



# Tucson Garden Railway Society's

## Time Table

Society web site: <http://tgrs.homestead.com>

Editor e-mail: [dizen@aol.com](mailto:dizen@aol.com)

March, 2005

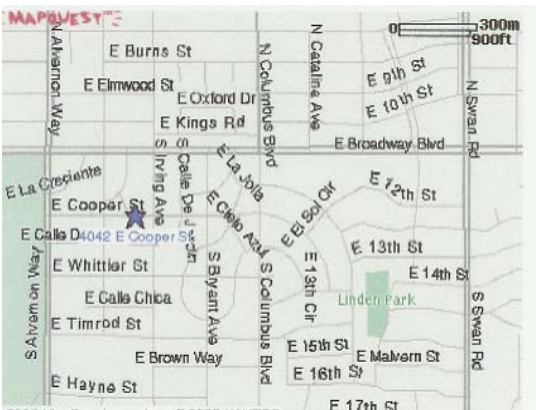
### This Month's Meeting

This month's meeting will be on March 19<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 PM at the home of

Gina and Barry Blackwell  
4042 E. Cooper Street  
Tucson, AZ 85711

Telephone: 322-5033

### Directions to Meeting:



From the West side, take Broadway to Alvernon, turn right (South) and the second left will be Cooper Street. Follow about a block and a half to 4042.

From the East side, take Broadway to Irving Drive and turn left (South) on Irving. The first cross street is Cooper. Turn right (West) to the address.

### The Railroad

The Rock Bottom Railroad is a four year work in progress. There are about 300 feet of main line with a 40 foot mining loop and an 80 foot point to point trolley line.

The layout includes a water fall, a stream and a 12 foot double track tunnel shared by the main and trolley lines.

The name, Rock Bottom, describes both the terrain and the financial condition of the railroad. The builder is a lover of puns and has incorporated several into the layout.

### To our friends in TGRS,

By Roy and Mary Ann Eberbach

Thank you for you prayers, calls, cards and concern during Roy's recent sickness. The good news is that it was not a blood clot or stroke. The bad news is that it is congestive heart failure. With diet and meds all should move along well. Special thanks to Jerry Springstead for his visit to the hospital. We look forward to seeing you at future meeting and the garden tour next month.

### 2008 National Garden Railway Convention Layout Tours – TGRS Participation

by Glenn Mitchell – Convention Layout Subcommittee

Although 2008 may seem a long way off, planning for the 2008 National Garden Railway Convention is in full swing and a big part of any convention is the layout tours. The 2008 convention is no exception with layout tours tentatively planned for portions of all four convention days, plus before and after the "official" convention days. The following table describes the currently planned layout tour schedule.

	<u>Day/Date</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Busses</u>
Monday	4/28 (1)	Tuc/Phx	No
Tuesday	4/29 (1)	Tuc/Phx	No
Wednesday	4/30	Phoenix	Yes
Thursday	5/1 (2)	Tucson	Yes
Friday	5/2	Phoenix	Yes
Saturday	5/3	Phoenix	Yes
Sunday	5/4 (3)	Tuc/Phx	No

**Notes:**

- (1) Layouts open for attendees arriving early
- (2) All day bus tour to Tucson
- (3) Layouts open for attendees remaining in area after convention

All of this tour activity is dependant upon there being club members desiring/willing to open their layouts for display. For planning purposes the Convention Committee would like to know the level of TGRS interest in participating in the layout tours. The layout subcommittee needs to begin planning the number of layout to be open, creating maps and directions to layouts, starting a collection of layout descriptions, planning for help for the host families during open hours, and etc. If you are interested in opening your layout for the 2008 convention, please respond with the following information:

Date(s) – pre-convention, 4/28 and/or 4/29; convention bus tour, 5/1; post-convention, 5/4.

Level of interest – definitely want to participate; probably interested; probably interested, but unsure at this time.

Preliminary layout info – size (do you consider your layout compact, medium or large) [All sizes should be on the tour]; do you consider your layout to be disabled accessible; any other preliminary info you want to supply.

The layout subcommittee would like to get an initial indication of interest by the end of March. You can respond to me as follows:

Email: [gemitchell.az@comcast.net](mailto:gemitchell.az@comcast.net)

Phone: 520-743-9263

In-person: at the TGRS March meeting (3/19)

## New Material

The following article is by Greg Hunter of Australia who is an excellent modeler whose railroad has been featured in Garden Railways. His very interesting website is <http://www.users.bigpond.com/huntergpmj/qregs/ghome.htm>

Greg has devoted a great deal of time to developing inexpensive ways of Garden Railroading. His track is aluminum strip slotted sideways into wooden ties which he has sawn and slotted himself. He is a consummate modeler but refuses to purchase what he can make himself. For example his wheels are turned from nylon on a lathe in his basement.

