

Calendar

March 6, 2021
Lamont Stolley

Tentative meets:

March 13, 2021
Work/trestle construction at the Siegels.
Contact Lamont Stolley

March 20, 2021
Gary & Marilyn Siegel

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

Newsletter: John Lyons
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MARCH 2021

OK. Gold Coasters, here's the latest. Lamont and Barbara Stolley will be hosting a run on Saturday, March 6. Please bring your own food, and wear a mask. Lamont has been busy working on his railroad, making some improvements and getting the track ready to run. The railroad is set up for battery operation only and the tightest curvature is 4' radius, (8' diameter), so plan your consist accordingly. Lamont has some spectacular areas on the railroad, especially the large trestle that extends out over a steep hill towards Avenida de los Arboles situated far below. It's a very cool railroad with lots of opportunities for running and switching.

The following Saturday, March 13, is another work session that will entail some maintenance and bridge construction at the Siegel's. Lamont, Nick Conti and John Ryan have already spent a day building false work in preparation for installing a 12 foot trestle near a spot where the Boulder Creek line goes under the mainline. Lamont has bent and laminated the trestle stringers and he is in the process of building thirty-some trestle bents. The large curved trestle as the line leaves the Boulder Creek yard is a future project. This construction project would be a great way to learn about trestle construction if you have never done this type of work. If you can help Lamont, John and Nick on March 13, please let one of them know.



The Boulder Creek branch needs some attention and a trestle at this point.

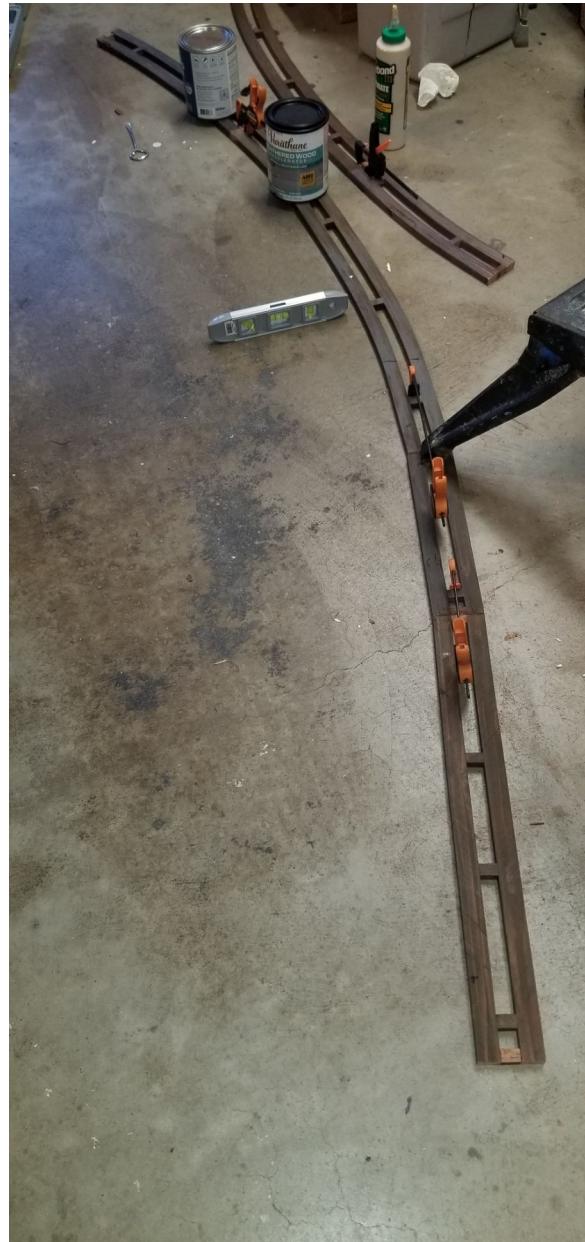
Work Party Report

Lamont Stolley, Nick Conti and John Ryan were able to accomplish quite a bit to fix up the Boulder Creek branch line.



Here is a view of the false work in place ready for the footings and trestle bents.





