

# NCGR Time Table

No. 247

Northern Colorado Garden Railroaders

May 2020



## Conductor's Corner

Fred Mann  
President

Well, the last several weeks have not gone according to plan for me, and I suspect the same is true for all of us. Instead of making significant preparations for our annual Open House, I have, instead, been working to settle my mother's estate. She passed away on April 25th due to Covid-19. She was not in particularly good health (she was 91), and was in an assisted living facility in Littleton. We were unable to have a service for her, and only my brother's family and our family were able to attend the burial as we were restricted to 10 folks. We will hold a memorial service for her at a later date.

We have, however, done some preparations on the layout. Sheila and I have filled at least one 65 gallon yard waste container with leaves and branches fallen on the layout from the neighbor's trees. And, I am still waiting on Phoenix sound to repair my sound card from my F3 diesel unit. I do have a new MOW speeder that I can run once I've finished the track repairs. And, I am working on more lighting for my buildings.

Given the need to social distance due to the virus, we have gone to 2x/month video conferences using Zoom. While it isn't as satisfying as our monthly meetings and our 2x/month Hobo Breakfasts where we meet face to face, at least we are able to see each other and listen to each other's stories. Given that most of us are in at least one high-risk category, we will

likely not be holding an in-person meeting real soon.

As mentioned in our last meeting, our annual Open House is postponed until at least August due to the virus. We don't want to be the cause of anyone (including ourselves) to become ill with the virus.

Our next meeting will be held via Zoom on Wednesday, May 20th beginning at 7:00. We will send out an e-mail invitation to the meeting. All you have to do is click on the link in the e-mail when it is time for the meeting. Or, you can go to Zoom.com and login to our meeting by clicking on "Join a Meeting" at the top of the page, entering the Meeting ID of 896 1966 1638, and then entering the Password of 064529. You will be placed in a waiting room until the meeting starts. In the meantime, stay healthy.



## Next Meeting

*Zoom Meetings*

*Every Two Weeks*

**Wednesdays**

**7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

**Zoom invites will be sent via e-mail.**



## Club Car

Chris Reid  
Secretary/Treasurer

### Current Membership

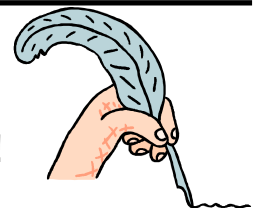
|                  |    |
|------------------|----|
| Paid members     | 34 |
| Honorary Members | 1  |

### Financials for April 2020

|            |           |
|------------|-----------|
| Income     | \$0.00    |
| Expenses   | \$0.00    |
| Bank       | \$3451.56 |
| Petty Cash | \$0.00    |

No transactions

**Publish  
Your  
Projects !**





## Meeting Notes

Chris Reid  
Secretary/Treasurer

### Virtual Zoom Meeting May 6th Hosted by Fred Mann

A virtual meeting on zoom was held on 6<sup>th</sup> May at 7 pm. Ten members participated.

Just a reminder to others who have not participated – a laptop with a camera or a smart phone is all that is needed. There is no sign up required and you just have to click on the link that will be sent to you before the meeting.

Fred confirmed that he had paid a subscription to Zoom so we are no longer restricted to 40 minutes.

Fred mentioned that there were potentially two new members – Will Alsum and Jim Donnell. If anyone knows these people would they further encourage them to join NCGR.

As the open house in June has now been postponed indefinitely Del will place a note on the web site.

Members discussed their immediate projects and problems – everything from computer scams to derailing.

Del is still looking for sound bites for his exhibition sound car. Recordings can be made on a smart phone.

One of the advantages of video podcasts is the ability to show videos and be able to show live ones projects. As an example Ken showed a video of his K27 - complete with sound and Del showed his latest project, a station stop controller for track power. It would be most interesting to see (virtually) members layouts as a background to their faces at the next meeting.

### Virtual Zoom Meeting April 22nd Hosted by Ken Jessen

This meeting used the Zoom app. (In case you have been hibernating of late, Zoom is basically another cloud based video conferencing tool where you can host calls with others).

