



# Garden Railroading News

May/June/July 2025 • 2025 #3 • [www.GRNews.org](http://www.GRNews.org)



**Club Corner:  
Modular Displays**

**Kevin Strong: Combining Two  
Engines for a New Life**

**Baker & Grande Ronde Railroad  
A Scenic Railroad Built for Operations**

A free digital magazine produced by garden railroaders for garden railroaders



# Garden Railroading News

May/June/July 2025 • 2025 #3 • GRNews.org

A wide variety of news; a range of projects.

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**Cover Photo: A work train passes Windy Point Junction on the Baker & Grande Ronde Railroad.**  
• Proprietors Gary & Jonette Lee/Photographer Carla Brand Breitner



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Photo by Mick Spilsbury

Above: Joel Waszak & Martha Miller's Colorado & North Western Railroad models the "Switzerland Trail" connecting mining towns west of Boulder, Colorado. Here a freight carrying finished lumber passes a siding used to load ore for shipment. Workers waiting for the ore cars on the trestle have found perches to enjoy the activity below. • Louisville, Colorado

Below: In 2023 and 2025, Central California Coast GRS helped Kay Cementina restore her late husband Dennis' railroad, a layout that had moved from Northern to Central California. The railroad ran during each of Kay & Dennis' two daughter's wedding celebrations, replicated in this scene from layout tours post-2023 National Garden Railway Convention. • Atascadero, California



Photo by Carla Brand Breithner



*MAY  
WE SUGGEST...  
Something New*


## A Big Thank You to All Who Made Garden Railway Conventions Happen This Year

Two garden railway societies stepped up this summer to welcome visitors from around the world to explore garden railroading with layout tours, clinics, social events and vendor hall product presentations.

The 2025 National Garden Railway Convention put on by members of the Sacramento Valley Garden Railway Society started with layouts in Reno, Nevada, and ended in the Central California mountains. It featured a banquet at the California State Railroad Museum and a visit to the Sacramento Live Steamers. The convention-goers enjoyed great layout tours, clinics, modular layouts, and informative vendor displays.

The Georgia Garden Railway Society hosted the 2025 National Big Train Operators Club Convention featuring layout tours and two full-scale train rides. Clinics and social gatherings filled out the week.

A round of applause for all the volunteers who made these conventions happen. From "behind the scene" work organizing everything to "there for all to see" G-Scale railroads, beautiful gardens, and displays, these garden railroaders put on conventions enjoyed by all who came. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

If your club is planning gatherings in 2026, please contact [editor@GRNews.org](mailto:editor@GRNews.org) with information about your upcoming events and we'll help get the word out. 

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## Fans of 2-8-0 "Consolidation" Steam Locomotives Should Check Out Accucraft's Latest Offerings

Accucraft is currently accepting reservations for several custom production runs of their live steam, 1:20.3, narrow gauge 2-8-0 Consolidation C-18: a coal-fired D&RGW C-18 (#315 and #318) and butane versions of ET&WNC #4 and Florence & Cripple Creek #3. D&RGW C-18 #318 is also available now in an electric version with Blunami control and sound.

Baldwin Locomotive Works started making a 2-8-0 steam locomotive back in 1866. Matthias Baldwin named it the "Consolidation" as it was built for the Lehigh Valley Railroad, a consolidation of several other rail lines. The configuration proved popular, with both standard and narrow gauge versions built with continual improvements and sent to railroads around the world. The C-18 class were built starting in the 1890s.



D&RGW C-18 2-8-0,  
Coal Fired Live Steam

D&RGW C-18 2-8-0,  
Electric w/ Blunami Sound



Of the C-18s made by Baldwin, D&RGW #315 and #318 are only ones to survive to today. Both were originally built for the Florence & Cripple Creek Railroad in 1895 as #3 and 1896 as #8. #315 was retired in 1949, placed on display in Durango, and restored in 2007. Since restoration, #315 has operated on both the Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad and the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad. The D&RGW #318 operated under steam until 1982 and is now on static display at the Colorado Railroad Museum.



Florence & Cripple Creek #3  
2-8-0, Live Steam

ET&WNC #4  
2-8-0, Live Steam



The limited edition production runs of Florence & Cripple Creek #3 and East Tennessee & Western North Carolina #4 are based on drawings by David Fletcher. These models will be custom built in small runs with appropriate parts modifications to appear prototypical.

Only the coal-fired C-18 will be available in a kit or ready-to-run. All other versions are ready-to-run. Delivery expected in late 2025 and January 2026.

Reservations open at: [livesteamstation.com](http://livesteamstation.com)

## MINIMIZING MAINTENANCE TIP #2 by Mick Spilsbury

### REDUCING STRUCTURE MAINTENANCE

The structures on some garden railroads have a well worn look, but my railroad theme calls for its twenty-one structures to look well maintained. This required annual maintenance until I adopted practices which put my structures on a three year maintenance cycle.

Aside from a few venerable structures acquired from Industrial Miniatures thirty years ago and a few plastic structures acquired at swap meets, my structures are built with redwood. Exterior and interior painted and wood surfaces on all structures get two coats of polyurethane lacquer, which reduces sun and moisture damage.

Most structures sit on brick foundations, some are fixed to pressure-treated wood foundations, and three sit on glued gravel. *None* sit on dirt.

All buildings are night-lit and several have sounds. Quick release electrical mini-plugs enable me to shelter buildings during rainy winter months.



## Add Stop/Start Automation to your Display Loops with the Station Stopper from Split Jaw Products

Great for commercial displays, seasonal layouts and permanent layouts, The Station Stopper will automatically sense a train passing the Deceleration Sensor, then gradually bring it to a precise stop at the Stop Sensor, pause your train at the sensor for as long as you want, then slowly bring your train back to full speed. Needing only a 3-foot minimum distance between sensors, the Station Stopper is triggered by an easily installed magnet under your loco.



Split Jaw has developed wireless sensors powered by 9V batteries (not included), so that long wire runs to reed switches are not needed. Place the sensors at train stations, water towers, grade crossings, whistle stops... wherever seems appropriate. The system runs any DC train (including multi-unit diesels and lighted cars) drawing up to 10 amps. Wireless range tested up to 100 feet from receiver.



Each Station Stopper comes with: Central Unit, wireless Deceleration and Stop Sensors, Receiver Unit, Magnet for locomotive. Optional sheds for the sensors and an optional enclosure for the central unit/receiver are available for outdoor layouts.

Easy set up with two input power wires to the central unit and two output wires to the track. Dial in pause time, set lap counter, place your magnet and your sensors, and watch your train stop and start up again.

More information at: [splitjawproducts.com](http://splitjawproducts.com) or [railclamp.com](http://railclamp.com)

## PIKO Provides Baltimore & Ohio Equipment for Both Steam and Diesel Eras

The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad was the oldest steam-operated railroad in the US, operating for over a century since 1840, before eventually becoming part of the Chessie System and, in 1980, the CSX Corporation. PIKO recently shipped new rolling stock for the B&O to your favorite retailer: a steam era locomotive, a wood caboose, and a diesel era rib side hopper. These PIKO models show the B&O livery at two different points in its heritage.



38263 B&O Mini-Mogul Loco (Non-Sound) 38982 B&O Wood Caboose

The 2-6-0 steam Mini-Mogul has a powerful 5-pole precision can-type ball-bearing motor and heavy duty, durable hard chrome ball-bearing drive wheels, and is ready for easy installation of a digital DCC decoder and/or sound. The Wood Caboose is made with the same durable wheels and incredibly tough weather-resistant materials as the Mini-Mogul.



38973 CSX-B&O Rib-Side Hopper w/Coal Load

The Rib-Side Hopper comes with a removable, lightweight coal load.

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

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

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Print a copy on demand: Go to:  
[www.blurb.com/user/GRNewsEditor](http://www.blurb.com/user/GRNewsEditor)  
or

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

Use the magnifying glass to search for "GR News" to find (and order) all issues.

Magazines are perfect bound on glossy paper printed to order.

## Large Scale Train Shows & Events

Make plans to attend a train show, visit layout tours and enjoy railroads of all scales on display.

**2025 MO-KAN Garden Railroaders Layout Tours** continue in the greater Kansas City area: **West Region August 23**. Information at: [mokangardenrailroaders.org](http://mokangardenrailroaders.org)



**RLD Hobbies Fall Open House** welcomes visitors to run trains and explore trains new and old from **October 2 to 4, 2025**, at the store in **Albion, Illinois**. Info at: [rldhobbies.com](http://rldhobbies.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](http://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** at: [nzgrc2026@gmail.com](mailto:nzgrc2026@gmail.com)



Steam up on multiple tracks at **Steam Over Spencer** at the North Carolina Transportation Museum in **Spencer, North Carolina** from **March 4 to 8, 2026**. Info at: [www.nctransportationmuseum.org/steam-over-spencer](http://www.nctransportationmuseum.org/steam-over-spencer)



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 15 and 16, 2026**; info at: [www.greatlakestrainexpo.com](http://www.greatlakestrainexpo.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](http://nashvillegardenrailroaders.com)



Go to **TrainShow.com** for information on all-scale train shows coming to your area throughout next year.

**Great Train Show**  
10/4 & 5 Del Mar CA  
10/25 & 26 Shakopee MN  
11/8 & 9 Victorville CA

**Greenberg's Train & Toy Show**  
8/16 & 17 Chantilly VA

**Great Midwest Train Show**  
9/7 Wheaton IL  
10/5 Wheaton IL  
11/2 Wheaton IL

## A Tourist Steam Locomotive Now in Switzerland, with a French Indochina Vietnamese History, Will Be Available Soon from LGB

LGB will be adding another currently running tourist locomotive with an interesting heritage to its G-Scale offerings in the fourth quarter of 2025. This steam locomotive, class HG 4/4 (0-8-0) No. 708, is one of those locomotives with an exciting life.



L26370 Class HG 4/4 Rack Railroad Steam Locomotive

It was built in 1930 at Swiss Locomotive & Mechanical Works in Winterthur for the Furka Railway in Switzerland, but retired when a tunnel and electrification made steam locomotives redundant. No. 708 and several sister locomotives were sent to Indochina, the current Vietnam, after World War II, when the French state railroad in Indochina wanted to relaunch a 1920s rack rail line connecting the Vietnamese lowlands on the coast with the spa and resort of Da Lat in the highlands. That railroad was disrupted during the Vietnam war and the locomotives were left to rust.

Enthusiasts of the Furka Mountain Line Steam Railroad (DFB) association in Switzerland remembered this rack railroad locomotive and worked to purchase it for the Furka Mountain Line. They succeeded in 1990, bringing back this unit as well as its sister, HG 4/4 No. 704. No. 704 has been active for a number of years after restoration. No. 708 was also completely overhauled in the steam locomotive shops in Uzwil and put into service on the DFB in the summer of 2024. It now runs on this spectacular mountain line. Info at: [dfb.ch](http://dfb.ch)

This finely detailed model with heavy metal construction has a high-performance motor and all driving wheels powered using side rods. Real rack railroad operation is possible with the LGB 10210 racks. The doors to the cab and the smoke box can be opened. The paint scheme and lettering are prototypical for Era VI, just as the locomotive currently looks. The locomotive has an mfx/DCC decoder with many light and sound functions such as headlights, cab lighting, running sounds, a whistle, and much more. The running sounds will also work in analog operation. There is a built-in smoke generator with steam exhaust synchronized to the wheels as well as cylinder steam, steam at the exhaust of the vacuum brakes, and steam exhaust at the whistle, when the latter is activated.

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

## David Sauerwald 1935–2025

The garden railroad world has lost another early G-Scale supporter. David Sauerwald, founder of Bridgewater, passed away on June 19, 2025. Bridgewater set the gold standard for a reliable power supply for track-powered garden railroads.



