



Gold Coast Flyer

December, 2020



Siegel Meet on November 14

Report by Gary Olmstead

We had great weather for November, and a good crowd. John Ryan demonstrated his new cartridge for turning locomotives. It's an innovative solution when there's no room for a turntable, but the Santa Cruz yard is so tight that I couldn't get a good picture of the cartridge in action.

Bill Fincher brought his mine train, but had finished running by the time I got there, so no pictures of that, either.

John Whitaker brought his BNSF Dash 8, and some guests from Bakersfield to help run it.

Nick Conti ran his BNSF SW1200, and to round out the Burlington and Santa Fe day, Randy Bryie had his Santa Fe GP35u and a pair of Burlington locos hauling the longest train of the day.

I'm pretty sure that that's Lamont Stolley's F3A and B in Western Pacific colors.

Georges Arseneault ran a pair of Geese.

Newsletter: John Lyans
lyans@pacbell.net

Treasurers/Badges:
Bruce Kuebler
pbkuebler@sbcglobal.net

Web Page: Gary Olmstead
<https://www.gcgrs.com/>

Facebook: John & Kim
Whitaker
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/145996342219253/>





Something New!

What Is It?

By: John Ryan

For those that were not at today's meet at the Siegel's, you are no doubt asking, what the heck is that??? It's official definition is a "cassette" but I refer to it as an "Armstrong Turntable". It was used today for the first time to turn locomotives. Not many actually used it for the purpose since they had planned on not having the ability to turn their locomotives. I decided to keep my contraption a secret so as to surprise participants. The original concept was suggested by Bruce Morden based on examples he had seen on smaller scale layouts (HO). Those ideas weren't so much to turn locomotives but to add or subtract cars to and from a layout during an operating session. If you scroll through the messages, you'll see Bruce's write up on the "Cassette" idea. I took it upon myself to build my version of the "Cassette" idea and this is what I came up with. It is 2 pieces, a frame for the cassette to be set into and the cassette itself. Also, you'll notice a couple golf balls. I drilled a hole in the golf balls and inserted a dowel in each. The dowel drops into a hole drilled in each end and at various points within the cassette to keep anything from rolling of the ends. Now you know what you're looking at. Takes a bit of getting used too but I think it worked well.





Some great pictures by Bill Fincher

About 20-25 at the meet today..... I have attached a few pictures. The lighting had very large contrast between light and dark, which unfortunately I did not pay much attention to while taking pictures. John Ryan built a manual turntable/carriage for the Santa Cruz yard. Also included a few historical pictures of the layout. - Bill





Six Degrees of Separation *musings by John Lyans*

It is said that any person on the planet can be connected to any other person on the planet through a chain of acquaintances that has no more than five intermediaries. Maybe the same might be said about events that connect us. Hang on for a few pages as I attempt to illustrate this point.

Last January, (pre-covid), I was asked to select and play a violin piece as part of our congregation's a church service. As an amateur violinist I searched for a hymn that was that was not too difficult yet was still interesting. As I searched YouTube for violin/piano arrangements I happened to find one that I thought would work. The name of the hymn is *It Is Well With My Soul*. "Well, nice hymn," I thought, I can play that in a violin/piano arrangement. But, . . . more interesting than the song is the story of how this hymn came to be and how these events and people are connected.

