

BAY AREA GARDEN RAILWAY SOCIETY

TRELLIS AND TRESTLE

January 2026

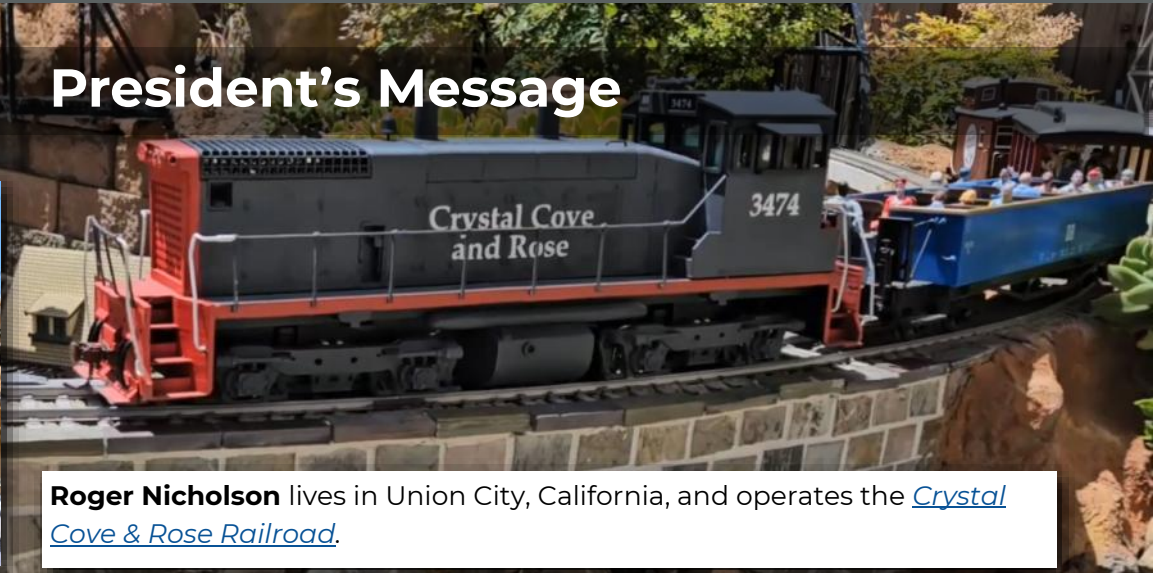


In This Issue...

- ***It is time to renew your BAGRS membership!***
- ***Getting Started in 3-D Printing for Garden Railroads—Part 1, by Roger Nicholson***
- ***Plus, all of our regular features!***

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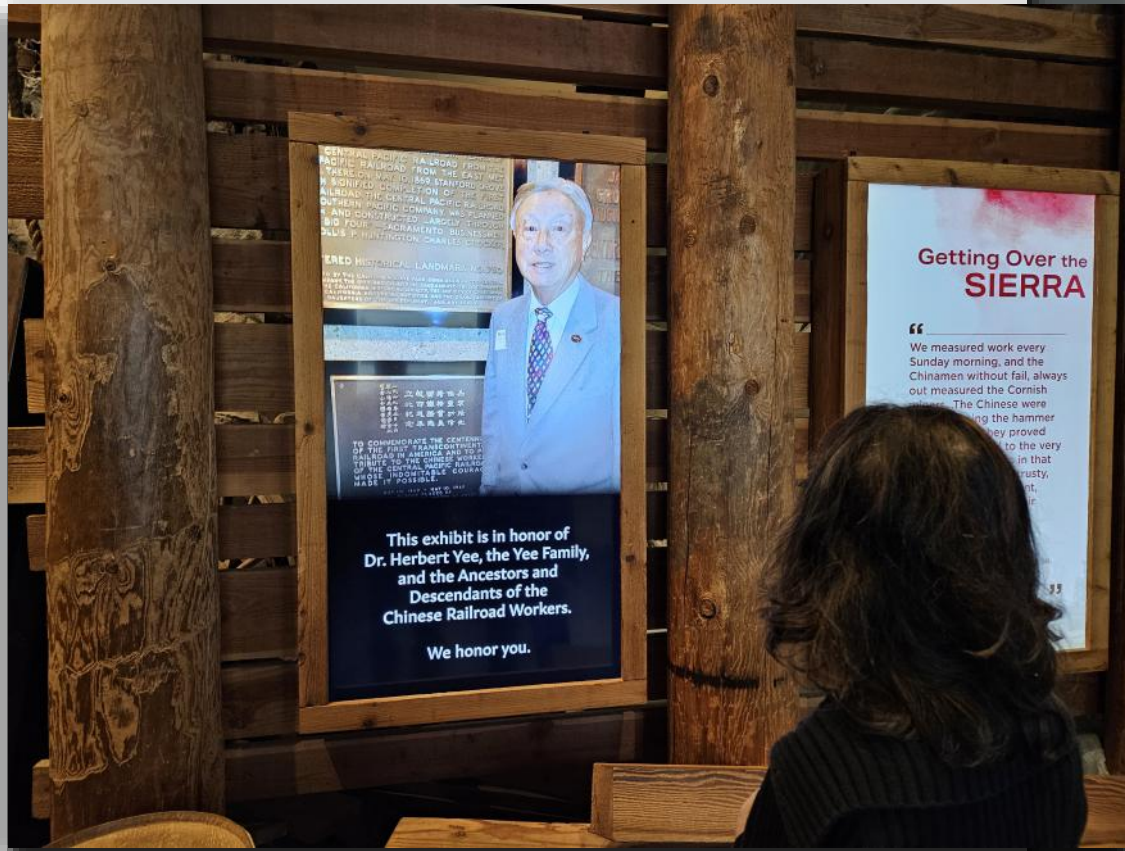
President's Message



Roger Nicholson lives in Union City, California, and operates the [Crystal Cove & Rose Railroad](#).