When I visited Greg in Australia, I was impressed by a beautiful arched stone bridge which he told me was carved from Hebel, a concrete material. He has now located a source for this material in the United States. (see notes

at end of article) Greg recommends this material as being strong, weather resistant and easy to carve.

## HEBEL concrete blocks for Garden Railways

By Greg Hunter and reprinted from his web site with his permission.

'Hebel' is the trade name of aerated concrete blocks that are very lightweight. They consist of many small holes (1-2mm dia) in a white concrete. They are a CSR product – You can buy Hebel blocks in sizes 600mm x 200 x thick, where the thickness can be 50,75, 100, 150 or 200mm. (That's 2'x8' x 2", 3", 4", 6" or 8")

They cost from \$5-\$10 per block. They are fine outdoors and are perfect for Garden Railway buildings and structures (eg bridges, piers)

The 50mm thick ones are relatively brittle - I broke a few in the car boot, just by laying them down flat on the drive home from the hardware store. So treat them gently!

The picture below shows the rough texture you get on the 'big' sides of the blocks and the smoother finish on the tops and ends.



Here's a couple of my structures: The first picture shows the church with the main wall rough finish and the buttresses and window surround with a 'plaster' finish. The church is a hollow building made from 50mm thick blocks, glued together with water based silicone.



The station building is two, 150mm blocks sitting in top of one another, without any glue.



The big viaduct is the most imposing hebel structure I've made. It took 6 months and lots of dust to make! Each arch is a 200x200mm block. The arches were 'cut' out by drilling many holes through from each side, then chiselling and angle grinding. Other people have had success by making curved templates from pineboard and using the bush saw.

The piers are 75mm blocks. The parapet is individual 25x25mm blocks glued on with hebel cement.



### CUTTING AND SHAPING

To cut it you can use normal wood saws, but they will get blunt pretty quickly. I now use a bush saw (bow saw?) It's like a big hacksaw with a replaceable blade. I find that even after a blade is no longer sharp enough to cut tree limbs etc, it still rips through Hebel!

You can drill it with wood drill bits but they too get blunt, so I use masonry bits where possible. But if I don't have the masonry bit size I need then I use the wood bit. I've used wood hole saws too.

An angle grinder is the best tool for getting rough shapes, but it makes lots of dust, so wear a mask! You can chisel it with sharp wood

chisels. Then a rasp and files for finishing and even sandpaper.

You can cut it down to 10mm thick if you are very careful, but 30mm is about the min for handling without breaking accidentally.



### JOINTING

You can drive nails into it. I use galvanised nails and sometimes predrill smaller holes so I don't need as much hammering force.

You can buy special Hebel cement but it only comes in 20kg bags at around \$20 a bag. It is good stuff, like very smooth, sticky concrete and takes colour the same as the Hebel so joints don't show up much. But the large quantity goes off in the bag so I have only ever used it the once.

Normal concrete can be used OK. I have also used 'normal' exterior grade silicone as used in bathrooms etc. But you have to make sure not to get ANY on visible surfaces.

But the best I have found is Fullers Ultra Clear water based sealant. It is white when it comes out of the tube, but dries clear. When dry it is waterproof. It's a bit like very thick PVA white glue!

### FINISHING

The surface can be carved out with a 1" wood chisel or even a steel ruler. You don't need a hammer, just push 'scratch' along the surface. This can leave parts 'standing out' for relief. This is quite fast to do - the front wall of the station (pic at top) took less than 30 minutes to do all the fancy quions around the windows!

Lines can be carved into the surface to represent stone blocks. Use a hacksaw blade or old screwdriver. Even a knife blade for narrow lines such as for brickwork, but this is getting a bit 'fine' for the size of the air holes and they tend to get 'lost'. Scribing lines takes longer especially the short vertical lines.

The first picture shows scribing 'blocks' onto the surface with a hacksaw blade.





The second one shows scrapping the surface down to leave some parts higher - eg around windows.



I have also used a very watery wash of plaster to fill in the little holes where I want a smoother surface. This can be coloured with cement oxide or painted.

### COLOURING

I have never painted my Hebel. I use the oxides (used for concrete colouring). I've got black, brown, red (very dark) and yellow. Just mix in water and paint on with an old brush, scrubbing it well into the little holes. It weathers nicely (some runs off in the first rain), but may need recoating after 5 years or so. Horizontal surfaces like the tops of walls, do not last as long as vertical surfaces.