Horatio Spafford

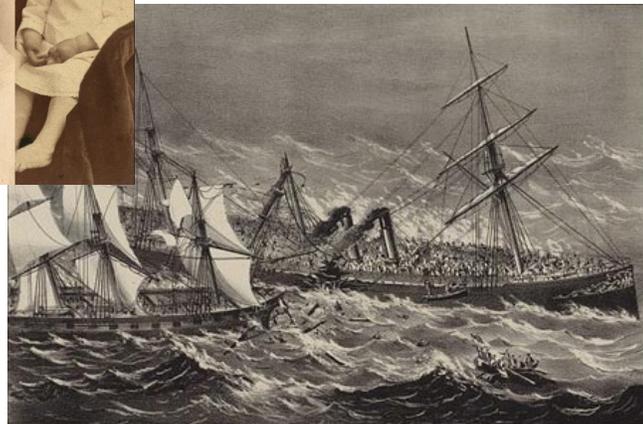
The words to the hymn were written by Horatio Spafford. Horatio was born in 1828 and by 1870 he was a successful attorney and businessman living in Chicago with his wife, Anna and their five children, a son and four daughters. When he was four years old, their son, Horatio Jr. died suddenly of scarlet fever. One year later, in October 1871, the great Chicago fire swept through the city destroying most of Horatio's properties. Two years later, while still recovering from the fire, Horatio decided to take his family on a trip to England to visit with their friend, pastor and evangelist, D. L. Moody. At the last minute, Horatio was delayed because of business, (zoning problems caused by the fire), so he sent his family ahead: his wife and their daughters, 11 year old Anna, 9 year old Margaret, 5 year old Elizabeth and 2 year old Tanetta. On the November 22, 1873, while crossing the Atlantic on the steamship, Ville du Harve, their ship was struck by an iron hulled clipper ship the Loch Earn. The Ville du Harve sank within 12 minutes. Passengers tried to board the lifeboats but they had recently been painted and they were stuck to the deck. In all, two hundred and twenty-six people lost their lives and there were eighty-seven survivors. All four of Horatio's daughters drowned, but remarkably his wife Anna survived. She was found unconscious, floating on a plank of wood. When she arrived in Cardiff, South Wales, she immediately sent a telegram to her husband, which included the words "Saved alone, what should I do?..."

Upon receiving her telegram, Horatio Spafford immediately left Chicago to bring his wife home. During the Atlantic crossing, the Captain called Spafford into his cabin to tell him that they were passing over the spot where his four daughters had drowned.



The Spafford children from left to right: Annie, 1862-1873; Margaret (Maggie), 1863-1873; Elizabeth (Bessie), 1866-1873; Tanetta, 1871-1873

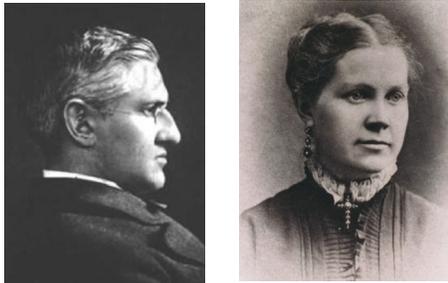
*Above: Spafford children lost at sea.
Right: The Loch Earn collides with
the Ville du Harve.*



Spafford later wrote to Rachel, his wife's half-sister, "On Thursday last we passed over the spot where she went down, in mid-ocean, the waters three miles deep. But I do not think of our dear ones there. They are safe, folded, the dear lambs". During that same voyage, Spafford composed the beloved Protestant hymn *It Is Well with My Soul*. The hymn starts:

*When peace like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to know
It is well, it is well, with my soul.*

Horatio and Anna later had three more children. Their second son, Horatio, named after his father and deceased brother, also died when he was four years old.



Horatio and Anna Spafford

Philip Bliss was an American composer, conductor, writer of hymns and a bass-baritone Gospel singer. He wrote many well-known hymns, including "Almost Persuaded" "Hallelujah, What a Saviour!" "Pull for the Shore," "Hold the Fort," "Let the Lower Lights Be Burning"; "Wonderful Words of Life" and the tune for Horatio Spafford's "It Is Well with My Soul." In 1869, Mr. Bliss became acquainted with Pastor Moody, (The same person that the Spaffords had intended to visit).



Philip & Lucy Bliss

By 1876 Bliss had given up composing secular music and he was devoting more of his time working with Moody and writing hymn books. He and his wife Lucy and their two young sons spent the Christmas holidays with his mother and sister in Pennsylvania and they intended to return to Chicago to work with Pastor Moody in January.

However he received a telegram asking him to return sooner to take part in meetings that were to take place the Sunday following Christmas. He wired a message, "Tickets for Chicago, via Buffalo and Lake Shore Railroad. Baggage checked through. Shall be in Chicago Friday night. God bless you all forever." They decided to leave the two boys, Philip Paul, age 1 and George, age 4, with his mother.

