

RIDING RAILWAYS NEWSLETTER



Grand Scales
Quarterly

MAY 2008

Hello! Welcome to the May issue of the Riding Railways Newsletter! We have a nice article for you from Don Gleason on building your own frogs, including lots of pictures. No doubt you will find it of interest no matter what gauge you run. Also, further in the issue we are giving away two brand new railroad books! Take a peek and enter to win.

With Spring here, and summer fast approaching, many clubs and private lines are now up and running. Remember to send in photos and news items for inclusion here. We want to hear from you!

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that appears to read 'Susan'.

PS - We are still working on publishing both magazines. As mentioned before, we are working hard and have not forgotten our responsibility to you, or our love for the hobby. Thank you for your continued patience.

Home Built Frog for the Westfork and Battle Creek RR

BY DON GLEASON

The W&BC is an 18" gauge railroad in the Grand Scale range. I like to tell everyone it's 1 to 1 in 18" gauge. Most of the equipment is mining equipment. When the opportunity came up to purchase a .5 mile of 20lb rail and four complete spring switches, I jumped at the chance. The purchase price also included a Vulcan Diesel-Mechanical locomotive and four cars. My original plan was to sell the locomotive and cars to recoup the money for the rail. Great plan until I figured out the loco and cars were 28" gauge. Not what you would consider a high demand gauge. After doing some research I found out that the locomotive and cars had started life in the tie yard of the **McCloud River Lumber Company** in California. Well, now I had a piece of history, so I decided to dual gauge my railroad.

Although I had enough rail, it became very obvious that one thing I was short on was frogs. Instead of one frog for every switch I needed three. I



have a very understanding Financial Officer. However, buying commercially built frogs was out of the question, as well as the bank account. So I did the next best thing: I built my own.

Having bought used rail from other railroads I

had lots of short pieces in the bone pile. Now I'm really glad I did not scrap any rail. I started by doing some research. A big help was the track manual from the *Swanton Pacific* (available free of charge at <http://www.grandscales.com/freestuff/freestuffindex.html>). I also looked at the frogs I had on hand. I decided to model my new frogs off the 28" gauge switches I had bought, as they looked the easiest and quickest to duplicate.



My first step was to bend the long rail. Since I was using short rem's they were already drilled for joiners and I didn't have to do that operation, but that will happen on the next ones. I'll pre drill before I bend. After I made my bends, I cut the rail to length. I did that because of the size of my rail bender. It is the old Jim Crow type modified with a hydraulic jack. The



commercial frog served as a pattern for the bends.

The next step was to make the heel of the frog. After looking at several frogs that I had, I decided that I would build a heel rather than miter the rail together. That way I only had to make straight cuts on the rail. Again I used the commercial frog for a pattern. I used flat bar 3/8" x 2 1/4" for the vertical pieces and 1/4" flat bar for the cap. This gave me a 2.5" height which

is equal to my rail height. I used my band saw to miter the flat bar but a torch could also be used.

When cutting the cap, I cut inboard of the round edge of the rail so when I welded to my vertical



flat bar, I could grind the weld to mimic the rounded edge of the rail. This was probably the most complicated part of the operation. Note: the wide end of the cap is cut to match the angle of the rail.



Next part is to cut the base plate for the frog and lay it out, and weld it into place. I used 3/8" plate,



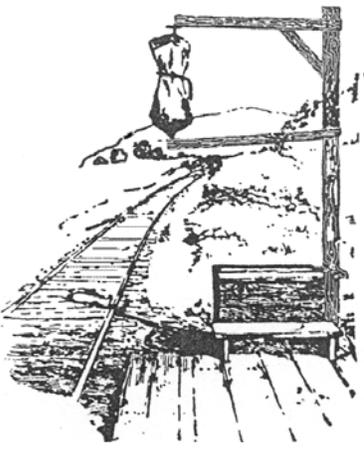
are correct. A 4' straight edge helps with alignment. For me, the straight edge matched up with the rail gap through the frog.

Once your layout is done, tack into place. One last check of the layout and weld it down. Some final touch up with the grinder to complete.



My first frog took me about 3 hours to build and about \$30.00 in steel. It was a fun project and helps to keep the cost down on my railroad. I tried to manufacture some points to go with the frog and decided my best solution was my local machine shop. ***

although 1/4" would work for lighter applications. This is also a really good time to confirm your bends



MAIL CAR

We welcome your letters, comments, thoughts, pictures and news. Send to: srobinson@theskybeam.com or mail to:

Robinson & Associates
PO Box 8953
Red Bluff, CA 96080

I enjoyed the February **Riding Railways Newsletter**. The story on the 24" gage CCPS&P reminded me of another little known steam 24" gage railway north of Seattle. Maybe you ought to contact the owner and get a story for the next newsletter.

I was visiting in Bow, WA, and was advised to take a certain road and look for a RR crossing sign, hang a right and plunge down the driveway. Then I saw 24" track meandering thru' the woods!