On the cover: A couple of trains pass in front of “New Victoria Falls” on the *Black Canyon Drinking Mining & Railroad Company* in San Rafael, California.

I hope that everyone had an enjoyable holiday season. I’ve been very busy with family visiting. I have five kids, plus their spouses or significant others, and most of them have been at my house during the holidays. One of our family activities was visiting the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento. I hadn’t been there in many years. I almost made it there last year during the 2025 NGRC, but, as you may recall, a family crisis pulled me away. I was amazed at how many well preserved locomotives they have there. My wife was particularly interested in the stories of the Chinese railroad workers who built part of the Transcontinental Railroad. She even found a photo of her old dentist there!



We got into the holiday spirit by posing in front of the Christmas tree: Just us, the decorated tree, a Western Pacific Locomotive and some random stranger in a cowboy hat.

Speaking of that Western Pacific locomotive, that brings back a memory . . .

The last run of the California Zephyr.

I was 10 years old in March 1970. I remember my parents taking me on a short train ride, and I remember that there was something special about it. My dad told me that this was the very last run of the Western Pacific California Zephyr. As I recall, we boarded the train in Fremont, traversed Niles Canyon, and then deboarded in Pleasanton.

These were the days of 126 Instamatic cameras and 12 or 24 exposure rolls of film. You only took pictures when you really needed to. I didn't have a camera with me that day, so I only have my memories of the event. One thing I clearly remember is that the locomotives were F7-A and B units painted orange and silver. In fact, they looked very much like this:



At 10 years old, I really didn't understand much about economics, or the fact that a railroad had to actually *make money*. Ocean liners were not the only elegant mode of transportation that was made obsolete by air travel—passenger trains also suffered the same fate. Such was the fate of the California Zephyr. Amtrak took over, and the Zephyr didn't reappear in Amtrak form for many years.



A number of former Western Pacific locomotives have now been relegated to various museums. #913 resides at the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento. #918-D and #713 reside at the Niles Canyon Railway. #917-D and quite a few others reside at the Western Pacific Railroad Museum in Portola, California.

The BAGRS Annual Meeting is coming up on March 21.

If there is anything in particular you would like to see at the Annual Meeting, please send me email at communications@bagrs.org.

I am planning to hold a 3-D printing clinic at my home in Union City sometime during the latter part of January.

I have had three people ask to attend so far. If anyone else is interested, please contact me at communications@bagrs.org. We will set a date soon.

Call for articles

We invite you to submit articles to the *Trellis & Trestle* on any subject related to garden railroading, gardens, or Large Scale trains. Please send any submissions to (you guessed it!) communications@bagrs.org.

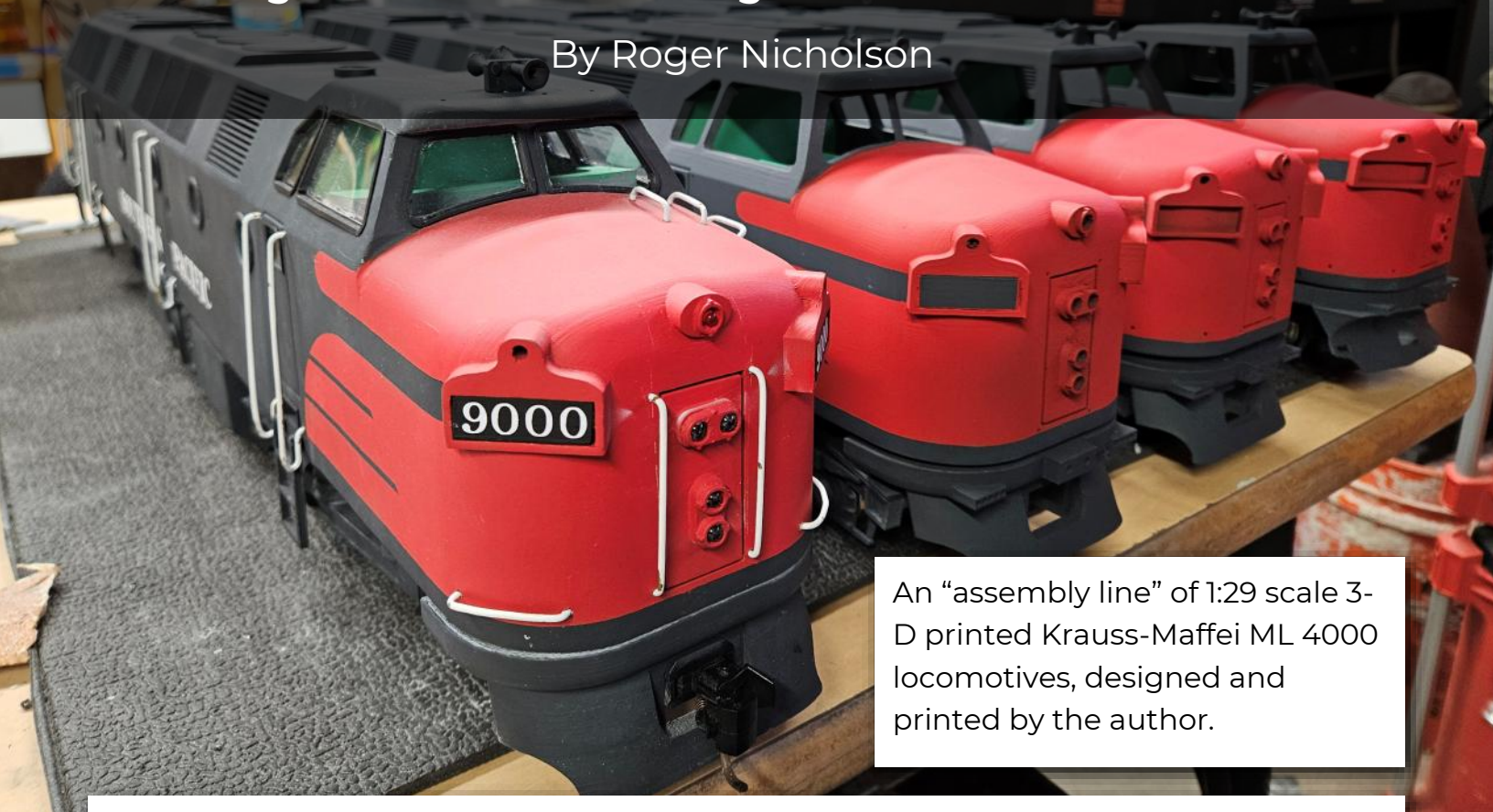
It is now time: Please remember to renew your BAGRS membership!

