. This resulted in the building of "The Wandering Welshman."

continued on next page

Create Beautiful Scenery for your model railroad displays

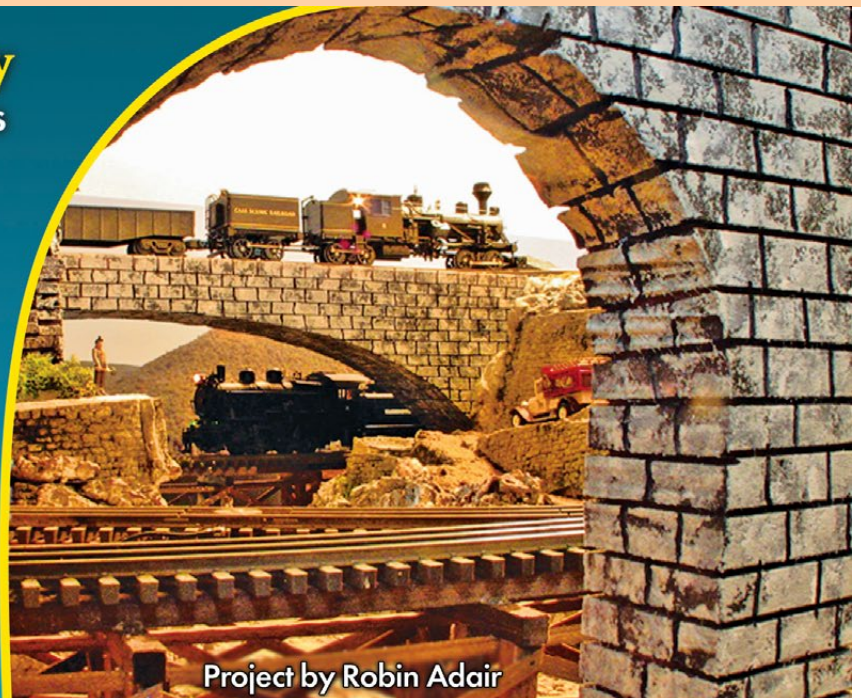


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Project by Robin Adair

The flat wagon and the plank wagon on which the ale tank and the pub are mounted are both stock Accucraft/British Model Supply products. The tank was pulled off a Marklin/LGB 4-wheel tank car and all toy-like features removed. Then it was painted and lettered before installation on stained basswood supports on the flat wagon. The hose between the tank and pub is attached with small rare-earth magnets placed at either end of the hose and in the brass valves mounted to the tank and pub.



The pub's "half-timbered" structure is thin birch plywood, scribed and stained on the inside to represent wood paneling, with stained basswood strips for the timbers and highly textured watercolor paper representing the plastered areas between the timbers on the outside. The roof is clad with tiny pieces of real slate, sourced from a British dollhouse hobby supplier on eBay. Other details and figures came from model railroad parts suppliers or dollhouse miniatures suppliers. The rest of the details were scratch built.

The pub's design and details (and name) were chosen as a result of negotiation and compromise between Ann and me, limited in some cases by my modeling skills but never by Ann's imagination!

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

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G-Scale Displays in Public Places



Photos and story by John Cushman



Many of us remember seeing our first trains running in the window of a department store. It was magical, and compelling. Those windows are gone, so we run trains at shows like the Denver Christmas Show to reach out to railers young and old.

Shows like this one are held all over the country. National Conventions, trains operating at Children's Museums, and public displays such as those operating at the California Railroad Museum, the Colorado Railroad Museum, Chicago Botanic Garden, and Northlandz in New Jersey share the joy of miniature trains. Support for these projects inspires new and return model railroaders.

continued on page 33



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Garden Railroading News remains active on social media with over 10,000 visitors on Instagram, YouTube, and its two Facebook Groups. We continue to post a combination of still images and videos. We will be announcing the Top 2024 Still Image and Video Posts that you have "liked" in the first 2025 edition of GR News.