Dave Sauerwald & son Mark in 2015. was still very new.

Dave was born in Los Angeles, on May 8, 1935. He was an exceptional man. In high school, he won an award for an electronics project which was a home-made radar set at a time when radar

was still very new. The award came with a scholarship for college, but he was never able to sit still long enough to be a traditional scholar. He spent time in the Navy, competing as a handgun marksman. In the early 60s, he was selling electronic components and making friends with the people who would go on to form the backbone of the electronic music business — Leo Fender (Guitars), Brad Plunkett (The Wahwah pedal), Gary Sunda (Randall guitar amps) et al.

He noticed that a lot of the components that he was selling were being shipped to Hong Kong to make the hot new consumer item: the handheld transistor radio. In 1966, Dave and his wife Peg packed up the house and moved to Hong Kong with their three young kids to open a factory making components for the transistor radios. When the transistor radio business moved to Japan, he shifted to making other products, all ahead of their times: pocket calculators, electronic security systems, smoke detectors etc. He did not stand still for long. In the mid 1970s, he moved back to California, returning to the electronic component sales industry for a new generation of products. In 1995, Dave retired, but quickly became bored, and started a new business, Bridgewater, to keep himself busy; Bridgewater makes high quality power supplies for garden railroads. This tradition continues today, run by his son Mark.

Dave was something of a square peg. He often reached out to offer help to others who did not fit in to standard society. His factories in Hong Kong hired disabled workers, modifying the machinery to allow them to operate it. Bridgewater hired people who were not accepted by mainstream society, because he always saw what they could do, not what they couldn't.

On June 19th, 2025, Dave passed away quietly. He was surrounded by family, and leaves behind a legacy of finding the possible path through a seemingly impossible landscape.

## On The Future of U.S. National Garden Railway Conventions

One reason for the formation of *Garden Railroading News* five years ago was to support National Garden Railway Conventions. So, you may be surprised to learn that at NGRC 2025 in Sacramento earlier in June, Mick Spilsbury, Marketing Director of *GR News*, suggested that National Conventions might be best scheduled every other year. Here is a summary of his remarks.

A lot has changed since the last pre-pandemic convention in 2019, making conventions every other year more realistic than every year. ① People are more cautious about travel in general. ② The demographics of our hobby have changed with a higher percentage of participants in their 'golden years' when there are other travel priorities like grandchildren and bucket lists. ③ Many garden railroaders have embraced social media in the past 10 years and can see more garden railroads online without traveling. ④ Fewer clubs have the concentration of either fully active members or railroads needed to host a National Convention. ⑤ More clubs are arranging more regional gatherings to encourage people to see their railroads without taking on all the aspects of a National Convention.

Given these trends, we at *GR News* are not convinced that every year is realistic. No club has announced its intention to host a National Convention in 2026. That leaves 2026 wide open for regional gatherings. Nashville is hosting the National Convention in 2027. We may have to wait until then to hear about the next Convention. However, if a club plans to host a National Convention after Nashville, contact *GR News* ([editor@GRNews.org](mailto:editor@GRNews.org) and/or [marketing@GRNews.org](mailto:marketing@GRNews.org)) and we will help get the word out before Nashville.

*GR News* will support and promote both National Conventions and regional gatherings via its magazine and our growing social media channels. *GR News* does not charge to do this... or for listing garden railroading events. Let us know what your area is planning.

Mick is also working on a 'Guide to Hosting National Conventions' using lessons learned in 2023 and 2025. The guide will summarize tasks before and during a Convention and share ways that expenses can be reduced compared to Conventions in the past. Share your ideas with him at: [marketing@grnews.org](mailto:marketing@grnews.org)

Of course, at the end of the day, *GR News* does not control the frequency of National Conventions. Clubs do! We can only observe trends and work to increase awareness of garden railroading. We look forward to seeing you at a garden railroad soon.

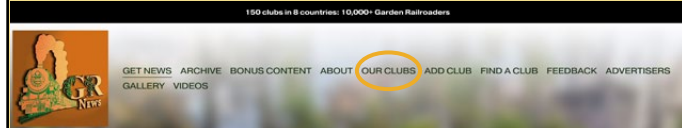
## Coming Soon in *GR News*: The Peerbolte Dutch Valley Railway in Missouri



## The Affiliated Clubs List Is Online at [www.GRNews.org/ourclubs](http://www.GRNews.org/ourclubs)

150 Garden Railway/G-Scale Clubs are *Garden Railroading News* affiliates. *GR News* can help you find a club to join or check to see your club on the list.

Go to [www.GRNews.org](http://www.GRNews.org) and click on the tab "OUR CLUBS."



There you will find our affiliated clubs  
organized by country/state  
with main city location.

### USA BY STATE

- TX San Antonio Garden Railway Engineer Society (*San Antonio*)
- UT Color Country Model Railroad Club (*St. George*)
- UT Utah Garden Railway Society (*West Haven*)
- VA Piedmont Railroaders (*Warrenton*)
- VA Tidewater Big Train Operators (*Chesapeake*)
- VA/MD/DC Washington, Virginia & Maryland Garden Railway Society
- WA Emerald Heights Garden Railroad (*Redmond*)

Almost all the clubs have websites or Facebook pages readily found using any major search engine. You will find event and 'Contact Us' information on most club pages.

If you contact a club without getting a response or want to add your club to the list, email *GR News* at: [marketing@GRNews.org](mailto:marketing@GRNews.org) and be sure to tell us which club (or clubs) you are writing about.

# Corrections To Note

## Corrected Wiring Diagram for Crest Revolution Conversion Pt. 1 in the March/April 2025 GR News

On close inspection of the wiring diagram in the Peter Thornton article, **there is a serious error in the wiring diagram** on page 35 of the March/April issue.

The on/off switch is shown with the charger plug connecting to the board in one position. The battery should be coming out from the center connectors. The wiring as shown would connect the charger to the board (bad) and never to the battery. It is hard to see, but it appears **the photo of the switch wiring is correct**; just the diagram is in error. This error could cause circuit board burnout. Thank you to readers who caught this error.

**A corrected wiring diagram is shown below.**

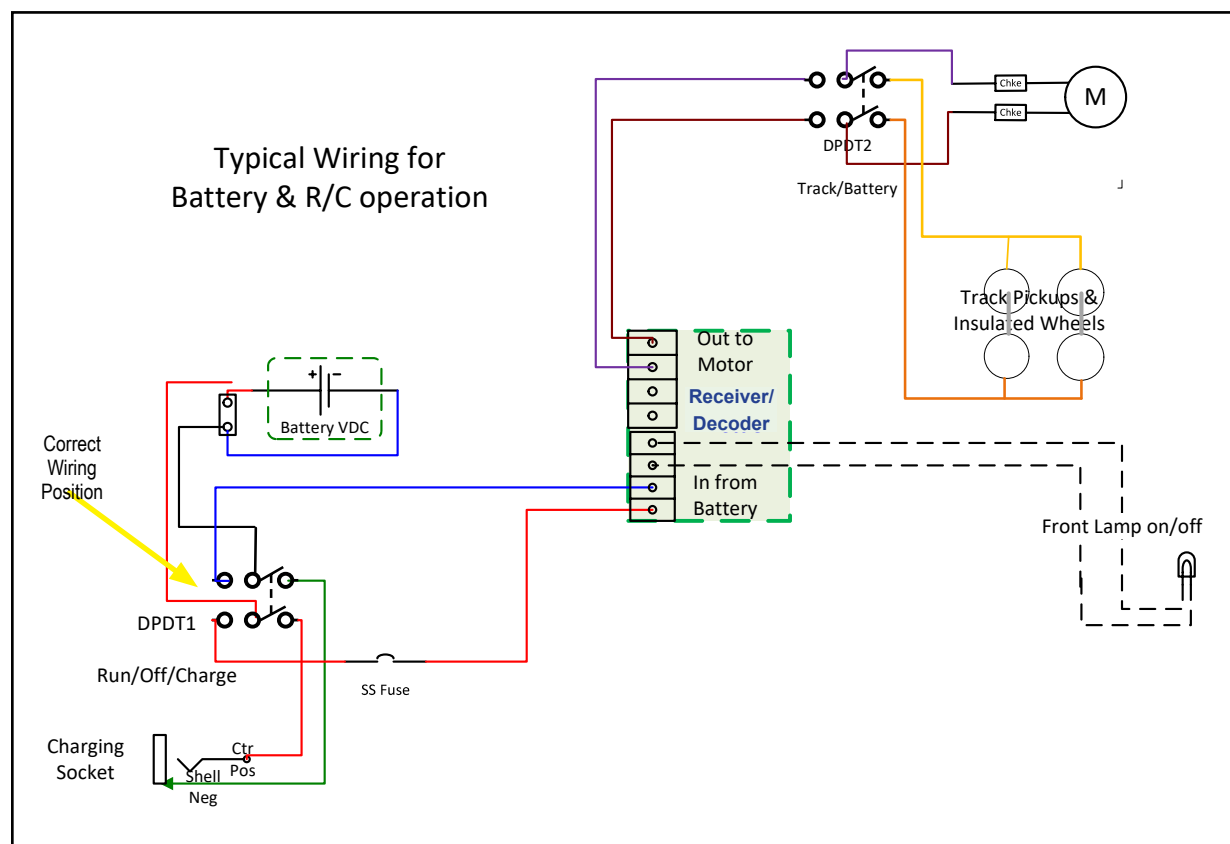
## Correcting a photo caption: Page 4 March/April 2025 GR News

One of the crew who rebuilt the White Pass & Yukon G-Gauge Railroad Exhibit now on display at the Railway Museum of British Columbia in Squamish, BC, was misnamed in a caption. Greater Vancouver Garden Railway Club member **Ron Scott** worked with David Jones to install the layout donated by Carl Vanderspek's estate. The layout has been reconstructed in the museum "Car Shop" with even more detail.

For museum information, go to: [wcra.org](http://wcra.org)



Ron Scott ballasting the roadbed.



Corrected Wiring Diagram for Peter Thornton article "Crest Revolution Part 1: Battery + Radio Control" published in March/April issue of GR News.

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## Baker & Grande Ronde Railroad • Proprietors: Gary & Jonette Lee

### The Baker & Grande Ronde Story

By Gary Lee MMR  
NMRA Master Model Railroader  
Corbett, Oregon

Photos by Gary Lee  
unless otherwise noted

As so many others of my generation, I was introduced to model trains at a young age. My dad was an HO scale model railroader. He would provide pieces of wood and cardboard and allow me to work alongside him as he would scratch-build buildings and rolling stock for a layout he was building with his brother, who lived across the street in our suburban neighborhood. I can still remember my first visit, standing on my toes, holding onto the edge of the layout and looking over a miniature world, complete with trains moving all about. I was fascinated, and to this day I still get a thrill when viewing miniature model railroad displays. This became the formative years for me, learning from my father.

As a young adult, I would visit the local hobby shop nearly every Saturday morning. I met other young modelers and developed many friendships. Through this experience, I learned about the mountain railroads that tamed the west. The Denver & Rio Grande, Colorado Southern, Denver, South Park and Pacific, all of the Otto Mears roads, including the Silverton Railroad, Silverton Northern, Silverton Gladstone & Northerly, and the Rio Grande Southern. I collected many books with wonderful vintage photographs depicting the role the three-foot gauge roads played in conquering the mountains of our country during the rapid development of the west. All of this set the tone and direction that I would pursue in my model railroading hobby throughout my life.

