



Tucson Garden Railway Society's

Time Table

Society web site: <http://tgrs.homestead.com>
 Editor e-mail: dizen@aol.com

April 2004

No Meeting This Month

April is the month for operations at the Pima County Fair. There will be three days of set up and make ready (April 12 through 14) and a full eleven days of operations (April 15 through 25) which ought to provide enough railroading to satisfy all of our members even without a meeting.

If you haven't signed up to help please contact Vice President Norm Ulmer. **Please remember that the fair only issues entrance badges to the people who are signed up to work. If you don't sign up you will not be able to enter the fair without purchasing a ticket.**

Condolences:

The TGRS offers it's condolences to the family of long time member Bill Fabbri who, passed away on March 22nd. Bill was one of the founding members of the club and was active in club affairs until his illness made it impossible.

It is a tribute to his imagination that the prairie dog module which Bill devised and built is still one of the most popular features of the club's modular layouts. He will be missed by all of the members who knew him.

Diesel Facility -

By Gary Westfall

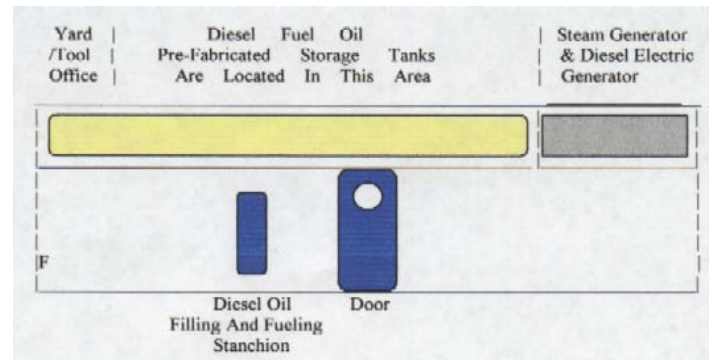
The following article first appeared in the February issue of the Washington, Virginia and Maryland Garden Railway Society's news letter the *W V & M Line* and is reprinted here by permission of both the author and that publication

Supplies Needed – An Aristo-Craft FB diesel shell - Evergreen Scale Models sheet styrene plain .040" thick (3 Sheets) - plastic glue - spray paint - modelers knife - scissor.

Remove all items from the FB shell – such as the grab irons, fan, smoke unit and save these items for your other FA/FB Aristo-Craft diesels.

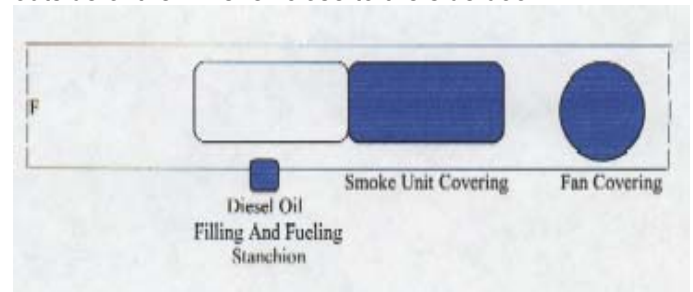
Cut a piece of the Evergreen Scale Models sheet styrene plain .040" thick to cover the openings for the fan, smoke unit, end diaphragms openings, bottom and glue these items in with plastic glue. If you wish to place any electronics into this unit this is the time to this and screw the bottom into the FB unit. The fan cover and smoke unit coverings are glued in-place from the

outside, the end diaphragms are glued in-place from inside the FB shell.



Front view of completed fuel station

I did however make a small vertical structure to house the fuel filling hatch and a fuel hose used to refuel the diesel locomotives and attached this structure to the outside of the FB shell close to the side door.



Top view of completed fuel station

I sprayed the sheet styrene covering the fan and smoke unit and small vertical structure to house the fuel filling hatch and a fuel hose B&O blue. The end diaphragm openings I left white and these would be a door that had no locking mechanism at all. A railroad employee would just push the door open and then the door would close tightly via a door closer. I used no interior detail at all since this is more or less an enclosed building.

The FB shell body I started with was a Santa-Fe FB freight diesel. I taped off and saved the Stripping around the upper grill work enclosed windows in order to save the yellow and red paint to designate this piece of equipment as a diesel work shop. I then lightly sprayed the sides and top only with B&O blue to cover any paint not wanted and to cover the white sheet styrene.

