

A&H Desert Railroad

Wow! What a railroad! Arlyn and Harvey Becker invited members and guests of the Rose City Garden Railroad Society to their open house in Bend, Oregon. About 25 members made the trip from the Portland/Vancouver metropolitan area and were well rewarded to visit a beautifully detailed logging and mining railroad built on a steep hillside. Glen and Judy Wadley traveled the longest distance from Bay City, OR to Bend, OR.

The railroad is track powered with a remote control panel for all track blocks and switch machines. Layout is a folded “dog leg” with reversing loops at each end; allowing trains on the mainline to run automatically. The mainline track is 275 ft. with

additional 125 ft. of track for: yards, siding, and turnouts. All curves utilize LGB R1 (5ft. dia.) track, grades average 3.5% to 5.5%, bridge clearance = 8.5 inches, and maximum trestle height of 24 inches. Although Jeff Lange did get his U25B to operate (except at the reversing loops), logging locomotives and small 2-8-0 “Consolidations” are the motive power of choice on this railroad.

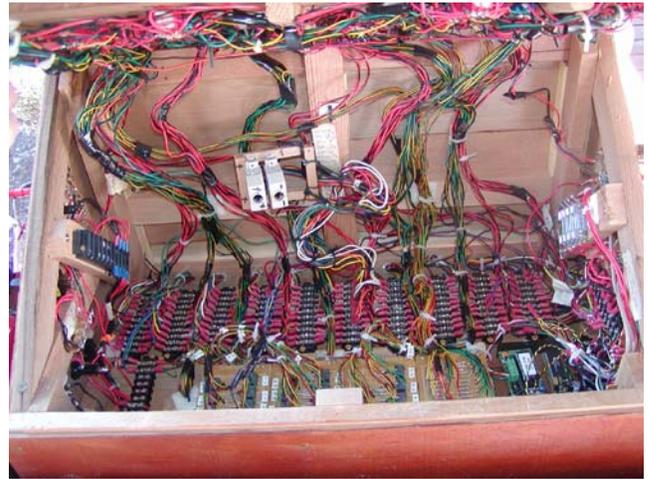
The railroad is a joint project by Arlyn and Harvey. Arlyn does the design of the railroad, including the heavy lifting for the landscaping. She is well known in the area by the sellers of rock and landscaping materials. Harvey says that Arlyn stands looking out of her kitchen window and dreams of what is next for the railroad.



A partial view of the railroad looking south from the midpoint

Harvey loves to build things. His buildings and trestles are of a quality that we often associate with those people that build doll houses in 1:24 scale. He builds beautiful scale structures from wood and applies finishes to protect them from the weather. (They have more days of sunshine than we who live in Portland/Vancouver.)

Harvey is a retired electrical safety engineer and his complex block systems, remote control switches, sound equipment, and schematics are professionally done. His control panel has many microswitches and indicator lights for the remote control operation of the railroad. The interior of the control panel shows the artistry and professional quality of the installation.



Interior of the control panel.



Control panel and power supply.



Engine shed at the north end of the railroad



Host Harvey stands at the north end of the railroad



Richard Walker and Glen Wadley find a shady spot high on the hillside to watch the trains go by.

On The Tracks Again

By Allan R. Warrior

The Pioneer Zephyr is the most signature train of my CB&Q railroad. I bought the model several years ago at a discount because it had been dropped. It is a beautiful “finescale” model made of brass and steel in Korea and originally sold by “Roberts Lines.” Unfortunately, the running gear was an unreliable bizarre assembly that would warm the heart of a Rube Goldberg fan. I occasionally ran the train until the second drive shaft wore out and it has since sat on a shelf for some time. I decided this summer to try and repair it. It has been a rather long and sometimes frustrating adventure.