Like so many of us, life had many changes; marriage, family, and pursuit of my career as an owner of a small design/build firm. Fast forward to 1998 and we were now “empty nesters” and one lazy morning, my wife and I were watching Train Junction on QVC. Bachmann Trains was promoting a large scale train set you could run outdoors. I was intrigued and ordered the set. When it arrived, I immediately showed it to my dad and we were both instantly hooked. I started to create 1/2" scale drawings of various railroad structures. My dad, who by then was retired, set about building these structures. He created memorable scenes from his youth growing up in the Columbia River Gorge, and soon we started building the Little River Railroad in my parents' suburban backyard. This was a great learning experience and acted as an apprenticeship for my own future garden railroad. We joined the Rose City Garden Railway Society, learning all about the club's garden railroads and activities and developing many friendships along the way.



*Odell & Hazel Lee's Little River Railroad filled a suburban backyard.*

In the spring of 2003, I started construction of my own layout, The Baker & Grande Ronde Railroad. My layout is the reincarnation of my HO<sub>n3</sub> layout I was building as a young man. It is inspired by all the railroads listed above, as well as the Sumpter Valley Railroad, which I learned of in later years. They all had the same common thread of being 36" narrow gauge railroads. They were all built during the heyday of narrow gauge in the West.

*continued on next page*



*Entering Grande Ronde Canyon MP-27 on the Baker & Grande Ronde Railroad.*

I created my own storyline of a feeder line connecting to a trans-continental railroad, and came up with the name Baker & Grande Ronde to have a similar cadence and sound as the Denver & Rio Grande. The line connects with the Oregon-Washington Railroad & Navigation Company, later part of Union Pacific, which was building east from Portland, Oregon, at

the time and met with the Oregon Short Line, another Union Pacific subsidiary which was building west from Green River, Wyoming, forming another transcontinental line extending to the Northwest. The Baker & Grande Ronde Railroad interchange and terminus are located in Baker City, Oregon, and the line extends westerly through the Blue Mountains and Grande Ronde River drainage

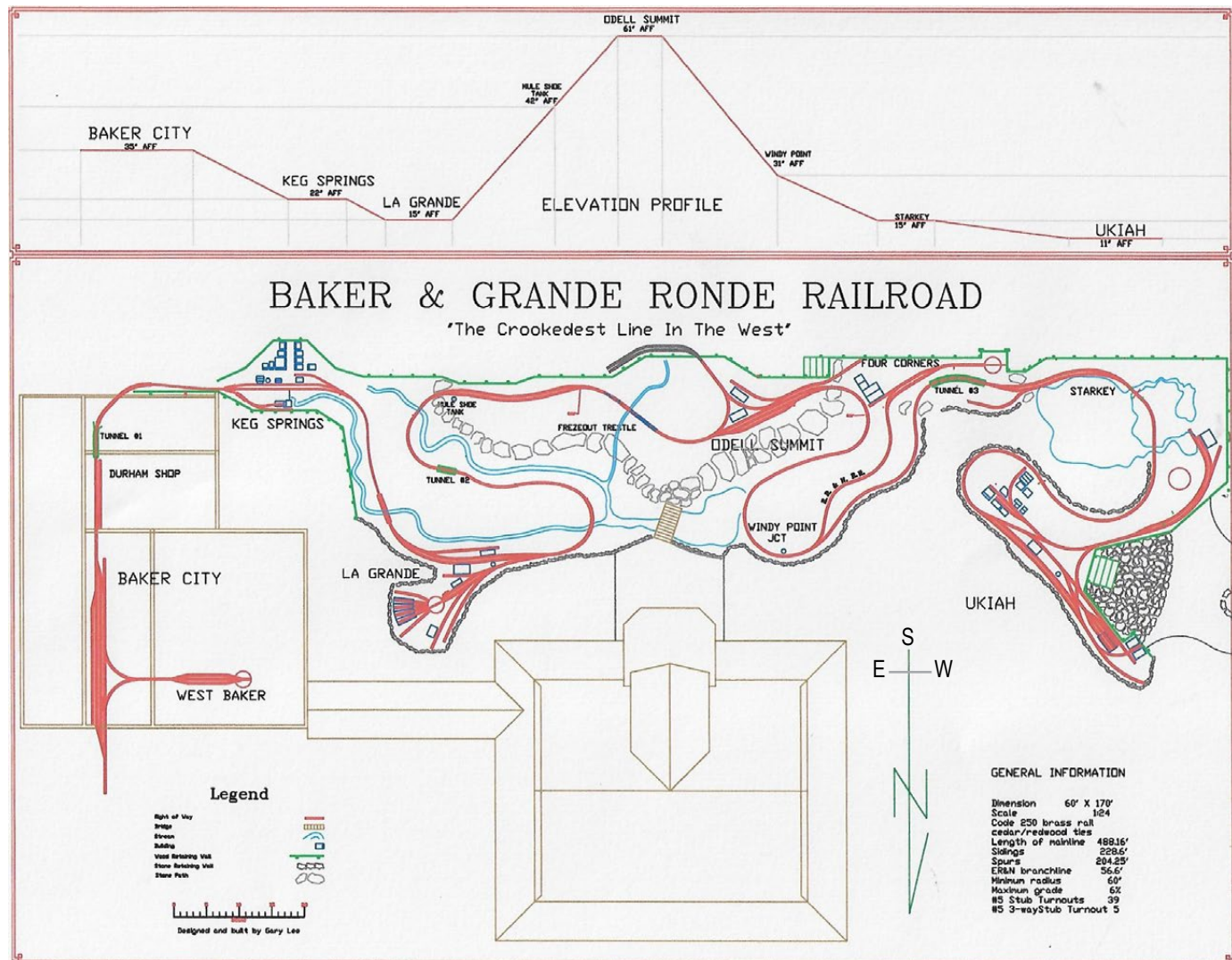
of eastern Oregon, extending to its current western terminus of Ukiah, Oregon, in the year 1890.

When designing the railroad, I wanted to create a line one could follow from scene to scene and town to town, and take a journey through the mountains of the northwest. It's a point-to-point road with no reversing loops so its operation is completely dependent upon engineer/operator

*continued on next page*



Photo by Carla Brand Breithner





to man the throttle and perform all necessary movements to operate the train in a realistic fashion. There is a roundhouse and turntable in Baker City at the eastern terminus, and a turning wye in Ukiah, the western terminus. The main eastbound revenue is derived from the extensive logging operations of the region as well as limited mining operations and cattle and sheep, all transported to various transcontinental markets. The westbound revenue is general merchandise destined to growing communities along the line.

The garden railway features extensive rockwork, over 120 bonsai trees trimmed yearly, lush ground cover, two ponds, and three streams totaling over 150 feet in length. All structures are custom designed and scratch-built. The trackwork is hand-laid on individual cedar ties, and the railway features thirty-nine #5 stub turnouts and five 3-way stub turnouts.

The Baker & Grande Ronde Railroad hosts regular Operations Sessions and Open Houses each year for visitors and members of the Rose City Garden Railway Society.

Trains are operated during sessions by two-man crews of an engineer and a conductor/brakeman, using both written and verbal train orders. All trains are battery-powered and radio controlled. A central dispatcher directs train crews, communicating with two-way radios.

### Traveling the B&GR RR from Baker City to Ukiah

The railway begins in my shop at Baker yard, Mile Post 0 (MP-0), and journeys outdoors through tunnel #1, continuing westerly to the community of Keg Springs, MP-17.



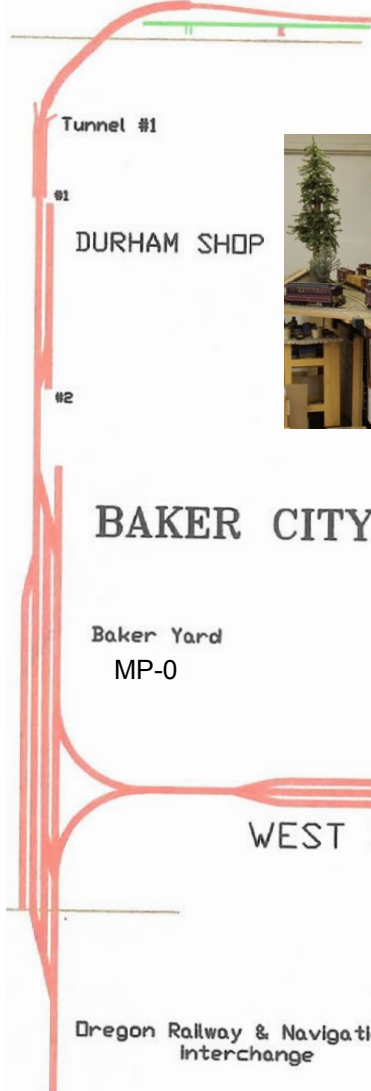
Tunnel #1.



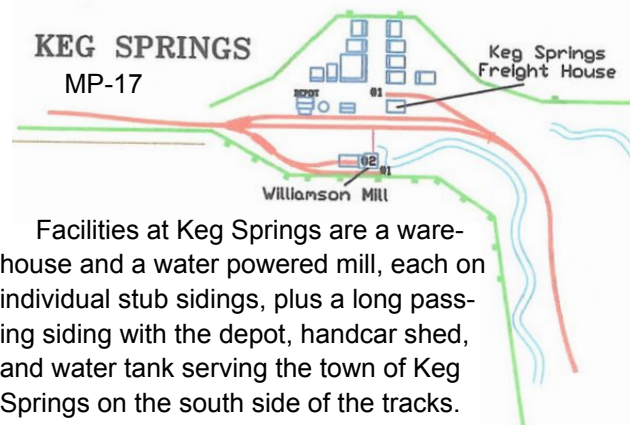
Durham Trestle MP-8.



Keg Springs Overview MP-17.



1 Baker Yard MP-0.



Facilities at Keg Springs are a warehouse and a water powered mill, each on individual stub sidings, plus a long passing siding with the depot, handcar shed, and water tank serving the town of Keg Springs on the south side of the tracks.

*continued on next page*



Dispatcher Dennis Peoples sets out cars and engines for an operating session.

Photo by Carla Brand Breithner

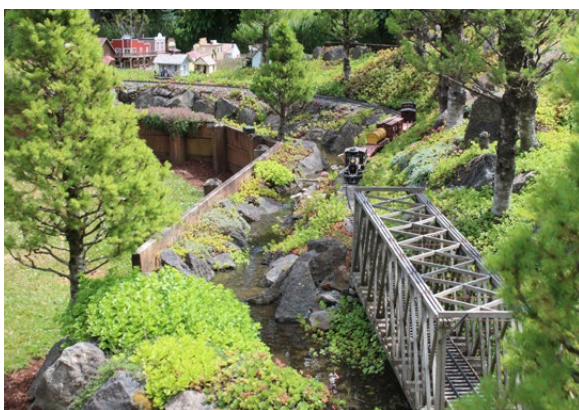


*Keg Springs daily passenger train.*

The line continues westerly on a downgrade following along Whiskey Creek and crossing Red Bridge (a Howe truss bridge) to arrive in LaGrande.