These are examples of the finishes possible. The left window 'frames' have a thick plaster coat. The wall is the 'chiselled' finish and the buttress had a thin wash of plaster and then the blocks carved with a knife.



The bridge had no plaster, just a rasped surface and lines scribed with the old tile cutter.

### Notes

Greg reports that Hebel is sold in the U. S. as Hebel-ACC which apparently stands for 'AutoClaved' or aerated 'Cement' and is distributed by E-Crete of 6617 North Scottsdale Road, Suite 203, Scottsdale, AZ 85250. Their phone number is (888) 432-7383 or (480) 586-3819. I haven't called yet to find out if there is a Tucson supplier.

## Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting

Respectfully submitted by Ellen Stoesser

February 15, 2004-7:00 P.M. at the home of Norm & Ibbly Ulmer.

All Board Members were present.

November minutes were approved.

### Treasury Report:

- Willis Flagg reported:
1. A current account balance of \$2,285.72.
  2. Revenues to date for fiscal year 2004-2005 are \$2,714.80 and expenses \$1,957.94 for a net increase to date of \$756.86.
  3. One open commitment of \$1000.00 to repay the "cash flow" loan from Gary Martin.
  4. Total membership to date 84.
  5. Treasury Report was approved.

### Events:

- Pima County Fair
1. Norm Ulmer is working on the Pima County Fair event which will begin on April 14 at 6 P.M. and end on Sunday the 24<sup>th</sup>. We will be in the Old Pueblo Building with set up starting on Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup> and continue till opening night with the same amount of space or more. Hours will be from 10:00-10:00 with either 2-6 hour

shifts or 3-4 hour shifts. Norm would like everyone to sign up for a morning and an evening shift in order to get passes, photo ID's will also be used.

We will raffle off an American prototype train starter set. Joe Stoesser and Willis Fagg will select the starter set.

2. **Toy Train Show** will be held twice this year at Rodeway Inn. We will set up the Children's Layout at the show in June.

3. **American Home Show** is in June, more information to follow later.

**Education:** Janet Mitchell and Bob and Phyllis Dirkson did a presentation at the R.C.W Railroading Club. They are just starting and were very thankful for the all the help and information given to them.

**Membership:** Ibbey Ulmer reported we had 4 more families join us.

**Mentors:** Joe Stoesser reported that all the new members have had mentors assigned to them. He would like all the new members to attend the meetings. Norm suggested maybe a list be kept for follow up to see how they are doing.

**Modules:** Joe Duda is working on a booklet showing different layouts, from a simple circle to more interesting layouts to be used for set ups. Norm also showed a drawing of the inside of the trailer showing where everything should go after an event. After the Rails in the Garden Tour, we are going to look at making racks for the corner modules.

Jim Cook asked about the broken Styrofoam on the modules. It was decided we would try to do better maintenance as it is needed for the track profile use and to deaden the sounds, also for a place to put the people in.

**Raising the modules to 24"**. Joe D. will make a list of the things that would be needed to do this, such as, new skirting, extending the lift bridge and the walk over.

**Point to Point Modules:** There was much discussion on this issue. Crossovers, reversing, using of the modules we now have. The matter was shelved until more ideas are discussed and investigated.

Main Points of the Point to Point:

1. These should be able to stand alone or be incorporated with the regular layout.
2. They should have fold up legs and regular layout legs.
3. They should be no longer than 8 ft., and an adult should be able to reach across it.

There should be a town side and an industrial side. The matter was shelved until more ideas are discussed and investigated.

**Rails in the Garden:** Bob Dirkson reported that the week of the 28<sup>th</sup>, volunteers would be at Ace on 22<sup>nd</sup> to sell tickets. If any of the sites feel you need more people for the Rails in the Garden or the Round-a-Bout contact Bob.

**Tucson Round-a-Bout:** 36-39 people are coming from Phoenix. Norm will meet them when they arrive at 9:30. They will tour the 6 sites with lunch at the Dorgan's in the Club House. There will be a table to sell rolling stock. A budget for the day, not to exceed \$400.00 was approved.

**Nominations:** People are needed to fill the position of Editor and Vice President. Duties of the Vice President:

1. Perform the duties of the president in their absence
2. Establish programs for the education or entertainment of the members at regular meetings.
3. Schedule and coordinate activities at non TGRS functions
4. Perform any duties assigned to them by the President. Our charter states that it is the VP's choice to do things himself or have committees or event captains as was done with the V. A. Hospital and the Rails in the Garden tours. All members should be ready to assist him in all phases of his duties as needed or requested.