I glued 2 sheets of Evergreen Scale Models sheet styrene plain .040" thick "end to end" then trimmed to fit the ends, centered the completed FB shell on this base and glued the FB shell to the styrene for the finished product. (a tool box and/or man standing just outside the diesel oil stanchion would be a nice "Modeler's Touch")

Authors Note: Items inside this type of structure would be – diesel fuel oil storage tanks with a heating unit for the winter (perhaps using a left over steam generator), a field office for the yard superintendent and small tool storage room and perhaps a small diesel electric generator. The FB shell would have been lifted and set in place with a crane. Spray painting need not be "neat" since this is "Work Place Structure" and not a "Up Front Show Case Structure".

Rail Crossing Sign

By Norm Ulmer

Now that you have a crossing bell with lights, you will want to have a sign to mount the signal on. If you haven't already figured out how you want to build yours, here's how I built mine.



The completed sign in place on Norm's railroad

From Home Depot (or Lowe's) , get a redwood 2x3, 8 ft. long, and a redwood or pine 1x4, 8ft. long. Cut the 2x3 in half to give you the two 4 ft. high posts, and cut the 1x4 into four pieces, each 20 inches long. That is enough material to make two complete signs.

At this point, on my table saw, I notched the center of each piece of 1x4, cutting away half the thickness (3/8") by the width of the piece(3 1/2" +or -), so that ,when assembled, the faces of the two pieces would be on the same plane. The pieces of 1x4 were then glued together, forming the two "X" s for the sign. These "X"s were then fastened to the posts, 6" down from the top of the post to the center of the "X".

A liberal coat of white exterior latex primer paint was

then applied to the assembly, followed with two coats of latex semi gloss exterior house paint. Allow this to dry for a day, then apply the letters for the sign. I used 2" high black letters on a reflective coated vinyl backing. These are available at Ace, and maybe at True Value. They were not available at Home Depot.

You can set the signs in concrete in the bottom 4" of any old 5 gallon plastic bucket, or as I did, used angle brackets to fasten them directly to a couple of RR ties lining the walk into my layout. Avoid even large coffee cans - they are not wide enough across the base to be stable.

There you have it. Enjoy.

I THINK I KNEW THAT! #15

BY Roy Eberbach

This column presents my ideas and is not intended as the only way or the right way of doing things. This is what works for me. If you have different ideas that work for you send them along and I will share them with the club.

#15-1. Woodland Scenics New G Scale People.

The new Woodland Scenics figures have arrived and are made in the 1 to 22.5 scale (the same as LGB). The first twelve sets represent white males except for set # 2524 which includes a dog, a cat and a trash can. The figures are nicely sculpted and list at between \$10.00 an \$25.00 per set. The single person sets are the \$10.00 ones while the sets which contain several figures are more expensive. Street price should run at least 20% less than list. The most expensive set contains two men playing checkers, two boxes, a barrel with checker board and a large dog (see picture).



New figures. Photo by Mary Ann Eberbach

The figures are made of a resin which cuts and sands nicely. This allows for modification of the people (within reason). The surface also takes paint and stain nicely (see below). Always read instructions first. This will allow you to make persons of color should you desire to add some variety to your railway. Always check the package as a few of mine came broken and required minor gluing. The first series of twelve sets includes a man with bench and two dogs, checker players, a dock worker with a crate, a dog with cat on trash can, two hobos, two mechanics, a porter, a conductor, a man with suitcase, and a cop eating a doughnut.

#15-2. Have you ever used The Detailer?

Yes, and I love the product. The Detailer is a set of six detailing washes. For years model railroaders have made black washes for detailing scenic items from India ink and alcohol. However, The Detailer gives you black, blue, brown, green, red and yellow stains. For example using these washes on the above figures allows you to vary the color of the people and gives a nice flat finish. These washes highlight the features on the people and bring out the details. Always read the instructions first and try the product on a surface of the figure that will not show. I use Q-tips to apply the product and to remove the excess. The longer the wash is left on the item the darker the color becomes. In a small clean container you can mix the various colors together to give you a variety of hues, just as there are in nature. While the product is water based and cleans off your hands well, I do not recommend getting the material on your good clothes. Always test first but the material should work on various resins, woods, plastics, plasters, papers and even painted surfaces. The Detailer is available from Micro-Mark, 340 Snyder Ave, Berkeley Heights, NJ 07922. Ask for their free catalog.

#15-3. Why has The Module Committee said that we should all use metal wheels on our rolling stock?

