



## Meets

- February  
Open
- March 20  
Gary & Marilyn Siegel - Battery power.
- April 10  
Jean Waterman - Track and battery power.
- May 1  
Don & Linda Morgan - Track and battery power.
- May 15  
Gary and Cathy Raymond - 1:32 scale only - battery power.
- June 5  
John Power and Angela Wharton - Battery power.
- June 19  
Richard and Jo Ann Abraham - Battery power.
- July 17  
Gary and Marilyn Siegel - Battery power.
- July 24 & 31  
Ventura County Fair booth prep?
- August 7 & 14  
Ventura County Fair?
- August 28  
Sal and Deborah Mele - Track and battery power.
- September 18  
Gary and Marilyn Siegel - Battery power.
- October 9  
Jim and Sylvia Eldridge - Track and battery power.
- October 30  
Georges and Marie Arsenault - Battery power.
- November 20  
Gary and Marilyn Siegel - Battery power.
- December  
Open

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## JANUARY 2021

Happy New Year everybody. Like my grandchildren say, “Are we there yet?” The common refrain that I keep hearing goes something like, “Good riddance to 2020,” or “Hoping 2021 will be better.” Memes seem to have become the new way we communicate.

*Something like this.*

*Or perhaps this.*



*This meme got a guy fired. He was probably a crappy employee anyway.*

My plans

2020



♡ 26.3K 7:05 AM - May 19, 2020



### Ramblings

Just over a year ago I volunteered to do the GCGRS newsletter for a year. Well, this issue marks number 13 for me. If anyone is feeling like they have too much time on their hands and would like to try their hand at writing and editing, let me know and I will get you set up. (I can just see everyone chomping at the bit, uh huh). Actually there is a certain amount of satisfaction in a perverse kind of way in doing the newsletter. I had a lot of fun doing the club newsletters for seven years in the 1990's However after a few years I started to get a little bored, stir crazy, sarcastic and opinionated. It's a little difficult to stay excited and motivated when we are not having regular meets to write about. Even before this Covid year there has been a dearth of new large scale product offerings from the various manufacturers and so not much to write about there. For me at least, I need to do something more than to run my trains in a circle if the hobby is to remain interesting. I need to find ways to be creative, to explore new ideas and learn new techniques. So if the manufacturers aren't doing much that shifts the responsibility to me, to come up with ideas for new rolling stock, motive power, bridges, buildings and scenery. (Although there are actually many “mom and pop” businesses that continue to feature new items that are pretty cool). Just because Bachmann and MTH are asleep doesn't mean that we can't find many ways to make a great garden railroad. And this hearkens to a time when things like scratch building and “kit bashing” were more common. I actually think that this is a more satisfactory approach in the long run. I love seeing the creative stuff, the scratch-built structures, the 3-D printed engines, innovative electronics and the creative ideas such as Joe's turntable, John Ryan's “cassette,” or Sal's creative mechanical gems to name but a few. These are the things that make the hobby great and are the things that I love to feature in the newsletter.. I also love to include stories about the real railroads like Art's Donner Pass series. Just to fill up space I occasionally like to write about train robberies, wrecks and other assorted 1:1 railroad lore. Thanks to many of you who have sent articles and pictures about your projects and adventures. I love the creative work done in the GCGRS, sharing ideas about what works and sharing things that don't work. This month we will feature more about Donner Pass from Art Sylvester, news about Lamont Stolley's operations event, Georges' December meet, and I will share a little bit about my attempts at mountain building. Cheers and Happy New Year!

John Lyans



# *Mills Family Newsletter*

## Special Events in my Life this Year:

- \* I'm still alive, damn it
- \* I played some Bingo
- \* My hip acted up in April
- \* I found my missing socks
- \* My waffle iron broke
- \* The Buick needed brake pads
- \* I discovered three new moles
- \* I purchased some slacks
- \* I switched coffee brands



## *Good Tidings to All...*

It's been a busy festive season for Donald Mills. In addition to playing "Sheep #3" in the Pleasantview Seniors Christmas Pageant, my days have been full sifting through all of the "holiday newsletters" I've received from relatives, friends and people whose names sound vaguely familiar but who I can't quite place.



Since you're too damned busy to visit me in person or pick up the phone and call me once a year, I suppose I should be grateful that you've taken the time to e-mail me a self-aggrandizing two-page exercise in familial navel gazing.

Forget gifts, nothing says Christmas like getting spam from your nearest and dearest.

