



FEBRUARY 2016

Upcoming Events:

February 13 11 AM
Gary & Jane Olmstead

Ventura
(805) 648-1770

Work party, no trains.
Rain cancels. Lunch will
be provided.

Everyone bring:
Chemical proof
gloves(see text)

Future Meets:

March 19 Siegel
April 2 Bryie
April 30 Morgan

If you are interested in
having a meet in 2016,
contact **Jim Eldridge** at
sjeldridge@earthlink.net

Gary & Jane Olmstead Work Party, Part 2

I am still rebuilding part of my layout, and will replace a complex of bridges and trestles with cement mountains. If you are interested in learning the technique, now is your chance.

Last month, we built the frame, and covered it with cement-soaked burlap.

This month we will be finishing the cement work with techniques that make cement and burlap and chicken wire magically turn into rocks and mountains. I intended to do this last month, but there just wasn't time.

This is going to be even more hands-on than the last time. If you come, you will work. Wear clothes you don't mind getting cement on (it comes off, mostly), and bring a pair of chemical proof gloves. Lowes and Home Depot sell them under different names. Don't bother with those thin doctor gloves; they are destroyed by the cement in a matter of minutes. I will provide the cement and all the tools.

Not Trains, but GCGRS Anyway

Our own **Art Sylvester's** long awaited book, *Roadside Geology of Southern California* is published. Available by the time you read this at Chaucer Books in Santa Barbara, or amazon.com, or directly from the publisher at mtnpress.com. If you've ever wondered about those rocks you drive past, here's your chance to get the answers from an expert.

What the Little Train Operators Are Up To

I'm sure you've seen or heard about the largest model railroad layout in the world, the Miniatur Wunderland in Hamburg, Germany. You've probably even seen some of the many the YouTube videos. Well, even if you sat through the one hour video, you haven't seen it like this. Miniatur Wunderland is now on Google Earth Maps. You can zoom in and pan around and go through the tunnels, and all kinds of dizzying stuff. Someone sent me an article about this; I've lost the article, and your name. Send me a reminder, and I will credit you next month.

All Aboard!!!

Please welcome our new members, **Bruce Morden** and **Andrea Adams-Morden** of Carpinteria. Bruce has been such a regular at the Siegel's meets that you might have assumed they were already members. Well, now they are. Bruce has been interested in trains in various scales since shortly after trains were invented, or at least it probably seems like it. Bruce, now you can officially come to all of our meets.



All Aboard!!

Please welcome our new member, **Beverly Durham** of Camarillo. Beverly says:

" My home is on Grandview Drive in Camarillo and looking out the back of the property the [Union Pacific] railroad tracks run by in the distance. I have a 3 year old grandson who hears the train whistle and runs to the back fence to watch the train every time it goes by. Because of him I started paying attention to the train. About 9 months ago I went on a garden tour, and a home in Santa Paula had a garden railroad. I had never seen this before, and getting ready to have my yard redone, I saw this as a great opportunity to put in my own garden railroad. I have the tracks in (Thanks **Crazy Charlie**) and a tunnel, and am now deciding on the design of the rest of the garden railroad.



garden railroads.'

Thanks, Beverly, and thanks to **Crazy Charlie** for sending the photo.

How to Build Mountains

This is part one of a two part article that describes how to build mountains out of plastic cement.

Plastic cement is normally used as the base for stucco, and comes in 94 lb bags. The advantage of plastic cement over, say, mortar, is that it has plasticizers mixed into it, probably to reduce cracking in stucco, but for our purposes, it means that it can be mixed to a consistency that is very much like modeling clay. If you get it just right, it will hold any level of detail, including finger prints.

The other key element is burlap. Not just any burlap, but one with a fairly open weave that is normally used in erosion control on hillsides. I have only ever seen it sold at Lowes. Home Depot does not carry it. I have not looked at other stores. The stuff sold in fabric shops is too tightly woven, and won't allow the cement to penetrate.

You will need something to mix cement in. A five gallon plastic bucket, or an empty paint bucket works well if you are working by yourself. If you have a crew, a plastic tub specifically made for mixing cement, or a wheelbarrow will

save a lot of work, especially if you assign someone else to the mixing.

You will need some chemical proof gloves. Don't use the disposable vinyl or latex doctor gloves, cement destroys them in a few minutes.

Finally, a shovel or hand trowel, and a smaller bucket of water, or hose for the mixing.

Before you start, it would be helpful to decide what sort of mountains would look good your space. I prefer limestone, sandstone, and related types as I think they weather into more interesting shapes than granite. And yes I have been to Yosemite, but the granite there is spectacular at least in part because of its enormous mass, which I cannot reproduce in my very restricted space. But I look forward to someone choosing to make granite and making it a success and proving me wrong. Here are a couple of web sites with usable pictures:

<http://virtual-geology.info/sedimentology/>

<http://geology.about.com/library/bl/images/blrockindex.htm>

The space to be filled is shown in the first picture. The

space has always had track, this project will replace a clutter of bridges and trestles with a more coherent and less visually intrusive grouping of mountains.



Next is the same view with track in place. I used redwood 4X4s because I had them left over from another project. Pressure treated 2X4s

work just as well. If the wire framework is securely fastened, and the cement is brought up to track level, you need very little wood, and no real foundation, as the cement will hold the track in place very securely. That said, these 4x4s are buried in pea gravel for drainage. The pea gravel was also left over from a previous project.



(Continued on page 5)

.Mountain Building Work Party

We had about twice as many people as we expected. Not everyone came to work, which was just as well, because the work space was never intended to host a crowd. Nobody brought anything to run, which was perfect, given that the only place to run would have been back and forth in the front of the layout.