**Venues:** Chuck Cook is working on a simple layout for the Challenger Little League. It would be held outside in the morning for 4 hours. No date has been set. He is also working with Big Brothers and Sisters, more info to follow.

**Publicity:** Rails in the Garden information is being put into the monthly and weekly events calendar. Flyers are being put in the RV parks. Bob also said "that of the 245 letters that went out, 45 have been returned for tickets and 6 were undeliverable".

**Tool Box:** Willis would like the club to get a new tool box and equip it with standard screwdrivers, pliers, tape, stapler, A list of the tools needed will be made. More at the next regular meeting on this.

No date was set for the next board meeting.

## Minutes of the General Meeting

Respectfully Submitted by Ibbey Ulmer, Acting Secretary

The meeting was held at the home of Gary and Peggy Martin at 4:00 pm.

New members, Marvin and Sandra Clark, were welcomed.

The minutes of the December meeting were approved.

**Treasurer's report:** Willis Fagg reported a Current account balance \$2,811.85.

Revenues to date for fiscal year 2004-2005 are \$3,264.80.

Expenses \$1,981.81 for a net balance of \$1,282.99.

Tours in the garden revenues to date are \$895.

Total membership to date is 85.

**Editor's report:** Dick Izen reminded members that they can get the newsletter via e-mail if they contact Norm Ulmer who will add them to the Yahoo list.

**Vice President's report:** Norm Ulmer announced the dates for the Pima County Fair. Set up will be April 12 and the event will be ten days, April 14 to 24. A sign up sheet was passed around. He would like 6 people per shift for running trains and/or selling raffle tickets. It will be in Old Pueblo Hall as last year. The question was raised as to whether we should shorten the shifts to 4 instead of 6 hours. The consensus was that due to the fact that there is a considerable commute involved, shorter shifts would not be practical. Car pools were suggested.

Norm announced that there will be a Toy Trains Operators Swap meet and a home show in June. Dates will be available at the next meeting.

**Module Committee** chairman, Joe Duda, reported that he would like to set up a work session to do maintenance and repair on the club engines.

**Education Committee** chairman, Janet Mitchel, reported that some folks from Rincon Country West Mobil Home Park approached them at the Home show and asked them to speak to them about Garden railroads. They did so and found that there are several people there interested in having a layout at the park. They have been given some space to do so and have started to raise funds for the project. The Mitchells and the Dirksens are acting as mentors. If anyone has rolling stock, track or anything else for sale, they might be interested. We already have one new member family from their group and more will come.

**New Venues Committee** chairman, Chuck Cook announced that they are planning to do the children's layout at the Challenger's Little League but the date has not been set. Phyllis Dirksen reported that we have had inquiries from the City of Marana and the Sierra Vista Home show. Also some friends who live in Winterhaven had inquired as to whether we might be interested in having a train in their yard during the Christmas season. Gary Martin said that the Tucson Botanical Garden may be

interested in our doing a layout again in the summer but there is nothing definite as yet.

#### **Old Business:**

Norm Ulmer announced that the **Arizona Big Train Operators** club in Phoenix will be touring six of our layouts on Saturday, February 26. There will be 36 people on the bus due to arrive at 9:30 and they will tour Shwab's, Hoffman's and Martins and then have lunch at the Club House near the Dorgan's. They will then tour the Dorgan's the Cook's and the Karrell's before leaving town. He announced that if our members have any stock or other items they would like to sell that they should bring them to Dorgan's club house to be displayed during the lunch break for the ABTO members who might be interested.

Bob Dirksen reported on the **Rails In The Garden Tour**. He announced that he was still looking for volunteers to help out at the Karrells those two days. Tickets will be sold at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Ace Hardware during the week before the tour and they are still available at Barbeques Galore. Ken Karrels announced that there will be notices in the Arizona Daily Star, the Tucson Citizen, and the Sahuaro News. It has appeared in the Garden Railroad magazine. Mike and Jane Dorgan have arranged for two radio stations to talk about it and one will be giving away tickets.

Dick Izen reported for the **Nominating Committee**. They are still looking for volunteers for Vice President and Newsletter Editor. Anyone interested please contact them.

A volunteer was needed to host the **May meeting** and Buzz and June Weaver offered to have it at their home in Green Valley.

#### **New Business**

There was a discussion of the possibility of every two months having regular repair and maintenance sessions on the club equipment. There has been some discussion of raising the display modules 6 inches. If that were done, the lift bridge and the access bridge would have to be raised as well. Members were asked to think about the possibilities.

