



Gold Coast Flyer

November, 2020

Meets

November 14
Gary & Marilyn Siegel

December
Nothing planned

Happy Thanksgiving

I apologize for being a few days late from my usual schedule in getting the Gold Coast Flyer sent out at the first of the month. We were visiting friends and family in Oregon and Washington. We didn't get to do too much in the way of railroading but we loved spending time with our kids and grandchildren in Portland and Junction City, Oregon, and long-time friends in Long Beach, Washington. I did happen on a few interesting railroads as we were traveling but most of them were abandoned. (See page 2).

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Newsletter: John Lyans

Treasurers/Badges:
Bruce Kuebler

Web Page: Gary Olmstead

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

I hope everyone has a happy, healthy Thanksgiving.
Until next time. John Lyans



Abandoned Railways in Oregon and Northern California



Driving along Highway 26 in Oregon, we stopped at this cool looking old deck girder bridge. We climbed up to see what the line looked like. The tracks are intact but obviously are abandoned. This would be a fun place to ride a track car but you would have to do some serious clearing of vegetation. Tillamook was many miles from here, over on the coast.



We were kind of lost, exploring some back roads of Highway 101 in Northern California when we stumbled upon this abandoned gem. It's somewhere off on a side road about 2 miles off of Avenue of the Giants. I finally found it on Google Earth; this is what is left of the Northwestern Pacific, (NWP), once a major railroad from the Bay Area to Eureka, California. You can follow much of the remnants of this line on Google Earth.

I love these older railroad structures I would love to create these scenes in model form.

November Meet

The meet will be on Saturday, November 14 at 11:00 am at the home of Gary & Marilyn Siegel, 1143 Camino Viejo, Santa Barbara, California 93108. (805)969-7687

John Ryan reports that the yard at Santa Cruz is completed with five usable tracks. I think it looks great!



Arsenault Meet by Gary Olmstead

We had a select group of members, but Bob Uniack was there with his “newest” engine. Newest because he had never run it before, even though he started building it more than 20 years ago as a live steam locomotive. It is now battery powered. It’s a one-inch scale, Mich Cal two truck 12 ton Shay. It runs on 4 3/4” track, which means that Georges has the only layout that we know of this side of the Bay Area where it can run. For the first run of a prototype, it did pretty well, meaning that it got half way around before the motor came loose.

Nick Conti had the only Halloween themed train. The weirdness factor went up by a lot when he used an Eggliner as the motive power.

I spent quite a lot of time trying to get a good picture of all the kids in their Halloween gear. I got one picture of all seven kids, only three of whom are sitting down, one doesn’t want to be in the picture, and none are looking at the camera. One picture with six kids looking in five different directions, and one great picture of five kids who are sitting nicely, smiling, and looking into a camera, but not my camera. I’m sending them all, you can use all, any or none, as you choose.

Tim Knapton brought his live steam Mikado. It looked great on Georges’ elevated line and through the tunnel.

Georges brought his Daylight out onto the turntable, but didn’t run it.

Georges Big Boy was sitting on a siding by his train shed with power on it. It would periodically blow its whistle in the most plaintive way you’ve ever heard, as if to say “I want to run, too. Don’t forget about me!!”. But to no avail.