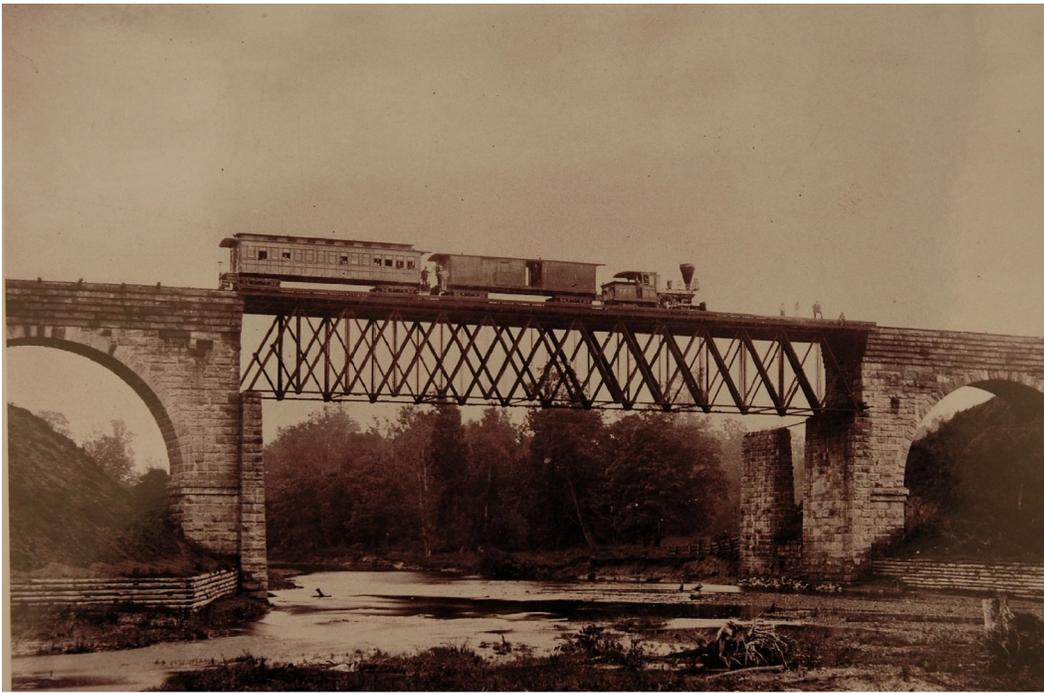
On December 29, 1876, Philip and Lucy were traveling on train number 5, the Pacific Express of the Lake Shore & Michigan

Southern Railway, The train consisted of eleven coaches pulled by two 4-4-0's, the Socrates and the Columbia. They were in the midst of a blinding snow storm, running an hour and a half late as they approached Ashtabula, Ohio. The train was slowing, just 100 yards short of the depot while crossing the Ashtabula River on a Howe truss bridge when everything went to hell. *"As the 'Socrates' neared the western abutment, engineer Daniel McGuire heard a crack and felt his locomotive drop slowly downward. Realizing the bridge was collapsing beneath him, he opened the throttle to maximum. The 'Socrates' lurched ahead, just as the weight of the 11 cars began to pull on the 'Columbia' behind it. The connection between the two locomotives snapped, enabling the "Socrates" to make it off the bridge. The rear trucks on his tender hung in the air, but the forward movement of the 'Socrates' pulled the tender forward and it regained the rails and solid ground.*