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CLUB CORNER

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

Why do members leave our clubs? I started a three-issue discussion on this topic in the July/August issue. Here are what I came up with as the main reasons why members quit our clubs.

1. Lose interest in the hobby
2. Find the hobby is too expensive
3. Lose interest in the club
4. Don't like the club any more
5. The club is too geographically spread out
6. Spouse is not interested in either the hobby or the club
7. Age out of the hobby; Too difficult to maintain or run a layout at their age
8. Other competing interests
9. Move to a new location in another region or city
10. Death

I discussed the first two reasons in the July issue, and then reasons 3 and 4 in our September/October issue. So that leaves reasons 5 through 10. Unfortunately, some of these are uncontrollable by G-Scale societies. But there are still some things that can be done to mitigate some of them.

5. The club is too geographically spread out. If your club covers a very large area, some clubs have set up divisions to help people get together in a region. The Rose City Garden Railway Society has an east side and a west side breakfast each month in Portland. The Puget Sound Garden Railway Society is the only G-Scale club in northwestern Washington. They have monthly breakfasts in Renton, Redmond, Bremerton, and Snohomish. The Bay area garden railway Society which embraces 10 counties the length and breadth of the San Francisco Bay region, is divided into 8 Areas. Clusters of open railroads are organized by Area. Social get-togethers are also organized by Area. All of these approaches help make large geographically spread-out clubs manage events local to areas of their clubs, so members don't have to travel in some cases several hours to attend club events.

6. Spouse is not interested in either the hobby or the club. When a spouse has no interest in the club or hobby, there are things a club can do to generate spousal interest. Our club has only family memberships, so a spouse never feels like he or she doesn't belong to the club. Spouses are encouraged to attend breakfasts, open houses, and all social events. Some spouses have taken up the gardening part of a garden railroad making the layout a family project. Some of the women in our club have attended clinics where attendees construct buildings to take home and put on their layout. Several spouses actively attend work parties to construct Christmas displays.

We have also put on clinics of particular interest to women in our club. These include making figures out of Sculpey, scrapbooking the layout, and building structures. Women are also active in some of our operation sessions where they are part of a team of two people running a train with waybills. They are also active in setting up and running our module layout at train shows.

Having only family memberships is a great way to encourage participation by



Setting up modular display.



Sharing information on layout tours.

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both the husband and the wife. So don't concentrate your attention on just the men in your club. Keeping both partners involved in the hobby and club activities will encourage them to stay in the club long term.

7. Age makes it too difficult to maintain or run a layout. I suppose most people if they live long enough will age out of the hobby as it requires mobility, dexterity, focus, and at least somewhat decent eye sight. We all find some of these traits declining as we get older. But when a member can no longer keep his layout running and decides to sell it off, it doesn't mean they have to leave the club. Breakfasts foster and maintain friendship. People without layouts can still enjoy open houses at other people's homes, and run trains on club modules when they are set up. Communication with club members through newsletters is important in larger clubs as it keeps people informed about upcoming events and reinforces memories of recent open houses. But it is important that the people who close their layouts are invited to events and engage with their friends. We want to keep every member in our club and help them to contribute.

One member in our club whose layout was featured in *Garden Railways* mag-



Assisting with track repairs.



Rose City GRS Eastside B&B.

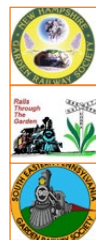
azine was ready to call it quits when a large tunnel collapsed when the pressure treated wood they used to support the tunnel rotted. It was more than he could handle with his current health condition. So several of us immediately headed over to his house with shovels, concrete blocks and other tools. We daylighted most of the tunnel and rebuilt the rest of it with concrete blocks that will never rot. The layout was again part of our Summer Tour that summer and is still running today. Jump in and help those that need it when disaster strikes.

8. Other competing interests. When members find that other interests trump their interest in trains and club activities, there isn't much a club can do other than make their club activities a lot of fun, have lots to participate in, and encourage activities that build friendship. We have a great hobby, and sometimes we can make G-Scale trains and club activities more interesting than their competing interest. Keep your dues low so the cost is not a significant issue in renewing. When people don't renew, call them on the phone and encourage them to continue. Sometimes people just want to know that someone cares about them and wants to see them stay in the club. Reach out to members who you don't see often and invite them to attend an activity you think they would like.