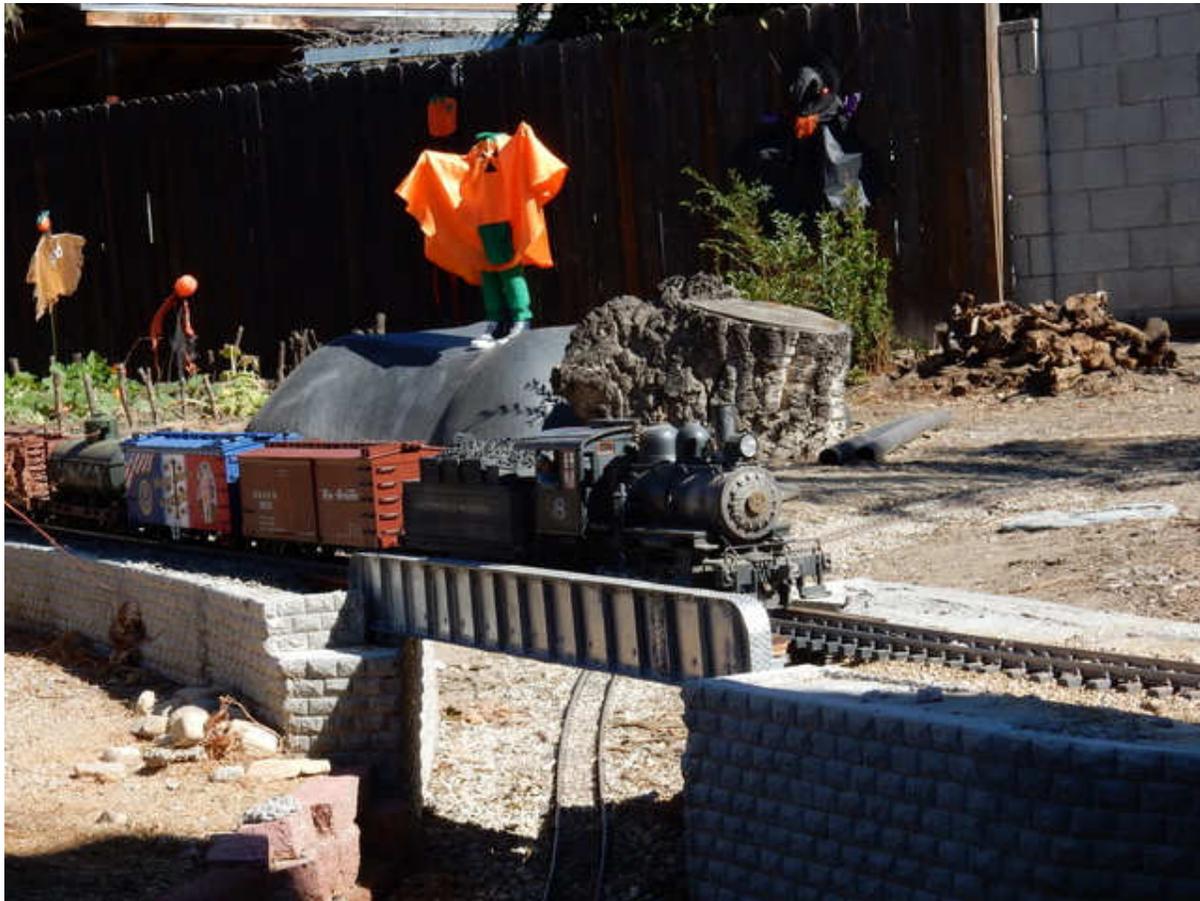
Randy Bryie and Lamont Stolley also had trains. There was a “Daylight” train whose owner I’ve forgotten. Sorry.