The owner and his family are operating the RR and hire out the place for pic-nics, weddings etc. Nice guy, invited me back for BBQ the next day, but flight out of Sea-Tac was on the schedule instead.

The loco was converted from a Homestake Mining Co. air operated loco many years ago, as I recall.

Bill Traill
GSP&P

I was the project manager for the 1994 construction of the Denver Zoo railroad mentioned in the April issue. A couple of minor points. The town is Strasburg, CO, just like the Pennsylvania town, 1,700 miles east. The motor is NOT a Ford, IIRC, it is a Kabota. Public Service of Colorado (now XCEL Energy) provided the incen-

tive for the natural gas fuel system.

Unlike C.P. Huntington's, the Mason Bogie is a very exact 5" scale model. Rail was recycled from the previous railroad.

The railroad is privately owned and is operated as a concession.

Ira Schreiber

Thanks Ira. Appreciate the additional information.

Do you know of any companies that could build a 1940's style, air-electric, pre-war, Toronto PCC streetcar model in one quarter scale? Also, are there any companies that manufacture overhead trolley wire and insulators for such a model as the above mentioned? Thank you for your time and information!

Best Regards,
Kerry

Readers, if you have information for Kerry, please send it over and I will forward it to him. (srobinson@theskybeam.com). Many thanks!

Thank you for being a sponsor of the "Discover Live Steam" photo contest! I received my **Grand Scale University** collection last weekend. So far I have only able to watch the one chapter on the 0-4-0 locomotive, but I was

truly impressed with what I saw. I model in 1 1/2" scale and can see how the larger scales also relate to what I am constructing. I am looking forward to watching and learning more from the DVD's. The chance of winning a prize such as yours really added to the enjoyment of the photo contest!

Thanks again,
Jim Kliment

You're quite welcome Jim and congratulations on your winning photo! So glad that you are enjoying the DVDs. We're always happy to provide prizes for the Discover Live Steam contests. (www.discoverlivesteam.com)

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I spoke with you at the AT&T RR convention last year and he showed interest in the NZR Dc loco that we had just started to manufacture at IKON LOCOMOTIVE WORKS for a LIONS club railway here in New Zealand.

We have now completed the 4" scale loco, Dc 4663 and I thought you may appreciate a couple of images as it was leaving our works in Auckland, NZ. We shortened the locomotive slightly from true scale length so it would fit inside the clients existing storage shed.

Dc 4663 will be operating

at the *Kowhai Park Railroad* beside the river in the city of Wanganui, North Island, New Zealand. This club has been operating a 15" gauge RR for 45 years on the same site and all the existing equipment is getting well and truly worn out.

The new NZR Dc locomotive is powered by a 33 hp 3 cylinder YANMAR industrial diesel engine connected to a infinitely variable hydraulic pump. The pump powers a hydraulic motor driving the 4 wheels in each bogie by double row 3/4" pitch chains.

The hydraulic system is fitted with

an oil cooler to ensure the hydraulic oil does not exceed 70 degrees celsius when working in hot weather.

A two cylinder air compressor is fitted to work the air brakes on the loco and the passenger cars. The locomotive weighs 2400 Kg (5500 pounds)

At present we are almost finished building a 4" scale model B Shay for a client in Europe. It is gauged to operate on the clients already existing 287 mm (aprox 11 1/2") gauge track.

My own 4" scale model B Shay "ENTERPRISE" running on 7.25" gauge track has now covered 7000 km (4500 miles) and is still running perfectly. I have also attached an image of the Shay hauling 130 passengers on 1.5% grades in Christchurch, NZ, last January.

Regards,
 Dave Giles, Manager
 IKON ENGINEERING DEVELOPMENT LTD
 PO Box 51056
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BOOK GIVE AWAY

Readers in the United States can enter the drawing for one of these two new books. Simply send me an e-mail (srobinson@theskybeam.com) with your name, address, phone number and e-mail address. I'll take all the names and draw two winners in mid-June. Winners will receive the books by the end of June.

RAILROADS OF PENNSYLVANIA

by Brian Soloman

Voyager Press - ISBN 978-0-7603-3245-0

\$34.95

Hardcover, 9 x 11.25", 160 pages

Publication Date: June 2008

Railroads of Pennsylvania travels from Scranton, home to Steamtown USA and the Laurel Line Trolley to Altoona, the heart of Pennsylvania railroading. From East Broad Top to the famed Horseshoe Curve, which still hosts 50 trains a day.

I must say that I truly enjoyed this book. The photos offer a diverse look at more than 15 railroads throughout the beautiful state of Pennsylvania. (There are over 180 images in this 160 page book. Truly a feast for the eyes.)

The author, Brian Soloman, has written more than 30 books about railroads. His style is informative and easy to read. He also included a handy Appendix and Bibliography for those who want to learn more.