I hate to break it to you but I really don't give a dime store damn how much money your husband made last year or want an update on your giant schnauzer's urinary tract infection. And while your offspring's acceptance to law school may be a source of great relief, I wasn't losing any sleep over it.

And I also find your claim that every member of your family is destined for greatness hitherto unknown to man extremely suspect. Based on my fading recollections, I had them all pegged for lives of profound mediocrity. At best.

You may want to take a cue from popular culture and start focusing your newsletter less on the successes and more on the outrageous failings of your family. People are more interested in your nervous breakdown than in hearing about how much yarn you used when knitting Mitch's Reindeer sweater. They want to hear the details of Gary's public nudity arrest, not about the latest addition to his Norwegian stamp collection.



And we all get suspicious when one of your kids gets only a passing mention. If Bruce is in rehab again just say so. The cryptic "Bruce is still Bruce, LOL" just gives rise to unhealthy speculation about his ongoing penchant for robbing convenience stores and huffing paint fumes.

To be brutally honest, you might want to give the newsletters a damned rest altogether. People detest them. They're the modern day equivalent of forcing houseguests to watch a slide show of your vacation to the Goodyear Rubber Museum in Akron.

There will be ample opportunity to list all of your achievements in your obituary. Until then, take me off your damned distribution list and send me a fruitcake for Christmas instead.



Wishing you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



*Donald Mills*



# Georgetown



The crew at the Arsenault's meet in December. Super fun, not super-spreader





Great opportunity to run some long trains on Georges' railroad. You can see part of the new mountain line, (center, right).

Thanks Georges and Marie

## DONNER PASS WINTER TIME MAINTENANCE OF WAY

Art Sylvester

Donner Pass is fabled for the difficulties of maintaining a railroad route over it, especially during the winter snows. Most of you are too young to recall reading about the blizzard of January 13-16, 1952, that dumped 13 feet of snow on the Lake Tahoe/Donner Pass/Yuba Gap area. An astonishing 65 feet of snow fell during that month. The Southern Pacific Railroad's crack luxury streamliner, the City of San Francisco, plowed into a pile of avalanche snow on the 13<sup>th</sup> and was stranded for three days until the blizzard abated. You may read many accounts of the incident on the web and view many images of it.

To battle the snows on Donner Pass, the Southern Pacific Railroad built some iconic snow removal equipment that is still in use today, although much less frequently thanks to climate change over the years. The equipment is usually parked in the Roseville yards near Sacramento, but sometimes they are parked in the Truckee yards during summer time. I was able to photograph some of them when I worked in that area one summer.

These amazing monsters comprise three types of locomotive propelled machines that are nearly 100 years old and are still able to clear snow better than any other vehicle. A **flanger** is called out when there's only about a foot of snow to contend with. It clears the snow between the tracks and to each side of the tracks.



This is not my photo of an EsPee **flanger**, built in 1945, but it is the best I could find on the web. The plow spreads the snow outward from between the tracks to where it can be pushed farther off of the right-of-way by bulldozers or scooped up by front end loaders and hauled away. This machine is pushed by a locomotive.



More than a foot to maybe as much as a couple feet of snow brings out a **spreader** to clear most of the snow to one side or the other of the right-of-way, and then a **flanger** comes along afterward to finish the job. Two **spreader cars** are in this photo, coupled back to back, so this view shows the front and side of the spreader in the foreground. The big gray, rusted panel on the side of the car swings outward away from the side of the car to spread the snow away from tracks. Such panels are on both sides of the spreader. Another big rusty panel on the front can also be swung to push snow to either side of the tracks.



This splendid picture, taken and copyrighted by Ray Lewis, nicely shows a couple of EsPee diesel locomotives easing out of one of the Norden snow sheds, pushing a **spreader** that plows snow off and away from the right of way. It looks as though a spreader is also hooked on the other end of the consist so that it can operate in the reverse direction without having to turn the train around. The tracks left of the consist look as though they have been cleared by a flanger. Notice the cable affixed atop the locomotive behind the spreader; its purpose is to knock down icicles dangling from the tunnel and snow shed roofs.

Once snow depth is deeper than a couple feet, it is time to call out the behemoth rotary snow **blowers**. They are particularly effective burrowing into and clearing drifted snow many feet deep.



Two rotary snow machines in this photo are parked back to back, but when in use, they are separated and propelled by a couple of diesel locomotives. If the consist gets stuck going forward, it can work its way out of trouble by going backward and the rear blower does the work. The big rotary fans spin at 90 rpm and draw the snow into the machine, which then can be blown in either direction far from the right-of-way. These two giants were built in 1927 and originally ran on steam power; they were converted to diesel-electric power in 1952.