Left: Site ready to add the footings, bents and top stirnger

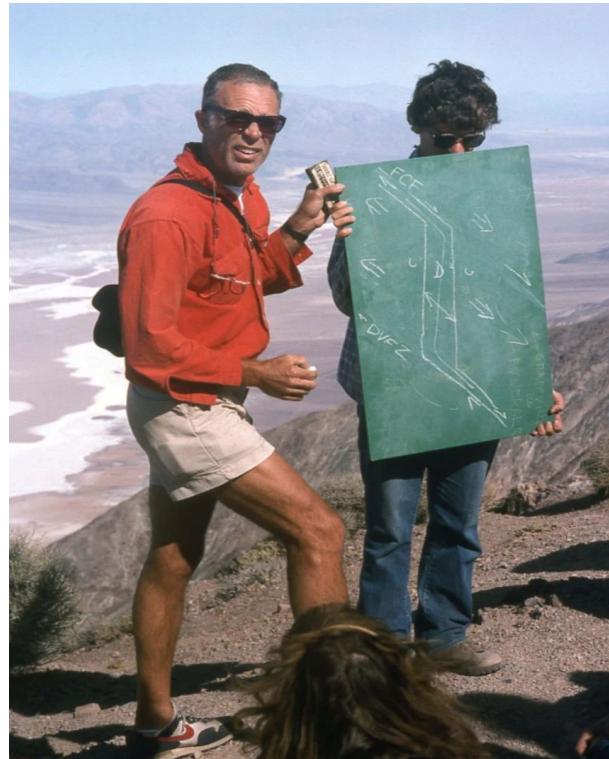
Right: The top stringer is glued and pre-bent to the correct shape in Lamont's garage

Lamont is planning another work session on Saturday, March 13 to install the footings bents and stringers. If you want to learn how to do a realistic looking trestle give Lamont a holler and he will give you the details. This area should look a lot different next month!

Bill Fincher forwarded this cool article about one of our GCGRS members. Rather than reprint it I have included a link to the article. Guess who?



Photo: Mark Hoover



Who is this young fellow?
Hit **Control**, then **click** on the link below
to view:

Club Member Featured in Article

Photo: Robert M. Norris

Ventura County Fair – Gary Olmstead (update: fair canceled for 2021)

I've just found out that the 2021 Ventura County Fair is scheduled to run from Wednesday, August 4 to Sunday, August 15. There aren't any other details yet, and probably won't be for a few more weeks, but in the past we had two weeks, plus one additional weekend to build our entry. Assuming that is true this year, that means the build stage will start Saturday, July 17.

In the meantime, we can discuss what we would like to do with this layout. The biggest complaint from our members last time was that they didn't own anything that could run on the very tight curves. The second biggest complaint was that there was only one train running at any time. I would like to get your thoughts on how to fix both of those problems. Available spaces run from 12x25 (our space in 2019), to 15x60 or 30x30. There are several sizes in between those. I would like to get your thoughts on these, or any other matters.

If you've never built a layout before, here is your chance to learn from experts. If you have built one before, here's your chance to teach some newcomers how it's done.

In the meantime, here are a couple pictures to remind you just how great it was.



A TRIP ON THE RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR

John Lyans

Even though I have been interested in railroads and trains most of my life, by the time I graduated from Brigham Young University in 1974 I hadn't been too focused on trains. My wife and I had moved into a new apartment complex in Provo, Utah and within a few days I became aware of a beautiful, streamlined passenger train that would go past our building every day, except Wednesday. Every Monday, Thursday and Saturday night at about 8:25 the train would go past our home headed west and then it would return every Tuesday, Friday and Sunday morning headed east. In the pre-internet age it was hard to find out much information about this mysterious stainless steel, dome car equipped beauty. The usual train consisted of an EMD F9-A, either two or three F9-B units, an ALCO PB-1, (that I later learned had been converted into a steam generator for heating the train), a combine, one or two coaches, one to four dome coaches, a diner or diner/lounge and an observation car.



The Rio Grande Zephyr at Provo, Utah. 1974. I was always partial to the "Covered Wagon," F units. 5771 was the head end power used on the RGZ except when it was down for maintenance or repairs.