*Whiskey Creek Canyon.*



*Whiskey Creek Overview and Red Bridge.*



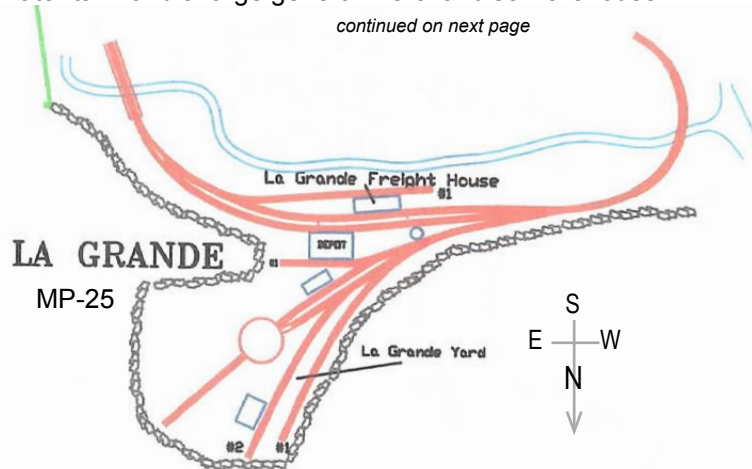
*La Grande freight and passenger trains meet.*



*La Grande Overview MP-25.*

LaGrande, MP-25, is the lowest point on the line where a helper station is located. Additional motive power originates here to be cut into westbound trains and removed from eastbound consists as needed. Facilities include fueling bin, sand house, turntable, a freight and passenger depot, adjoining stub yard, water tank and a large general merchandise warehouse.

*continued on next page*



*Freight leaving La Grande crosses Whiskey Creek Trestle.*

From LaGrande the line begins to climb toward the summit crossing over Whiskey Creek at its confluence with the Grande Ronde River. It then ascends on the north bank of the Grande Ronde River at a 4.3% grade, piercing a promontory through tunnel #2 and then crossing the Grande Ronde River over a Howe truss deck bridge to arrive at Mule Shoe tank and flag stop, MP-32. At this location is a long passing siding to relieve congestion on the highline.



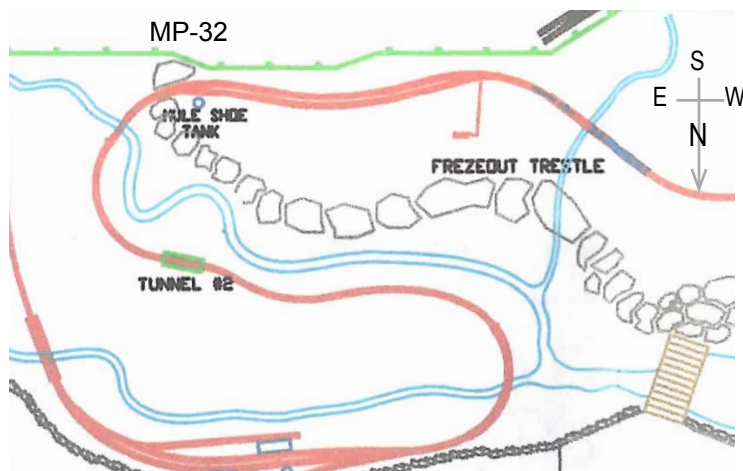
*At Rockwood MP-29 above Tunnel 2.*



*Approaching Mule Shoe MP-32.*



*Grande Ronde River Canyon - Tunnel #2.*



*Passenger and freight trains pass on the highline using the Mule Shoe siding.*

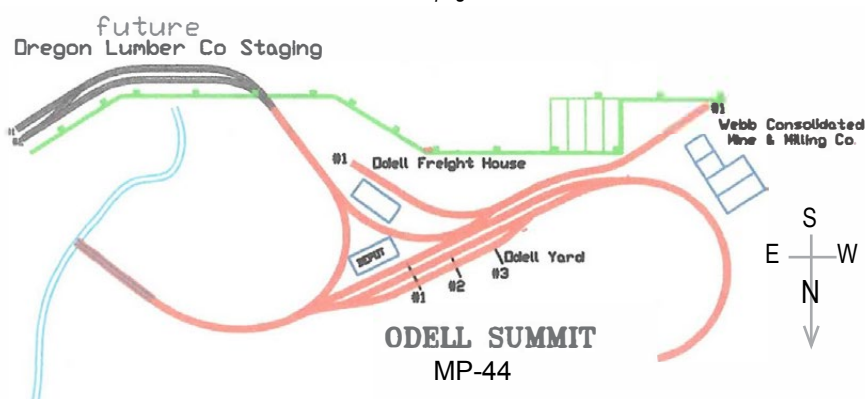
Continuing westbound, upgrade from Mule Shoe siding, the line crosses the long and high Freezeout trestle featuring a Howe truss deck center span, and finally we reach Odell Summit at MP-44, the highest point on the line.

At Odell Summit, the Oregon Lumber Company feeder line joins via the south leg of the turning wye. Facilities include depot, water tank, warehouse and a 3-track double-ended yard. From Odell the line continues westerly, descending down the western slopes of the Blue Mountains over Blowfly trestle and down through Thief Valley, continuing west over Chase viaduct featuring trestle work and three Howe truss deck spans, and soon to arrive at Windy Point Junction, MP-56.

*continued on next page*



*Eastbound freight train on Freezeout Trestle MP-38.*



*Water Stop at Odell Summit.*



*Odell Summit MP-44.*



*Thief Valley MP-50.*



*Westbound freight stopped on Chase Viaduct.*



*Odell Summit Yard.*



*Blowfly Trestle looking west past Webb Consolidated toward Tunnel #3 and Summers-Tunnell Mine.*

Windy Point Junction features a depot and water tank. Here, the Elkhorn Range & Northern joins the Baker & Grande Ronde mainline. The Elkhorn Range & Northern is a branch line serving the Webb Consolidated Mine and Milling Company and Oregon Lumber Company holdings to the south.



*Chase Viaduct and Windy Point Junction Overview.*

Continuing westbound and downgrade, the line soon crosses a long low trestle before entering tunnel #3, the last tunnel on the railroad. Stationed near the west tunnel portal is a short line to the Summers-Tunnell Mining Company.



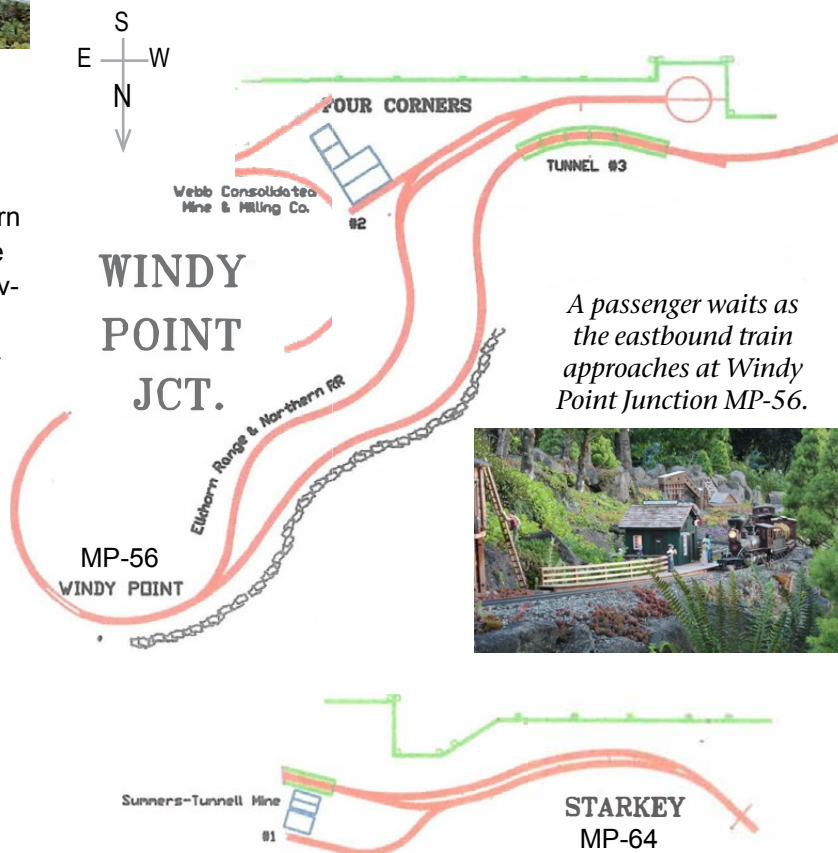
*Tunnel No 3 at MP-59 and the Summers-Tunnell Mine Complex.*



*Webb Consolidated Mine & Milling Company on the ER&N branch.*



*Turntable at the ER&N end of the line.*



*A passenger waits as the eastbound train approaches at Windy Point Junction MP-56.*



*Starkey MP-64 is a resort stop overlooking a lake.*

Starkey, MP-64, is the next station stop featuring a long passing siding. Facilities include water tank, depot, and an eatery.

*continued on next page*

From here the road travels around a lake fed by twin streams, crossed by a through pony truss and another Howe truss bridge.

The line continues westward traversing a long sweeping “S” curve before passing into the Ukiah yard limits, MP-88. Ukiah features a long 3-track yard with several stub sidings all serving various customers and industries.

Located in Ukiah is a turning wye able to accommodate long trains, and an engine service facility, sand house, fuel bin, water tank, a two-stall engine house, depot, and a freight house with a long transfer platform. The western leg of the turning wye extends some distance to serve a sawmill at the end of the line.

Jonette and I enjoy many pleasant hours together tending to and improving our Baker & Grande Ronde garden railway. We also love to share it with family, visitors and fellow railway enthusiasts.



*Looking east past Twin Springs toward Starkey and Blowfly Trestle.*



*Digger's Sawmill.*



*Log train at Digger's Sawmill — end of the line.*

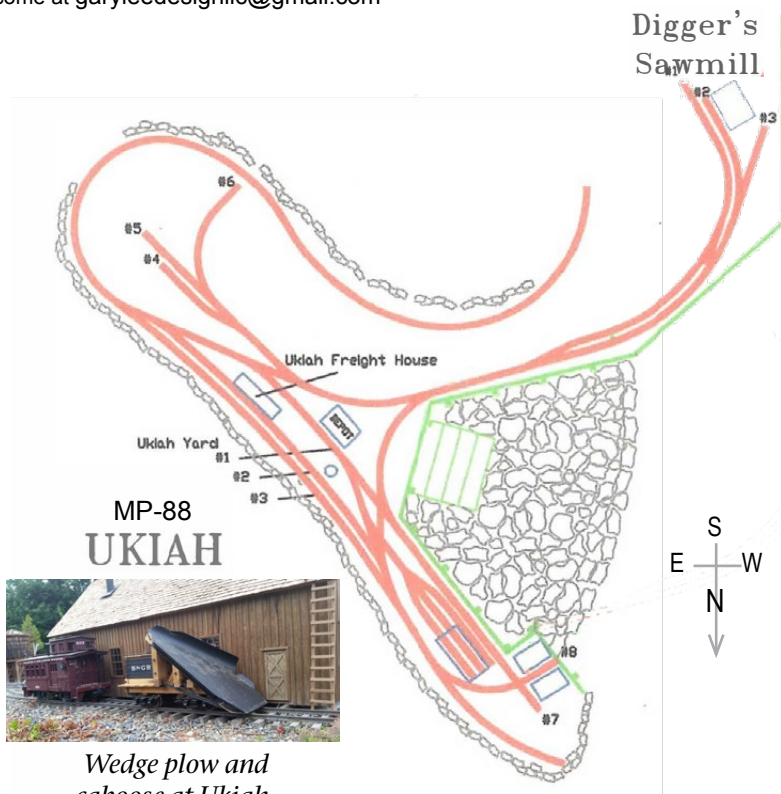
Email welcome at [garyleedesignllc@gmail.com](mailto:garyleedesignllc@gmail.com)



*Passenger train arrival at Ukiah.*



*Ukiah engine house.*



*Wedge plow and caboose at Ukiah.*

Facebook Group: Gary & Jonette Lee's Baker & Grande Ronde Garden Railroad  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1925434147477224>  
 TSG Multimedia Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ehIVCkZmWo>

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**20494** Amtrak AMD 103 "Genesis" Diesel Locomotive; Road No. 108 (left)

**20493** Amtrak AMD 103 "Genesis" Diesel Locomotive; Road No. 160 (right)



**31201** Amtrak Baggage Car (Streamliner)

**LGB** Amtrak cars have interior lighting and metal wheelsets. Passenger cars have interior details and stickers for creating different road numbers.