Snow blower in action blowing snow off to one side. Not my photo.

Even with all these machines, much hand work has to be done to clear ice and snow out of switches, switch stands, and flanges. Bulldozers and front end loaders clear snow where it has been blown or spread upon roads, railroad crossings, and yards.

Icicles dangling from tunnel ceilings require MoW attention in winter. I've seen some icicles in the abandoned tunnels that were 3 feet long and 6 inches thick, which, when the EsPee still ran through those tunnels and snow sheds, had to be clipped off by a cable that stretched abeam the locomotive or the spreader or flanger roof.



When things go awry, and they do, the MoW crew must call in heavy duty equipment, such as this monster 25 ton wrecking crane and its gondola. The smokestack on this giant implies that it may have been steam driven at one time if it is not to this day.

Donner Pass MOW crews have much to do during the summer, too, on a railroad that sees some of the heaviest traffic of almost any railroad in the country. I'll focus on that in a contribution in a future newsletter.

# Making Cement Mountains

John Lyans

Inspired by Gary Olmstead and Gary Siegel, I decided to try my hand at making some concrete mountains and embankments. I have used a somewhat different approach and here I detail my efforts. Joel Bragdon, <https://www.bragdonent.com/molds.htm>, makes an extensive line of rubber molds and weathering powders. He has a system using the molds to make lightweight, urethane castings but I find that the molds work equally well using type S cement mortar.



One of the molds ready to go. My first castings were made by just putting the mortar in the mold which worked well. However I picked up a refinement at the 2019 Garden Railway Convention in Portland. Ron Means and I attended one of the clinics where the instructor suggested putting some chicken wire in the mortar. Great idea, I'll show you why below.



Left: The chicken wire in place.



Right: Mixing the type S mortar



Mold release agent. I sprayed a release agent on to the inside of the rubber mold.. Some say to use vasoline, one guy on YouTube uses WD-40. I used Dawn dish detergent which worked great.



I first tried using metal lath (used behind stucco), but I quickly found out that this 1/2" square hardware cloth worked much better. It's easier to form to different shapes and the mortar is able to get through the mesh easier. The mortar will stay in place behind and in front of the mesh. Here I am using a Harbor Freight pneumatic stapler to tack the hardware cloth to my ladder roadbed.



The hardware cloth ready for mortar. I put the mortar on with a trowel and it easily filled in behind the mesh. On the right is a completed casting ready to place on the wet mortar. The chicken wire allows you to break the casting to fit around curves while still holding it together. Later you can fill the cracks, or not, to form natural looking faults in the rock work.



I like how the fault in the cliff face looks as a result of breaking the casting to fit around the curve.



In comparison is a section that I am not happy with. I just used the wet mortar and tried to carve it to look like rock work I'm going to mortar several of my castings over this section.