THE RAILROAD NEVER SLEEPS

24 HOURS IN THE LIFE OF MODERN RAILROADING

Edited by Brian Soloman

Voyager Press - ISBN 978-0-7603-3119-4

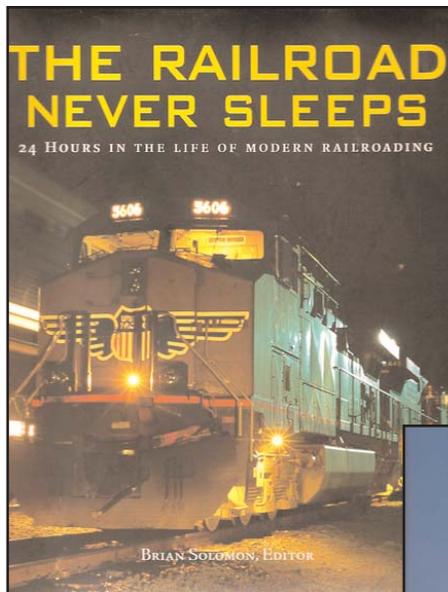
\$35.00

Hardcover, 9.25w x 10.875h, 176 pages

Voyager Press tells us: "For well over a century and a half the railroad has rolled on, crisscrossing the continent in the ceaseless activity that keeps the North American economy moving. This never-ending workday unfolds hour by hour in A Day in the Life of Modern Railroading, a

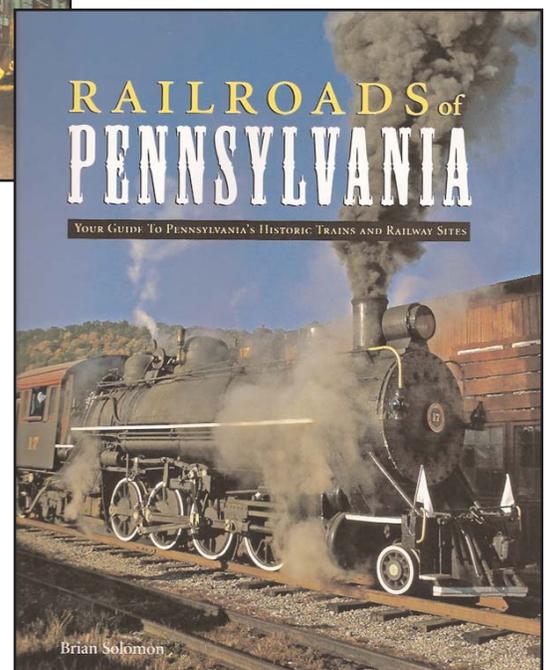
remarkable photographic chronicle of North American railroading over twenty-four hours. On May 10, 2007, the anniversary of the Golden Spike ceremony marking the completion of the first U.S. transcontinental railroad, several of today's top railroad photographers set out for every corner of the continent to capture the railroad in action at every hour of the day and night. The result is a portrait of railroading across North America, from rural outpost to urban center, port city to Great Plains, dawn to dusk to deepest night. The breathtaking photographs and detailed captions depict every type of railroading--heavy-haul unit trains, internodal, modern passenger and commuter lines, short-line services, and more. Together they create a complete picture of the motive power, rolling stock, workers, and operations that keep North American life and business on the rails."

The Railroad Never Sleeps is edited by Brian Soloman, the same author of the *Railroads of Pennsylvania*. It's much more of a pictorial than a book to read. The photographs do provide an interesting inside look to modern railroading that is not often seen by those who are not employed by the RRs themselves. The photos include the big name railroads as well as many shorter and less well-known companies from across the US. Soloman did a



fine job in choosing photos and text.

Both books would make good gifts and are available through Amazon.com or your local book seller.

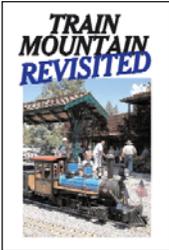


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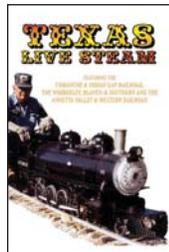
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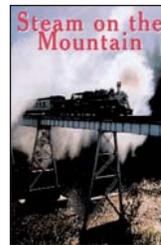


Come on y'all and visit three of the nicest 7.5" gauge railroads in the glorious state of Texas! You'll be impressed with the size and quality of Nick Edward's newly built **Wimberley**

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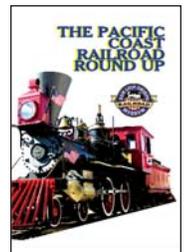
ful drive rods and steel wheels. You'll enjoy the dramatic scenery and hearing the engineer describe what it's like to run a steam engine over a railroad he has worked on for decades. And there is no sound in the world like a lonesome steam whistle echoing through the pine trees.



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The Pacific Coast is a private railroad on the Central California coast. It is opened to the public only once each year, as a fund raiser for the San Luis Obispo Railway Museum. This DVD takes you aboard the charming narrow gauge train. It features vintage steam engines (including the one that was in the opening shots of Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman TV show with Jane Seymour). The coaches are genuine Disney coaches - the first coaches to be used in service at Disneyland. Great for railfans, narrow gaugers, families, Disney enthusiasts and anyone else who would just enjoy a good show. Approx. 1 hour with bonus features. **\$19.95.**



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