McGuire brought the *Socrates* to a halt about 100 yards (91 m) down the track, and began repeatedly sounding his whistle and ringing the train bell in alarm. The *Columbia* and the 11 cars behind it acted like a linked chain load. The bridge's collapse was therefore not sudden, but rather somewhat slow and piecemeal. The "*Columbia*" struck the abutment, the engine supported by the stonework while the tender hung downward toward the river valley. The first express car fell into the ravine, [w] crashing nose-first into the ground at the base of the abutment. The *Columbia* slipped backward off the abutment, landing upside-down and backward atop the first express car. It then fell onto its side, its trucks pointing north. The second express car and the two baggage cars landed largely upright, slightly south of the bridge. The second baggage car was slightly askew, its nose resting against the western abutment and its rear pointing southeast. Most of the bridge's upper chord (the bottom of the bridge) crashed to the ground north of the bridge. The lower chord (at the top of the bridge) and what remained of the deck held for a moment, then fell directly down to land atop the locomotive, express cars, and baggage cars. Momentum pulled the rest of the train into the space where the bridge used to be. The first passenger coach landed upright in mid-stream atop the wreckage of the bridge and the second express car. The second passenger car twisted in the air as it fell, landing on its side atop the bridge and first baggage car. The smoking car, having broken free of the passenger coach ahead of it, moved more freely. It struck the forward part of the second passenger coach, crushing it, before being propelled into the first passenger coach. (It is widely believed most people in the first passenger coach died when the smoking car fell on them.) Momentum also carried the parlor car "*Yokohama*" and the three sleeper cars into the chasm. All of them landed about 80 feet (24 m) south of the bridge. The "*Yokohama*" landed upright in mid-stream, and the sleeper "*Palatine*" landed mostly right-side up beside it to the north. The sleeper "*City of Buffalo*" then nose-dived into the rear of the "*Palatine*", partially crushing it and killing several people. [60] It continued through the "*Palatine*" into the rear of the "*Yokohama*", pushing the parlor car onto its side. The "*Buffalo*" smashed forward along the length of the parlor car, likely killing everyone inside. The rear of the "*Buffalo*" lay atop the "*Palatine*", high in the air. An eyewitness said no one in the "*City of Buffalo*" survived the crash. The final sleeper, the "*Osceo*", landed on the east bank of the river, mostly upright." (Wikipedia) (Sorry for all of the minutia, I got sidetracked by the stuff of interest to railfans).

Philip Bliss survived the crash and was able to escape the wreckage but within five minutes the train caught fire and he returned to try to free his wife. He struggled to free her and stayed by her side until they were both consumed by the flames. No trace of either Philip or Lucy was ever found. Ninety-two people died in the wreck. (Note: Bliss composed the music to *It Is Well With My Soul* one month before his death. Note 2: Not too sure it was such a good idea to hang around with D. L. Moody).





What has all of this got to do with garden railroading? Keep reading.

Len Brown is a documentary film maker and he has made four features for PBS. His latest project is called "Engineering Tragedy." At the time it was the worst railroad disaster in the United States and he feels that this story has been largely lost in the pages of history and it deserves to be told. Money for the film was partially raised through Kickstarter. The film was about 85% completed when Covid struck and as of the summer of 2020 filming has been on hold. Much research has been put into the project including archeological excavations at the site of the disaster to locate damaged sections of the old bridge. (CSX and Amtrak use this route today and a new bridge has replaced the destroyed bridge). There is a lot of information in the film about the original bridge and how it was designed, (faulty) and built, (faulty), by the owner of the railroad. Len Brown has recruited Bachmann to the project and they have donated two of their 4-4-0's and eleven coaches that have been painted to represent the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railway train.



Len Brown and "Engineering Tragedy" PBS documentary models.



Len Brown has also recruited **Damian Cavasos** of *Mainline Bridges* in Arizona to build a beautiful model of the ill-fated Howe truss bridge and abutments.



Damian Cavasos, Mainline Bridges and his model of the Ashtabula bridge.

You may not know it but members of the GCGRS are familiar with **Damian Cavasos'** bridges. He is the artist that built the beautiful bridges on **Gary Siegel's** Santa Cruz – San Jose garden railway.



Gary Siegel and one of the bridges built by Damian Cavasos

So . . . six degrees of separation. I'm not sure if this proves my point or not but it did give me something to write about!

Horatio Spafford
Philip Bliss
Len Brown
Damian Cavasos
Gary Siegel
John Lyans

*I ordered one of Damien's bridges. Yeah.

*I never got to play the hymn in church because Covid hit and we went to online meetings.



Contemporary Donner Pass

By Art Sylvester

A few newsletters ago I shared some of my pictures of historic railroad structures on Donner Pass. This time I share pictures of old structures not on the Summit together with some of contemporary railroading there.



This is one of my favorite images - a Union Pacific consist blasting out of the Judah Tunnel, also known as the “Big Hole,” a two mile-long tunnel beneath Mt. Judah, which cuts off several miles of right-of-way through snow sheds on the northeast flank of Donner Peak. The tunnel has no means to ventilate exhaust, so it is pulled along and out with the train. Theodore Judah was the surveyor who, back in the 1860’s, plotted the route over the rugged Sierra Nevada. Note the ski lift chairs above the locomotives.