Gary

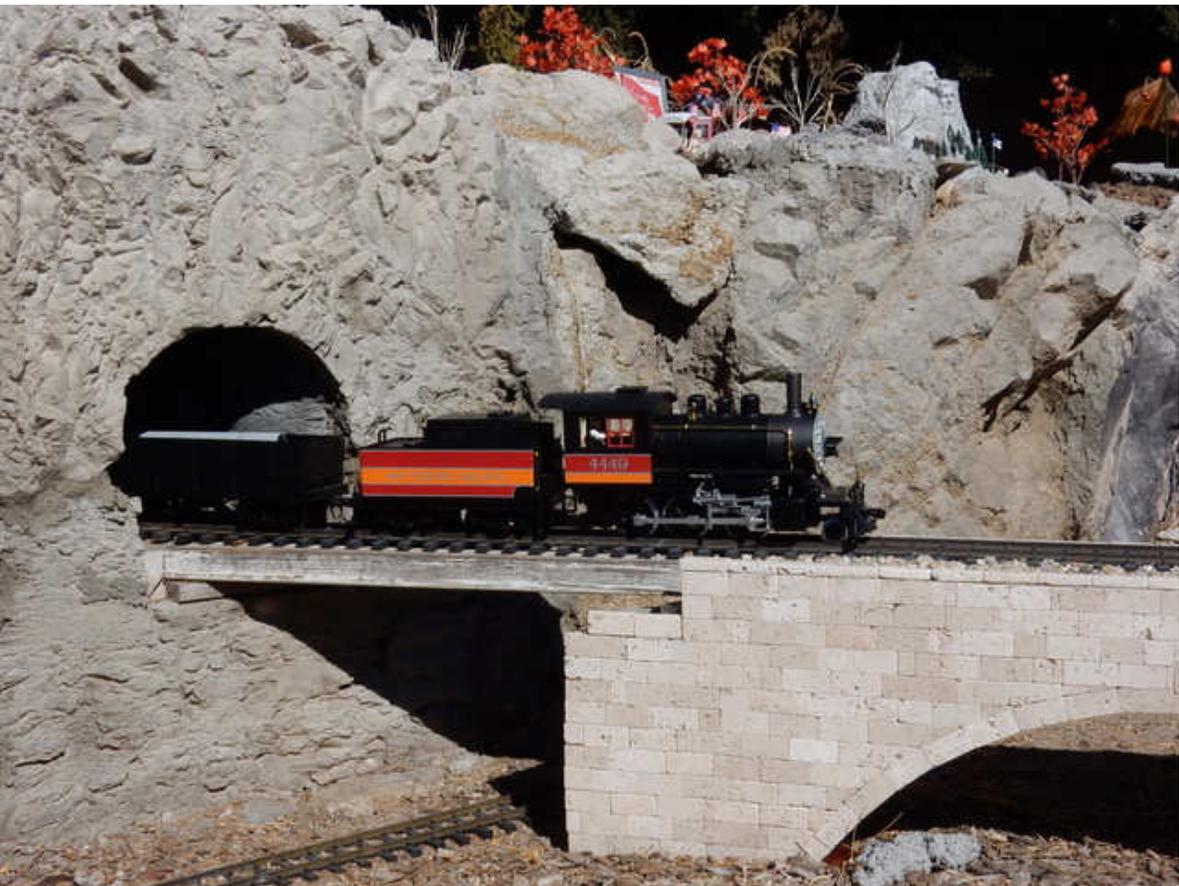


















“THE HILL”

By Art Sylvester

As a sometime rail fan, I was fortunate to spend weeks at a time over several summers living and working near Donner Pass with spare time to watch trains. I made a point of visiting historic sites along the railroad, including the Summit Tunnels, the China Wall, the Norden snow sheds, and the long snow sheds east of the crest of the pass. I also visited modern features, such as the Judah Tunnel, and I watched contemporary operations including track maintenance and replacement. Such a historic place and so much to see and experience there!

You may view a lot of pictures on Google that are better and more numerous than mine but they provide little information, so here I annotate a few of my selected images for your viewing amusement.

A Little Background

The Sierra Nevada forms an imposing, 360 mile-long wall of granite that affords few easy places to cross. In fact, most passes such as Tioga, Sonora, Ebbetts, Echo Summit, Carson, Henness, and Beckwourth are passable today with modern automobiles, but foot traffic was about all that could get across them in the 19th century, and they were certainly far too steep and tortuous for a steam railroad of the late 19th-century vintage.

Donner Pass, formidable as it is, may be considered the best of a bad lot. Even so, it is one of the most historic places in California insofar as transportation is concerned, especially for the Gold Rush emigrants and, shortly afterward, the transcontinental railroad.