9 and 10. Moving away or death. These reasons can't be helped or avoided by clubs. We considered a motion forbidding club members from dying, but the motion died for lack of a second. But there are plenty of things clubs can do about the other reasons. If your dues are low and you have a newsletter, encourage them to stay in the club even if they can only attend when visiting. Our club has members in New York, Hawaii, and other states. If your club is losing members, hopefully there are some ideas in the last three columns that your club can try to retain the members you have.

Next year we will look at what we can do to attract new members so our clubs can grow rather than shrink. We have a great hobby and all of us need to help keep it strong. That is why we started GRNews in 2020. Encourage your members to open and read our magazine. We welcome articles from our readers. Help us to inspire those in our hobby.

I am always happy to hear your club's experiences. You can email me at bill@derville4.com.



A DIFFERENT SORT OF TRACK SHORT

by Mick Spilsbury

The appearance of a red track-short light on a transformer is never welcome. A track-short of unknown origin is particularly frustrating. So, although you may never have this specific problem, I am sharing my track-short story just in case you do.

One morning in August, the dreaded red light appeared on my faithful BridgeWerks transformer. I inspected my tracks for some random metal item on the rails but found none. Optimistically, hoping that this too shall pass, I shut down the transformer and went about my day.

The next morning, the same dreaded light appeared, so I took all my locomotives and rollingstock off the tracks. Many of them had been worked on recently, including the installation of lights powered from the track, so I figured some wiring may have come loose. The removal was to no avail because the red light persisted.

I puzzled over the problem for a few days, and on the spur of a moment one evening, I turned the transformer on. No red light! Over the next several days, I tried the transformer in the mornings and in the evenings. The dreaded red light appeared every morning, but not in the evening. So, what happens in the mornings that does not happen in the evenings. Irrigation!

With renewed vigor, I inspected my tracks again and discovered a few spots like this.



Water can collect if ballast is missing, causing a track short.

There were low spots and gaps in the ballast, which has impermeable brick and rock underneath... perfect spots for water to collect, only to evaporate by evening.

The gaps were filled. No more irrigation water accumulation between track rails. No more unwelcome morning red lights! An unusual problem for sure but lightning can strike twice!

THE LEADER IN TRACK POWER



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.
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Capturing the Spirit of American Railways, One Model at a Time



GP60/GP60M



GUNDERSON 50' HI-CUBE BOX



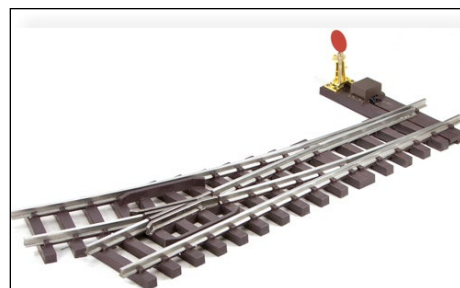
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AML American Mainline GP60

A Track-powered Diesel Product Review

by Grant Sweer



Specifications

Scale: 1:29

Gauge: 45mm

Minimum Radius: 5 feet

Size:

Length: 25.98 inches (660 mm)

Width: 4.76 inches (120.8 mm)

Height: 6.67 inches (169.5 mm)

Weight: 9.5 lbs. (4.4 kg)

Fittings: 2 brush motor; Plastic articulating ball bearing trucks with metal wheels; 8-point electric track power pick-ups; Working Headlights, Backup lights, Ditch lights, Cab lights; Plug-and-Play DCC and sound ready

Road Names: GP60: Union Pacific, Norfolk Southern, CSX.