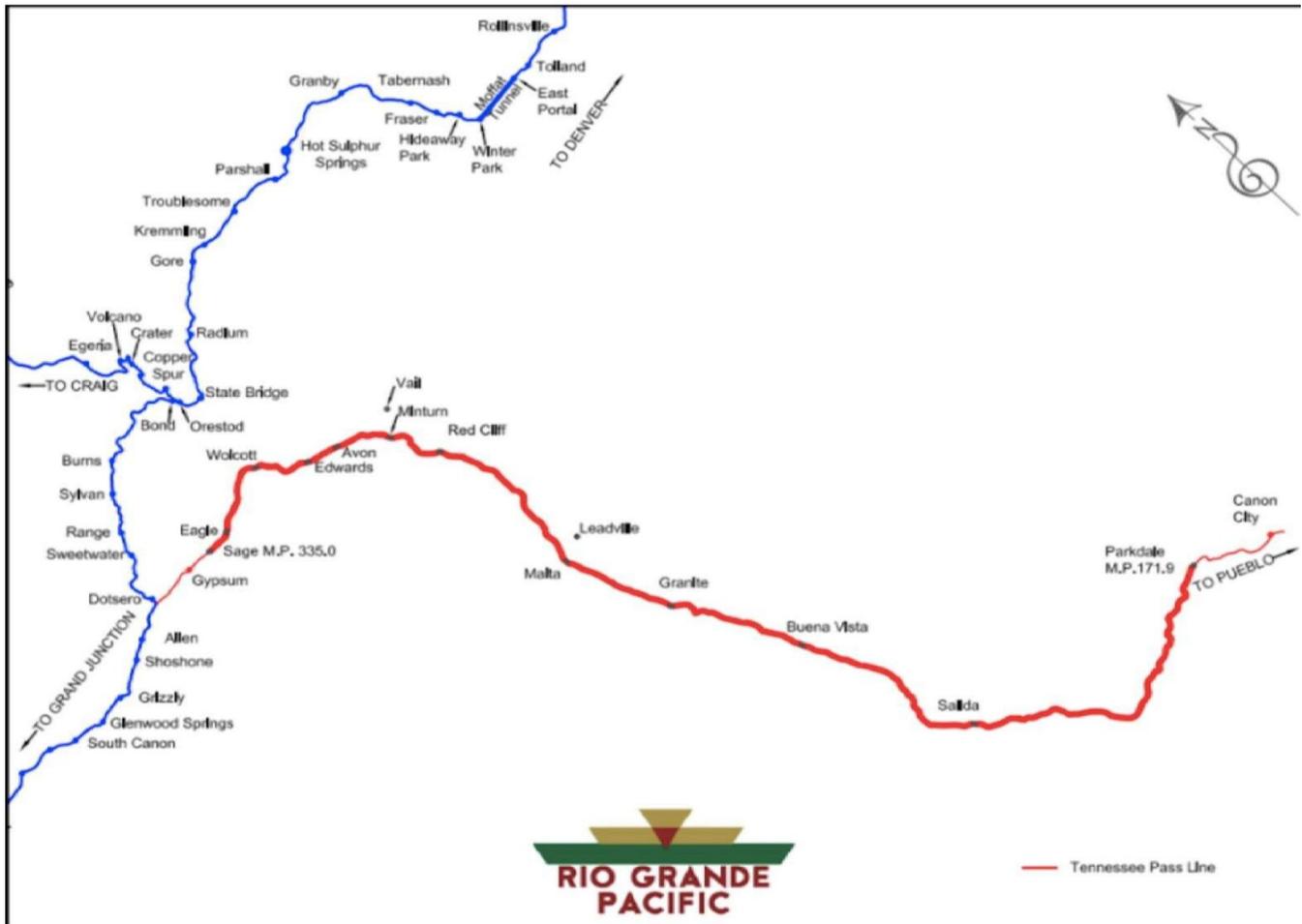
I'm pretty happy with the results. The resulting rock work can be colored with paint washes or left natural. I use both the regular gray and tan type S mortars. You can mix them together to form variations in color. These rubber molds from Bragdon Enterprises are great. They are made with high quality latex and are very durable. I highly recommend them. After I use the molds I clean them with some dish detergent and a bristle brush.

Seeing as how many of us love to model the D&RGW and successor SP, I thought this breaking story might be of interest. UP has been sitting on this line for many years, probably because they don't need to use it and they don't want the competition for their mainline through Wyoming.

## Deal may allow use on Tennessee Pass rail line

Line stretches from roughly Canon City to Eagle but has been little-used since the 1990s

Scott N. Miller  
Vail Daily  
January 1, 2021



The Colorado, Midland & Pacific Railway Company Thursday announced it has completed an agreement with the Union Pacific Railroad — shown here in red — for commercial use on the rail line from Eagle to Canon City. After decades of little to no use, rail service may return to the Tennessee Pass line. The Colorado, Midland & Pacific Railway Company announced Thursday it has completed an agreement with the Union Pacific Railroad for commercial use on the line, which stretches from roughly Canon City to Eagle. The Colorado, Midland is a subsidiary of the Rio Grande Pacific Corporation, which operates freight and passenger railroads in eight states. While an agreement is in place, a lot of work remains before trains will roll. “The real work is just beginning,” Colorado, Midland community liaison spokesperson Sara Thompson Cassidy said in a phone interview. A press release from Colorado, Midland noted that “Track and other infrastructure will require rehabilitation before any service can begin.”

Just what that service might look like remains to be determined, and railroad officials say they’ll work closely with local governments in Fremont, Chaffee, Lake and Eagle counties to help determine local and regional needs. The release also states that if there’s interest, the railroad will help public agencies find funding for establishing passenger rail service.



Eagle County Commissioner Kathy Chandler-Henry hadn't yet heard the news when contacted by phone. Chandler-Henry said she's intrigued by the news, and eager to learn more, particularly if the line could somehow be used for passenger traffic from Dotsero to Dowd Junction.