Donner Pass, commonly known among railroaders as "The Hill" is 6,600 feet higher than Roseville, just 80 miles to the west. No other railroad comes close to such an ascent, and few can match its extremes in temperature and precipitation. The average annual snowfall at the summit is 34 feet, whereas the rainfall in the Central Valley averages less than an inch between May and September.

Hard, tough rocks underlie the core of the Sierra at its crest and are part of the reason why the range is so high. Topography and those rocks were the main impediments the Central Pacific Railroad (CPRR) faced in the 1860s to construct a railroad over the Sierra Nevada, together with the relatively primitive use of black powder rather than nitroglycerin to carve tunnels through those rocks.

Besides the rocks, snow shed fires and the fickle and foul winter weather posed the greatest difficulties for building and maintaining the railroad. Eventually the Big Four's money and Chinese labor prevailed - the route completed in 1868 is virtually the same as that followed by trains 152 years later in 2020 - a monumental tribute to the vision of Theodore Judah who surveyed the route, to the financial commitment of the Big Four, and to the ingenuity of the engineers and laborers onsite.



The historic focal point of railroading over Donner Pass is the Summit Tunnel, which is actually a series of three tunnels. At an elevation of 7,069 feet above sea level, the pass was the highest point on the CPRR.



View east over part of the Summit Tunnel. Donner Lake is in the middle distance; the Carson Range is on skyline.

The granite (117 Ma - Cretaceous) at Summit was the hardest rock to cut through by far along the entire route of the CPRR, and of course you might know that the route required the longest tunnel to be cut through it: Tunnel #6, 1659 feet long. Work commenced in August 1865 but proceeded at a rate of only 8 or 9 inches each 24-hour day. To speed up the work, a shaft 8' by 12' and 124' deep was excavated into the center of the tunnel alignment so that boring could be pursued from four faces simultaneously. Lift power was provided by a small Hinckley locomotive, which was stripped down to its fundamental workings, hauled up the Dutch Flat road, and erected over the shaft. Even so, it took nearly a year to complete the shaft to depth because of the extreme hardness of the granite. Tunnel #6 was finally holed through in August 1867, and the first train passed through November 30 of that year.



The shaft is still open from tunnel grade to the surface, but it's covered by this rusty steel cap. You can use a flashlight to look up the inky black shaft from the interior of the tunnel.



West entrance to the Summit Tunnels.



View west of the Summit Tunnel exit. The Summit Tunnels were abandoned in 1998 when the Union Pacific Railroad acquired the Southern Pacific Railroad. All of the tracks have been removed, but buses full of school children now drive through the tunnels, and companies offering “tunnel hiking tours” are thriving, which is a little surprising to me, given the possibilities for accidents and liability suits.



Near the Summit Tunnel is a deep ravine that had to be crossed by more than just a mere bridge. Chinese laborers built a retaining wall and fill out of enormous granite blocks.



A long series of enclosed concrete snow sheds on the east flank of Donner Peak replaced those originally built solely of wood and thus prone to fires from sparks that escaped from wood-burning locomotives. The Southern Pacific drove its giant cab forward locomotives through these snow sheds, which were so thick with exhaust smoke that their crews were sometimes overcome by it. The cab forwards were designed and built just so the train crews could ride ahead of their own locomotive's smoke. The snow sheds were not designed and built to accommodate pedestrians; escape portals are few and far between along the way, so it is a long walk in the dark from portal to portal.



The 2 mile-long “Big Hole” beneath Mt. Judah, shown here with a westbound freight blasting exhaust as it exits the tunnel, bypasses and renders obsolete the Summit Tunnels and snow sheds. With the advent of double stack trains, the tunnel had to be deepened by several feet. Can you guess what happened to all of the excavated rock? The mountain takes its name from Theodore Judah, who surveyed the route over Donner Pass for the CPRR.