GP60M: Santa Fe, BNSF,

What do we have here? (Overview)

Under their AML American Mainline brand, Accucraft has made a strong entry into the 1:29 scale diesel locomotive market with the introduction of their outstanding EMD GP60 locomotive. For the past 30 years, Accucraft earned the reputation for high-quality brass steam locomotives powered either with live steam or electric. They also made museum quality narrow gauge freight and passenger cars, and high-quality mainline freight cars that have done well over the years. We have waited for the release of their first mainline diesel locomotive with great anticipation, and they have produced as well as we hoped.

The General Motors EMD GP60 is a 16-cylinder 3,800 H.P. third-generation diesel that modernized locomotive system controls by replacing wire circuits and relays with microprocessors. A total of 380 locomotives were built between 1985 and 1994; this included the GP60 narrow nose, the North American Safety Cab wide nose GP60M, and the cabled B unit GP60B. Accucraft offers the GP60

and the GP60M; I don't know if there are plans for B units. As railroads focused on more powerful 6-axle locomotives for long mainline routes, the GP60 was the last new EMD General Purpose "Geep" produced.

Packing Quality

The Accucraft GP60 is packed exceptionally well for shipping. The locomotive containment box is wrapped with a vapor barrier plastic sheet and is placed in a foam panel lined shipping box with desiccant packets to protect the locomotive containment box. The locomotive is packed with foam and strapped to a plywood board to secure it during shipping.

Contents

The GP60 locomotive comes with front and back handrails installed. Metal/plastic side handrails and durable metal sunshades, smoke stack and smoke bracket, and plastic air hoses need to be assembled. Also included is a booklet of locomotive exploded diagrams facilitating servicing, plug-and-play sound and DCC installation, and part replacement.

continued on next page



Opening the well-packed locomotive.



Inside the box.



Locomotive before parts assembly.

Assembly

The side handrail plastic posts are not a snug fit in the deck plate slots. A small drop of canopy glue will hold them in place with the ability to remove them at a later date without damage to the rails or locomotive. The metal handrails fit snugly into the locomotive predrilled holes; all fit in line without having to bend them straight. The front side handrails also installed well with no difficulties.

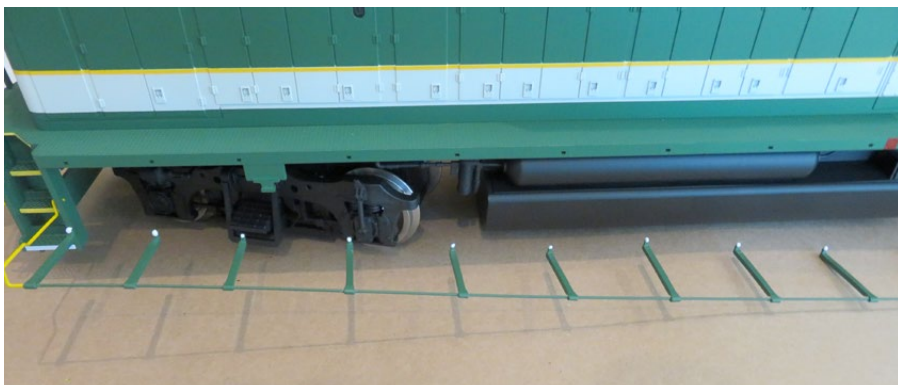
The metal sunshades fit snugly into the locomotive cab slot that makes them super durable. Sunshades hold in place with reasonable handling and resist being broken off better than typical construction.

Plastic air hoses are easy to install into the locomotive chassis. A drop of canopy glue could be used to help to keep them in place.

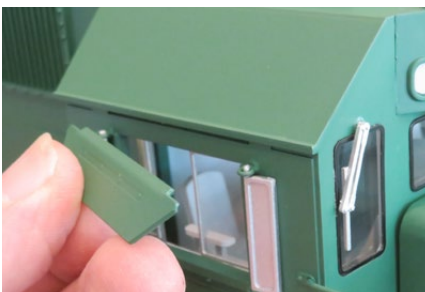
Fit and Finish Detail

The locomotive fit and finish is done extremely well. Overall appearance captures all the details of the full-size locomotive. The matte paint finish is rich with color and crisp sharp lines. The plastic locomotive body features detailed static access and cab doors panels, diamond plate walkways, anti-slip stair treads, painted brass handrails and chains, non-operable rotary beacons, molded cooling vents and rotating fans. The side cab windows slide open and the four rear view mirrors are positionable.