There are many good reasons for all of us to use metal wheel sets on our equipment. First they add weight to our cars which makes them less likely to derail. Next they lower the center of gravity of our rolling stock so that our cars will go through the switches and curves better. The biggest reason is that metal wheels attract less dirt than plastic wheels and will help keep our module tracks cleaner. All of these reasons are just as important for our own railways as they are for our club's railroad. We do need to be careful as there are several manufacturers of metal wheels and not all have the same axle length. You will find that Bachmann, Hartland and some others use a shorter axle than Aristo Craft, U.S.A. and etc. In some trucks it does not seem to matter but in others the wrong wheel sets will not work. The same brand products may have some variances year to year. There are also cars with big (diameter) wheels and other of the same brand that have small wheels. Another issue involving wheels is that some makers have wheels with ball bearings on the axles. These wheel sets have less friction and allow you to pull more cars with your present locos. Having said all of this, I think that it is a great idea to switch over to metal wheels. I have been doing this for several years and will continue to do so. Metal wheels are available from several sources so shop around for the best deal. You should see real improvement in your railroad.

Editors Rant

Last month Roy Eberbach's opinion column discussed some problems with Saint Aubins, the large mail order dealer. This touched off a spirited exchange of e-mails both praising and castigating Saint Aubins. The praise tended to focus on prices and the wide range of products carried and the

negative comments focused on customer service. At one point we were considering removing the link to this dealer from our web site. In the end it was decided to leave the link but include a flag noting that several members had experienced difficulties in resolving problems with orders from Saint Aubins.

One other point came out in all this discussion that bears repeating to the general membership. That is that 22nd Street Ace Hardware is carrying a broad range of G products and offers good prices plus a 5% discount for club members. It is to our benefit to support this effort whenever we can, as having a wide range of products available in town works to our advantage. It has been a long time since Tucson has seen as broad a range of G products available for review and purchase as that at 22nd Street and we would all be the poorer if we don't do everything we can to help this effort.

Recreational Railroading

With the National Garden Railway Convention being held in Denver this year (August 12-15) I know many members are planning to drive to the convention and then take a few extra days to visit the many railroads and railroad museums in the area.

To help plan those railroad oriented excursions it might be a good idea to pick up a copy of the May issue of Trains magazine. According to the publishers, it will include their 2004 Guide to Recreational Railroading listing museums, tourist rail lines, dinner trains and more.

Control Choices

By Dick Izen

From time to time I get calls from club members who want to talk about remote control and battery operation. I thought it might be a good idea to review the choices we all face in deciding how to control trains running on our garden railroads.

Basically there are three choices; **track power controlled from a transformer** or power supply, **remotely controlled track power** and **individual locomotive control**. Just to make things a little more complex the last also offers the choice of control signals sent through the track or radio control signals. The important thing to remember is that there is no absolute right and wrong choice. Each of the options has positives and negatives. Lets look at each option.

Track Power Controlled from a Transformer

This is the way things come from the factory. Put an engine on the track, connect two wires from the track to the power supply, turn the power on and off you go. Simple, straightforward and easy. Any guest can run his trains on your track and you can run any powered unit direct from the box with no need to alter what the manufacturer has provided. Accordingly it is also the least expensive option. Further if you are only going to

run one engine at a time it is probably sufficient for what you need. There are, however some drawbacks.

The first of these is that you need to keep the track clean to ensure good electrical contact between the track and the locomotive.

Secondly you have to do some slightly more complex wiring if you are going to have a reversing loop. This is not a huge deal but it is necessary to avoid short circuits. It involves reversing switches and electrically isolated sections of track. Usually the reversing switches are mounted on a panel near the transformer so that you can control speed and direction from the same place.

If you want to run more than one locomotive on a single loop of track, you need to electrically isolate sections (or blocks) of track so that you can slow or stop the faster train and keep it from running into the rear of the slower one. Again, this is not difficult but it does result in a more complex control panel.

Finally, you have to remain near the transformer to control the trains instead of following them around the layout.

Remotely Controlled Track Power

This is the option that the club uses on its modular layout. In this option you place a radio receiver / controller between the transformer and the track, turn the transformer on to full power and control the amount of electricity going to the tracks with a hand held radio transmitter. This lets you move about with the train and control it's speed and direction from any place in your yard. Further since each individual block has its own receiver / controller, wiring is simplified and you don't need a control panel.

With this option you still have to keep the track clean and avoid short circuits. Since transmitters can control multiple receivers, you can use a distinct receiver for each block or electrically isolated segment of track. This is what we do on the club's modular layout. Each loop of track has two distinct blocks. While all four blocks on the two loops could be controlled from one transmitter, we use separate 'inner loop' and 'outer loop' transmitters to make things less confusing for the engineers.