**31202** Amfleet® Passenger Car – Business Class



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**31204** Amfleet® Split Club Car



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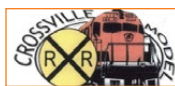
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# CLUB CORNER

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

In my last column in the March/April 2025 issue, I discussed train displays that many clubs build on site. Most of these are on the ground or floor, but some are built on tables after the tables are set up. In this issue, I will discuss club modules where track has been pre-attached to tables ready for set up.

Modules are being shown by clubs across the country today. Most G-Scale clubs include members that don't have their own layout at home. Having a modular layout provides these members a way to run train equipment they own. Modules also build fellowship between club members when they work together to build modules, set them up, break them down, and run trains on the modules at public shows.

It also is a great way for a club to reach out to the public and attract new club members who are enthralled with our big trains. There are many people who have never heard of or seen large scale trains, and train shows are a great way to show them off.

Modules have their own set of problems. These include the cost and time to build the modules, where to store them between shows, how to transport them to shows, and the effort to set them up and tear them down each time.

Standards and layout configuration planning are the secrets to making everything fit together. Arranging modules in different configurations allows the layout to be changed for each set up location. Therefore track at the edge of each module must meet at a pre-defined point. Electrical connections, if needed, should be consistent.



Photo by Bill Derville

*Rose City Garden Railway Society's old wood modular track used lift bridges for easy access to the center of the layout..*

There are many degrees of sophistication of club modules. Some have elaborate scenery that is included with the layout. Others have members bring their own buildings, scale autos, and other items they own to decorate the layout. Better scenery attracts more people. Mountains and tunnels are tricky because they take up a lot of room to store and create obstacles for operators as trains pass through them. But they add a lot if you successfully build them. Including curtains or drapes from the edge of the layout to nearly the floor give that "finished look."



Photo by Mark Howe

*Puget Sound Garden Railway Society at the 2025 Monroe WA Model Train Show.*

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



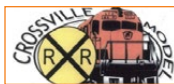


Photo by Linda Loudon

Rose City GRS members attach legs and assemble track on their old wood modular layout.

Rose City Garden Railway Society started with hollow door blanks as table tops. We screwed double folding table legs to the bottom of the doors, adding PVC pipes to each leg to raise the layout to a good viewing height. Screws added to the bottom of the pipe extensions adjusted the table tops level when setting up on uneven floor. This was the cheapest way we could think of to build a lot of modules. Wood took paint well and we could use screws to fasten down code 332 track.

We then built steel carts to store and transport these heavy modules. We bought a trailer with a ramp to store the modules between use. This served us for many years, but as our members aged, it became increasingly difficult to set up and tear down the tables, connect bus wires, and push these heavy carts up the ramp into the trailer. Ultimately, we decided the wood modules had to go, so we stripped off the track and dumped everything else, recycling what we could.



Photo by Jim Loudon

Fortunately, five years ago the Puget Sound Garden Railway Society designed and built new aluminum modules. These were light and easy to handle, and their layout could be assembled and reassembled by a few people in a couple of hours. They had an aluminum fabricator build the modules for them, welding the frame to the aluminum tabletops. There are only two legs per table, as the adjacent table holds up the other end of the table. Links to videos about their system are in a table at the end of this article.

We decided to adopt the Puget Sound GRS aluminum table design and to change the rect-



Photo by Chuck Carlson

Puget Sound GRS members assemble modules.



Photo by Cameron Dietz

Rose City GRS has new modules with separate double-ended set up sidings for each of the main lines, so entering and exiting the main line does not block the other line. A control stand with power supplies stands at the centerpoint of the U-shaped track. Scenery has yet to be developed.





angular configuration we had been using to a U-shape to make it more interesting. The club spent \$20,000 on having the modules and the cart to store them built. We used the same trailer and most of the old track and switches from the old modules. Additional switches, new ties, roadbed, and a winch to pull the racks into the trailer cost another \$5,000, so money can be an issue.



*Rose City GRS members open a fully loaded trailer at a train show in 2019.*

Provide access to the center of the layout without requiring members to duck under the tables. This is usually done by including a lift bridge that can swing up to allow people to enter the center. Make sure you have a system to keep a train from running off the edge of the layout while the bridge is open.



*Bridge provides access to the inside of the Puget Sound GRS layout.*

Be sure to include sidings where members can set up their trains prior to entering the main line, as well as remove them. These tracks should be at least 20 feet long, but can be much longer. Rose City GRS built a separate yard for each main line, so no train would have to cross over one of the main line tracks to reach the track they will operate on.

The Florida Garden Railway Society built 4' long wood tables using 1/4" plywood and four 1x4" tapered legs in 2018. There are 12 straight sections and 12 corner sections, all interchangeable. They gave up using ballast and made their tables shorter, which made them lighter and easier to handle. C-clamps are used to join the tables. Their layout is powered by a Bridgewater power supply.



*Florida Garden Railway Society layout attracts a crowd; a garden railroad video encourages questions.*

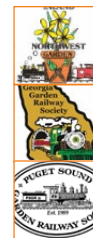
Modules should allow for track power on at least one of the tracks, with walk-around controls, to allow club members to run track-powered engines. To ensure there are no dead spots, each module should have its own power feed to the rails, which means you will need wires running to every module. Plug-in wire connectors will be needed for making that connection without using terminal blocks and a screwdriver.

If you include live steam trains, they will need space and time to get up a head of steam. Be aware that live steam engines are messy, so confine them to one track. Never run them on a powered track, which could short out.

Roadbed is needed for deadening the sound from reverberating off the tables. Cork or Homasote works well and is glued down before laying the rail. Be sure to put the rail together first to see exactly where the roadbed needs to be glued down. Fixing mistakes usually ruins the roadbed. Be sure the roadbed is thin enough to stack modules so that track does not touch the module above it when stored.



*Puget Sound GRS members unload layout.*





Electrical continuity between modules can use easily connected plugs. Track alignment is smoother with rail clamps, rather than joiners. Rose City GRS cuts the rail off at the edge of each module. Then Split Jaw rail clamps are used to join the rail between modules. Do not nail down the track at the end of each module to allow some wiggle room for connecting tracks between modules.

Ballast is messy because it tends to come off when the modules are tipped and loaded. But it looks much better if you can add it. If you do use ballast, be sure you put lots of diluted glue on it to hold it in place.

Crowd control is important, just as it is with ground-level layouts at shows, so stanchions with plastic chains or other means of keeping visitors from doing mischief, such as throwing switches and causing derailments, is important for a harmonious day of running trains.

Train shows need a lot of people to run trains, talk with people, answer questions and promote club membership. So scheduling members to run trains and be hosts, talking to the public, is important.

You will also need members to set up and tear down the modules. Know who will be there ahead of time, so you will have enough manpower to comfortably get the job done in the allotted time. Breaking down the display requires organization and someone in charge. That person directs the order that things need to be moved into the trailer... and where everything goes so it will all fit.

You need to keep trains continuously running, so schedule who will run trains in half hour segments. Make sure all club members get a chance to run, but fill all the slots before going to the show. It is best to run trains in opposite directions so one is not chasing the other. But if you are using battery trains on a big layout, you can have one train follow the other, keeping them spaced well apart.

Remember, our hobby is primarily running trains outside in the garden. Our club shows the public that this is a garden railroading hobby by showing a video of our garden layouts on a TV next to the modular layout. Members encourage people to buy books to our Summer Tour at one of our retail outlets. If we sold books at the show, it would change us from a train club to a vendor with fees assessed. Therefore we don't sell anything, but we will take membership applications and pass out brochures.

Train shows are a great place to show off your club and attract new members. Remember to have people wear club shirts, hats, and badges. It is time to promote your club and attract some new members! In the next issues, I will discuss permanent club displays that are never torn down and clubs that focus on modules.

I am always happy to hear your club's experiences. You can email me at: [bill@derville4.com](mailto:bill@derville4.com).



Photo by Jack Kowitt



For video about the Puget Sound GRS modular system, go to [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com); search for "Garden Railroading Join the Fun" and select "Playlists." Then select "view full playlist" from under "Puget Sound Garden Railway Society Modules." There are multiple videos from conception to upgrades; you might start with the ones listed below:

Starting the modules	New Modules for Puget Sound Garden Railway Society	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5mAjCYIp2o">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5mAjCYIp2o</a>
Explaining the set up/tear down process	2022 Clinics Alex Modules	<a href="https://youtu.be/xMdM0xfiht8">https://youtu.be/xMdM0xfiht8</a>
Building the lift bridge for access to the inside of the modules	2020 New Bridge Build part 1	<a href="https://youtu.be/E1dSHHF6yG4">https://youtu.be/E1dSHHF6yG4</a>
Bridge completed and a trip around the layout on a train	2020 New Bridge Build part 2	<a href="https://youtu.be/aLgvHjY7i6g">https://youtu.be/aLgvHjY7i6g</a>
How to load their trailer with the modular racks	2020 Trailer loading	<a href="https://youtu.be/hKo4xSV0Hvc">https://youtu.be/hKo4xSV0Hvc</a>

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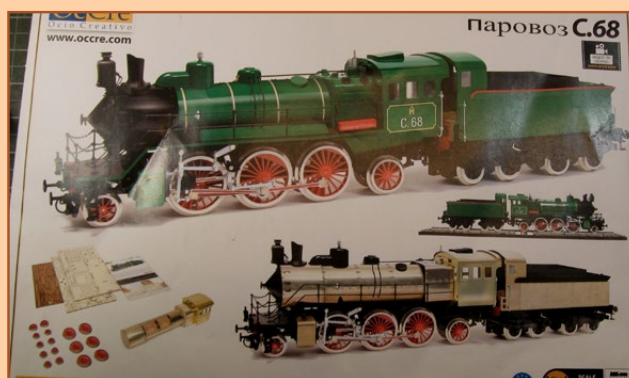
## LOCO OF THE EDITION

## Kit Build of a Russian C.68 2-6-2 Passenger Locomotive by Bruce McKinney

This model of a Russian C.68 completes my collection built from the entire OcCre line of locomotives kits. This is 1/24th scale, so basically G-Scale and will fit on G-Scale track. This was the rarest and, therefore, the most expensive of the bunch. LONG out of production and I was searching for quite a while on e-Bay. A sealed unit finally showed up in L.A. and, after a back and forth with the seller, we agreed on a price. If you are not familiar with these OcCre kits, they are highly detailed using brass, wood and Britannia metal, well engineered, and fun to build.



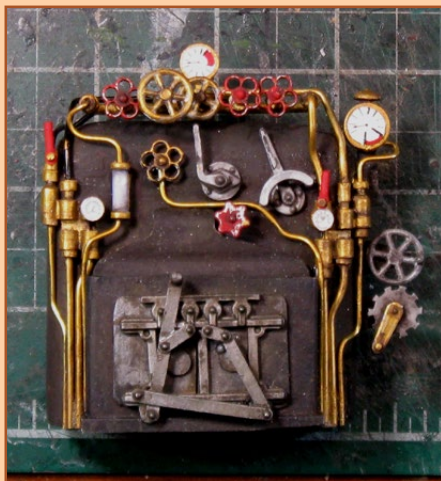
I hesitated to purchase this kit as the stock OcCre photos made the locomotive look far too toy like, but I found a restored C.68 on display at the Russian Railways Museum in Saint Petersburg, Russia, and it had a totally different look than the OcCre instruction pictures. So, once I found a kit to purchase, I went with the Russian museum display look—basically no brass. My frustration is that this IS NOT a well-documented locomotive. So, there was some guessing on my part to up detail this thing—such as the coal chute door on this weird and rather homely tender.