Roger ■

THE 3-D PRINTING DEPARTMENT

Getting Started in 3-D Printing for Garden Railroads—Part 1

By Roger Nicholson



An “assembly line” of 1:29 scale 3-D printed Krauss-Maffei ML 4000 locomotives, designed and printed by the author.

The process of 3-D printing is relatively new on the model railroad scene. It is, however, becoming very much mainstream. It is tantalizing to think that you might have the ability to create and build locomotives, rolling stock and structures that are not (and may never be) available from the few G Scale manufacturers that exist.

The availability of easy-to-use, out-of-the-box 3-D printers has made the hobby accessible to many who would have otherwise been intimidated by it.

There is, however, still that barrier to cross: How do I get started 3-D printing? Where do I go to find designs? What do I do if I want to create my own designs? The purpose of this article is to get you pointing in the right direction toward resources that will help you get started in the hobby. In the case of Garden Railroaders, it is the “hobby within the hobby.” In this article, I will focus on how to get information and obtain designs to print.

Where can I find information about 3-D printing for Large Scale?

In order to get an idea about how to get started in 3-D printing for garden railroads, I would recommend joining a few online forums dedicated to the subject. You will be able to see what others are creating, and they are a helpful venue in asking questions. Don't worry if you are just a “beginner”: We all start somewhere, and the folks online generally tend to be very helpful to newcomers.



A 1:29 scale 3-D printed EMD SD9 locomotive, also designed and printed by the author.

Here are some relevant groups. Some are private and you must request to join the group before you can post. It is a simple process:

Facebook: [G Scale 3d Printing Group](#)

Facebook: [3D Printing for Model Trains](#)

Facebook: [3D printing for garden railway scales](#)

Facebook: [G Scale Painting, Painters & Decals](#)

Reddit: [r/3dPrintingInModelRail](#)

There are also more general Garden Railroad groups that also tend to be interested in 3-D printed content:

Facebook: [G Scale Railroading](#)

Facebook: [G Scale Trains](#)

Reddit: [r/GardenRailroads](#)

A pair of 1:29 scale 3-D printed EMD SW 1500 locomotives. These are a remix (modified) by the author of an original design by Daniel Noree.



Where can I find designs to print?

There are a number of sites which host designs that may be used to print garden railway equipment. Some sites offer designs for free, and others allow you to purchase designs for a fee. Keep in mind that these designs may or may not be in the scale you desire. If they are not, it may be necessary for you to re-scale the design using design software. I'll save that discussion for another installment where we discuss design software.

Keep in mind that there are varying levels of talent involved in the 3-D designs that you can find online. Some prints will have more detail or be easier to print than others.

I would recommend that you check out a couple of designers who are particularly talented and stand out at creating large scale locomotives and rolling stock **for free**.

[512Designs on Thingiverse](#) : A rapidly growing collection of rolling stock for garden railroads. The designs are well thought out and easy to assemble, with clear instructions. This designer also has a working SD9 design (which is completely different from my own SD9 design!)

[Manimal on Thingiverse](#): A collection of extremely well designed pieces of rolling stock and replacement parts. If you are missing a hard-to-find part, you should check out his offerings. These designs also offer a high level of detail.

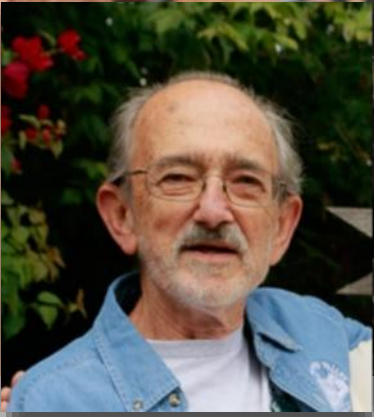
There are other sites in addition to [Thingiverse](#), but Thingiverse is a good place to start your search. You can easily locate other sites using a Google search. ■

Next installment: We will discuss 3-D printers and learning how to use them.

Carnivale on the Green: A Railcar Based Traveling Carnival

THE AMAZING WALLENSKI'S.....PART THREE

By Jim Ralph



Jim Ralph is a member of BAGRS as well as the *Sacramento Valley Garden Railway Society*, and is the brother of BAGRS member Bill Ralph. Jim's website is located here: <https://carnivaleonthegreen.com/>

Actually, not all of the WALLENSKI'S were amazing . . . but it made good billing. This generational family of carnival performers and workers had immigrated from Poland, eventually joining the CARNIVALE troupe. This month's article is about the marketing of a souvenir replica of PROFESSOR WALLENSKI'S 'Rabbit Hats' by his niece, NIECE (she likes to be called NIECE).

RECAP:

October brought us Professor's unlimited rabbits jumping out of a hat. November; Mama's unending sausage plates with a kid looking to tap a hat used for tips, ongoing rumors of a magic box were still circulating and reports of a sighting of the 'ghost boxcar' built into a passing freight outside of Chicago. And will there be more rabbits this month? . . . Of course there will be.

MAGIC HATS: RAILCAR #97

This 'pop-up' toy version of the Professor's magic hat was similar to the Jack in the Box featured in the October 2024 French Piñata article, but instead of using a crank to operate, a hidden button is pushed releasing the rabbit to 'pop up' as the operator says a magic word, amazing the onlookers.