Nine of our members attended and with surprisingly few teething problems we had an interesting meeting.

As President, Fred introduced the meeting and with some difficulty attempted to keep to an agenda. It was suggested that we need to agree on how attendees initiate speaking so interruptions do not occur. A suggestion of raising hands did not seem to work, so Fred will decide a course of action before the next meeting. A specific "host" speaker with all others muted until invited to speak might solve the problem.

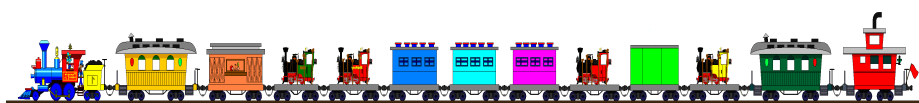
He outlined the problems with keeping to our schedule of meetings and our open house. This year's open house had been scheduled for June 20<sup>th</sup> and with the agreement of all present this would be indefinitely postponed. A suggestion was made that August or September might be considered but it was too early to agree on any specific date. Scott said that his group of metal stranglers had cancelled all their meetings for this year which demonstrated how seriously people are taking the situation. He was loath to consider face to face meetings at all.

Fred reminded members that the Nashville Convention had been cancelled this year and would now be held sometime in 2021. This would mean that the Denver Convention would probably now be delayed until 2022. We are still programmed to take part, but any planning for this will not happen until next year.

Ken talked about the ability of the Zoom app. to enable the use of video and he demonstrated with a video of his layout – complete with sound track. He also showed a building he had been working on. It was obvious to those of us that had not used Zoom before that in future meetings we should be able to "show and tell".

Del suggested that we could hold virtual meetings instead of our normal "hobo" breakfast meetings which would allow us to have a meeting every two weeks. It was further suggested that members should be able to do a "walk round" of their layouts as well as showing what they had been working on. This was agreed and the next virtual meeting would be held on May 6<sup>th</sup> at 7.00 pm.

Shawn wondered whether we could still hold our monthly meetings at member's homes and he suggested that with appropriate social distancing this might be possible. It was agreed that we should consider this for future meetings but not yet.





# Modeling a Working Hot Air Balloon

By Del Tapparo

One of my customers, Paul Hart in Mahopac, New York, contacted me for some advice on his idea for a project. He wanted to have a hot air balloon for his garden railroad's circus scene. The balloon would be suspended on fishing line and slowly rise and fall about 10 feet via some sort of motor drive. He wanted to know how to control it.

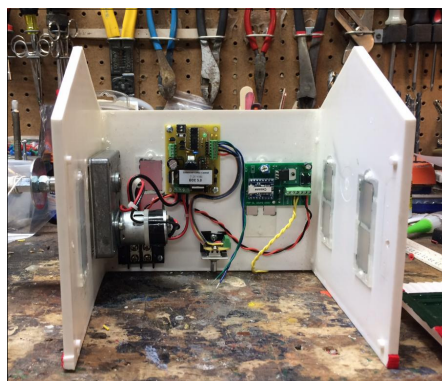
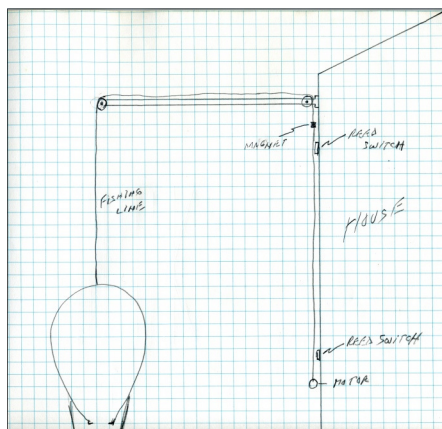
Initial ideas and some testing based on a running a motor for a precise time period were prone to errors, which would make landing the balloon at the same spot/time unreliable. We needed some sort of position feedback.

I advised Paul that my G-Scale Graphics Enhanced Critter Control, which can be used for back 'n forth trolley operations might be the answer. It uses magnets and reed switches to detect the end points of the run. Paul came up with a sketch showing the reed switches mounted to the side of the house and a magnet attached to the fishing line.

