

Santa Clarita Valley Garden Railroad Club



NEWSLETTER

Santa Clarita, California

June, 2010

June Meeting

Sunday, June 27, 2010

10:00 am at the Loop, 12 Noon at John Bell's home
19512 Sycamore Drive, Tehachapi, California
661-823-1308

Tehachapi Loop & John Bell's Layout

To get to the Tehachapi Loop take Highway 58 to Keene and proceed on Woodward-Tehachapi Road southeast about 4 miles to the lookout. Parking is along side of road and is somewhat limited.

There are two ways to get to Tehachapi from Santa Clarita and San Fernando Valley. Distance from the junction of I-5 and I-14 freeways is about 95 miles to Keene, regardless of which way you choose to go.

Plan to go to the Tehachapi Loop around 10:00 am, if you can. The Club outing to the Loop last year was a little disappointing since traffic was suspended for over two hours for some problem, but we hope that won't happen this year. Over 40 trains a day move up and down this pass on average.

At noon we plan to meet at the home of member John Bell where we will picnic while taking in the views of trains 300 feet above and only 1,000 feet away.

John will provide and BBQ hot dogs so you will need to bring any sides, chips, cookies, drinks, etc for your own group. There will be a small charge for the hot dogs. **PLEASE RSVP by Wed evening to Dodie Pilling at 661-259-1018 or Alan Wright at 661-287-0026**

2010 CALENDAR

JULY 26 Monday	MEETING AT LAYOUT OF JIM & SANDI OWENS, Canyon Country, CA
AUGUST 2-8	2010 NATIONAL GARDEN RAILWAY CONVENTION, Tacoma, Washington
AUGUST 29 Sunday	MEETING AT LAYOUT OF SCOTT & ALETHA MILLER, Frazier Park, CA
SEPTEMBER 27 Monday	MEETING AT LAYOUT OF JOHN & MARIE NOZZI, Valencia, CA
OCTOBER 24 Sunday	LOMITA RAILROAD MUSEUM, Lomita, CA Display of steam locomotives, cars, water tower, re-creation of historic depot.
NOVEMBER:	TO BE DETERMINED
DECEMBER	NO MEETING.

ON TRACK by Alan Wright

On Sunday, June 20, we went up to Santa Barbara to visit the layouts of Gary & Marilyn Siegel. I sent all the members a flyer for this open house a couple of weeks ago. The open house was a fund raiser for the Parkinson Foundation of Santa Barbara. This was a perfect way to celebrate Father's Day with my son, my daughter-in-law (who has Parkinson's) and their 5 year old son who loves trains. We weren't disappointed.

The outdoor layout is G gauge and models the Southern Pacific Santa Cruz Division in 1:32 scale—standard gauge era 1971 and is approximately 150 x 200 feet overall. All of this is carved out of an immense hillside. There is a natural creek separating it from the expansive patio area with lots of trees. The majority of the track bed is poured-in place concrete. It is not track powered. Can you imagine cleaning hundreds of feet of track, under trees and up and down this hill? There are about 1,100 dwarf Alberta Spruce trees already planted, which, I understand were started from about 4" box size. These continue to be pruned to make them more realistic and to scale.

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SANTA CLARITA VALLEY GARDEN RAILROAD CLUB

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MORE ABOUT THE TEHACHAPI LOOP

As a rail fan, visiting the Tehachapi Loop must be high on your own “bucket list”. This month, the club will visit the “Loop” for the third time. While as many as 40 trains go through every day, we were disappointed last year when unexpected maintenance prevented much viewing while we were there. We hope this year will be different.

The loop, where the railroad crosses over itself to gain elevation lies about halfway up grade to the Tehachapi Pass. This line running 28 miles from Bakersfield over the Tehachapi Mountains has an average gradient of 2.2%. The loop is .73 miles long and a train of more than 4,000 feet (about 85 box-cars) will pass over itself as it progresses.



The line was started in 1874 and completed two years later in 1876. The line was cut through solid & decomposed granite by up to 3,000 Chinese laborers. They used picks, shovels, horse drawn carts and blasting powder. There are 18 tunnels, 10 bridges on the single track line which is still in use essentially unchanged 134 years after it's completion. In 1998 it was named a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark.

Hailed as one of the greatest engineering feats of its day, it was built by the Southern Pacific Railroad and is now owned by Union Pacific. BNSF also uses the loop under a trackage rights agreement. In the April, 2010 edition of our newsletter we featured an article by member Jim Kerschner, a now retired engineer for the Southern Pacific who took hundreds of trains through this pass. Also, in that edition were pictures of a bad fire which occurred at the tunnel where trains enter (or leave) the loop.

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Above, view of the layout looking down from upper path.

Left: The indoor layout is HO scale, about 1,500 sf in size. It is modeled after the Louisville & Nashville RR, Eastern Kentucky Division, era 1971. I was blown away by the rock scenery and what must be thousands of artificial trees. This layout has been featured in several model railroad magazines.