MARKETING:

Using a proven industry sales formula; exploit someone or something popular, create related merchandise, sell it to the masses, make big bucks. And it seems the WALLENSKIS have adopted that formula to utilize their unending supply of rabbits.



THE PRESENTATION:

Enter NIECE, dressed in true carnival garb and top hat, she steps forward to demonstrate the MAGIC HAT toy . . . Audience quiets. With the rabbit hidden in the hat, NIECE slowly waves her hand over the hat softly saying . . . ABRACADRABRA . . . APPEAR MAGIC BUNNY. Pressing the hidden release button, the rabbit pops up to the amazement of a cheering crowd. It was just a toy . . . The crowd knew that . . . but it was the presentation . . . insuring the sale.

EPILOGUE:

HATS every day. The magic box rumor was still circulating. Could it actually exist? Does it contain magic power? Do the WALLENSKIS have it? Another 'ghost boxcar' sighting was reported passing through Omaha. Will next month's article, THE WALLENSKIS . . . PART FOUR, have the answers? Tune in next month to find out.

Having an unending supply of these toys . . . of course she did . . . NIECE would sell hundreds of MAGIC HATS.

BY THE WAY:

The 'ghost boxcar' is the subject of a railroading legend. Like unoccupied ghost ships claiming to be seen on the open seas, this legend is based on rare sightings of a typical boxcar, but is completely sealed, no doors, hatch covers or any other access points or markings of any kind . . . a ghost. Only observed at night, and built into a random passing freight train.

NEXT MONTH:

The last WALLENSKI . . . Finally.



Editor's note: All of Jim's past articles may be viewed at <https://carnivaleonthegreen.com/>



THE GARDEN DEPARTMENT

Parrot's Beak—January 2026

By Richard Murray

BOTANICAL NAME: Lotus berthelotti

COMMON NAME: Parrot's Beak

USDA ZONE: zone 10 (down to 35 degrees)

SUNSET ZONE: 9, 13-24

Parrot's Beak is a delightful evergreen perennial that does well in many areas of the Bay Area. In colder winter areas of the Bay Area the plant can be treated as an annual, or if the plant is in a pot, it can be brought inside during winter. The stunning, brightly colored flowers have a bit of a tropical feel. It flowers heavily for a long period during spring. Thereafter and throughout the growing season, it seems to alternate heavy flowering with no flowering every 3-4 weeks. Because it produces such a heavy amount of flowers, the plant can benefit from regular fertilization. It likes full sun. The plant should be watered regularly, but it does not tolerate soggy soil. It's better to let the top layer of soil to dry out before watering. Otherwise, the plant may suffer root rot. Therefore, it is important to have good drainage. Older branches should be cut back to produce bushiness. The width of the plant is about 2-3 feet and its height is about 6 inches. Its flowers are about 1 1/2 inches long and about 1/2 inch wide. My plant has orange flowers, but red flowers are also available. The plant looks great hanging over baskets or cascading over rock walls.

The plant is native to the Canary Islands. Although it is widely cultivated by nurseries, it is either extinct in the wild or persists as just a few individuals. In 1884 it was already classed as "exceedingly rare." Collection of plants has probably hastened its decline. The flower shape resembles parrot beaks and is believed to be an adaptation for bird pollination. Bird pollination is infrequent, so the plant has adapted by having extended flower lifespans.



The plant has been the winner of the prestigious “Award of Garden Merit” by the Royal Horticultural Society. ■