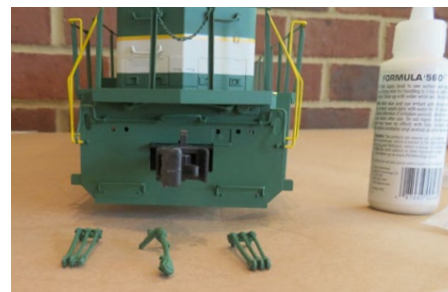
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Handrail with drops of canopy glue just before placing into the deck plate.



Sunshades snap into place easily.



Air hoses ready to fit into place.



The locomotive features all the details of the full-size prototype.

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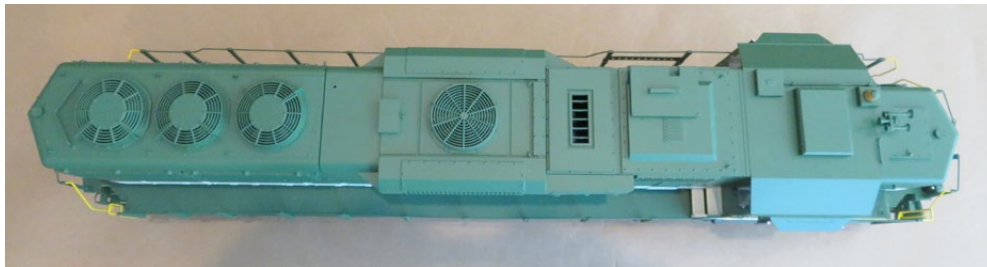
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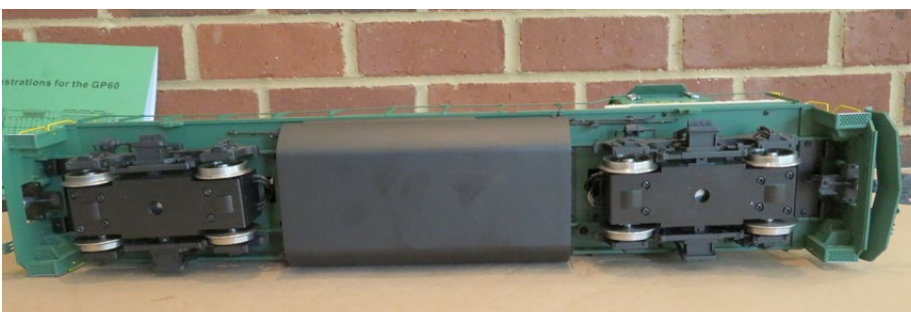
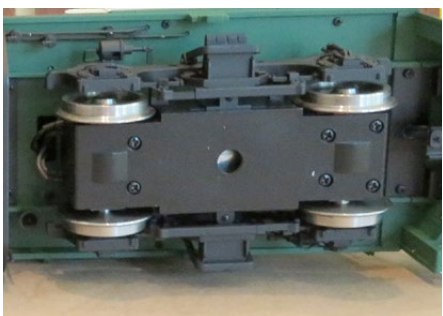
Back end, top, and front end views of the locomotive in Norfolk Southern #4613 livery.

The locomotive body is secured flush to the locomotive chassis with 12 screws that can be accessed from the bottom of the locomotive without removing the fuel tank or trucks. This makes it easy to open the locomotive for DCC and/or sound system installation or detailing the cab. The locomotive has directional headlights and non-alternating ditch lights. The number boards have crisp lettering and are not illuminated.

The locomotive trucks are also fully detailed with the leaf springs, restraint bars, anti-sway dampers, and axle sensor on one wheel only.



Finely detailed trucks and wheel set.



The underside of the locomotive.

