



# Arizona Big Train Operators

## Newsletter

Club web site: <http://azbigtrains.org>.

February 2007

Volume 15, No 2

### President's Message

Happy New Year Garden Railroaders!

It was a great turn out at the January meeting at Dennis Serrine's home. Once again, I have to say that the railroad is a real show stopper even though it is still in the construction stage! It has some new walls and the backyard lighting poles have been installed. Dennis hopes to have the ponds and water features completed by April of this year. He said that progress has been somewhat slowed because of his new restaurant being built in Gilbert. After about 45 minutes viewing the layout, all the members drove to the Rancho de Tia Rosa Restaurant for our general meeting and lunch. Thank you for coming, but in Jan '08, please remember to



RSVP and please remember to read ALL the details for our meetings in the newsletter. There were 35 more in attendance than planned, but Dennis and his staff stepped up to the challenge and we were served fairly quickly. A little known secret is the restaurant's hot chocolate! It was a truly great treat that hit the spot if you were one of those seated outside in the patio. After the tasty lunch, everyone gathered outside in the patio for the general meeting as well as desert. Thanks to portable propane radiant space heaters, muscled in by his energetic staff it was nice and warm. If you haven't been to eat at the restaurant, you should make the effort to do so. You won't be disappointed. A special note of thanks to Dennis and his staff.

This month's meeting will be at Glenn and Katie Sampson's home. This will be a little different, as it is an evening meeting. This will leave your Saturday a little more open and will allow Glenn to showcase his night lighting in the buildings and other scenic elements. I have had the pleasure of seeing the railroad lit a night and it is quite impressive! At any rate, Glenn has a great looking railroad by night and may cause you to think about installing night lighting in your own buildings.

It has caused me to reassess night lighting on my own railroad. Last Christmas, Bob Clark was kind enough to help install lighting on our railroad and I am now installing new 12 volt grain of wheat lights in all my new buildings, and I will eventually renovate all my buildings to install the interior lights. The 12 volt grain of wheat lights are cheap, small and easily located on the building interior and exterior. Since it's low voltage, the wires can be run directly in the soil and connected up to a simple 12 volt transformer. Set the voltage to about 10 volts or less, and the bulbs will last a very long time.

After all, isn't that why we visit members garden railroads? To see what the other guy has done, and to see if maybe we might not want to do something similar? That's the beauty of being a member of a club, you get to talk to like minded folks and then go see their handiwork. Every railroad has a little something that can catch your interest, and may inspire you to do something similar on your own railroad. And if you don't have room for a backyard operation, remember, you can participate in the club modules, which will allow you to build dioramas, operate trains as well as socialize with a great bunch of guys and gals!

Remember, when the trains run, we all have fun!

Bob Rauperstrauch

Photos by Sandy R.

**ABTO Board Members**

President  
 Bob Rauperstrauch

Vice President  
 Glenn Sampson

Secretary  
 Roy Towne

Treasurer  
 Don Halver

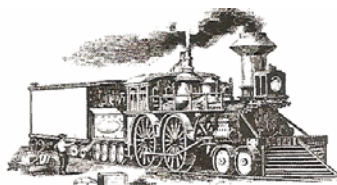
Member at Large  
 Gerry Pfeiffer

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Newsletter Editor  
 Sandy Rauperstrauch

LAST MINUTE CHANGES  
 PLEASE NOTIFY the  
 PRESIDENT or a  
 BOARD MEMBER, or the  
 NEWSLETTER EDITOR with  
 information concerning a time,  
 date, location change or can-  
 cellation, in order that all mem-  
 bers can be notified by Email  
 and the Calling Tree can be  
 activated in a timely manner.

Constructive comments are  
 always welcome!