Dave's Corner

by Dave Frediani

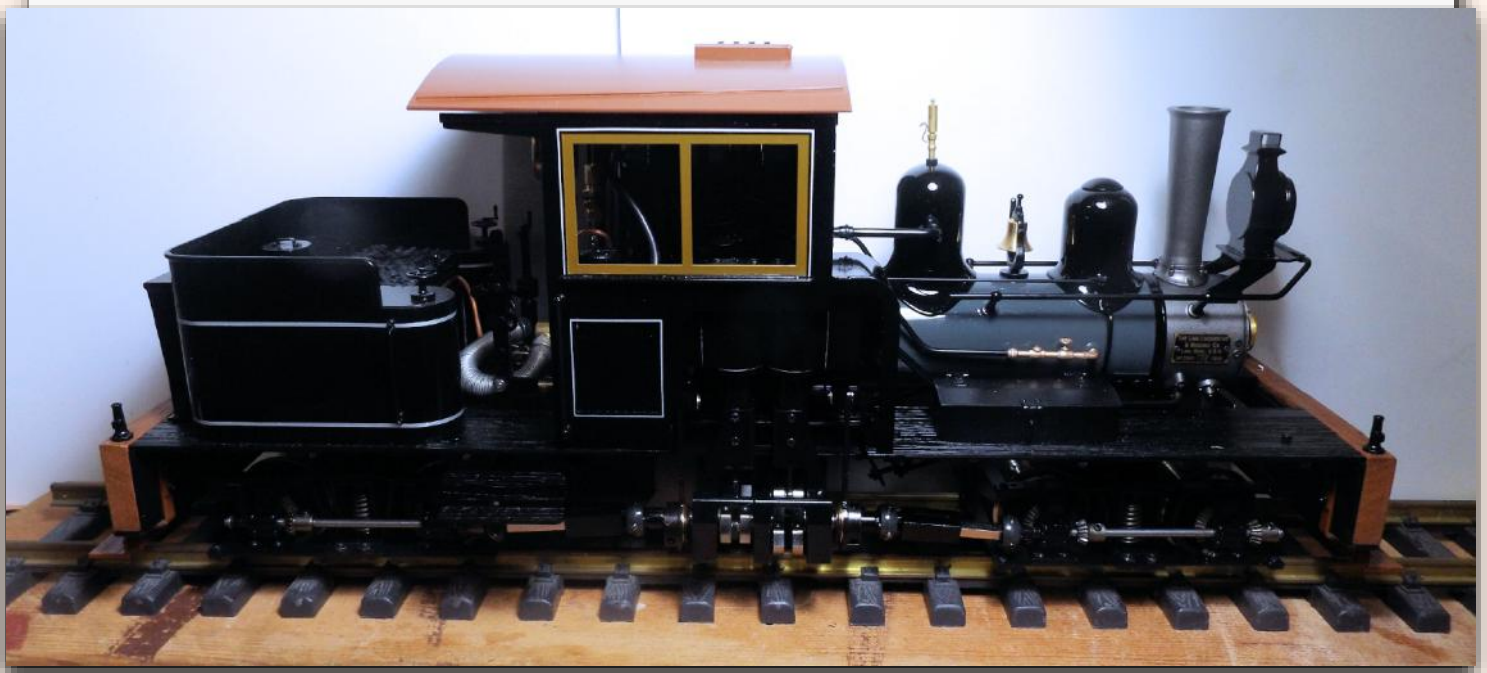


Dave Frediani lives in Sonoma, California and, among his many talents, constructs 7/8 scale rolling stock.

Making A Few Changes for A New Locomotive

While I attending the fall steam up, put on by the Sacramento Valley Live Steamers, I noticed that Accucraft had set up a sales table. It seemed innocent enough, so I walked over just to see what they had going on.

There it was, the new Accucraft 1:20.3 scale, 13 ton Shay, but this one was different from all the others that I've seen in the past. I remember seeing the 13 ton Shays at Accucraft's warehouse in Fremont. The Shay came in a few different colors like black, blue, and green, but this one was painted differently. It had a black cab, tender and frame, brown end beams, black couplers, and a brown roof. The boiler was painted a light gray with a silver nose and stack. That's all it took. I was hooked.



I didn't get a chance to run my new Shay that day. We just had delivered the two Shays that we had converted to battery power, and it didn't take long, before the kids started showing up for a chance to run one. I had also brought two of my own steam engines to run, which I had a chance to do.

I found it's never a good idea to run a new steam locomotive around a crowd for the first time. I prefer to brake them in on my workbench after checking everything out, lubing them up, and checking all the nuts and bolts, and reading the owner's manual making sure I'm not missing anything new.

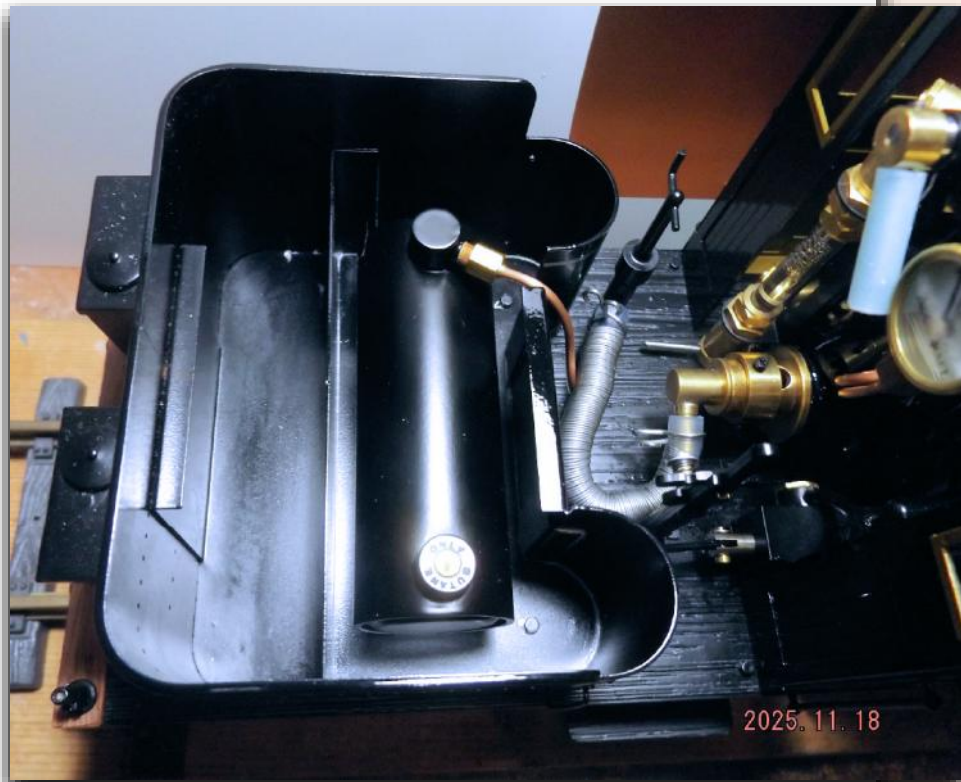
Three features that I really liked on this locomotive were #1 the sight glass, #2 the blow down valve at the bottom of the sight glass and #3 the water bath compartment, for the fuel tank, which keeps the fuel warm.

In the view below, you can see the sight glass along with the blow down valve, (that's the chrome lever) that's just above the floor. You can also see the water bath compartment located in the tender, that the fuel tank sits in.

This locomotive is by far the easiest live steam locomotive to run. Just fill the oil tank with steam oil, add 220-230cc of water and then remove 30cc of water to make room for steam. Next fill the fuel tank and add warm water in the fuel bath. Once you have 20 PSI or so, your ready to go.

You may have to move the reversing lever or (Johnson Bar) back and forth a few times to clear any condensed water out of the cylinders. After that it should be off and running.

My first run was a little over fifteen minutes. The next three runs lasted in the mid-twenties. I feel once it's broken in, it should run for at least thirty minutes. Always keep an eye on the sight glass, and never let it run low on water. This locomotive is also equipped with a Goodall valve, so use it. You shouldn't have any problems controlling the speed of this locomotive. After all, it's a Shay.