As I built the kit, I have come to appreciate this locomotive. Built from 1910 to 1919 in the Nevsky shops in St. Petersburg, this class was Russia's premier passenger locomotive through the first half of the Twentieth Century—state of the art at the time, reliable and fast.

I added a few additional details to the backhead, but this is not a very well documented locomotive, so accuracy is out the window. I have to assume OcCre got it pretty close.

The pinstriping around the cab sides and steam chest were basically hand painted. My decal order came in a bit too gold looking for me, so I went over the decals with a dirty mustard color—again as displayed in Russia. Luckily, I have a very steady hand.



This is actually a pretty nice-looking engine. I think it just needed some weathering to get it away from the shiny toy look. Also, the OcCre kit box cover has all the piping and railing in brass. Everything in black makes a huge difference in my opinion. The REAL C.68 on display in Russia has very little brass on it—so I kept it in line with the displayed train.

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Send your photos and write-up to [Editor@GRNews.org](mailto:Editor@GRNews.org) or [Marketing@GRNews.org](mailto:Marketing@GRNews.org).

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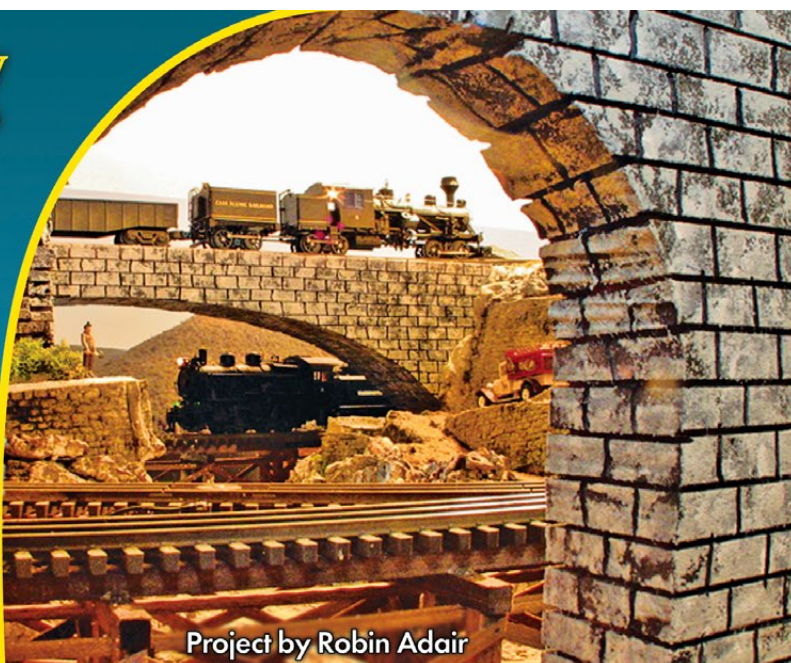


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Project by Robin Adair

## Banta 1:20 Scale Beaver Creek Fire Department by Ted Yarbrough



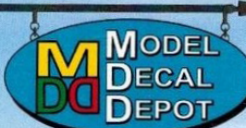
I recently completed the Banta Model Works Beaver Creek Fire Department. The kit is shipped well packaged and has wonderful photo and text instructions. It is rather easy, but enjoyable to assemble. (I have put together several laser cut kits including one other from this manufacturer in the past.)

Be careful separating a few of the small laser cuttings as I broke a couple, but was able to glue them back without any structural problems. The only complaint is that the diagonal laser scribing on the two front doors could be a little deeper as once paint was applied, even in light coats, they pretty much became invisible.

Each assembly is packaged together.




continued next page




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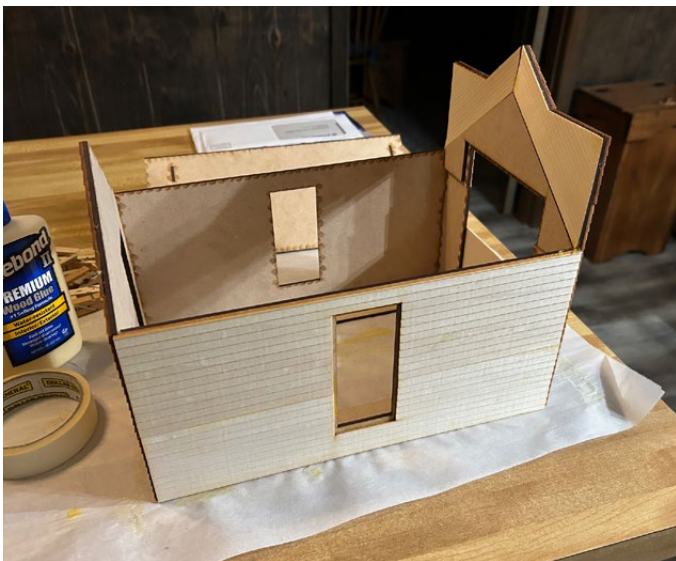
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Sub assembly. I used fabric naming tape to help hold building together until wood glue dried completely.



Siding goes on as thin skin over building base.



Painting & details: Instructions show front doors red, but after painting them this way, I decided to repaint them white for more contrast. Lots of options.



continued next page



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I like the fact you can have the windows closed or open to any setting you desire, so the windows do not all have to be identical, allowing for different options.



Finished fire department building on the garden railroad. Overall a great addition to any garden railroad town.



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# PIKO

## #7+ #16 = #5 New Life to Old Projects by Kevin Strong



East Tennessee & Western North Carolina #5 was delivered to the railroad in January, 1903. This model is built on a Delton/Aristocraft C-16 in 1:24 scale. The model represents the prototype as it would have appeared in the 1920s.

The set-up for this project goes back maybe 30 or so years when I was living in upstate New York and modeling the East Broad Top RR in 1:24. I had an old 1st generation Delton C-16 which I kitbashed to a model of East Broad Top #7. Alas, the 1<sup>st</sup> generation C-16s suffered from an issue where if the motor got too hot, it softened the plastic holding the motor, thus misaligning it with the drive gear. Because of this, the loco got sidelined, to be rebuilt at a later date. That later date never came as I moved to Colorado and switched from modeling in 1:24 to 1:20.3. Old #7 found itself in a box in my parents' basement with other derelict locomotives.

One of those other derelict locomotives was Woodland Railway's #16. This was a 3rd generation C-16 made by Aristocraft that I had built for my parents' railroad. WRY #16 was involved in an accident which damaged its front end. For reasons I cannot remember, my dad decided to replace it rather than repair it, so it too became a dust collector, a job it did well for the better part of 20 years.

Fast forward to last summer, and an ongoing conversation with a modeler in Tennessee who was exploring various prototype railroads to model. We looked at railroads from coast to coast, including the EBT, Quincy & Torch Lake, White Pass, and East Tennessee & Western North Carolina. All of these railroads ran 2-8-0 locomotives similar to the Delton/Aristo C-16.

We happened to be having this conversation while I was visiting my mom back east. I pulled out the rather dusty box of derelict locomotives to see the two C-16s. One looked great but didn't run; one ran, but didn't look too great. You see where this is going.

A plan was hatched. The only remaining question — which 2-8-0? Ultimately he decided to model a semi-freelance version of the ET&WNC, so we opted for a model of their #5, chosen from the three nearly-identical 2-8-0s the Tweetsie ran solely because I had a suitable Baldwin number plate with "5" on it.



These two derelict C-16 models were combined to create one working model.



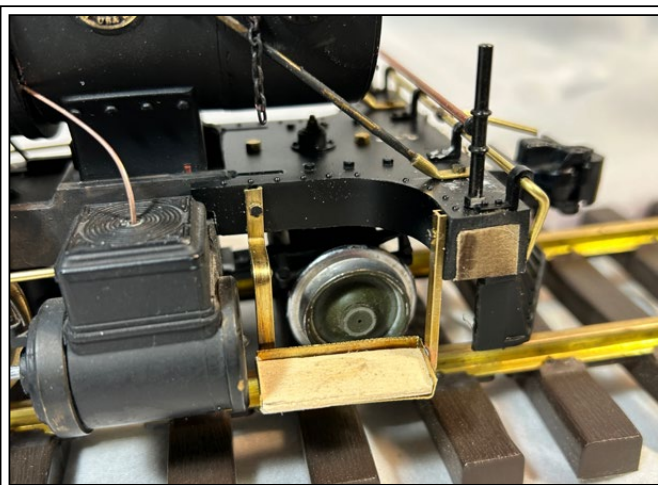
ET&WNC #5, rebuilt from #7 and #16, is ready for the paint shop.

Old #7 and old #16 got boxed up, stuffed into a suitcase (Hey, bags flew free on Southwest!) and transported to the Tuscarora Railroad shops at my home for rebirth.

ET&WNC #5 took the working chassis and boiler with "modern" round domes of WRY #16, and combined it with the smokebox, cab, and tender of EBT #7. From there, other details were added to complete the transformation to the ET&WNC's locomotive. I raided my parts bin for the front pilot of a Bachmann 4-6-0, headlight from an LGB Forney, and tender light from a Bachmann Shay. I made the unique pilot steps which the ET&WNC used out of brass, and added air tanks under the cab made from 3/4" dowel wrapped in thin styrene. I widened the running boards and made a new smokestack from copper pipe. Brass rod of varying diameters completed the re-worked plumbing on the locomotive.



The air tank under the cab was made by wrapping a wood dowel with thin sheet styrene with rivets embossed along the edge. Brass and copper rod made new plumbing for air and water lines.



Many of the ET&WNC's locomotives had these unique pilot steps on the front. The challenge with including them on models is that it limits the swing of the pilot wheels, which limits the radius of the curve the locomotive can handle. This loco can handle a 4' radius (8' diameter) curve.



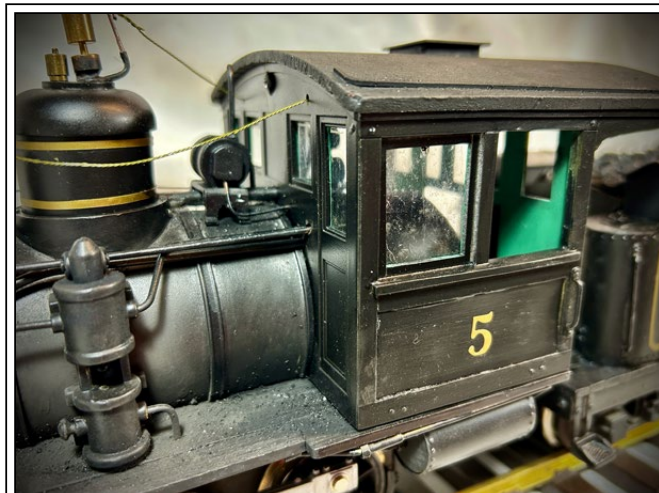
The author widened the running boards per the prototype. This was done simply by gluing additional styrene strip to the original running boards of the Aristo model.

The locomotive is painted with Krylon's satin black "Fusion" all-in-one paint and primer. I simulated the planished iron boiler jacket with a buffable wax paste made by AK. This goes on like thick paint, and once dry, you buff it with a cloth to shine it up. I also rubbed powdered graphite onto the boiler surface to help even the tone. This is then clearcoated with a gloss finish.

The lettering and striping are vinyl, cut on my wife's Cricut machine. Once applied, I brushed Vallejo Satin clear acrylic over the lettering to help seal it to the surface and keep it from peeling up with routine handling. Remarkably, I was able to just brush the clearcoat on; it sat down very smoothly with no visible brush strokes. The alternative would have been to airbrush it, but I was being lazy.



Bell and whistle cords are made from stranded electrical wire whose insulation has been stripped off. Coal dust was sprinkled on wet black gouache along the top of the boiler.