Paul then worked out the mechanics of the project using a pipe extending out from the house and pulleys to guide the fishing line down to the motor house. Inside the house is a 24VDC, 45 RPM, gear motor, the Enhanced Critter Control and its speed adjustment, and a Sound Module that will be playing a sound track for a biplane that will be pulling a banner to hide the pipe. Great idea!

Upon testing, Paul says it all works perfectly. Travel from end to end takes several minutes, with the balloon making nice soft landings each time with just a bit of slack in the lines. It rests for awhile, then makes the trip back up.

What a fun project. Thanks to Paul for letting me be a part of it.



Above left: The motor, Enhanced Critter Control, and Sound Module.

The house protects the motor and electronics from the elements. It is powered from a 12VDC power supply in a nearby shed.

Left: The fishing line and magnet. Magnet must be within 1/4" of the reed switch.

Photos: Paul Hart



## False Front Store

By Kenneth Jessen



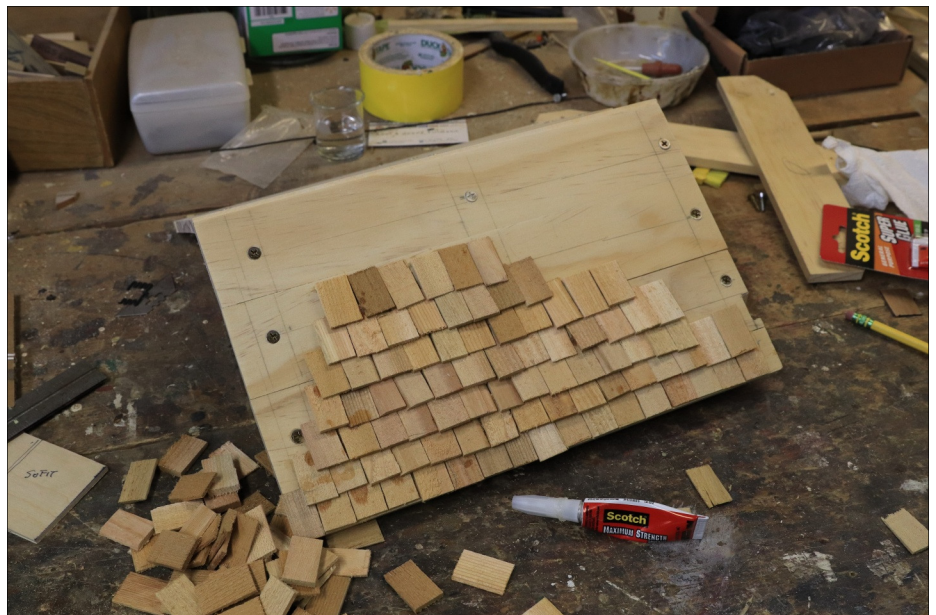
*The front of this building is cast in resin. Now the rest of the structure is being fabricated. The roof will be removable to allow for future enhancements on the interior.*



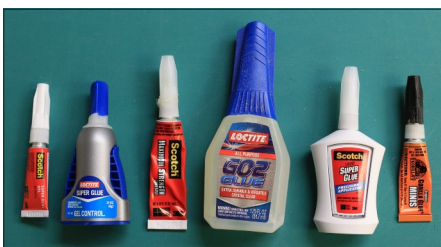
*The windows on each side of the false front store are complete. Next will be the addition of clap-board siding.*



*Along the sides, there will be four windows for my false-front store. They are such a pain! 16 individual, hand cut pieces per window.*



*Shingles are being installed using super glue. Only 5,248 shingles to go! Just joking. There are less than 200 shingles per side and only six hour of work is required. Cedar shims are used to make the shingles and only the narrow tip.*



*For uneven surfaces, a gel super glue is required. The 3M products, especially in the small tubes, have a high viscosity gel and bonds in about a minute. The Loctite gel is also excellent. Regular 3M super glue is too runny. Gorilla glue requires water to actuate and clamping to hold - not good for irregular surfaces. Goop (not shown) is far too difficult to control where the application point is located.*



# Programming Track Powered Sound Boards

By Del Tapparo

Today, I needed to make some programming changes to my Phoenix Sound PB17 track powered sound board. While I have done this many times before, it was only today that I realized this can be quite a process for those not equipped with all the necessary tools for the job.