There is so much more to see on Donner Pass. I am very anxious to return and do an aerial study with my drone, perhaps next spring. In my next episode, I’ll present images of some trains and MOW operations.

Editor’s note: Thank you Art for another great article. Now I am looking forward to the next episode on the trains and MOW operations. The pictures provide some great inspiration for things that we might try to include in model form on our backyard railroads. I love the views of the granite cliffs, tunnel interiors and portals and the rock retaining wall!

BUILDING A NEW SWITCHING YARD

By Joe Bussing

I've wanted to expand the switching opportunities in the town of World's End ever since I laid the original track. The town sits behind a thirty-inch high retaining wall that is at the perfect height for operators to work. No bending over or getting on your knees! With limited space, the only possibility of expansion was to add a new yard on its own table and connect it to the existing yard. Here's a pictorial of how I did it.



The basic track work was laid out on the driveway and a frame was constructed from 2x4 pressure treated lumber.



The frame was temporarily set in place and adjusted to allow for proper access around it, the house and the HVAC unit.



The frame was leveled with the retaining wall. The legs were permanently affixed and placed upon paving stones. An extension to the frame was added to connect it to the existing yard.



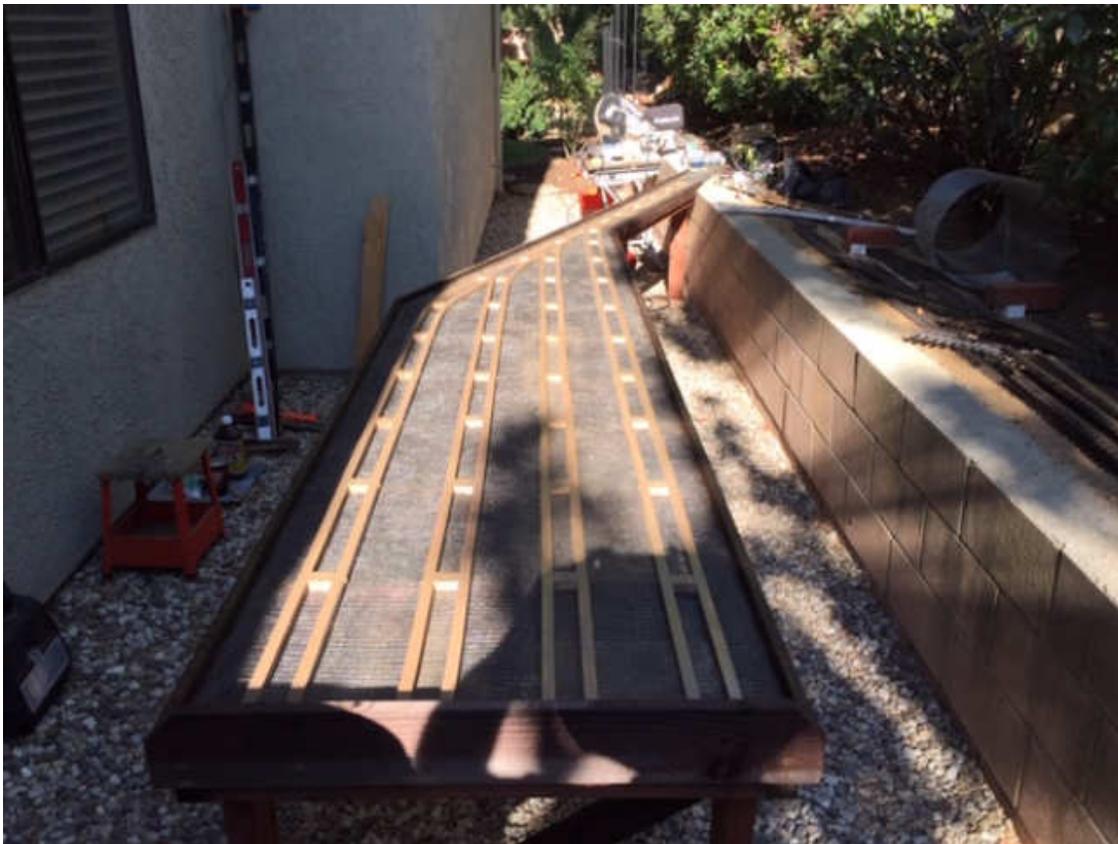
Half-inch galvanized wire fencing was stapled on top



Close-up of the wire fencing



Landscape cloth was stapled over the wire fencing and a frame was added around the perimeter to hold in the ballast.