I soon discovered that the Provo, D&RGW depot was only two blocks from our apartment. On Monday, Thursday and Saturday evenings during the summer, the local rail fan contingent would gather at the depot to await the arrival of the Zephyr. My wife and I learned from fellow rail fans that the RGZ was a remnant of the "California Zephyr," a three railroad partnership that once traveled from Chicago, Illinois to Oakland, California. The CZ traveled from Chicago to Denver on the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy (CB&Q), then from Denver to Salt Lake City on the D&RGW and finally from Salt Lake to Oakland on the Western Pacific, (WP). The "Q" owned three complete train sets, the WP owned two train sets, and the D&RGW owned one set of equipment. In 1971, with the formation of Amtrak, the D&RGW decided to not join Amtrak and elected to continue their portion of the CZ route from Denver to Salt Lake City. The train ran mostly during daylight hours and so they no longer needed their sleepers two of which were converted to coaches and the rest were sold to Ferrocarriles Nacionales de Mexico. Their baggage car, *Silver Antelope*, was sold to a Canadian railroad.



So we resolved to take a trip to Denver. I went to the Provo depot about a week before our planned trip to buy our tickets and the employee there at first told me that there was no train to Denver. After I persisted and told him that I saw the train stop here six days a week, he reluctantly let on that “maybe I could buy tickets on the train.” Wow, he was deliberately discouraging ridership. I was never able to determine if this was his own initiative or if this was company policy.

When the day of our trip arrived we went to the depot about 20 minutes before the train pulled in to the station at 7:50 am. Once we were on the train the attitude of the crew was completely different. It was obvious that the crew took great pride in their train. Everything was clean, the crew was professional and the service was great. The conductor sold us our tickets and we were soon enjoying breakfast in the *Silver Banquet* as the train began the ascent up Spanish Fork Canyon.

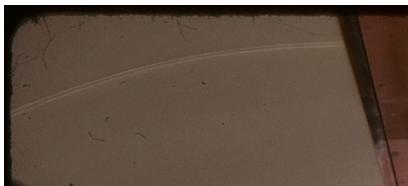


Departing Provo, Utah on the Rio Grande Zephyr, 1974



Riding in one of the Vista Dome coaches as the train ascends the 2.4% grade towards Soldier Summit, Utah

A younger version of me relaxing in the *Silver Aspen* coach. The western half of the line in Utah was not as heavily used in the initial years of the RGZ. There was lots of room to spread out.



Amie and the conductor in the dining car, *Silver Banquet* before lunch. The food and service on the RGZ, like the CZ before it was first rate.



Grand Junction depot from one of the four *Vistadome* cars. There were four dome coaches, *Silver Mustang*, *Silver Colt*, *Silver Pony*, and *Silver Bronco*. The observation car, *Silver Sky*, also had a dome as did the infrequently run buffet/lounge car, *Silver Shop*..



Our assigned seats were in one of the coaches, *Silver Aspen*, but we spent a lot of time in one of the dome cars. Coach cars *Silver Aspen* and *Silver Pine* had large, comfortable, reclining seats. The *Vistadome* seats were not assigned.

Glenwood Springs. The depot was built in 1904. A lot of passengers boarded the train here. The route from Glenwood Springs to Denver is considered to be the most scenic part of the trip.



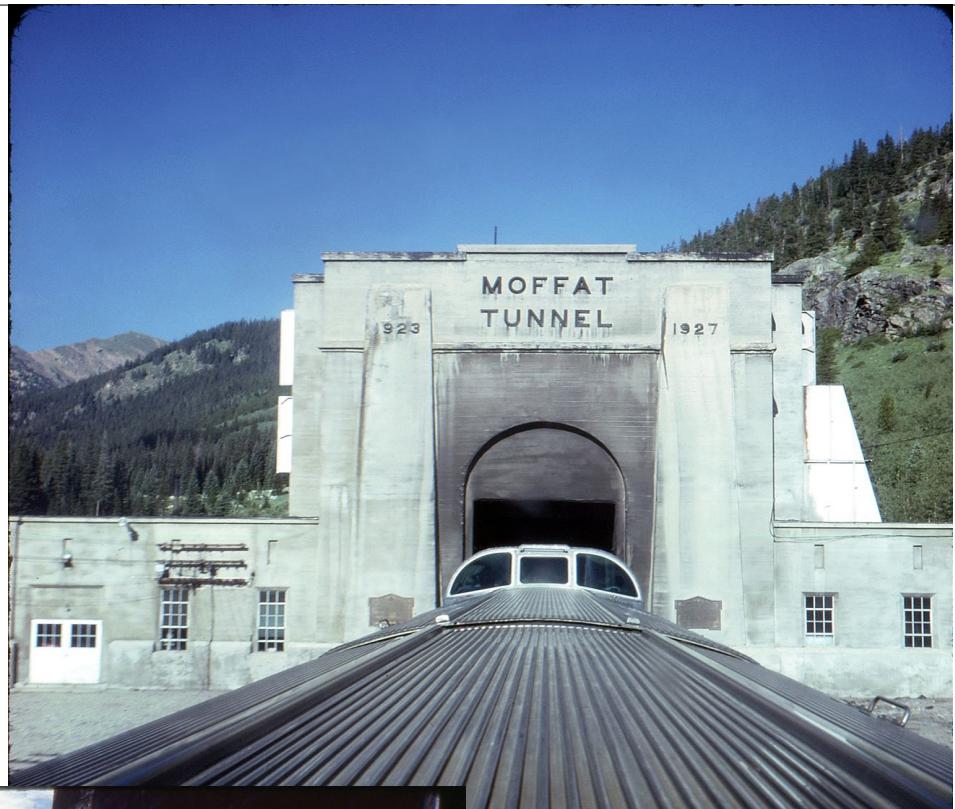
So true!