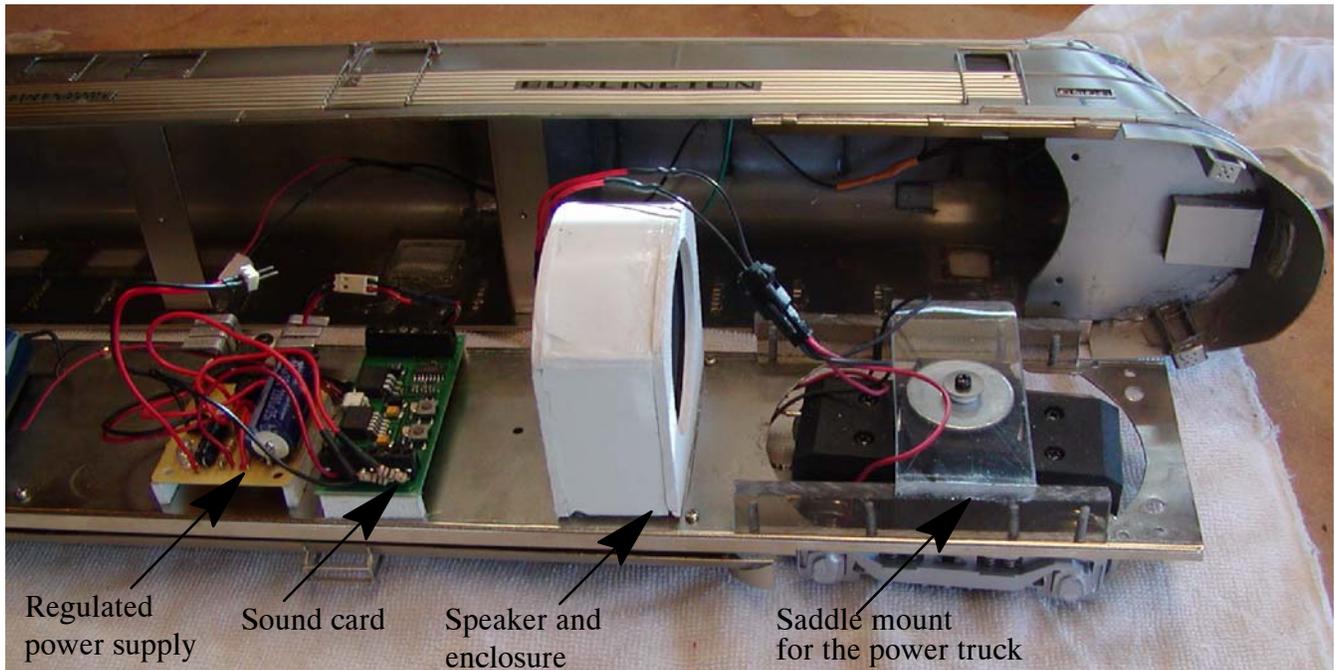
The first step was to find a replacement for the power trucks. The original design has a power truck at each end of the train which involved a huge Pittman motor and transmission. I talked to Northwest Shortline (NWSL) about my problem and an estimate began to grow that looked to me like a portion of the national debt. I reviewed all of the power trucks currently installed in model locomotives and finally found that the truck in the USA Trains’ “44 Tonner” was similar in appearance to the prototype and only 0.125 inches larger than the original. (What isn’t prototype you can’t see.) It looked so promising that I ordered a complete new truck from USA Trains. The train is a double hull construction of brass and steel and is rather heavy for its size. I hoped that a single power truck would be able to power the train up my 3% grade. It does!



President Gary Lee poses with Hostess Arlyn



The "Pioneer Zephyr" at the Creston Station



I butchered the original steel floor plate mount and built a new saddle mount from acrylic plastic for the power truck. I drilled and threaded the acrylic so I could use screws to fasten it to the steel floor plate. The new power truck had Hyatt bearing covers instead of the prototype Timken bearings and made the truck too wide. I cut off the bearing covers, which cured the width problem, and molded new Timken bearing covers. I didn't like the results, so the ersatz bearing covers which you can't see you won't miss.