Robustness and Serviceability

The locomotive is propelled by one brush motor for each rugged plastic truck through a single pass worm gear drive train on each end of the motor, providing all wheel drive. As always with worm gears, progressively changing the load from light to moderate will prevent gear face galling and premature wear. The wheels are ball bearing mounted for more efficiency and life than brass bushings. A tip for longer life—keep the wheels shafts going into the motor block oiled with a drop of synthetic oil and inspect for adequate oil before running that day. The motor gear train is accessible from the bottom of the locomotive allowing for proper lubrication, typically 50 hours with synthetic grease. I use automotive grade for both lubricants.

Each solid metal wheel transmits electrical power to the locomotive, allowing this locomotive to operate in hot temperature environments. Tractive force is increased with a chassis-mounted weight which brings the total locomotive weight up to 9.5 pounds. The ball bearing axles can easily manage this. The high heat and micro dust at Living Desert Railroad in California is one of the harshest environments to run a gar-

den railroad. Currently only one manufacturer can support their needs. Accucraft's truck construction, with a reliable supply of motors and drive wheels, is a great candidate to be the second locomotive to operate in that environment. The GP60 running gear, high-quality plastic trucks and overall construction with its robust motor and transmission, has all the right elements to last a long time in heavy operation with proper maintenance and cleaning.

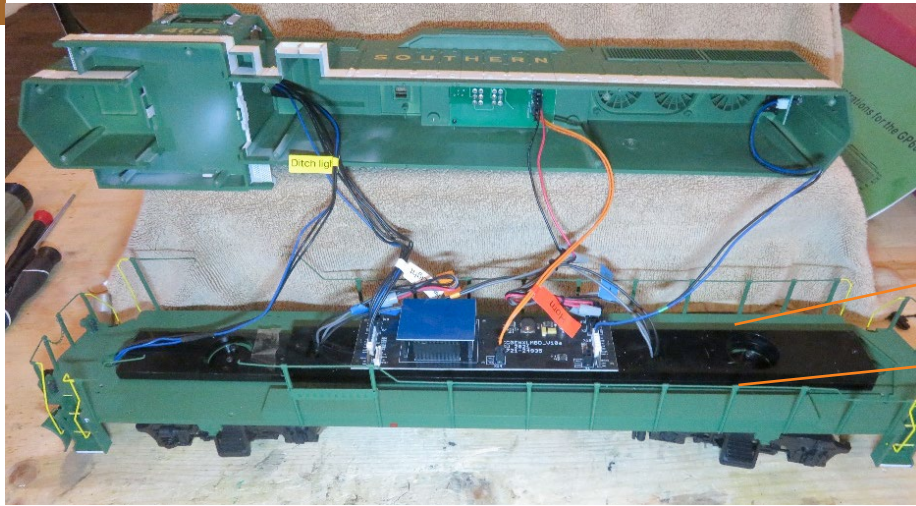
Configurability

GP60 switch controls are located under the center fan assembly, which is held on with a snug fit and four magnets. This is a nice design feature, but it is not strong enough to lift the locomotive by. If you lift the locomotive by the central fan assembly you will drop and damage it. In Alabama, Tennessee, and Georgia,

continued on next page



GP60 switches and charger plug under center fan assembly.



Plug-and-Play Printed Circuit Board makes sound installation easy.

we call that a “Jake move.” The switch controls support DCC battery operation and charging. There is plenty of room to install sound card and smoke switches and charging ports. If an aftermarket smoke unit installation is desired, there is enough room to install its switch as well.

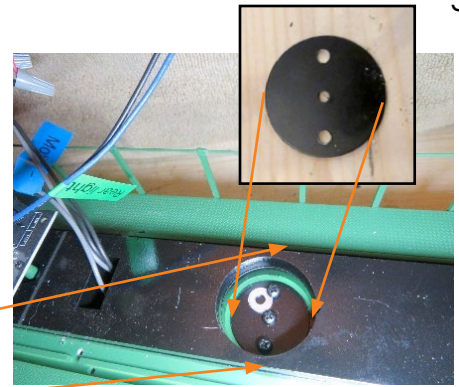
Under the locomotive body is the locomotive chassis Plug-and-Play Printed Circuit Board. All the ports are clearly marked and can be easily seen—with a magnifying glass for those who went to school when tablets were introduced... the stone ones. The wires are clearly labeled with big clear tags and can be read

from across the room by all ages.

