

# ENGINE



# BOOSTER

June 2020

SINCE

1956

[www.lals.org](http://www.lals.org)

## “Dusty Shorts” Western Town Continues to Grow

*By Tom Hanson*

In August of 2019, Tom Hansen volunteered his time and tools, and the Board approved the construction of five miniature buildings for the layout. Those buildings were completed in April of 2020.

In May of 2020 six additional structures were given approval by the Board. To date, eight structures have been installed of the eleven approved. The buildings are designed for easy maintenance and a long life on the layout using techniques learned during an in-person visit and guided tour of Train Mountain in Chiloquin, Oregon by Tom Hansen and Dan Humfreville.

The eight structures are; Dusty Shorts Western Town, Foonman’s Feed & Grain Silos, Dusty Shorts Train Control Tower, Two scale

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New “Dusty Shorts” train station.  
More photos on page 8.

## Announcement of Special Election To Be Held July 2020

In response to the suspension of most LALS RM activities, your Board of Directors is holding a special election to determine if the term of each current Board member should be extended an additional year.

Details of this election are being mailed to each LALS RM member through the United States Post Office. Each member will receive an email regarding the election.

Additionally, you can learn about this election through the membership portal of [www.lalsrm.org](http://www.lalsrm.org). The Board of Directors invites all voting members to email questions or comments to any member of the Board.

*LALS History 1965-1966– Second in a Series*

## Our Young Club Grows, Builds and Matures

*By Diana Manchester*

By 1965, LALS boasted:

- Two loops of 1,100’ each of three gauges of track
- Two 12’ circular steaming bays
- Newly-built Sutchville Station
- Old Sherwood Stations
- Three 1,000-gallon water tanks
- Tidewater & Tonopah Club Car
- Shaded picnic area
- Two equipment and car sheds
- Restroom where the New Sherwood

Station is now located

- UP Semaphore from Travel Town railroad
- Our Club’s north border was fenced just below the decommissioned narrow-gauge track from Travel Town. Zoo Drive and the 134 Freeway had yet been built. The east meadow (where the Disney Barn is now) had a spacious drainage swale planted with a large rose garden. Access to the Club was via Crystal Springs Drive, which was still a park ‘through’ street.

Our second BLS Meet was held over the 1965 Memorial Day weekend, which was well attended by LALS members, guests and the public. Train rides were

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## President's Message



By Ted Merchant  
President

Let's all congratulate Diana Manchester and Peter Fuad! Last month's *Booster*, celebrating 64 years of Los Angeles Live Steamers Railroad Museum was simply fantastic. Our past is exciting, and we have come a long way. The *Booster* is America's premier large-scale model railroad newsletter. Diana and Peter made sure the last issue exceeded expectations.

So, where do we go now? First, let's remember who we are. We are a large-scale model railroad designed to educate ourselves and the public regarding railroad history and model railroad operation, and fabrication. That is a tall order! It requires proficiency at design, construction, politics, leadership, fundraising and understanding railroad history. It is limited by the resources of space, time, volunteer energy and money. There is more than enough for all of us to do, and there is more than enough for all of us to play. We could, and at times do, try to become more, but I suggest we stay focused on what we have always been. We do it well with our limited resources.

How do we move forward with the COVID-19? First, let's all stay healthy. Most of us fall into that age and health group considered high risk for death should we get the disease. The number of new COVID-19 cases in Los Angeles increases weekly so we are now at an all-time-high exposure risk. The economy and LALS RM must eventually reopen. This can only be accomplished by our making effective efforts to decrease transmission of coronavirus with face masks, social distancing and frequent hand washing. Please wear a face covering when you come to the property. I know it isn't cool, but it saves lives. Data is limited but it demonstrates that half those transmitting the coronavirus are asymptomatic. Many carriers don't understand what their symptoms mean. Wearing facial covering over your mouth and nose protects and extends respect to those around you. If you see

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## SPLINTERS FROM THE BOARD

By Steve Rodstein, Secretary



At 7:01 pm on June 1, 2020 the June BOD meeting was called to order by President Ted Merchant. Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) the meeting was teleconferenced on Zoom; participants connected either by computer or phone. Seven Directors and 30 members were present.

**President's Comment:** Ted recognized Diana and Peter for their outstanding work in continuing to compile and publish the Club's monthly *Booster*.

**Secretary's Report:** The May minutes were approved. There are no events scheduled at the Club due to the Coronavirus. As stated previously the LALS RM calendar is changing due to the CV-19 on a daily and monthly basis. Ron Hitchcock will contact the insurance carrier once it is determined how long the Club was closed to the public so a credit can be arranged for that part of the insurance premium.

**Treasurer's Report:** Tim presented the prior periods financials. There was minor discussion and the Board approved them. Tim stated that the shed rental invoices were being prepared.

**Membership Report:** Nick Suncin requested that Jeff Pardee be accepted as a full member since he had contributed many volunteer hours and the Board approved his membership.

**Superintendent's Report:** Ted filled in for the Superintendent, as Drew was not available. Ted thanked Ron Nelson, Michael Murphy, Jeff Pardee, and the many other Club members who have been working at LALS RM to repair track, signals, landscaping and the many other jobs needed to keep the Club in good repair.