We arrived in Denver on Tuesday evening and rented a car for our stay. The Rio Grande Zephyr never ran on Wednesday so we spent that day visiting the Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden and seeing some of the sights in Denver. Here I am standing in front of RGS Goose No. 2. Below is inoperable and badly worn out RGS No. 20. In 1974 a lot of people were pessimistic that No. 20 would ever run again but thanks to the perseverance of the folks at the Colorado Railroad Museum, number 20 has just finished a fourteen year restoration, (2006 to 2020), and is now operational.



On our return trip to Utah on Thursday, the train leaves Denver and soon begins to climb the front range until it reaches the Continental Divide. The railroad crosses the divide via the Moffat Tunnel, a 6.2 mile long tunnel that was completed in 1928. The tunnel replaced the torturous, high altitude route over Rollins Pass built by the *Denver and Salt Lake Railroad*. (*The Moffat Road*). A trip through the tunnel is a real experience. The only light you can see is the headlight ahead of you as viewed from a dome car.





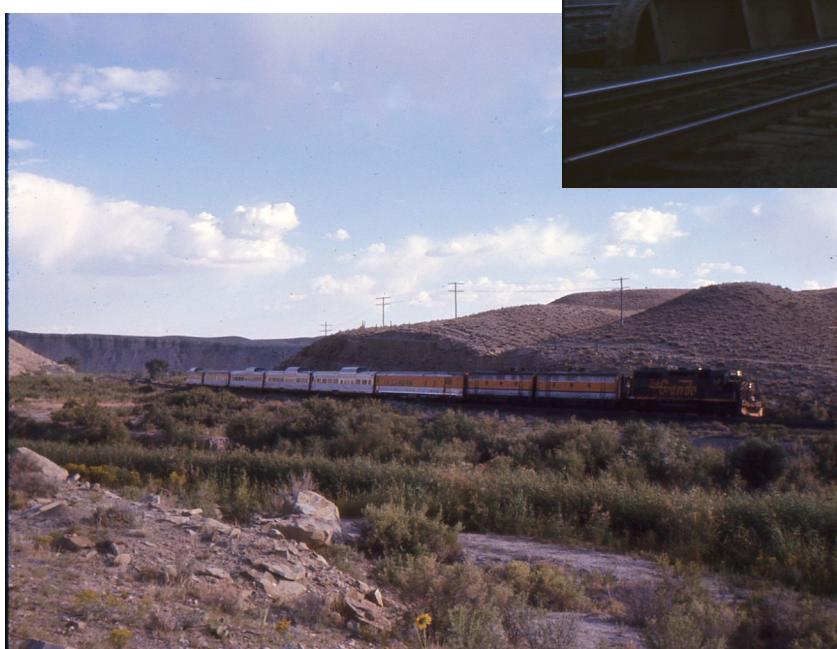
Our westbound train had more cars than it had on the eastbound train on Tuesday. On this day the D&RGW business car, *Wilson McCarthy* was attached at the rear of the train behind the dome observation car, *Silver Sky*.