**Calendar of Events**

2007



*Date Change* ↘

	17	5 pm - 8pm	<u>ABTO General Meeting</u> Glenn and Katy Sampson
Mar	3	8:00am	<u>ABTO Board Meeting</u> Home Town Buffet 1312 N. Scottsdale Rd. - Scottsdale
	9-11		<u>Modules</u> Ostrich Festival See page 6 for Module schedule
	17	11am - 2 pm	<u>ABTO General Meeting</u> Pat & John Meyers
	24		<u>Adobe Mountain</u> Modules event
	31	8:30am - 9:30am	<u>ABTO Board Meeting (for April)</u> San Marcos Hotel - Chandler
	31	10:00am	<u>2008 NGRC Meeting</u> San Marcos Hotel—Chandler
April	1		<u>Spring Picnic</u> McCormick-Stillman RR Park
	7-8		<u>Spring Open Houses Tours</u>
	21		<u>NO ABTO General Meeting</u> Spring picnic is event for April
May	5	8am - 11am	<u>ABTO Board Meeting</u> Home Town Buffet Bell Rd. - Phoenix
	19	5:00pm -	<u>ABTO General Meeting</u> Gerry Pfeiffer
June	2	8:00am	<u>ABTO Board Meeting</u> DBA
June	1	6am	<u>Leave for Ontario</u> Modules showing 2nd and 3rd

There are several months in 2007 that need meeting hosts. June, July, and August, are still open. If you are interested, please call

## Module Activity and Participation

*By Ennis Thompson*



In '97 I joined the ABTO Module Railroad Club, because I was looking for another motif for our Christmas Decorations in the yard. It just hit me that trains might be the answer. Surely, G-gauge trains offered more substance and seemed large enough for children and people to view. I wasn't a modeler, so this was all new to me.

When the club disbanded the original module layout, I had only participated in one show at the Los Arcos Mall, but enjoyed it very much. Not having been around long enough, I couldn't understand dropping the activity from the itinerary of the club.

While in the presidency of the ABTO a few years down the road, I thought it would be a great idea to bring a form of the modules back as another activity in the club. Many people have worked very hard for 6 years now in developing our modules.

My reason for telling everyone, especially new members, the facts about our modules, is we would like to see more new members participate in the work, building, shows, travel, and comradeship the modules have to offer. Some of you don't even have your own layouts yet, so this gives you an opportunity to learn many of the pros and cons in starting a railroad of your own. We also can learn something from you.

Some other aspects of the modules are the types of trains that can be run with two different power systems, size of trains (long or short), diorama fabrication, setup/teardown, planning, operating (even if you don't have your own units), and of course, an occasional breakfast get together before a show, and just plain participation as members see it. The show of the year is going to California for "The Big Train Show" for 3 or 4 days of having fun with other Garden Railway people.

Jim Kangas and Ennis Thompson are co-chairman of the modules and would enjoy having everybody be a doer at one time or another with this program of ABTO.





**NEWS ARTICLES FROM THE RR WIRE**

*by Mike Lewandowski*



The other night I was sorting out my LGB Telegram magazines. There were many interesting articles but one series of articles I thought would be appropriate to discuss in the RR Wire was an article series on the LGB MTS product. Since a number of ABTO members are currently using this system or contemplating on purchasing the MTS product I thought I would include all this neat technical stuff. If anyone needs a copy of any article, please contact me. I have all the LGB Telegram magazines since inception. Photo: Courtesy of Buffington Publishing.

**Q&A**

**Previous MTS Articles**

**Spring 2000 (Vol. 11, No. 1)**

- A Multi-Train System Overview
- Installing an MTS Decoder in Locos with a Direct Decoder Interface

**Summer 2000 (Vol. 11, No. 2)**

- Installing MTS Decoders in First-Generation LGB Moguls

**Fall 2000 (Vol. 11, No. 3)**

- Installing MTS Decoders in the LGB Uintah Mallet with Sound

**Winter 2000 (Vol. 11, No. 4)**

- Installing MTS Decoders in LGB "Shell Gearbox" Locomotives

**Spring 2001 (Vol. 12, No. 1)**

- Installing MTS Decoders in LGB F7 Diesel Locomotives

**Summer 2001 (Vol. 12, No. 2)**

- Installing MTS Decoders in LGB Ge4/4<sup>III</sup> RhB Locomotives

**Fall 2001 (Vol. 12, No. 3)**

- Installing MTS Decoders in the Mars Flyer (and other small locos)

**Winter 2001 (Vol. 12, No. 4)**

- Installing MTS Decoders in the LGB U-Series Locomotives

**Spring 2002 (Vol. 13, No. 1)**

- Installing MTS Decoders in the New American Starter Set Locos

**Summer 2002 (Vol. 13, No. 2)**

- Installing MTS Decoders in an Early LGB Mogul with sound

**Fall 2002 (Vol. 13, No. 3)**

- Installing MTS Decoders in First-Generation Mikados

**Winter 2002 (Vol. 13, No. 4)**

- Installing MTS Decoders in an LGB Crocodile Locomotive

**Spring 2003 (Vol. 14, No. 1)**

- MTS Decoders: Advanced Programming

*Back issues are available from Buffington Publishing or from your local LGB retailer.*



55016 Loco Remote

**Q  
A**

**On my MTS layout, how do I take control of a moving locomotive without stopping it?**

**Say you have two locomotives, Loco 1 and Loco 3.**

You're controlling Loco 1, and Loco 3 is moving. It doesn't matter what speed or direction. You want to take control of Loco 3 without stopping it.