Individual Locomotive Control

This is the most flexible but requires alteration of the locomotive to place a receiver / controller into the locomotive itself. These systems can be divided into those that rely on control signals being transmitted through the track and those that transmit control signals via radio.

Recently several manufacturers have begun to provide "remote control ready" locomotives so that installing the receiver is a relatively easy plug in option. Unfortunately the manufacturers have each gone with a different system and these are not compatible with each other.

Lets look first at systems that require track power and rail clean enough to receive signals directed to each engine. The three that come to mind are LGB's proprietary system which they call MTS (Multiple Train System), MTH's DCS (Digital Command System) and Bachmann which says its new engines are DCC (Direct Computer Control) ready with several after market DCC providers available. Because these systems transmit signals through the rails to the engine two or more of them can not be used on the same loop of track at the same time. Further, since they require control signals through the track, they are not good candidates for battery operation.

On the radio control side, Aristo-Craft offers a system called Train Engineer (which is currently marketed under the Crest brand name), RCS (Remote Control Systems) offers its own system, and Keithco offers Locolinc. A new radio control / battery DCC system is being offered by CVP Enterprises. CVP apparently requires a base station hard wired to the track, however, so they seem to still require clean track to transmit the signals. The other three of these systems transmit their control signals through radio transmitters and ignore contact with the track. They can, therefore, be used either with track power or batteries. Since these units do not transmit control signals through the track they could all be used on a single block or loop of track.

With individual locomotive controls you can run different locomotives at different speeds and in different directions on the same track. Trains can speed up or slow down independently of each other which allows you considerable flexibility. These systems also have a memory function so you can get the trains running and then ignore them.

Since you control each locomotive you don't need to have blocks in your track to slow down or speed up trains. If you run with track power you still have to keep the track clean and avoid short circuits at reversing loops. If you run on unpowered track (with batteries), you can ignore the need to insulate sections of the track to avoid short circuits at reversing loops. With these systems less wiring is required for reverse loops, as the direction of travel is independent of track polarity.

The biggest drawback of these systems is that they require installation in the locomotive which may result in warranty problems and the cost of equipping each of your engines with a receiver / controller. Also radio transmitted signals can be 'lost' if the train is too far away or there are things that reflect and distort the radio signal.

Summary

Which way is best is really up to what you want to do with your railroad. Within the club we have users and proponents of all of the ways of controlling trains.

Minutes of General Meeting

Respectfully submitted by Ellen Stoesser

The meeting was held at the home of Bill & Barbara Dillon on March 20, 2004.

Pres. Nick Buchholz called the meeting to order and thanked the Dillon's for hosting.

Guests and new members were warmly welcomed. 62 members attended the meeting.

The minutes of the February meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's Report was approved by the members. We have a current account balance of \$6,710.17. Revenues to date for fiscal year 2003-2004 are \$8,855.85 and expenses \$4,995.05 for a net increase of \$3860.80. Revenues for the Home Tour were \$4,757, with expenses of \$483.96. Net gain for the event is projected at \$4,273.04. We currently have 89 paid memberships.

Editor's Report: Dick Izen again gave out the Members Handbook.

Vice President's Events Report: Nick had a sign-up sheet for the Home Show, as more members are needed to do repairs and work the shifts. The Fair Commission is requiring a daily sign-up sheet of all TGRS workers from us. So you must be signed up to work to get in the fair. Where we will park, and how the badge system is going to work is being checked out. We will be in Old Pueblo Hall.

Committee Reports:

Membership: There were name tags for members. We now have 89 members.

Mentors: Joe Stoesser would like new members to see him if they need a mentor to get their layout started, he also has hats, shirts and decals for sale.

Module: Joe Duda showed and explained how the new magnetic module board will work. Later on the racks will be numbered to show where the numbered modules will go.

Education: Janet Mitchell reported the Green Valley Presentation has been canceled. The committee felt the expense of a new digital projector was not worth it. They are looking for a small TV to use at the fair. Several were offered to them.

New Venues: Roy Eberbach would like all the members of the newly merged New Venues and Permanent Layout Committee to meet after the meeting. Any other members who would like to join are welcome..

Old Business: The TBG layout has been taken down. Gary Martin will meet with TBG to discuss changes for next year. TBG would buy their own equipment and we

would help set it up and help run it. Any donation of equipment to the TBG is tax deductible.

Meetings: All meeting dates for 2004 are filled. See newsletter or board for dates and times.

Trailer Purchase; The club approved a motion to buy a high quality trailer. The price of the trailer would be in the \$6,000.00 range. The board will discuss more about purchasing the trailer at the board meeting. We will be renting the storage space on a month to month basis. The balance of the money would be due in June for the trailer and if all members pay their dues on time it will be OK. The end of the year would be tight, but with the 2005 "Rails in the Garden Tour" we would be solvent again.