THOUGHTS ON THE BIG TRAIN SHOW & SOUTHWEST GARDEN RR SHOW

By Alan Wright

There was a lot of discussion and concern from many garden railroaders about having two shows on the same weekend. (June 5 & 6). The Big Train Show (BTS) for the second straight year was combined as an all-scales show and this did not go over well with some who attended it last year. The Southwest Garden Railroad Show (SWGRS), which did a show last year in October at the Fairplex, went head to head with the BTS this year with an all garden railroad (G Scale) show. The results appear to be mixed, depending on who you talk to.

Why should we care? After all, we can buy things we want for our layouts from a number of sources including the hobby shops and by mail and internet from vendors world wide. Well, there is nothing quite like having all of that in one place where you can see and talk with the sellers and others who provide many other related services. A good show provides that venue.

A week or so ago I emailed all our members with questions concerning whether they attended one or both of the shows, and if not, why they did not go. Out of our membership of 25, it appears only four of us actually attended, doing both shows. The members who replied that did not attend had various reasons; heavy work load, vacation travel, sick, other activities that conflicted and just did not need anything for their layout right now. One member said they were unhappy with an all-scales show.

George McLeary, Gary Woolard, Carla Breitner and I attended both the shows. George and I went on Saturday, starting at the BTS first. This was clearly the larger of the two shows and had the most vendors, although not all of interest to large scale. Half of the exhibit hall contained modular railroads, dominated by the great Del Oro Pacific. The Arizona Train Operators also had a nice modular setup, but most of the others were of smaller gauges. Michael Broggie presented his story of Walt Disney's history of trains at a site on the floor of the hall with almost all seats filled for each session. We did not feel that this was really a very large show from the standpoint of large scale vendors. While there were quite a few people in the hall in the morning, this seemed to drop off as the afternoon wore on.

At the SWGRS, (after paying for parking and admission again), we did not see a lot of people and the number of vendors was disappointing. There were two nice modular railroads set up and a

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A view of the BTS exhibit hall about 1:30 on Saturday. The photo was taken from the location of the modular railroads. I assume that some people were attending the clinics, but we did not go there.



We went over to the SWGRS at Fairplex about 3:00 on Saturday. The photo above shows about a third of the exhibitors, so it had far less vendors than the BTS. Some took advantage of the Fairplex Garden Railroad and brought trains to run on the layout.



Hans and Rachel seemed to be exceptionally busy at Gold Coast Station although they occupied about half the space that they usually take for their booth.

THOUGHTS ON THE BIG TRAIN SHOW & SOUTHWEST GARDEN RR SHOW

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raised track with live steam which was interesting. I made my only purchase of the day at Rainbow Ridge, but George was unable to find what he was looking for at either show.

Carla and Gary offered their opinions on the shows and I will paraphrase some of their comments as follows: "As it turned out, there was so little to see at the SWGRS that we went over to the BTS Saturday afternoon. And it was pretty quiet there—we were able to park in the closest lot! After a quick pass through there, we came back to the Fairplex for the My Large Scale pizza party, which was a lot of fun. Sunday we went back to the BTS with an HO scale friend. Clearly more vendors than SWGRS, but the only thing I bought was a milled wood kit of a small western building from Shady Glenn Models."

Gary picked up some comments from MLS threads and one went like this, "if you put both of this year's SWGRS and BTS shows together, you still wouldn't have something that approached the old Queen Mary shows in their heyday. I think this was especially obvious at the SWGRS, but BTS was hurting as well".

Gary continues, "Why? Obviously the two shows were hurting each other, but it would appear that there were a number of vendors that decided to sit out the weekend entirely, maybe waiting to see what things looked like after the dust settled. But I think a lot of it was a reaction to the bad economy generally. Also, several vendors told me that last year there had been difficulties in getting the cooperation and services they expected from the Convention Center, which now owns the BTS. This year, some who returned to the BTS anyway reported that the management was trying much harder to cooperate with the vendors. But it may have been too late."

"Apparently, the Convention Center Management was much more used to putting on conventions for big business distributors and chains. They realized after the last show that they didn't really understand the niche hobby market with its small retailers and garage manufacturers. That may be why several representatives from the Convention Center came over to the Fairplex early Saturday to talk to Dave Roberts. (SWGRS promoter). Rumors are that they've asked him to run all or part of the next Big Train Show."

What's in the future? I am sure we will not see another two shows on the same weekend again. SWGRS has just announced that they will have a large scale show at the Fairplex on November 6 and 7, 2010. Dave Roberts of SWGRS says that he has heard from most of the manufacturers and vendors in large scale and they all plan to attend.

Mark your calendars!



Ross & Sue Pipers Rainbow Ridge booth at SWGRS. They make a line of Precision Board products and kits with a large number of milled surface treatments.



American Heritage Trains is a newly founded company and their first item they offer is a code 332 G-scale brass track. I recognized one of the partners in the new company, Andrew Kann. We had visited his layout during the last Western Regional. His layout also appeared in Garden Railways Magazine. He has since moved and is building a new layout. The track has a number of improvements including the tie design, and the method of attachment which allows for the use of soil nails and screws without them being visible. All track is flexible and comes in 5 foot lengths. Prices are \$5.49 / foot Go to their website for more information. www.americanheritagetrains.com