- If you're using a 55016 Loco Remote, make sure it's in the "Center-Off" mode. Then, press "0" to start the process of changing the loco address, but before you actually input the address of Loco 3, preset the throttle knob to the approximate speed and direction of Loco 3. Then, go ahead and select Loco 3 by pressing "03."

Finally, adjust the speed slightly, so that the Loco Remote sends a speed command to Loco 3. (If you send a function command first, the loco's speed will be reset to zero.)

- If you're using a 55015 Universal Remote, you can use the programmable "hand-off function" built into MTS decoders, both add-on and onboard. When the hand-off function is set to "on," you can adjust direction and speed for two seconds after selecting a moving loco without causing the loco to stop. That gives you time to press the appropriate arrow buttons on the Universal Remote to match the speed and direction of the moving loco.

Hint: In most cases, the hand-off function is set to "off" at the factory, but you can reprogram that setting using your 55015 or using a 55045 MTS PC Decoder Programming Module. See your decoder or loco instructions for more information. 🚂

**Next month: The building of a LGB MTS trailer car for battery and wireless operation.**

**Until Next Month, Happy Railroading!!!!**

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### Rock Wall Clinic

by Mike Lewandowski



After five years of developing the multi-level Dry Creek Mining and Logging Railroad, it was time to add the final mountain range backdrops and mountain peaks. However, this was not my strong suite in building an outdoor railroad operation. I tried building a mountain out of burlap and stucco with a framed Styrofoam mountain but I was not impressed; nor was Nancy. While visiting Dennis Serrine's layout, he told me about Canyon Creations who use rock panels to make rock walls and mountains. Voila!! I immediately contacted them to discuss my needs.



Bruce and I met at my house in late November and I knew that this was what the railroad needed. Since I felt that this process had merit with our club, I requested that Bruce demonstrate this concept in a Saturday clinic. So the first ever rock wall clinic was held in January. A total of 10 club members attended the four hour clinic. Topics covered in the clinic included: type of rock wall panels, support structure, type of concrete to use, forming, and staining.

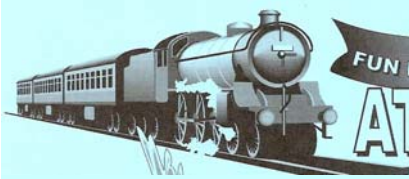
Bruce indicated that there are seven major rock panels that Canyon Creations uses in its landscaping projects. Each one is made of a lightweight fiber reinforced concrete, and is not stained at this point. These rock panels are intended to be used as part of a larger project by cutting each panel into pieces and fitting the pieces together to form one larger rock formation. There will be some hand carving of fresh cement to finish the joints in between panel pieces. Once a complete rock wall is built and dry, it is ready to be stained.



Watch for more photo updates on our website!!!!

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Photos by Mike L.



**FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!!!**  
**ATTENTION!**

Garden Railroad Fans!  
**8th Annual**  
**Eaglewings Ironcraft**  
presents:

### Garden Railroad Open Houses

4007 N. 22nd Ave. - Phoenix, Arizona

Saturday, April 14th 10am - 4pm

Sunday, April 15th 10am - 3pm

Get your maps to the tours there or go on line:

[www.eaglewingsironcraft.com](http://www.eaglewingsironcraft.com)

Meet at Dennis Serrine's home - 1929 N. 24th St, Mesa (see map in Jan. Newsletter)

Saturday at 6:00pm for "Dutch Treat" buffet dinner

Cost \$15.95 (includes non-alcoholic drinks)

**Please RSVP at 602-276-8101 by March 31**

Make plans to attend this fun event and have a good time visiting with other railroad fans.

The Tours  
are Free!

See over 20 Railroads!  
Get maps

DEMOS!

PRIZES!