A PVC ladder system was added as a sub-bed for the track. It was affixed using deck screws. The perimeter frame and all raw lumber received a coat of sealant.



Ballast was added



Done! This will be an eighteen car interchange yard where two railroads meet to swap cars and freight. Of course the “other” railroad is non-existent, but the yard opens up all sorts of possibilities for operations.

An Opportunity to Expand Your Railroad or Think Big!

Two years ago, Whit and I met a very nice older couple (while shopping for mattresses!). SOMEHOW, the conversation turned toward trains. Merrill and Adele explained that he had purchased plans, upscaled and built over the course of 20-25 years this beautiful Mogul Engine #09 to run for family and small groups. Five years ago, as they approached their 80s, they had sold their home on 4.5 acres in Shafter, CA. The Lehmans then bought a home in a traditional Bakersfield neighborhood having to retire Engine #09 to their garage.

Since our home remodel is allowing us to 'see the light at the end of the tunnel', I recently contacted them to see if they had sold their train. Nope. Now in their mid-80s and not computer folks, I very much desire to help them find the perfect showcase home for Engine #09.

I've researched and found a few websites that offer to list amusement park trains, but Mr. Lehman explains to me that Engine #09 is not for intense, daily use. Successfully, I've gained access to and listed with Railway Preservation News' member forum classifieds.

Hoping that our GCGRS members might 'know people who know people' who might be able to direct me to other avenues, would you be willing to add this to the newsletter and website, please? Thank you for your help, much appreciated! I will also send this request to Carla Breitner to see if she has some suggestions.

Attached are photos, as well as the local news video and the RYPN links:

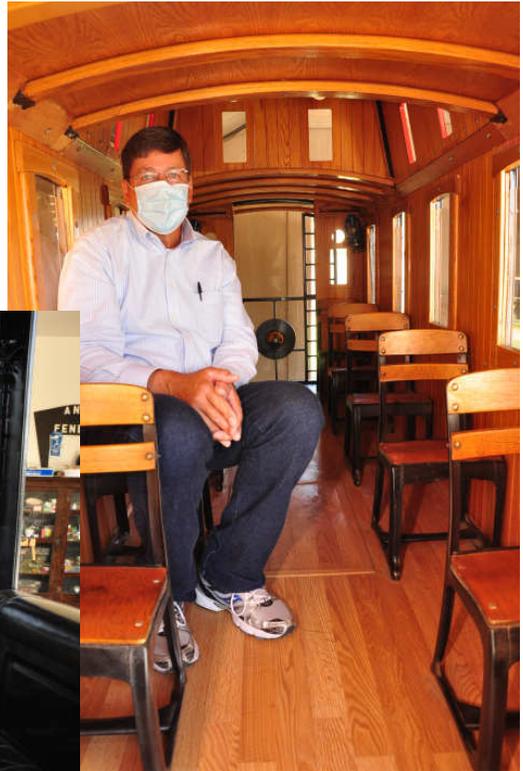
<http://www.rypn.org/forums/viewtopic.php?f=2&t=44976&sid=28550be3be2be2c76d52954f15727125>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RtvEF4Oz6bs>

Click links for all of the details, descriptions, contact information, etc.
\$175,000.00

Kim Whitaker







Odds and Ends

Renewals: 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.

Thank you for sending your construction and railroad adventure articles! I have had no shortage of interesting articles to share. Please send 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.