Regular use on the line — which dates to the late 1800s — ended in the mid-1990s. Until the Moffatt Tunnel was completed in 1928, the Tennessee Pass line was the primary way to link Eagle County with Colorado's Front Range, via Pueblo. Since the line was deactivated, locals have looked for ways to use the line, either for trails or rail use.

Union Pacific officials in the 1990s said the railroad wanted to keep the rails intact for future use. Since then, several ideas have come and gone.

In 2016, Christof Stork presented the Eagle County Commissioners with an idea for passenger and tourist service on the line.

In 2019, a hauler on Colorado's eastern plains submitted a \$10 million bid to Union Pacific to use the line for hauling agricultural products west from Kansas and Colorado.

"There's been lots of interest," Chandler-Henry said, particularly from local governments. "We've been looking at (the line) for some time."

*From Walt Thompson*



It's been a while since I last wrote a newsletter, October 2020. Much has happened and little has changed in that time frame. Well, at least for us. We hope and pray you and your family are doing well during these trying times. Our best wishes go out to each and all that you are healthy and doing OK during the pandemic.

I've promised a lot but deliver so little. Plans seem always to be greater than performance the more you age. November I turned 78 and next month Mary 75. Boy time has gone but when you are having fun.

We've been busy with a lot. We did put down a solid oak wood floor in our family room. yes, WE did it right after Mary painted over the red brick fire place with a medium gray color. Looks great. Also we've been totally involved in charity work.

I'm a member of a local council for the Knights of Columbus. Actually an officer of both the council and I'm the 4th degree Commander of the Honor Guard. Our Council has formed an agreement with a large company where we get brand new books (mainly) and toys that have been removed from big box stores. If we didn't take these it would be sent to the landfill. We get large Gaylord pallets full of these. So far over 300 pallets. A member lets us use a part of his companies large warehouse on the condition we move these items out quickly.

So, we have 180 charities in the Indianapolis area we supply and now hauling to 9 other states. We make no discrimination as to religion or politics but give it to all as long as nothing is sold but given freely to the poor. Over 160,000 items worth an estimated \$3.2 million have been distributed free of charge to all kinds of charities.

Mary and I rented a U-Haul truck and took 3 large pallets to Grand Rapids Michigan a week ago for distribution. This is a lot of FUN and we know were making a lot of parent and children happy as most don't have the funds to purchase such stuff. Going to make a lot of kids Christmas HAPPY.

I'm slowly converting a lot of detail castings to 3D prints. This is allowing for them to be sized now in N, S and O scales where before most were just HO scale. So, watch the website to see what's new in your scale. Also been busy with Steve at Rail Scale Models as he's coming out with new kits in N and HO scales with RSSM providing the detail parts so watch there also.

Whether you are Christian, Jewish or other we wish you a HAPPY HOLIDAY and GOOD HEALTH as we move forward into a New Year

Walt & Mary- Rusty Stumps Scale Models

**RUSTY STUMPS  
SCALE MODELS**  
<https://www.rustystumps.com/>

## 2021 Dues



### TREASURERS REPORT

Bruce Kuebler is in charge of collecting dues, keeping the membership roster updated and making the name badges. Dues traditionally were used to cover printing and postage for the newsletter and to pay for our December banquet. Now we have no printing or postage costs of which to speak. We do have some web hosting expense. Bruce reports that we have a surplus in our account, and he is wondering what we should do with it. Purchase some type of a club tool to share? What are your thoughts? Let me or Bruce know what you think?

**Reminder: Dues for 2021 are due: \$10 from January to December. Make checks payable to “Bruce Kuebler.”** Do you need a name badge? Let Bruce know and he can make you a badge.

There has been a suggestion that we use some of our excess funds to rehabilitate the Boulder Creek branch line on the Siegel's layout. Yes? No?

One tool that we might purchase as a club is a track odometer from G Scale Graphics. We would also purchase a car to mount the odometer and this “Odometer Car” could be used as needed by our group. Yes? No?

Track Odometer  
\$59.00

Mount our Track Odometer in a car of your choice to answer the question, "How many feet of track do you have?". The on-board display reads out in Feet or Meters traveled. Reset button resets back to 0 feet. Built-in calibration routine allows you to use it on any car with any wheel diameter. Magnets on a wheel trigger the reed switch. Powered by an on-board 9V battery (not included). Quick disconnect connector allows you to remove the track odometer from the car for normal everyday running.