Diner in the diner. Eating in the *Silver Banquet*, was a real treat. The diner featured white table cloths, original *California Zephyr* china and a delicious menu to chose your meal. On our return trip I had their specialty, Rocky Mountain Trout. Shortly after dinner the train started to go noticeably slower. The F9-A, 5771, had a traction motor overheating. When we got into Price, Utah, the A was cut off and GP 40-2, 3109 took over the lead. The F9-A was out of commission for a week or so and I took these pictures of the 3109 several days later at Castle Gate, Utah



When the D&RGW discontinued the Zephyr in 1983. Most of the cars were sold and scattered to other railroads. Unfortunately, the *Silver Banquet* was discovered to have a cracked center sill in the frame and so the car was scrapped.



The 3109 at the head of the RGZ several days after our trip at Castle Gate, above Soldier Summit. The 3109 was the substitute head end engine until 5771 was repaired.



Typical equipment used on the Rio Grande Zephyr from 1971 to 1983

- [EMD F9 locomotives](#) (A-B or A-B-B)
- [Steam generator car](#) rebuilt from an [ALCo PB1](#)
- [Combine 1230 or 1231](#)
- [Coach – Silver Aspen](#)
- Coach - *Silver Pine*
- [Vista-Dome Coach – Silver Bronco](#)
- Vista-Dome chair car – *Silver Pony*
- Vista-Dome chair car – *Silver Colt*
- Vista-Dome chair car – *Silver Mustang*
- Vista-Dome dormitory-buffet-[lounge car](#) – *Silver Shop*
- [Diner](#) (48 seats) – *Silver Banquet*
- Vista-Dome buffet-lounge-[observation](#) – *Silver Sky*



Into the final stretch of our trip. We arrived in Provo about an hour late because of the burned out traction motor on F9-A, 5771. The D&RGW normally ran the Rio Grande Zephyr right on time. As the years went by, the word got out that this was an outstanding train and trip and ridership increased to the point where the D&RGW was often running the train with every passenger car they owned. Finally, in the spring of 1983, with the equipment getting older, the Rio Grande decided to join Amtrak and the RGZ was discontinued. The change over to Amtrak was delayed by a couple of months because of a huge landslide in Spanish Fork Canyon that blocked the line and completely covered the small community of Thistle, Utah. The rail line and highway were re-routed and the railroad built two new tunnels to bypass the slide. When Amtrak finally took over service they brought back the name, *California Zephyr* and used Southern Pacific, D&RGW and Burlington Northern trackage for their version of the train. Amtrak has run a daily *California Zephyr* up until the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020. They are currently running the train every other day.

You can still see this beautiful scenery on the ex D&RGW, (now owned by Union Pacific) portion of this route operated by Amtrak. It's still a beautiful trip, but I don't think you can ride in the vestibule and there are no *Vistadome* cars.



Relaxing in an almost empty dome observation car, *Silver Sky* as we approach the end of our trip..



What a great trip!
Arrival at Provo, Utah
Photos: John Lyans

Items for sale

- **Byron McCracken** has over 50 engines and about 150 pieces of rolling stock in 1:32, 1:29, 1:22.5 and 1:20.3 scales. He is looking to consolidate his collection somewhat. He doesn't have a list of everything yet but if you are interested in expanding your rolling stock or need motive power, Byron might have what you need. He says that he will sell things for a good price. You can reach Byron at (805)290-2413
- **Ed Davis** has some very nice O scale items that he would like to sell.



The gondola and the hopper cars are die cast metal. The covers on the gondola are removable and the doors on the hopper are operational.

The caboose and the box car have plastic bodies and die cast trucks and couplers. Doors and hatches are all operational and the caboose has the appropriate lighting.

The graphics are very fine as are other details such as rivets, shiplapping, grab handles, windows etc.

Everything appears to be to scale with the exception of the wheel flanges.

The quality and realism is far above the Lionel toy trains.

These cars appear to be mint and there is no sign that they were ever run. Alll four cars are in original boxes in their original packing material. Ed will consider reasonable offers. Ed Davis (805)379-9615.

Gondola:	\$60.00
Hopper:	\$60.00
Caboose:	\$40.00
Box Car:	\$35.00

John Lyans

If you would like to avoid my sometimes irrelevant stories and articles in this newsletter, then send me some articles, descriptions, pictures or stories about *your* projects or adventures. Thank you to those of you have sent me material for the newsletter. It's much appreciated.



2021 Dues are now being collected. \$10.

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.