## Phoenix Sound

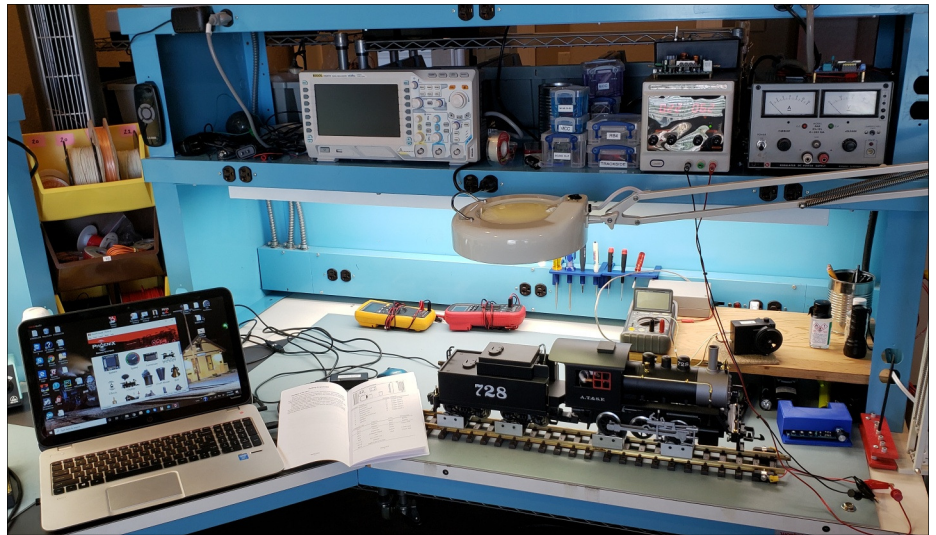


Phoenix Sound boards require at least three things for programming: a computer (PC), a computer to Phoenix programming cable (\$79), and power to the board. It is the latter that makes it kind of messy. If you bring your PC to the train, you need to run the train to get the board powered up, stop the train next to the PC, where it will continue to make sound via battery. Now you have to connect the cable, and get into the program to find the setting you want to change, before the board times out and shuts down.

So the best way to do this job, is to put the loco on the bench, sitting on rollers (\$50) and track powered from a power supply, run it at low speeds, and take your time making all the desired changes. Then you may have to take the loco back to your layout to confirm the changes. This is often a time consuming back and forth process.

## MyLocoSound

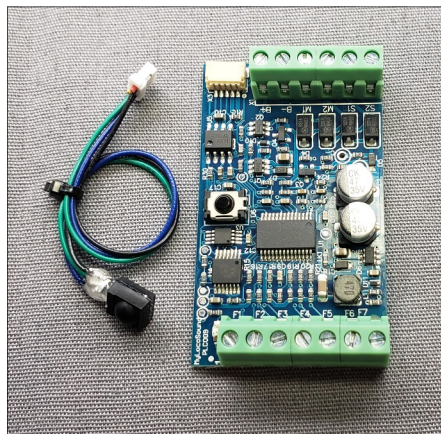
In contrast, when programming a MyLocoSound board, all you need is the IR Remote (\$15, or free if you use your own TV remote) pointed at the IR receiver on the loco. Changes can be



*Programming Phoenix Sound: PC, Phoenix Interface cable connected to loco, bench power supply, test track, loco rollers.*



*Programming MyLocoSound: IR Remote pointed at IR receiver mounted on loco.*



made while the loco is sitting in front of you, running on the battery. Or, if more time is needed, you can do it as the loco passes by. Much easier!

## Some sound programming changes you may require

- Changing the volume of individual sounds
- Changing from voltage controlled chuff to switch triggered chuff, or vice versa
- Changing individual sounds; e.g. whistle, bell, chuff

Each system works differently, but they both have a multitude of settings you may want to experiment with to get the optimum sound for your loco.