#### **Announcements**

A. There will be an Arizona Division, N. M. R. A. Meet Saturday, March 5, the same day as our Tour.

B. Jerry Springstead announced that he is taking down his layout and distributed a list of what he is selling with prices.



C. Madelyn Cook announced that someone had left a couple of utensils and a table cloth at her house at the time of the Christmas party.

D. Ken Karrels announced that the Southern Arizona Transportation Museum will have it's Grand Opening on March 20 at 10 am. It will be the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the Railroad to Tucson.

## Bobber Caboose Conversion

Some time ago we published an article on converting the Bachmann 4 wheel "bobber" caboose to a short eight wheel caboose. Glenn Mitchell recently completed a similar conversion of an LGB 4 wheel caboose and sent along these pictures:



This is the LGB caboose as it came.



Here is the converted and repainted caboose before weathering.

Even without weathering the repainted and retrucked caboose looks much less toy like. In this picture Glenn hadn't yet removed all of the masking protecting the window glazing nor had he painted the window trim.



Final product in service on Glenn's railroad.

We could write entire articles on weathering but look how much better this caboose looks with some grey "dust" on the trucks, steps and around the bottom of the car.

## Southern Arizona Transportation Museum

On March 20, the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the railroad in Tucson there will be a grand opening of the new transportation museum in the historic down town Tucson depot at 414 N. Toole Avenue. The museum will be dedicated to the telling of the story of the railroad in southern Arizona and will include exhibits in the museum, the depot building itself and Southern Pacific steam locomotive 1673 in a ramada just outside the depot.

There will also be dedication of statues and a certainly non-historic gunfight reenactment to amuse children and adults with no interest in railroad history.

The ceremony will begin at 10:00 AM but Ken Karrels reminds us to get there early as down town Tucson parking is often a problem. The 20<sup>th</sup> is a Sunday and parking meters are not in operation on the weekends.

For persons interested in a \$30 a plate luncheon there will be a luncheon with Tucson Mayor Bob Walkup who will receive the first ever "Silver Spike" award. The luncheon will be at noon in the Hotel Congress banquet room. If you are interested please make reservations by March 15<sup>th</sup>.

The museum is a division of Old Pueblo Trolley, Inc. who are soliciting donations and volunteers. In addition to their Street Railway and Motor Bus divisions, the museum division is looking for docents.

## New Members

The TGRS extends a warm welcome to new members Sandra and Marvin Clark and Patricia and Ken Zacharias.

## Electronic News Letter

We have had a number of new members join in the past few months. I wanted to advise them that they can receive the news letter via e-mail. This allows them to view the photographs in color on their monitor and to print out a color hard copy.

Not only do e-mail subscribers get the news letter faster, they also get a better quality version while saving the club the cost of copying and postage.

To get your news letter via e-mail just tell Norm Ulmer that you want to be added to the Yahoo distribution list and make certain that he has your correct e-mail address.

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 30<sup>th</sup> of each year. For new members dues are pro-rated at \$2.50 per month remaining in the year until June 30<sup>th</sup> 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 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

**Mar 5-6 Rails in the Garden public open house – 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM both days**  
**Mar 19 Meeting at Gina and Barry Blackwell's home - 1:00 PM**  
**Mar 20 Grand opening of the Southern Arizona Transportation Museum – 10:00 AM**  
**April 14-24 Pima County Fair at fair grounds – Set up April 12, time TBD**  
**May 21 Meeting at June and Buzz Weaver's home – 10:00 AM**  
**June 18 Meetings at Mary Kerr and Nick Buchholz's home – 10:00 AM**  
**July 27-31 National Garden Railway Convention, Saint Charles (Chicago), Illinois**

### TGRS Officers and Board of Directors

<p><b>President:</b>.....Nick Buchholz.... 520-744-4932  <b>V-President:</b>..... Norm Ulmer.....520-299-9401  <b>Secretary:</b>.....Ellen Stoesser.....520-577-1210  <b>Treasurer:</b>.....Willis Fagg.....520-760-0147  <b>Editor:</b>.....Dick Izen..... 520-498-4634</p>	<p><b>At Large Board Members</b>  Chuck Cook.....520-888-3264  Bob Dirksen.....520-742-9503  Bob Hoffman.....520-825-6967  Joe Stoesser.....520-577-1210</p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Tucson Garden Railway Society**  
**12356 North Mount Bigelow Road**  
**Oro Valley, AZ 85737**