Enough about the new engine, I'll be turning 82 in a few months, and I found it's getting more and more difficult putting my locomotives that have more than a 0-4-0 wheel arrangement on the tracks. So with the help of my friend Richard, here's what we came up with.

Richard was kind enough to build me a box to carry my locomotives in. After building the box, he cut away the bottom rear of the box and added a couple of latches.

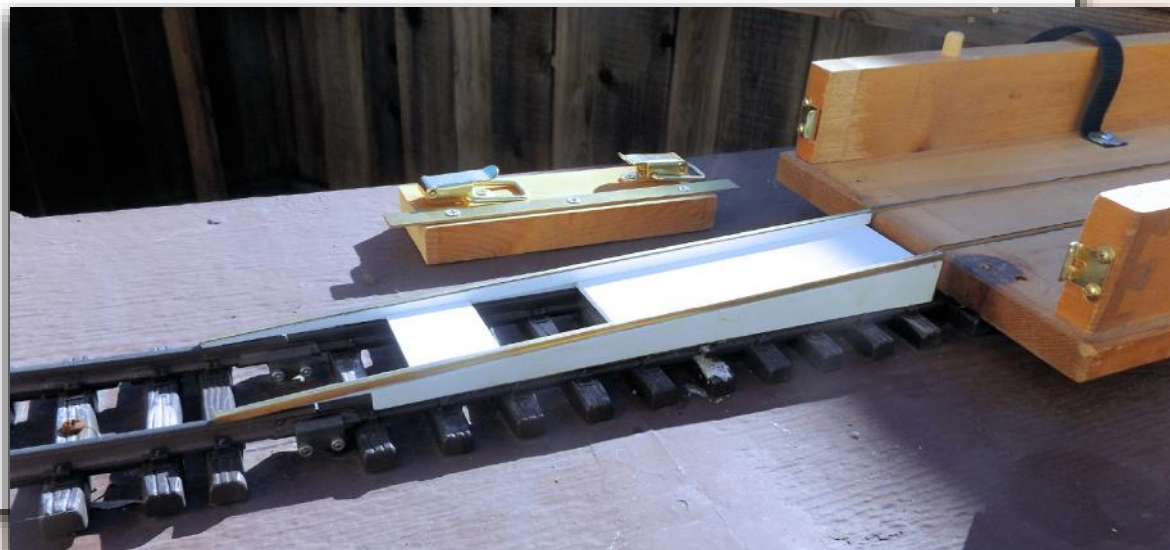


Next, I built a ramp out of 1/8" styrene and added two brass angle pieces, so that a locomotive can run in and out of the box, without having to lift the locomotive.

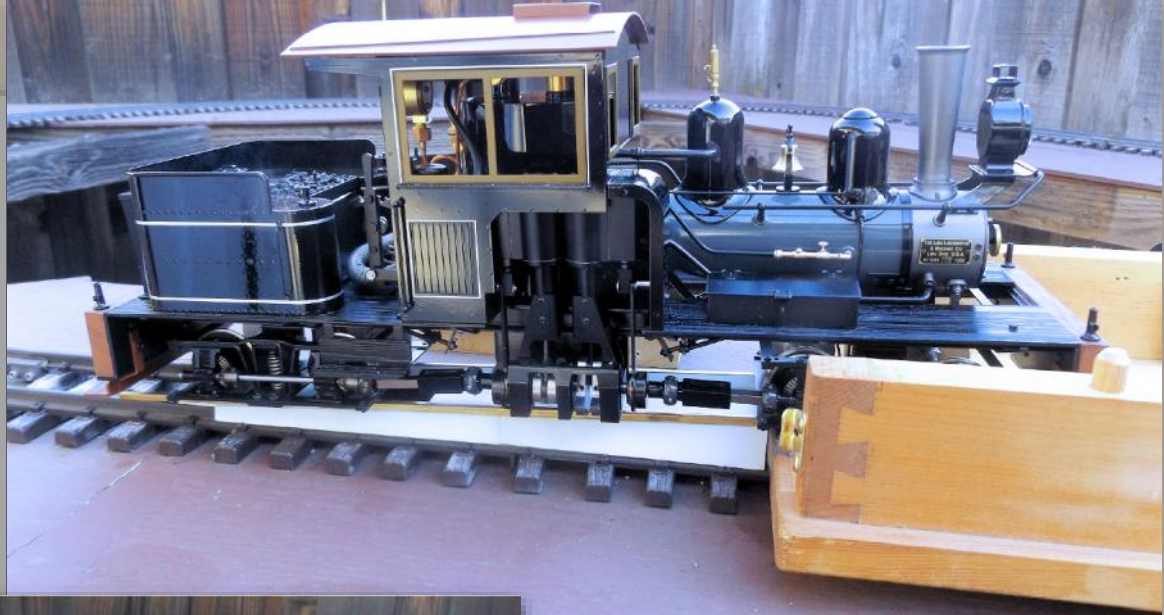
Here's a look at the finished ramp.