County Fair Set-Up: Repairs to be done: Corners to be a fixed assembly, wiring corrected, and repair bridges. All members welcome.

Modules: We will not be buying any new modules until January, 2005. Members are encouraged to bring theirs to the County Fair.

New Business:

Presentations: Presentation Awards were given to Jay Sanders and Jerry Springstead for their work on the round about committee. Billboards were given to all of the hosts of the round about – Roy & Mary Ann Eberbach--- Glen & Janet Mitchell--- Gary & Peggy Martin--- Mike & Jane Dorgan--- Rick & Sue Gast--- Bob & Jean Hoffmann--- Loyal & Marty Hart--- Garb & Dorothy Mechigian--- and Jerry & Pat Springstead.

Nick has covers for additional billboard signs, if anyone wants some.

Board Meeting: April 6-7:00 PM at Norm & Ibbey Ulmer's

Announcements: Nick has Railfest and Verde Canyon Railroad schedules.

Bob Dirkson asked "why we were not in the Garden Railways any more"? Nick said the postcard had been mailed back to GR".

Next meeting will be on May 15, 2004 at Herb & Terry Hoffman's home at 1:00 PM

For Sale

Jim Cook was approached by a local man at the GATT show asking if he knew of anyone who would be interested in purchasing his LGB Amtrack Express set. If you are interested please contact the man directly. His name is Tom Oger and his telephone is 722-0076.

Hats and Shirts

The club has several styles of shirts and caps embroidered with the club logo. Members are asked to wear their club shirts as well as their badges when working on club displays.

This helps to identify club members to the public so that they can ask for more information about garden railroading.

If you don't have a club shirt or cap yet, please contact Joe Duda. The shirts are available in a tan cotton knit (polo shirts) with or without a pocket and in blue denim with long or short sleeves. The caps are adjustable and one size fits all.

New Members

The TGRS welcomes new members Bill Streever and Robert and Denise Current (and their son Teddy).

Medical Update

In addition to having Bill Dillon recover from his operation enough to host a meeting, it was a pleasant surprise to see Augie Gustillo up and around at last month's meeting. Augie, as you will remember, recently underwent bypass surgery.

The Tucson Garden Railway Society is a non-profit corporation incorporated in Pima County, Arizona. Society members are interested in all areas of garden and modular large scale railroading. We welcome new members and hope you will consider joining. Members help each other build layouts and learn about railroading and modeling. The TGRS dues are \$30.00 per year and are due on June 30th of each year. For new members dues are pro-rated at \$2.50 per month remaining in the year until June 30th plus a \$15.00 initiation fee, the first year. Additional name badges cost \$1.00 for each badge after the first.

If you are interested in the TGRS please contact one of the officers at the phone number listed in the Calendar section below. If you wish to join immediately, send a check and your name, address and telephone number and the names for any additional badges to:

Ibby Ulmer
4935 N. Craycroft Road
Tucson, AZ 85718

Calendar of Events

April 6	BOD meeting at Ibby and Norm Ulmer's home - 7:00 PM
April 12-14	Set up for Pima County Fair beginning 10:00 AM on Monday the 12 th - Fairgrounds
April 15-25	Pima County Fair – Fairgrounds - 9:00 AM to 10:00 PM daily
May 15	Regular meeting at Herb & Terry Hoffman's home - 1:00 PM
June 19	Regular meeting at Barb & John Madden's home – 9:00 AM
June	Possible Home Show – Dates will not be known until April
July 17	Regular meeting at Jean & Bob Hoffman's home – 9:00 AM
Aug 12-15	National Garden Railway Convention – Denver
Sept 18	Regular meeting at Jane & Mike Dorgan's home – time TBD
Oct 16	Regular meeting at Jan & Lou Sleeper's home – 10:00 AM
Nov 20	Regular meeting at Mary & Ken Karrels' home – 1:00 PM

TGRS Officers and Board of Directors

President:Nick Buchholz.... 520-744-4932	At Large Board Members
V-President: Norm Ulmer.....520-299-9401	Bob Dirkson.....520-742-9503
Secretary:Ellen Stoesser.....520-577-1210	Roy Eberbach.....520-531-1087
Treasurer:Willis Fagg.....520-760-0147	Bob Hoffman.....520-825-6967
Editor:Dick Izen..... 520-498-4634	Joe Stoesser.....520-577-1210

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