The ongoing Crystal Springs project was discussed briefly. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the FCR that Larry Boone had previously presented concerning the Carolwood mine trains. It was de-

ecided that there were too many items still in question and the FCR as presented was not approved. The Board requested a more detailed FCR, that the site be staked out, and that a committee from both organizations meet at the Disney Barn to go over the actual proposed plan.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding track rental, who should actually be able to rent track, and the members that were delinquent in their rental payments. It was agreed that an executive BOD meeting would be held after this meeting to discuss the matter further with the shed master (Michael Murphy). Ted notified the membership that he was able to contact Gary Baker, who has now agreed to remove the green trailer in the east parking lot by August 1, 2020.

Ted also informed the membership that he contacted the Parks Department regarding procedures for reopening LALS RM subject to the Coronavirus requirements. All parties agreed that for the time being LALS RM would remain closed to the public. LALS RM will wait until Travel Town opens to see what procedures they set up to reopen. LALS RM will then craft a program to reopen and present it to the Parks Department for approval.

There was a discussion about the solar powered transfer table. At this time it has numerous maintenance issues, and based upon those problems it appears that it will be taken out of service and removed. It was agreed a little more discussion is needed before this would happen.

Bill reported that bees have returned to the Club, and he will notify the appropriate party to remove them. Ross informed Bill that there were bees in the G-scale layout area as well.

Ted discussed extending the current Board's term one year due to the ongoing Coronavirus (COVID-19) which has curtailed all functions at LALS RM. The membership was asked for their opinion regarding Ted's proposal, and it appeared to meet with agreement. To comply with Club bylaws a formal vote will be held shortly to get the membership's formal approval.

The next public BOD meeting will be July 6, 2020 at 7:00 pm.



**Crystal Springs Yard Project.** Much progress has been made on carving out the area for the proposed future carbarn between the Mountain Division and the McKelvey Loop. Les Kovacs has been heading up this project with help

from other members. *Top left:* Status of project on June 16. (Glen Manchester photo) *Bottom left, and above right:* Status of project on June 21, just five days later. Photo on bottom right shows the new drain for water in the new concrete channel for the spring. (Peter Fuad photos)

## President's Message

(Continued from page 2)

someone without facial covering, ask them to put something on. Please help us!

How are we going to reopen LALS RM, especially since coronavirus is not going away? There are significant obligations and liabilities once we open the property to the public. The Board has decided that we will not open before Travel Town. We will wait for Recreation and

Parks to establish guidelines and benchmarks for the Travel Town reopening so LALS RM is not taking responsibility for those standards. You can bet the guidelines will make facial coverings mandatory. We don't know when this will happen. It will take us about four weeks to prepare, so you can expect us to open no less than four weeks after Travel Town opens.

And what do we do until our reopening? Some members are coming down to the Club. Hopefully, they are wearing face masks and socially distancing. Some have projects, some are raking up leaves, some just walk around. Attendance at the Club has been sufficiently low that we cannot be accused of congregant activities. Why don't you put on your facial covering, come down to the Club, maintain social distancing and do something? You'll be glad you did. Some members have projects at home that they can share on social media. Those projects are informative and inspirational. Please keep that up.

So that's the way it is. Stay safe. Stay well. I'm going to my garage. Your comments are always welcome.

Ted Merchant

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#### 2020 Officers and Directors

<b>President</b>	Ted Merchant
<b>Vice President</b>	Bill Schirmer
<b>Secretary</b>	Steve Rodstein
<b>Treasurer</b>	Tim LaGaly
Martha Figueroa	David Holman
Les Kovacs	Nick Suncin

# 1965-1966 — Club Builds and Matures

(Continued from page 1)

given on both the 7-1/2" gauge track as well as the small sales tracks. Engineers would double- and triple-head to pull the heavily-loaded cars. Public riding cars for 1-1/2" scale were mostly low-side or high-side gondolas, and could each hold about three to four riders, who sat on the floors.

Toward the end of 1965 it was brought to the Board's attention that we needed to have eight Board Directors to comply with state regulations. We filed new papers of incorporation with the name "Los Angeles Live Steamers, Inc." In order to preserve continuity in the Club's operations it was decided on a rotation of four new Board members each year.

## Wide-ranging new plans for 1966

Incoming President Chet Peterson, the Board and our Committee chairs were enthusiastic about new programs, plans and improvements proposed for the coming year. Topics included a safety program for operations and crowd control, increased member participation, a significant eastern track expansion, a larger members' parking lot on our east border, and the building of 15 new public riding gondolas.

In January we launched a monthly newsletter, the *Engine Booster*, with 1966 Board Secretary Ross Crawford as editor. Besides Club news, each month's issue featured a chapter from the soon-to-be-published book "So You Want to Build a Steam Locomotive" by LALS member Joe Nelson.

A Bylaws Committee was formed and completely revised our Bylaws, covering every possible topic and making them much more specific and business-like. Honorary Membership was defined and an evaluation process created. Three members were appointed media agents to develop a rental contract for the film industry.