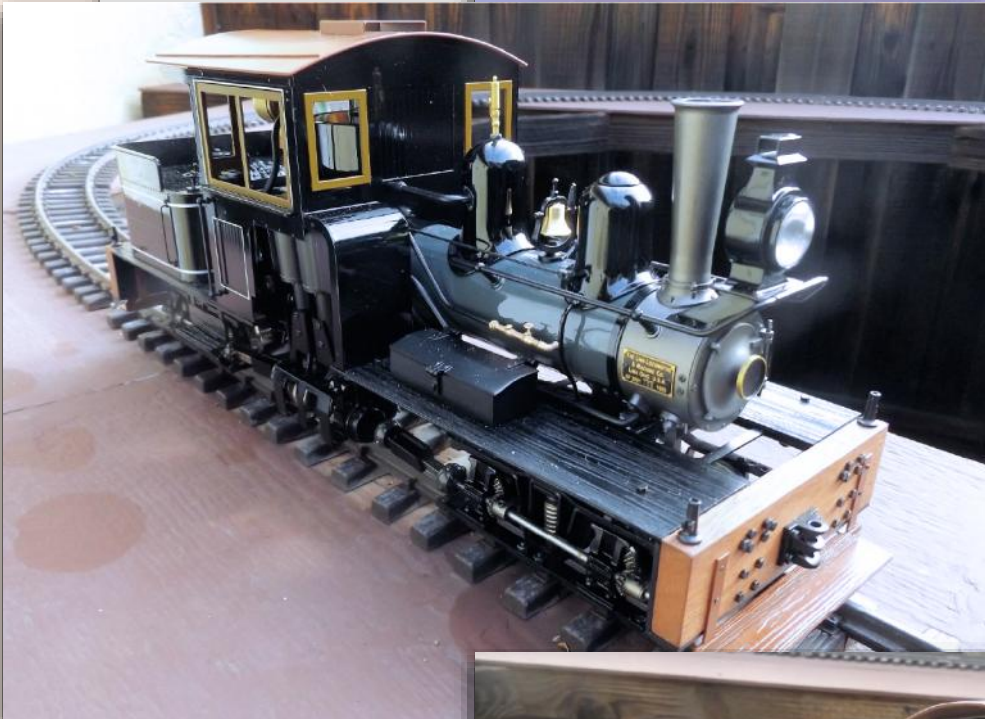
In this view you can see the bottom rear of the box removed and the ramp in place.



Here's my new Shay making its way on to the track. With battery powered locomotives you can actually run them from the box to the track, or back to the box without touching them.



Here's two more views of the Shay. I think it's pretty good-looking. ■



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Historic Snippets

DOLLYWOOD EXPRESS: THE TRAIN OF MANY NAMES

Bill Ralph operates the [Porcupine Gulch Railroad](#), and knows a thing or two about amusement parks and postcards.

North Carolina real estate developer, Grove Robbins, opened a theme park near Blowing Rock named Tweetsie Railroad with an ex-East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad 4-6-0 #12, in 1957. An instant hit, he acquired two USATC 2-8-2 locomotives from White Pass, sent one to the Tweetsie, and the other, #192 to Pigeon Forge in the Smokey Mountains of East Tennessee for a second amusement park he named Rebel Railroad in 1961. It included a general store, saloon, and blacksmith shop. The steam train ride was inspired by the 100th anniversary of the Civil War with “attacks” by Union soldiers, train robbers, and Indians. Art Modell, owner of the Cleveland Browns football team, purchased the Rebel Railroad from Robbins in 1970. He added a log flume ride and outdoor theater to the western town and steam train ride, and renamed the growing tourist destination *Goldrush Junction*. The property was sold once again in 1977, this time to the experienced Herschend family who renamed the park *Silver Dollar City* for an amusement park that they owned and operated in Branson, Missouri.

Interested in entering the theme park business but admittedly without experience in that area, singer, actress, superstar and local native, Dolly Parton, approached the Herschends for advice and became part-owner in the property in 1986 and the park renamed Dollywood, and the train ride the Dollywood Express. The narrow gauge railroad alternates two ex-White Pass & Yukon 2-8-2 “Mikado” type steam locomotives, dubbed “Cinderella” and “Klondike Katie”) along a two and a half mile loop-to-loop from the village train station to the top of the mountain bordering to the North and requiring five tons of coal per day. The balloon stacks were removed and the engine painted black following the 2004 operating season to promote a more western theme. The Dollywood Express crew now follow an annual checklist of repairs and overhauls as necessary to maintain the 1938 and 1943 Baldwin locomotives, and open passenger cars, in pristine working condition. Since Dolly Parton’s involvement, Dollywood has become Tennessee’s biggest ticketed attraction with more than three million guests annually enjoying one hundred and fifty acres of family fun and *The Train of Many Names*. ■



East Devil Hills Modeling Group

by Henner Meinhold



Henner Meinhold resides in Berlin, Germany. The *East Devil Hills Modeling Group* meets regularly to create, collaborate, and share incredibly machined models.

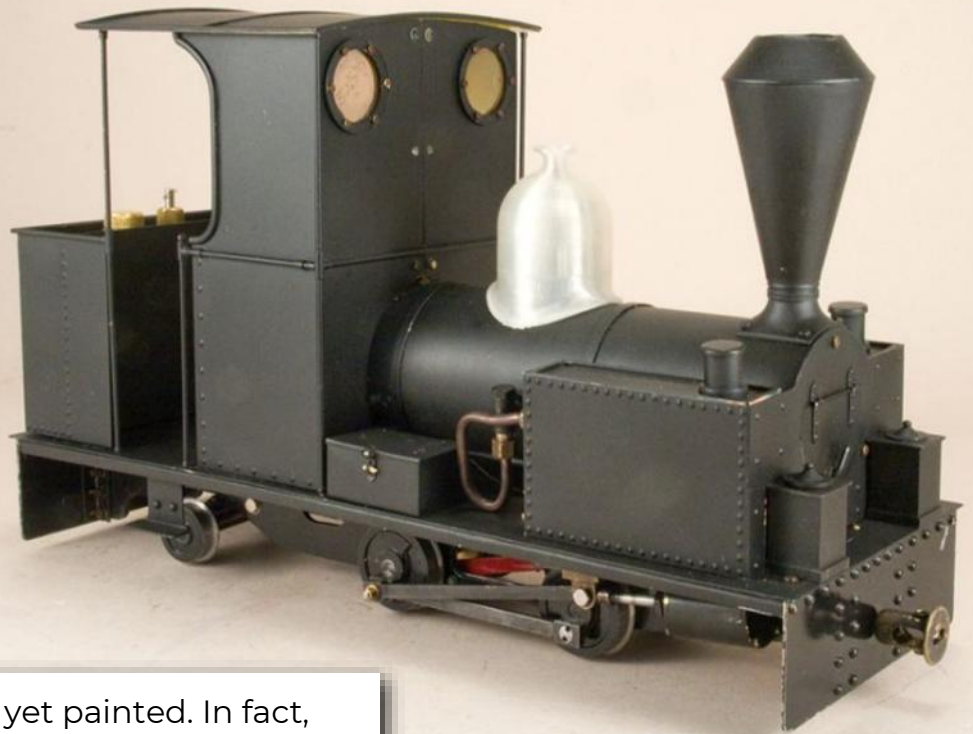
Bill Allen ordered wheels from Walsall in GB, which took some time for delivery. Now they arrived and his Garrat rebuild is literally back on track. The castings from Walsall are a beauty, free of hard spots and with a smooth surface. The new axle arrangement required quite a lot of wheels, so he went into batch production. The counter weights were CNC-milled by Dennis.