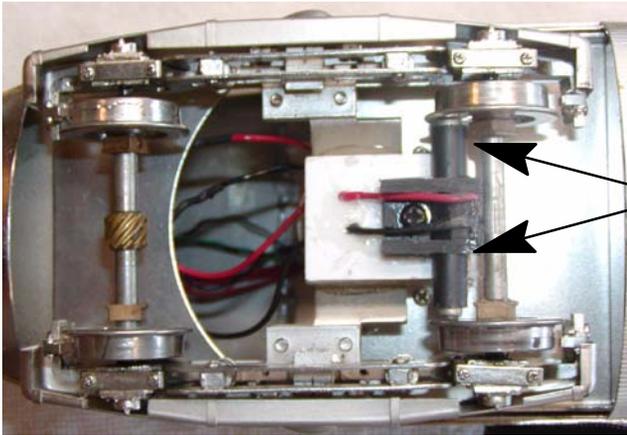
I wanted the lights to work correctly and to install a sound system. I built a regulated power supply with an 8.5 volt DC output for the lights and sound system. The original lighting system was designed

for 12 volts DC, but when I hooked up my new power supply, two of the old diodes promptly exploded and three of the miniature lights burned out. I replaced all of the lights with 3 mm LEDs. The LEDs are rated for up to 25 milliamps and are far too bright. I installed a 1-k Ω limiting resistor on each one to reduce the current to 6.5 milliamps, but the headlight is still too bright. Installing the new diodes was somewhat akin to building a ship in a bottle with long tweezers. I then built and installed a speaker sound box for my forthcoming sound card.

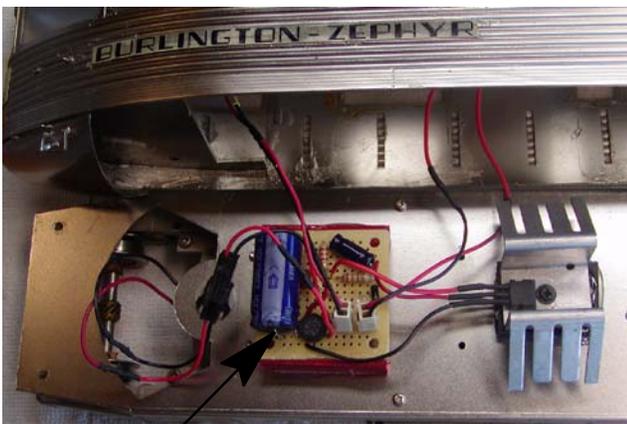
I couldn't find a sound card for a straight-8 diesel and had to settle for a V12. I don't think most people can tell the difference. The first sound card

seemed to be DOA out of the box and I asked for a replacement which seemed to take forever (about three weeks).

I built another regulated power supply for the rear car of the train and had to fabricate a mount for the LGB spring brushes. Again, I had to do the install with tweezers operation to install the new LEDs in their proper places. I also installed some 12 volt grain of wheat bulbs to light the interior of the car. This was one of the few steps in this project that went smoothly.



Mount for LGB brushes



Regulated power supply for lights and LEDs

Running tests showed that electrical pickup from a single power truck does not make for smooth operation over switches or somewhat dirty track. A sound card would not survive the electrical glitches. I fabricated another mount for LGB brushes and installed them on the rear articulated truck of the power car. The problem here was how

to get the wiring from the truck pickups to the motor block. The power car has steel stiffening baffles and there is no clear route through it. I bored a couple of holes and found that the steel used in the model is some tough stuff. I had to be careful not to heat the metal too much while drilling and cutting so as not to destroy the bonds to the outer hull of the car.

The replacement sound card arrived and the worst of the nightmare began. It would work and then quit. The sound would go crazy if there was any sound at all. The horn blew constantly if there was sound at all. I suspected a cold solder joint, so I disassembled my power supply mounting and resoldered all of the connections. I desoldered and replaced a couple of critical components “just in case.” I traced and inspected all of the lead wires for any problem. I tried three different speakers, sometimes the system would work, but not reliably. I tried a different sound card from one of my other locomotives with no better results. After an on and off week of failures, I felt I was doomed to not having a sound system. I finally found the problem by accident as I was moving a speaker wire and caused an intermittent response. Careful inspection revealed a very tiny whisker of solder embedded in a shrink wrap tube. Movement of the wire would cause an intermittent connection with its neighbor.