The pictures below are somewhat different than the usual, in that they are more or less in order from idea to planning to framing to covered framework to the group picture.

After the cement had dried for several days, I added a second coat to make it solid enough to stand on. That isn't necessary, I do it for safer access to that orange tree.

Thanks to **Georges Arseneault** and **Kim Whitaker** for all of these pictures. Georges used his GoPro, which explains the curved perspective in some of the pictures.

And thanks to everyone who came; a work party is lots more fun when it's a real party. Please come back in February to find out how to make a large pile of cement look like mountains.





(Cont;d from p2)

In the picture at right, you can see the wire frame-work in place. The wood here is old picture frame pieces. Again, leftovers that had been gathering cobwebs in my garage. You can use any bits of trash wood you have lying around.



The wire is 3/4 inch mesh poultry netting, also called hex netting. I prefer it because it is easily formed into rough shapes. Just crumple it into a ball, then straighten it out, more or less, and push and pull on it until it looks suitably lumpy. It won't like rock at this point..



I have also used 1/4 inch hardware cloth. That works, but is much harder to form in interesting shapes. Either kind of wire

is attached to the wood frame with industrial staples.

Gary Siegel uses the expanding mesh normally used for stucco walls.

You don't have to use wood and wire as a base at all. The picture above is an arch formation on the rear wall of my layout. The background is the traditional wood-wire-burlap method, but the foreground arch was done in a completely different way.



And here is how that was made: solid Styrofoam, carved with a sharp knife and glued to the surrounding rocks with hot glue. Hot glue works well, but it won't tolerate getting soak-

ing wet, so you have to finish covering it with cement before the next rain storm. Also, because of the insulating properties of Styrofoam, the hot glue takes a very long time to cool off enough to solidify. The separate pieces of Styrofoam can be hot glued, or held together with dry wall screws, which are much faster than holding all the bits together while the glue sets up.

We are ready to begin. For your first batch, cut a bunch of burlap pieces between 6 and 12 inches square. Put a shovel full or so of cement into the bucket. Add water, stirring continuously, until the cement is about the consistency of oatmeal. Don't make too much at first, depending on the ambient temperature, you will have anywhere from 20 minutes to several hours before the cement sets up to too hard to work.

Put a piece of burlap into the cement, and make sure that every bit of both sides are covered with cement. Place it on a not-too-steep part of the wire. Make sure that every bit of the burlap is touching the wire netting. Repeat with the next piece, overlapping the first piece by an inch or so. Work in whatever direction you wish; just make sure that every bit of wire is covered. If the cement is too thin, you may see the weave of the burlap. Don't worry about that right now, we will fix that later.

If the netting is too steep to hold the burlap, there are several techniques you can use. One is to use a large (16d) nail to "pin" the burlap to the netting. The cement won't stick to the nails, and they can be pulled out after the cement hardens. Another is to take a small-ish piece of paper towel, wad it up tightly, and stuff it into the burlap, and push it through the holes in the netting. Another is to cut very small pieces of burlap, perhaps 4 inches square, and cram practically all of it through two or three adjacent openings in the wire. Don't attempt to cover the wire completely; you are making anchors to hold another layer of burlap to be installed after the first one sets up. Another technique, and the fastest by far if you can use it, is to put the burlap on the back side of the netting.

As you get the hang of it, larger pieces of burlap are much faster than smaller ones. Pieces larger than about two feet square will be so heavy that you will need an assistant to maneuver them.

Tunnel roofs need a different technique. Cut relatively narrow strips of burlap a couple of feet longer than the tunnel. Soak it in cement, then with an assistant, pull the burlap through the tunnel, and wrap it up and over the top of the tunnel. A better idea: plan ahead so you can put the strips on top of the netting instead of inside.

Continue until everything is coated. Let it dry for several days. If you will need to step on any part of it for access to whatever is on the far side of the yard, then rap that part with your knuckles. If it sounds hollow, or if the weave of the burlap is visible, you need to add more cement. It won't need more wire or burlap, just slop another coat directly on the existing base.

GCGRS Membership Application Form

Membership in the Gold Coast Garden Railway Society is open to anyone who is interested in outdoor model railroading. Dues are \$20 per year to get a printed copy of the newsletter mailed to you; or \$10 if you can take the newsletter via email. New members, please add \$6 for each name tag that you want to have. Membership runs from January to December. Make checks payable to **"Bruce Kuebler for GCGRS"**.

Bring this application and payment to any meet, or mail it to:

Bruce Kuebler
10908 Encino Dr
Oak View CA 93022-9238

First Name _____ Last Name: _____

Spouse/Partner/Other(SPO) First Name: _____

SPO Last Name, if different: _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: (_____) _____

email: _____

I enclose \$20 because I love to receive a printed newsletter in the mail _____

I enclose \$10 because I want to get the newsletter two days earlier by email _____

I also need _____ name tags,
pin type name tags \$6 each _____

magnetic name tags \$8 each _____

Shipping and handling for name tags: \$4 per order _____

For new members:

Would you like some help designing and/or building your layout? (Yes/No) _____

If yes, what would you like help with _____

Gold Coast Garden Railway Society
10908 Encino Dr
Oak View, CA 93022-9238

Newsletter: Gary Olmstead
(805) 648-1770

garyolmstead@earthlink.net

Membership: Bruce Kuebler

(805) 649-3050

pbkuebler@sbcglobal.net

Meets: Position Open

Webmaster: Position Open

<http://www.gcgrs.com>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/145996342219253/>

High Priestess of Facebook:

Kim Whitaker

whitdevelop@sbcglobal.net

Please put "GCGRS"
in the subject line of any
correspondence.