When installing sound systems, the speaker mounts are located under the first two of the aft fans for easy installation. However, magnet triggered sound systems will require minor modifications to the chassis or fuel tank. Two snug fitting holes in the fuel tank provide the cleanest and most secure location to add reed switches with a drop of marine glue.

Operation

First, I should state that my tracks are not perfect. The GP60 trucks have sufficient up and down articulation, yet the lateral articulation was a little stiffer than other locomotives,



Truck retention plate with enlarged holes gets reinserted above trucks with a spacer to improve lateral articulation of trucks.

sometimes causing the locomotive to derail. I made a simple modification to fix the limitation. The remedy to improve the truck lateral articulation is to enlarge the truck retention plate holes to 1/8", then install the mounting screws with a 0.060" spacer. This leaves a gap allowing for truck lateral articulation. With that minor tweak to the truck mounting approach, the locomotive ran great and stably around my railroad in both forward and reverse throughout its graduated load break-in.

After modification, the locomotive ran great. The GP60 is a smooth and steady operator at all speeds with plenty of power to pull freight

continued on next page

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cars around the loops on my layout. The locomotive is able to cleanly negotiate through switch tracks from three different manufacturers and a 30° cross track without a hitch. My railroad is a conglomeration of second-hand track from all of the brass track manufacturers and the locomotive did not notice the differences. I also had not cleaned the tracks after a week of rainy weather and the locomotive still operated well with a light patina on the tracks, aided by its 9.5-pound weight and 8-point electrical track contacts.

All in all, this is a great locomotive that runs and looks great. Based on my past locomotive repair experience, this locomotive will last a long time with proper care and maintenance. It is good that Accucraft is expanding their AML American Mainline offerings, entering this market segment with another diesel locomotive option to choose from as we build our railroad empires. Hopefully, this will be one of many well-made diesel locomotives offered by AML American Mainline in the future.

www.livesteamstation.com/aml



Editor's Note: Grant Sweer sent his modification to AML/Accucraft and they plan to incorporate his idea to improve lateral articulation in the future.



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G-Scale Displays in Public Places



The Railroad Garden in the Botanic Garden at Albuquerque BioPark, featured layout in *GR News* Nov/Dec 2021 #6, adds Christmas lights and festive scenes for the ABQ BioPark's River of Lights festival evenings in December.



This gondola load of chile peppers is somewhat out of scale, but adds that New Mexico flavor to the holidays. Perhaps next year they will run a tamale train. Info at: riveroflights.org and cabq.gov/artsculture/biopark

Photos by Andrew McHarney (bottom) & Rick Hill (top)

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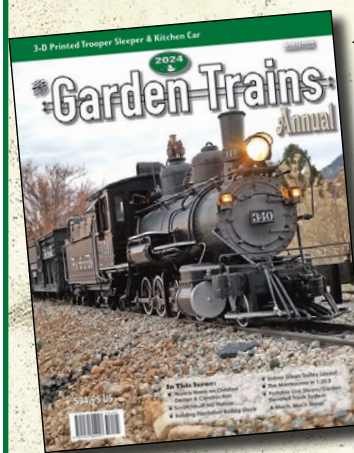


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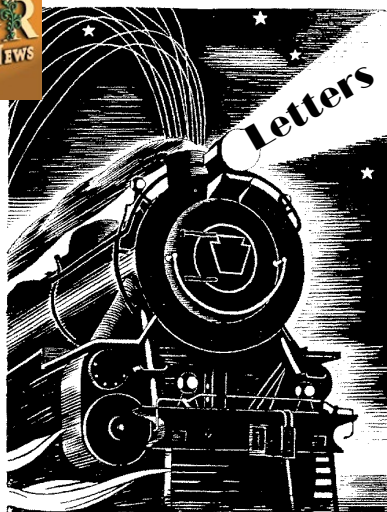
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STRAIGHT FROM THE IRON HORSE'S MOUTH

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

Newsletter Editors Retiring

Happy Holiday's Garden Railroaders,

This is the last club newsletter for 2024 and my last newsletter as Rose City Garden Railway Society editor. It has been my pleasure to produce this wonderful club's newsletter these past several years, but it is time to step down and tackle abandoned projects and TRAVEL.