Wax paste was used to simulate a planished iron boiler. Powdered graphite evened the tone. Weathering adds the look of regular use.



Lettering for the locomotive was cut from vinyl sheet on a Cricut cutting machine.

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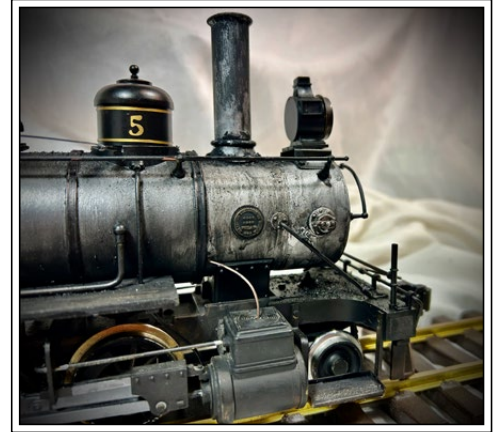
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Weathering is done primarily with washes and powders. I start with a wash of black paint to simulate the soot which accumulates on steam locomotives. I also dab the top of the boiler with a very dark, very flat black gouache for extra depth. When the paint is still wet, I sprinkle crushed coal dust onto it to simulate the cinders which inevitably accumulate on coal-fired steam locos. Lastly, I'll dust the undercarriage with various shades of browns and greys to simulate the dust kicked up from running. I do not seal any of my weathering. Over time the powders may fade, but they're easily re-applied during routine annual maintenance if I so desire.

The locomotive is battery powered, using Soundtraxx's Blunami control system. The electronics and battery are in the tender, and the speakers are in the boiler so the sounds emanate from the locomotive as opposed to the tender. In this scale, it's noticeable.

The Delton/Aristocraft C-16 has always been one of my favorite locomotives in large scale. It never gained the popularity of the LGB mogul, perhaps because of its small size, but for some reason I've always felt it deserved more notice than it gets. The 2-8-0 wheel arrangement is surprisingly common among narrow gauge railroads. I'm quite happy to see my two derelict locomotives get new life and the opportunity to grace the rails again.



Washes of thin black paint create the sooty look of a hard-working steam locomotive. Crushed coal dust simulates the cinders which quickly accumulate on horizontal surfaces.

And no worries, I'm currently working on a new model of EBT's #7, kitbashed from a Bachmann C-19.



The tender for this loco was scratch built from styrene originally for a model of East Broad Top #7, but it scales out well for the tender for ET&WNC #5 as well, so little needed to be done to it beyond new paint.



The author extended the main rod to reach the third set of drivers to match the prototype. The original model had the main rod going only to the second driver.

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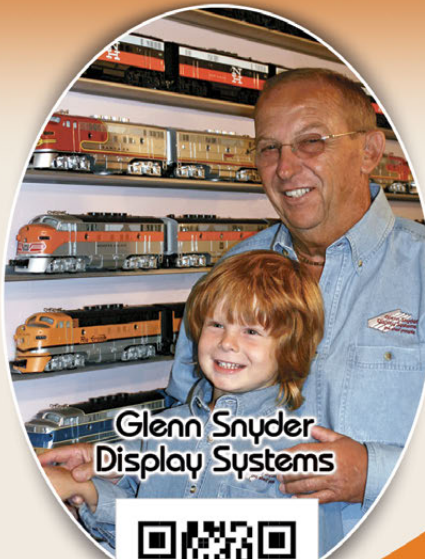


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# April Showers Bring May Flowers!

## Chuck Klein

...or so the saying goes. Spring means it's time to plant! San Diego is a garden railroad paradise [Ed. Note: Hardiness Zone 10b] — mild winters, long growing seasons, and tons of sun! Although there are microclimates in San Diego, we still have a ton of flexibility for our planting.

For our garden railroads, we want plants that are:

- **Slow-growing or dwarf**
- **Scale-appropriate** (to mimic trees, shrubs, and groundcover)
- **Hardy with minimal maintenance**

Here's a list of excellent plant choices for San Diego garden railroads, grouped by category:

### **Miniature Trees / Shrubs**

These give your layout a true-to-scale landscape look:

- **Dwarf Alberta Spruce** – Classic model railroad tree, slow growing, conical shape.
- **Boxwood** (*Buxus microphylla*) – Easily pruned into shape; stays dense.
- **Dwarf Olive Trees** (*Olea europaea* 'Little Ollie') – Mediterranean vibe, no messy fruit.
- **Juniper** 'Blue Star' – Compact with silvery-blue foliage; great contrast.
- **Japanese Boxleaf Holly** (*Ilex crenata*) – A great alternative to boxwood, heat-tolerant.

### **Ground Covers / Fillers**

Perfect for grass, bushes, or undergrowth at scale:

- **Elfin Thyme** (*Thymus serpyllum* 'Elfin') – Tiny leaves, pink flowers, fragrant, and walkable!
- **Dwarf Mondo Grass** (*Ophiopogon japonicus* 'Nana') – Clump-forming, slow spreader, great lawn substitute.
- **Sedum varieties** (like 'Angelina' or 'Dragon's Blood') – Colorful, drought-tolerant succulents.
- **Miniature Wire Vine** (*Muehlenbeckia complexa* 'Mini') – Creeping and wiry, looks like tiny vines.
- **Corsican Mint** (*Mentha requienii*) – Tiny leaves, great aroma, loves filtered shade and moisture.

### **Succulents for a Southwest Theme**

Low water and super San Diego-friendly:

- **Crassula tetragona** – Often called "mini pine tree," looks like conifers in miniature.
- **Portulacaria afra** 'Minima' – Mini Jade, looks like a tree on a small scale.
- **Sedum dasyphyllum** – Blueish mini sedum, soft texture and scale-appropriate.

### **Flowers for Pop**

A little color goes a long way:

- **Dwarf Marigolds or Alyssum** – Bright and low-growing.
- **Gazania** 'Mini Star' – Tolerates heat and drought, stays compact.
- **Lobelia** (compact varieties) – Great for edging, attracts pollinators.

### **Tips for Success:**



- **Plant in scale:** Use the "10-foot rule."  
If your layout is 1:22.5 scale (G-scale), a 1-ft tree = 22.5-ft full-size tree.
- **Watch watering zones:** Drip irrigation is ideal; keep water off your track.
- **Prune often:** This keeps things tidy and in scale without overgrowth.
- **Mulch carefully:** Use fine gravel, not bark chips, to stay in scale and avoid attracting pests.



— By Richard Murray

BOTANICAL NAME: *Picea glauca* var. *albertiana*  
'Alberta Globe'

COMMON NAME: Alberta Globe dwarf Alberta spruce

USDA HARDINESS ZONE: 3–8 (down to -30° F)

Sunset Climate Zone: 1–6, 15–17



**DESCRIPTION:** This is a miniature version of the most common of all railroad plants, dwarf Alberta spruce, (*Picea glauca* 'Conica'). It looks like a Hershey Chocolate Kiss. It tends to be squat at the base and somewhat pointed at the tip. It is extremely slow growing, maxing out at 1/2" per year. It has a very tight and compact growth.

It likes full sun, but tolerates some shade. My specimen has grown in an area that gets only about 40% sun. In spite of getting a limited amount of sun, it has always looked healthy and dense. To make things a bit more difficult for my plant, it was planted underneath a pine with large roots. My 'Alberta Globe' is about 15 years old and only about 8" tall. With full sun and no root competition, someone else's plant would grow a bit more. Except for some pruning the first couple years to raise the skirt, it has not been pruned in 13 years.

The 'Conica' variety was discovered in 1904 in its native area, Canada, whereas the 'Alberta Globe' variety was discovered in 1968 at a nursery in Holland.

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

*Postscript:* Seven years after having written the article, the plant has grown another 1 inch.

August 2018

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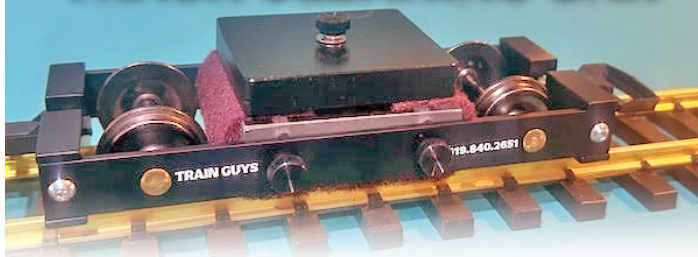
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## Crest Revolution Conversion – Part 2 Battery Plus Radio Control

By Peter Thornton

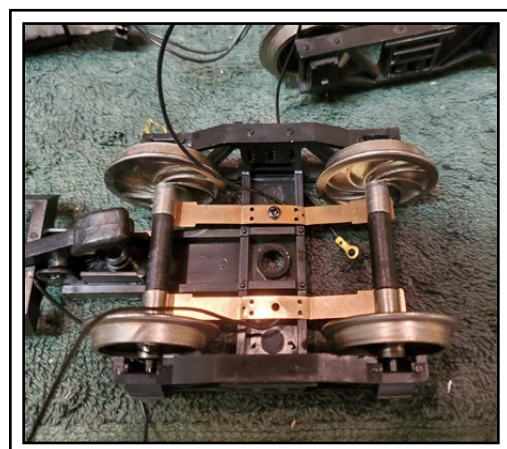
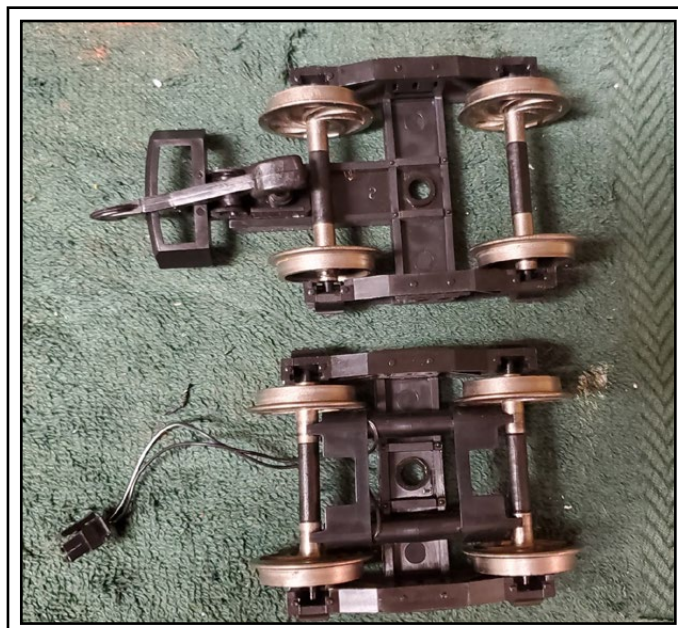
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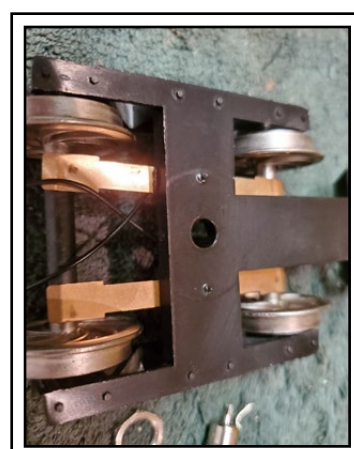
As I had decided to keep track power as an option when adding battery plus radio control to my Hartland 4-4-0 locomotive, it was time to set up the tender trucks to replace the locomotive track-power pickups that I had isolated as mentioned in Part 1.