Marc Horowitz's Excelsior nears completion. But first I want to show some older pictures, which I could not post due to my surgeries. The loco has a very distinct smokestack with two cones. Marc started out by cutting templates out of cardboard. He then used this template to cut the real stack out of brass sheet, which he then rolled to the required shape and soldered everything together:



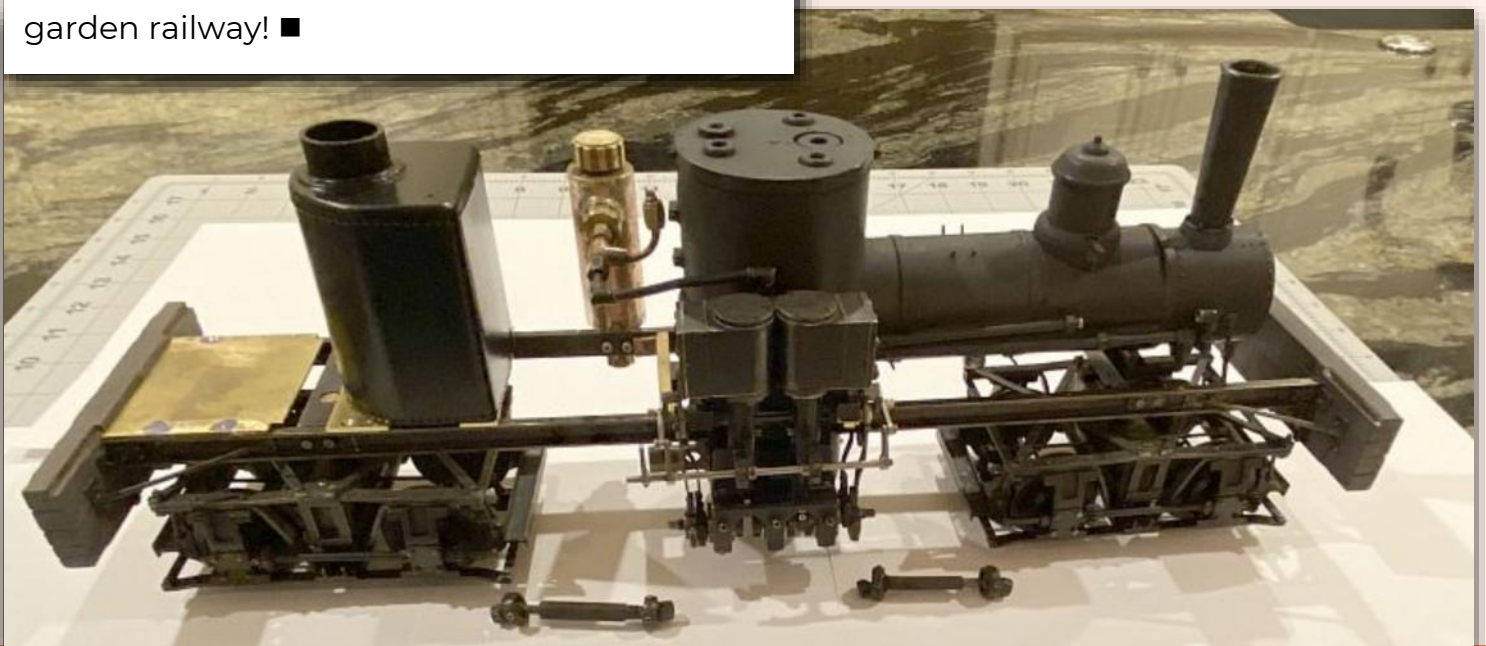
This is how the loco looks at present:



As you can see, the dome is not yet painted. In fact, that is not the real dome, which will be cast in brass. The white piece has been designed by Dennis and 3D-printed in “ashable” plastic. This material can be used as a pattern for a casting. It will be embedded in plaster or ceramic and the plastic driven out at higher temperature without any residue, hence the name “ashable.” Here are two of these printed domes.



Finally Ron Malouf shows the almost finished chassis of his Shay. I hope you all had a Merry Christmas with lots of new equipment for your garden railway! ■



TRACKSIDE PHOTOS



It's a bird! It's a plane! No, its . . .

Frankly, I don't know what it is.

Perhaps at one point the UP was thinking beyond just taking over the Western Pacific and the Southern Pacific.

This creature resides on the Alameda County Central Railroad Society (ACCRS) HO layout in Pleasanton, California.

Do you have an interesting trackside photo and a backstory to go with it? Send it in to communications@bagrs.org and we will feature it in the *Trellis & Trestle*.

THE LAST PAGE



Traveling by train once included a fine dining experience. This setting, representing what was once used on the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway (ATSF) dining cars, includes fine china which depicts California Poppies. Apparently, the china was manufactured in Europe, and the manufacturer did not know what a California Poppy looked like. So, the railroad sent them seeds, which they grew and then used the resulting flowers as models for the china design.

TRELLIS AND TRESTLE

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