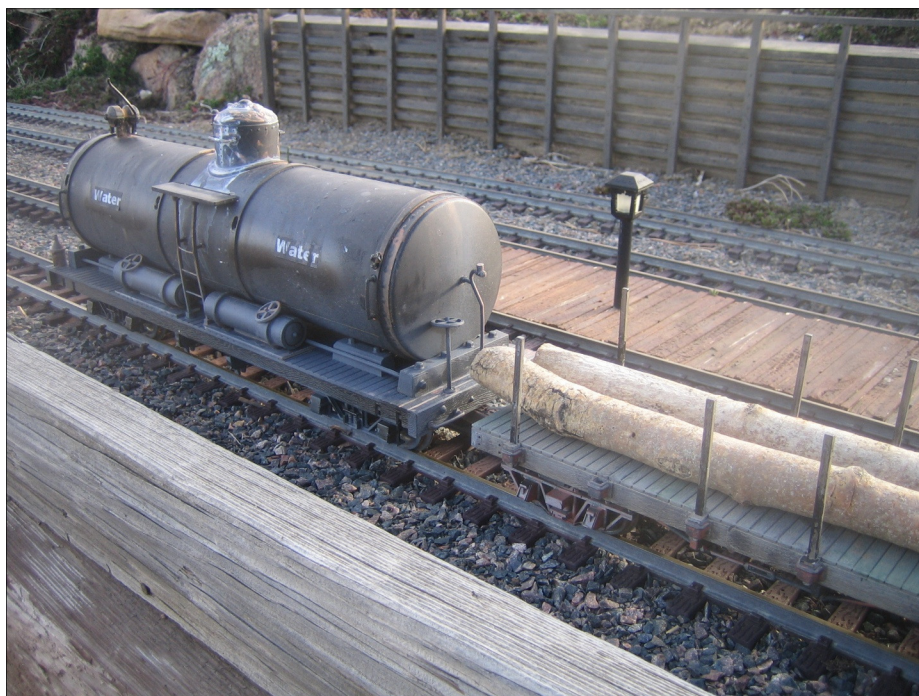


## Couplings & Things

By Chris Reid

Sorting cars and coupling and uncoupling is something we all do on our OO HO layouts – particularly if we have Kadee couplings. In G gauge it seems that we tend not to run our railroads like this and are more content to leave consists alone and almost permanently coupled.

I have previously demonstrated how I modified Bachmann couplings to be body mounted. The tendency for the Bachmann couplings to let go – (usually when people are watching), can be improved by body mounting. The reason this works is the truck mounted couplings have a tendency to bounce up and down as the truck itself does and being on the end of a large connecting shaft this accentuates the up and down move-



real life with link and pin couplers - at least in the early days. However these were notoriously dangerous to the fingers and in the early part of the last century, the safety police insisted companies use knuckle couplers. However,

ing a pin!!.

Although my railroad is supposedly dated around the 1930/40's I have decided that the Great Southern and Western Railway decided to retain the



ment – hence the uncoupling. Most of my stock is now body mounted and although I still have disconnects it is better than it was AND it looks so much better with the cars coupled closer together. Don't try this if you have very sharp curves.

Lumber cars (of which I have a few!) were usually connected together in

guess what? Knuckle couplers would come undone with disastrous consequences for exactly the same reason as ours do - the up and down movement on rough track caused them to fail. (Not inferring your track is rough).

Lumber companies solved this by drilling through the coupler and insert-

link and pin model. I replicated this and also run my trains as fixed consists. I first tried to produce a vertical "pin" on each end of the cars but ended up using a plastic shaft with a hole in it. To connect each car I literally use a bent bit of wire in the shape of a staple. So far, complete success and very easy to disconnect when removing cars from the track.





# Bull Session

*Bring us up-to-date on your latest projects. Include a photo, if you have one.*



*The RGS Extension is delivering much needed supplies to Mountain Pride much to the relief of its residents. (Kenneth Jessen)*

## Del Tapparo, Windsor, CO

My new "All Purpose Train Control" for track power, is a step up from the last version (Automatic Train Control).