Enjoy the Read!

Linda Loudon
 Rose City GRS Editor (for the last time)
 Vancouver OR

Thank you, Linda, for your many years of informative club newsletters. Let me take this moment to thank all the news-

letter editors who share club activities and much more with members. Linda is one of several editors retiring this year. Please consider stepping up in your club. The editor sets the newsletter style and determines the contents. Help share your club activities calendar, columns from your club officers, how-to articles about a member's (mis)adventures in modeling and model railroading, meeting photos and more. Your work might even be republished in Garden Railroading News with permission from the author facilitated by your newsletter editor. My thanks to all the newsletter editors who help keep our hobby connected.

*Yours, Carla Brand Breitner
 Editor
 Garden Railroading News*



Photos Welcome for Seen on the Tracks

A G Scale Realistic Scene Photo Gallery

Please send uncompressed photo (with caption information describing the scene, rolling stock, railroad name & proprietors, location, and photographer's credit) to:

Editor@GRNews.org

Photos may also appear on the **GR News** website and social media.

Affiliated Clubs outside the US by Province & Country as of 12/24/2024

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

Affiliated United States Clubs by State as of 12/24/2024

* 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
	Redwood Empire Garden Railway Society	OH	Buckeye State Garden Railroaders
	Sacramento Valley Garden Railway Society		Columbus Garden Railway Society
	San Diego Garden Railway Society	OH/KY*	Greater Cincinnati Garden Railway Society
	San Joaquin Valley Garden Railway Society		Miami Valley Garden Railway Society
	San Leandro Historical Railway Society G&O Rwy		Northern Ohio Garden Railway Society
	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
DE	First State Model Railroad Club		Susquehanna Valley Garden Railway Society
	Shore Line Garden Railroad Club	TN	Crossville Model Railroad Club
FL	Emerald Coast Garden Railway Club		Knoxville Area Model Railroaders
	Florida Garden Railway Society		Mid-South Garden Railway Society
	Gulf Coast & Central Florida RR Museum, Bushnell Stn		Nashville Area Garden Railroaders (formerly Nashville GRS)
	Model RR Division of Florida RR Museum	TX	Houston Area G Gaugers
	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		
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MD/DC/VA*	Washington, Virginia & Maryland GRS		
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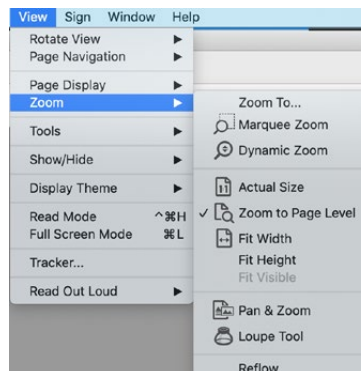
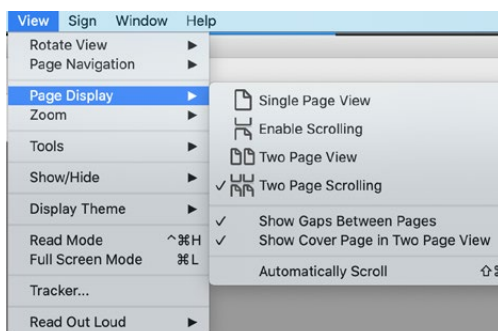
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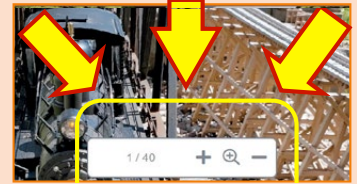
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