I had one last problem; how to prevent small electrical glitches in the track causing the sound card to reboot regularly or the horn sounding all the time. I installed a battery as an auxiliary power source and the results were wonderful. A battery is almost unbeatable for smoothing out electrical spikes. However, I could not find a place in the power car to install a miniature switch and a charging port. The access to the interior of the power car involves a dozen or so small screws and some tight clearances. I finally programmed the sound card to a low sensitivity and installed a large capacitor in lieu of a battery to smooth out any electrical glitches. Finally success! The train is on the tracks again. It is a beautiful model and it makes me feel good to run it.



Six decades of passenger service on the CB&Q Burlington Route

Operating Session 9/26/08 At The Baker & Grande Ronde
By Gary Lee

Friday afternoon and evening, a dozen train running members gathered at the Baker & Grande Ronde for an operating session. I had prepared a scenario including a timetable and waybills. Jan Zweerts studied, reviewed and acted as our dispatcher for the event. At times up to six trains, running in both directions, were expertly orchestrated by Jan. A mix of RC battery power, as well as RC live steam provided the motive power.

As you can see from the photos a good time was had by all!



Merlene Bacon And Odell Lee enjoy watching the operation.



Tom Gaps, conductor/brakeman, oversees his train



Ron Bacon's #2 Climax is helping Darrel Dunham on the high line, while Nick Kelsey snaps a photo and Bill Derville looks on.



Joe Eckardt's engine steams up the track while Mike Greenwood looks on.



Nick Kelsey looks on as Jan Zweerts directs engineer Ron Bacon's #3 mixed freight at Odell Summit.

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Christmas Train Set For Sale

A friend of mine recently was forced into bankruptcy and had his house foreclosed. He gave me an LGB Christmas train #72534 (starter set) to sell for him if I can find a buyer. This train set is in great condition and is complete with track and power supply. It appears to have been lightly run. Tam-mies Hobbies originally sold the train set for \$429.99. If you are interested, give me your best offer. The train set is available for inspection and sale by contacting me (Allan R. Warrior).

Schedules & Timetables

Make sure you check the calendar on our Website at <http://www.rcgrs.com/> for the most up-to-date schedules and timetables.

It is the Society's policy to attempt to have an event or open house on every second Saturday of the month. Other and additional dates during a month are also available and encouraged. Anyone interested in having an Open House or sponsoring an event, please contact **Christina Britain**.

October 4, 2008, Saturday, 5:00 to 8:30 p.m.: Open house at Shannon Pratt's railroad, 6677 SW Bancroft Way, Portland, OR. The track on Shannon's railroad only permits Marklin equipment to run on it, but both Party Town and Farmdale will be celebrating Halloween in grand style.

Host will provide soft drinks, coffee, beer, wine, snacks. A-G desserts, H-O side dish, P-Z main dish. 503-292-9464, shannon@shannonpratt.com

October 12, 2008, Sunday: Excursion ride on the Sumpter Valley Railway. We look forward to seeing all registered riders at McEwen Station on Sunday morning.

Schedule:

10:00 a.m. -11:15 Train Ride

(with 2 stops for photos)

11:15-Noon Dredge Tour (free)

Noon-1:00 p.m. Lunch at Borello's Italian Restaurant (pizza & salad)

1:15 p.m. Train leaves Sumpter for McEwen

2:00 p.m. Arrive at McEwen Station

October 25, 2008, Saturday, Noon until midnight: Annual Ghost Train Event. Plan now to decorate a car or locomotive (or train) with a ghoulish delight. Make sure your design will pass through a typical bridge or tunnel. The railroad is track powered. Open house at Bill and Jean Dippert's; 2650 NW Robinia Lane, Portland, OR 97229. 503-646-9783, bandjdippert@zcloud.net.

November 8, 2008, Saturday, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.: Annual workshops, luncheon, presentations, and raffle. Kingstad Center, 15450 SW Millikin Way, Beaverton, OR 97006. Steve Cogswell, Chair. 503-650-4682, scogswell@tkw.com

December 2008, Friday: The date will depend on the schedule of the Christmas ship parade. Jan & Rae Zweerts will be hosting an open house on their houseboat at Jantzen Beach, The Christmas ships will be sailing past their house that same evening. Jan's European railroad which is on a floating deck next to the houseboat will be in operation.

Editor's Note: The deadline for the November 2008 newsletter is October 25, 2008.