Can be used at home, train shows, or commercial applications.

### Features

- **Manual Speed Control** via built in speed knob and direction button.
- **Automated Station Stops** via hardwired or wireless track reed switches.
- **Interactive Train Display** with Push button start/Auto Time Out. Remote start options (not included)
  - Hardwired Start Button
  - Wireless Start Button
  - PIR motion detector start
- **Automated Train Display; Auto start** with Interval timer/Auto time out.
- Continuous loop or **back 'n forth trolley operation** via reed switches
- **User Programmable** settings
- **Max Speed Setting** for children

Requires external power supply.

[https://www.gscalegraphics.net/store/p124/APTC\\_-\\_All\\_Purpose\\_Train\\_Control.html](https://www.gscalegraphics.net/store/p124/APTC_-_All_Purpose_Train_Control.html)





# More Bull

Steve Andersen  
Estes Park, CO



*Old locos being cut up for scrap*

*Avid cyclists lost in an HO rail yard with On36 ore cars in the background*



*My covered bridge view has a water feature cut from old backpacker sleeping pad scrap. The location is close to viewers heads so I opted for soft water. (Note the dismembered cow floating downstream, accompanying a couple logs.)*



*An unusual occupant of a cattle car.*



*A visit to Ken Kafka's inner sanctums with my grand nephew and Club member, Logan Musci.*



# & More

**Robert Linton**  
**Fort Collins, CO**

We are making headway. A ton of dirt here and there, a few rocks moved to and fro, and building trestles like there is no tomorrow. I am liking the idea of expanding my railroad. As you all know it is an enormous undertaking but always leaves us knowing we have accomplished something special. As you look at the pictures you will begin to see a nearly completed addition. Another 20+ feet of trestle will be put in place and the tracks will be put through a final leveling and ballasting. Thanks to the great ideas and skills of Chris Reid, my new power unit will be under construction soon and I am excited to not have to tote around all of my MRC's. You can look for them in our new swap pages in the near future.

A special thanks to Ken and Fred for their creative "Zoom" idea. Its fun to share with members during this time of isolation. I hope more will be able to join us in the near future.



As you look at my layout pictures, know that I am NOT finished. I know the portals haven't been reinstalled, there are retaining walls that are leaning and not finished, and of course, we need plants, plants, and more plants. Just wait. : )

I hope you and your families are healthy and are able to enjoy some together time as well.



# & Some More

## Glenn Shull, Fort Collins, CO

I have attached pictures of some of the work my wife and I have been doing on the Railroads. Earlier this year, I was wondering if I would even be able to get the railroads going this year because of the full summer schedule but now with all of the free time, we are able to do a lot of work getting the RR running even though I don't know why. We were scheduled to go to Ireland with a national New Horizons band in June, Local New Horizons and Pops Band Concerts, Jazz Sunday in Grand Lake, Fun Plex concerts in Greeley all have all been cancelled. Still



track because of settling and frost heaves. The trash bags are evidence of what I have said about not building a railroad under a Austrian Pine Tree. There is still more to be done to get the Horsetooth R.R. going.



uncertain is the International Studebaker Meet in Chattanooga, TN in August (where I not only show a car but direct a band) is uncertain. It's hard to have a band with "Social Distancing".

As you can see from the pictures, I have been running trains on the Shadow Mountain R.R. I had to lower the track under the overpass





# & Even More

## Swap Box

**For Sale, Trade, or Free**

LGB Couplers  
Free. Chris Reid

LGB Turnouts  
Three 16150 R3 Left with  
12010 switch box.  
One 16050 R3 Right with 12-  
10 switch box.  
\$50 ea. (\$117 new).  
Del Tapparo

Motors  
DC motors, geared and non  
geared, 5-30VDC, small to  
large. A huge collection. Free.  
Scott Kretschmer



The K-27 is pulling a 24 car train around the blue spruce. It was a slow trip. (Kenneth Jessen)

### Del Tapparo, Windsor, CO

A neighbor was using this stuff in between patio pavers. It applies like sand, then you wet it and it sets up pretty hard. Some may find this useful as ballast on the curves? I haven't tried it. He got it at Home Depot or Lowes.