### TENDER TRUCKS

Pictured on the right is the pair of trucks as they originally came off the tender. Only the bottom one has wheel pickups, so I will add pickups to the second truck for better operation. The little plug on the front truck in the bottom of the picture was originally used to send track power directly to the locomotive. I had to cut those wires and splice in more wire to connect them to the track-battery switch. I added a pair of wipers to the other truck from



a Bachmann coach truck, which I think are phosphor bronze. I originally planned to make some wipers from phosphor-bronze wire or sheets. (Phosphor bronze is springy, doesn't corrode, and is a good conductor.) You can buy sheets on Amazon but, thanks to a well-supplied "junk" box, this job was easy. The screws for the track pickups protruded into the bolster pivot area hitting the chassis, and I had to grind off the tips with a Dremel cut-off (photo right) to allow free swing of the trucks.



(Continued Next Page)



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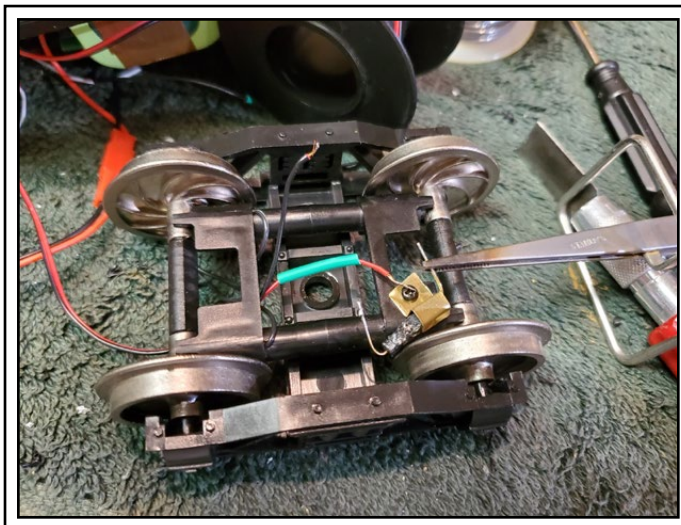
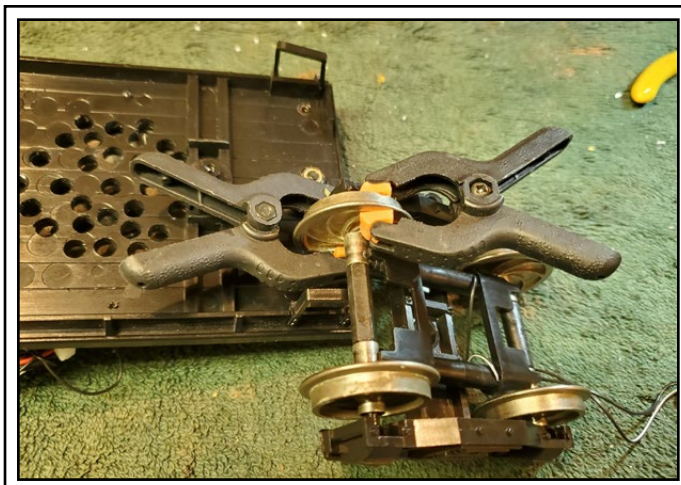
I'm also adding a 'chuff' trigger, consisting of a pair of magnets glued to a wheel on the tender. They activate a reed switch every time the magnet comes close to the switch. The tender wheels are almost 1/2 the size of the driving wheels, so 2 magnets should give me 4 chuffs (approximately) per driver rotation. Here, in the picture on the right, are clamps holding the tiny magnets while the glue (acc/superglue) sets. The magnets activate a reed switch which tells the electronics to 'chuff'.

In the picture below is the reed switch being installed and wired. It's at an angle, as it is very sensitive, and I found that it would be triggered twice if it is too close to the magnet. A small screw and bent brass strip hold the switch, and the red and black wires will be soldered to the ends of the switch.

The "chuff trigger", in case you wondered, is just an on/off switch that causes the Revolution board to make a 'chuff' sound when it turns on. The Revolution will make its own chuff sounds if it doesn't detect a trigger, and many people consider that perfectly satisfactory.

Some locos have a chuff trigger built in them. The Bachmann Big Hauler 4-6-0 and the Spectrum 4-4-0/2-6-0 models all have a mechanical chuff trigger on one of the axles, which can be connected directly in place of the reed switch I used. Many newer Spectrum locos have chuff triggers. Some of the Bachmann locos have a more complex optical chuff trigger – the C-19 has one in the cylinders at the front of the loco. I'm told these types are available on the motherboard and will trigger the Revolution 'chuff', but I believe there is extra wiring involved. As you can tell, I haven't tried it yet! Maybe the subject of a future article.

[Corrected wiring diagram for Part 1 is on page 9 this issue.]



[Ed. Note: For more information about chuff sounds and triggers, look back at Eric Timberlake's article "Upgrading Your Chuff Sensor" in Garden Railroading News Sept/Oct 2023.]

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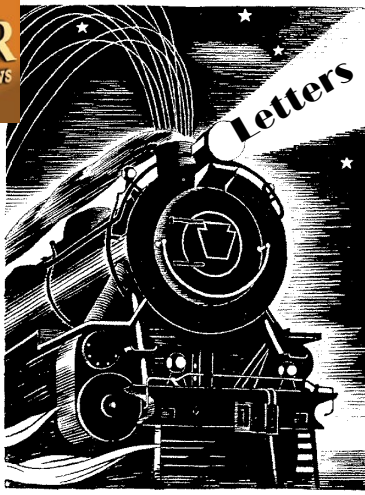
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# STRAIGHT FROM THE IRON HORSE'S MOUTH

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We have done nearly 100 battery conversions with club members in workshops. We always remove all of the track pickups; just more drag and potential for a short-out meltdown. When you have a battery that will go for hours, there is no need for track power. This also makes conversion less complex.

The first question is basically: steam or diesel? The process is different physically because of space but the steps are essentially the same. Basically getting the loco opened up in the case of diesels or getting to the motor leads in a steam engine are the hardest part. Nothing else should go to the motor (or motors) other than two wires from the receiver connection board (the marked screw terminals). "Gutting out" all the other wiring (except wires to lights) is the safest process. Nobody we

know has wanted to return to track power. Leaving the power pickups in a locomotive is adding drag and raises risks of short circuits. Smoke units are power drains and need to be sacrificed when going dead rail.

Using prewired "harnesses" from RLD or others is only a \$10 part and means no soldering is needed. You drill a hole for the charger plug and a hole for the power switch (on/off/charge) and one more hole for the "linking" red button (all can be hidden, usually under the frame) and other than having a speaker installed, the rest is just fitting the receiver board and battery in the shell using creative techniques depending on available space. The battery plugs into the harness. Two wires to the receiver board and two to the motor. Two wires to the speaker. A connector cable with disconnect plug is necessary if it is a steam loco with separate tender or trailing car. If the battery is charged, you turn it on and you hear a "click". You then

follow the "linking" instructions from Revolution with a transmitter. Beyond this every engine is "slightly" different because of space but the steps are the same. Headlights and taillights (optional) are simple unless you convert to LED and need to use resistor in series. Polarity (direction) can be set with the transmitter along with speed adjustments, etc.

The Revolution system is not the only choice but is the most simple to install and link up. We have done RailPro and other systems (needing sound boards and triggers), but the Revolution system is simple and very reliable with good range on large layouts.

Hope this review is of some help. We are not experts or professionals. We just help club members at cost as a club service. These are just our opinions.

Warner Swarner & Mike Fisher  
Rose City GRS Clinic Instructors  
Portland OR

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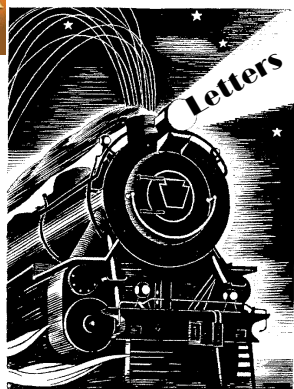


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Our garden trains look great in motion, so Marketing Director Mick Spilsbury is placing short videos on the GR News YouTube channel for everyone to enjoy.

Contact Mick at: [marketing@GRNews.org](mailto:marketing@GRNews.org)  
to post one of your videos to the channel.



## Continued

*Thank you, Warner and Mike, for your informative comments. I forwarded your message to the article author, Peter Thornton, and his reply is below. He has an interesting reason for keeping a track power option. Perhaps other readers will email with their thoughts.*

*Yours, Carla Brand Breitner  
Editor (editor@GRNews.org)  
Garden Railroading News*

## Re: Warner Swarner & Mike Fisher's Comments on my Revolution R/C Article

Let me say I entirely agree with their response with one caveat. While removing all the wheel pickups does reduce drag, and gutting the loco of existing wiring makes it easier to re-wire, it makes things difficult for the next owner. I have seen many posts on various forums from owners who bought a used loco to run on track power, and found all the internal wiring was gone.

I personally live in a condo, and I have no layout, so I tend to re-sell locos that I have converted after a few years, when the shelves won't take any more! Leaving the track pickups is just a future sale feature.

Peter Thornton  
Florida GRS

**Articles for *Garden Railroading News* are welcome.**  
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Send your *Tale of the Track/How-To* to editor@GRNews.org

## Dear Readers and Advertisers,

Your editor would like to apologize for the delay in releasing the third issue of 2025. The simplest explanation is that editing *Garden Railroading News* is a volunteer activity and, as I get older, I do not seem to have as many hours in the day. Life activities took up more time and suddenly it was the end of July. I do have most of the articles for the fourth issue in hand and a fairly open August/September calendar, so the next issue is in progress.

As you can tell by the recurring blurbs requesting story ideas, your contributions are always welcome. Your pointers to garden railroad and G-Scale displays are also appreciated. Comments about what you like... and don't like... are encouraged. My thanks to those who have filled these pages with stories for the past five years.

Thanks to all the clubs that forward their club newsletters to GR News and have given permission to share their articles with garden railroaders worldwide. Compliments to the newsletter editors who assemble stories about their club activities and member projects. Please thank your club newsletter editor for the time they spend putting together club news.

Also a big thank you to clubs for forwarding notice of our new issues to their members and publicizing our website address, so members don't forget about this free magazine. Please support our advertisers and let them know you appreciate their contribution to keeping G-Scale on track. Let's keep sharing our passion for garden railroading.

Your editor, Carla Brand Breitner

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

Videos less than 3 minutes are ideal.

[www.youtube.com/channel/UCmuyDnk2QRy1e1Q1AMFXrJw](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmuyDnk2QRy1e1Q1AMFXrJw)

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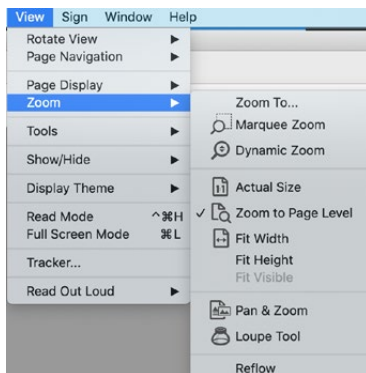
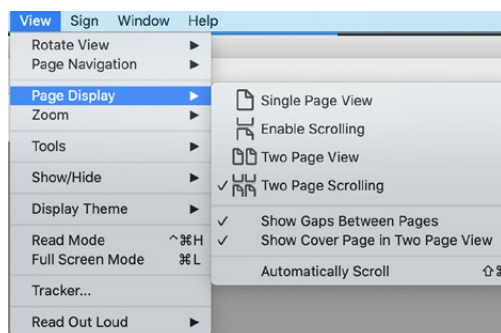
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Hope these explainers make reading GR News more fun. Enjoy.



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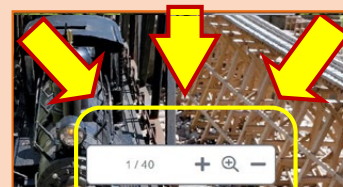
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