There were 15 tunnels originally along the route between Sacramento and Reno, Nevada. This, the Troy tunnel, was one of the few that was abandoned for reasons unknown and is bypassed by the Troy cut.



An eastbound UP freight in the Troy Cut. The 1867 route was single track. Increased transcontinental traffic, especially during WWII, made it necessary to double track several sections of the route over Donner Pass, but many single track sections persist today.



Art Aldritt, John Ryan, Ken Kelley, Bruce Morden, and two other SCSME members stand in front of another abandoned tunnel whose name I've forgotten or never knew.



This is one of my favorite trestles and pictures of it – Crystal Trestle, which is about 15 miles west of Donner summit. It is wide enough to accommodate double track but has only one set of rails. The stone piers, built by Chinese masons, date from the early 1860s.



Bloomer Cut, near Newcastle about 60 miles southwest of Donner summit, is still in use for main line traffic today, and looks just the same as it was on the day it was completed in the early 1860's. Its nearly vertical walls consist of a deposit of rounded, very durable stream cobbles. It is amazing to think of what a chore it was to make the cut, because a pile of cobbles is not something that can be easily carved with black powder. It is also amazing to this geologist that the cut has been so stable for 160 years!





Odds and Ends

Thank you everyone for contributing articles for the newsletter! Art's adventure on the train to Tuscon is great. Thank you Russ Reinberg, el jefe Grandissimo emeritus for the history lesson.

Donations: Send \$10 to Bruce Kuebler. Make your checks out to Bruce Kuebler, GCGRS in memo.

Check out our website for more articles and past issues of the newsletters. Thanks to Gary Olmstead, our webmaster. <https://www.gcgrs.com/>

Check out the Facebook page courtesy of Kim Whitaker. Kim posts many pictures from meets. I'm sure you can find yourself in at least one of those pictures! Thanks Kim.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/145996342219253/>

Make sure you sign up for Groups.io if you have not done that yet. Make sure to look at the polls on Groups.io. Again, check your email for the invite or request to join by going to <https://groups.io/g/GCGRS> and hit the 'join' button.

Please send me articles, write-ups and pictures about your projects and ideas. It works best for me if you send your articles in Word (doc, docx, etc), Open Office (.odt), Libre Office (.odt), or anything like .txt files. If you send me files in a .pdf format make sure they are editable. That makes it much easier to incorporate your articles into the newsletter. Thanks!

Please, everyone stay healthy,

John Lyans

As a reminder, the Gold Coast Garden Railway Society is not a "club" or any other type of formal organization that schedules, organizes or sponsors meets. We are a group of friends that get together to share our garden railroads with each other. Individuals send out a notice via the newsletter, Groups.io or Facebook that they are opening their layout to others in our group and they host and organize their own meet. It is up to each host to follow state or local laws as regards to size and type of gatherings. Stay safe.

Gold Coast Garden Railway Society Membership Application



Membership in the Gold Coast Garden Railway Society is open to anyone who is interested in outdoor model railroading.

Dues are \$10 per year per household. Annual Memberships are valid from January through December. NEW memberships submitted after August 1st will extend through December of the following year.

Date _____

1) First Name _____ Last Name _____

2) First Name _____ Last Name _____

3) First Name _____ Last Name _____

4) First Name _____ Last Name _____

(Additional names on back)

Membership, household			\$ 10
Nametags, pin	\$6 ea x	Qty	\$
Nametags, magnet	\$8 ea x	Qty	\$
Shipping			\$ 4
Total submitted			\$ _____

Street Address _____ City _____ St _____ Zip _____

Mailing Address _____ City _____ St _____ Zip _____

Preferred Phone _____ Mobile/Text _____

1) Email _____ 2) Email _____

Experience with garden railroading: planning stage/need help under construction
 completed & operational schedule meet

Name of your railroad: _____

The sharpest curve is _____ ft radius. The steepest grade is _____%

Please make checks payable and remit to:
Bruce Kuebler
Memo: GCGRS
10908 Encino Drive
Oak View, CA 93022-9238

gcgrs.com
 goldcoastgardenrailwayCA@gmail.com
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