### Chris Reid, Fort Collins, CO





# & Yet More

## Bill Brayden, Fort Collins, CO

The (Tapparo) Train Shed is back together now and ready for a new life! Took a couple of years, but I have a lot of time on my hands now. I guess that's a benefit of the Corona Virus. It was a real battle but I finally got it all done.

I added a Phoenix sound board to my C-19.

Finally was able to get with Gary Raymond and get the correct wheels for changing out the awful wheels on the Accucraft caboose. He claims to get an 8:1 reduction in friction and while I have no way to measure it, you can tell the drag of the old caboose is significantly noticeably reduced. I am hoping this will eliminate the problem of derailments with the AMS freight cars on long trains. It seems like this has indeed made a difference. No derailments since I changed the caboose wheels. Thanks (to Del) for the recommendation on Gary Raymond wheels. Expensive but worth it!





## NCGR Contact Info

Dues are \$25/year/family, renewable each December.

|                        |                        |  |              |
|------------------------|------------------------|--|--------------|
| President              | Fred Mann              | <a href="mailto:Fredmco@comcast.net">Fredmco@comcast.net</a>                 | 970-493-5215 |
| Secretary/Treasurer    | Chris Reid             | <a href="mailto:cjReid7@gmail.com">cjReid7@gmail.com</a>                     | 970-443-2704 |
| Director               | Mark Sears             | <a href="mailto:MarkESears1@msn.com">MarkESears1@msn.com</a>                 | 970-226-1949 |
| Past President         | Robert Linton          | <a href="mailto:rjLinton1@gmail.com">rjLinton1@gmail.com</a>                 | 970-420-0451 |
| Librarian              | Chris Reid             | <a href="mailto:cjReid7@gmail.com">cjReid7@gmail.com</a>                     | 970-443-2704 |
| Publications           | Del Tapparo            | <a href="mailto:DelTapparo@comcast.net">DelTapparo@comcast.net</a>           | 970-581-3567 |
| Webmaster              | Del Tapparo            | <a href="mailto:DelTapparo@comcast.net">DelTapparo@comcast.net</a>           | 970-581-3567 |
| Programs               | Mark Sears             | <a href="mailto:MarkESears1@msn.com">MarkESears1@msn.com</a>                 | 970-226-1949 |
| Train Shows            | Robert Linton          | <a href="mailto:rjLinton1@gmail.com">rjLinton1@gmail.com</a>                 | 970-420-0451 |
|                        | Mike Shelton           | <a href="mailto:Mike@eventemsofcolorado.com">Mike@eventemsofcolorado.com</a> | 720-442-2867 |
| Facebook Admin         | Mark Goldrich          | <a href="mailto:mGoldrich@thegroupinc.com">mGoldrich@thegroupinc.com</a>     | 970-218-1930 |
| DGRS Liaison           | Robert Linton          | <a href="mailto:rjLinton1@gmail.com">rjLinton1@gmail.com</a>                 | 970-420-0451 |
| <b>Mailing Address</b> | NCGR c/o<br>Chris Reid | 3740 Braidwood Dr.<br>Fort Collins, CO 80524                                 |              |

## NCGR Calendar

Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month.

Bring something to share for "Show & Tell". **Please wear your name badges.** Guests are always welcome.

| Date | Event                                  | Details   |
|------|--|---|
|      | <b>Physical Meetings are on hold !</b> | <b>Virtual Meetings for now.<br/>You will be notified via e-mail.</b> |

|        |  |                        |
|--------|--|------------------------|
| Jun 17 | Monthly Meeting ???                        |                        |
| Jun 20 | NCGR Open House ???                        | This date is tentative |
| Jul 15 | Monthly Meeting                            | Mark Sears             |
| Aug 19 | Monthly Meeting                            |                        |
| Sep 16 | Club Picnic instead of a September meeting | Chris Reid's Place     |
| Oct 21 | Monthly Meeting                            | Shawn Elworthy         |
| Nov 18 | Monthly Meeting                            | First Indoor meeting   |

**www.NCGR.net**