## FCR committee accelerates projects

An FCR Committee was started for long-range planning with Doug Alkire as chair. Doug proposed that the plans for the eastern expansion should be authorized immediately, and that plans for a future western expansion of the 1-1/2" track to the Travel



▲ Our pedestrian crossing bridge was completed in October 1966 to provide safe access over the Disney Loop to Sutchville Station. New fences along our south and east borders also provided safety.

▼ Tracks from two steaming bays join mainline and head for the crossing over drainage ditch.

Town border be developed.

In February, heavy rains washed tons of decomposed granite down the hills into our facility. Using shovels and wheelbarrows, LALS members moved this mud to the lowlands east of Sutchville, and a 550' drainage ditch was dug for routing future floods into the east meadow. A retaining wall was built of old railroad ties and metal pipe (FCR #7-66). Dick Priest engineered and built a metal plate bridge across the ditch to accommodate the three gauges of track.

## Second eastern expansion "Disney Loop" built

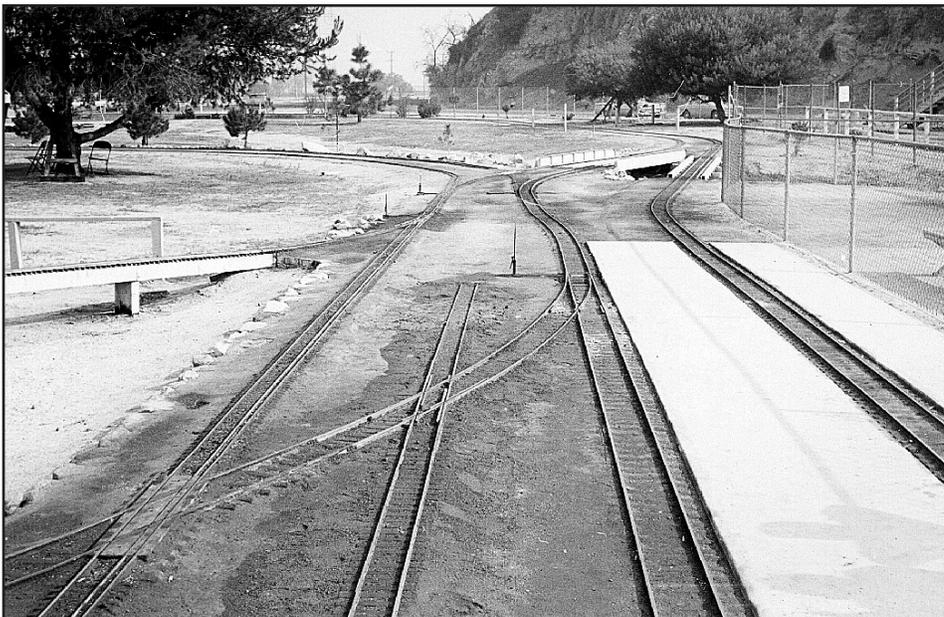
In 1964 we were gifted with 1,200 feet of track plus switches and rail timbers from Walt Disney's private Carolwood Pacific Railroad. Construction was started on FCR #17-66 in September 1966 and was built entirely with the Disney materials. It was first known as the "Scenic Route". The new 7-1/2" gauge loop began near where the switch is today to Nelson Tunnel, and wrapped south then east behind the area where the Alkire Shed now stands, and continued eastward along Crystal Springs Drive. It then curved northward along a low, 17 foot-long bridge, where it joined the northeast edge of 1959 eastern expansion.

With the Disney Loop, the 1959 outer loop became the inner loop and both were connected at the northeast corner. Buss Sutch built the complicated crossing, which featured three curving legs and the diamond.

## Golden Spike Ceremony for Disney Loop

We finished the new "Scenic Route" loop

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# 1965-1966 — Club Builds and Matures

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just in time for our Fall Meet on October 22 and 23.

A “Golden Spike Ceremony” was held on the bridge with an authentic gold spike donated and driven by Harry Dixon, Secretary of the IBLs, and City Park officials attending. Walt Disney was invited, but unable to come because of his schedule. He wrote later that he was very happy that his track proved beneficial to the Club. The rest of the Meet was very low key and relaxing, and included many train rides over the new track. It was such a success we decided to hold a fall meet every year.

Shortly afterward in December, came sad news the world over, and especially to our hobby, that Walt Disney had passed away. It was decided at the December membership meeting to rename the new expansion “The Disney Loop”.

### Pedestrian Bridge and Public Safety

Included in the Disney Loop project was new fencing along our south and east borders, as well as an elaborate pedestrian overpass to make crossing the new Disney Loop tracks safer. A fence had already been erected directly behind the Sutchville Station to prevent pedestrians from walking onto the tracks. Earlier in 1966 a Safety Program was developed by Chet Peterson and Doc Reiter which included a manual for the safe operation of trains and crowd control.

### One of the most progressive years in Club history

At our annual banquet at The Smokehouse in early December, President Chet Peterson remarked that 1966 has been “one of the most progressive years in the history of the Club.” One contributing factor was our new newsletter, which helped keep everyone informed. Members participated weekly to run their trains and to work on Club projects.

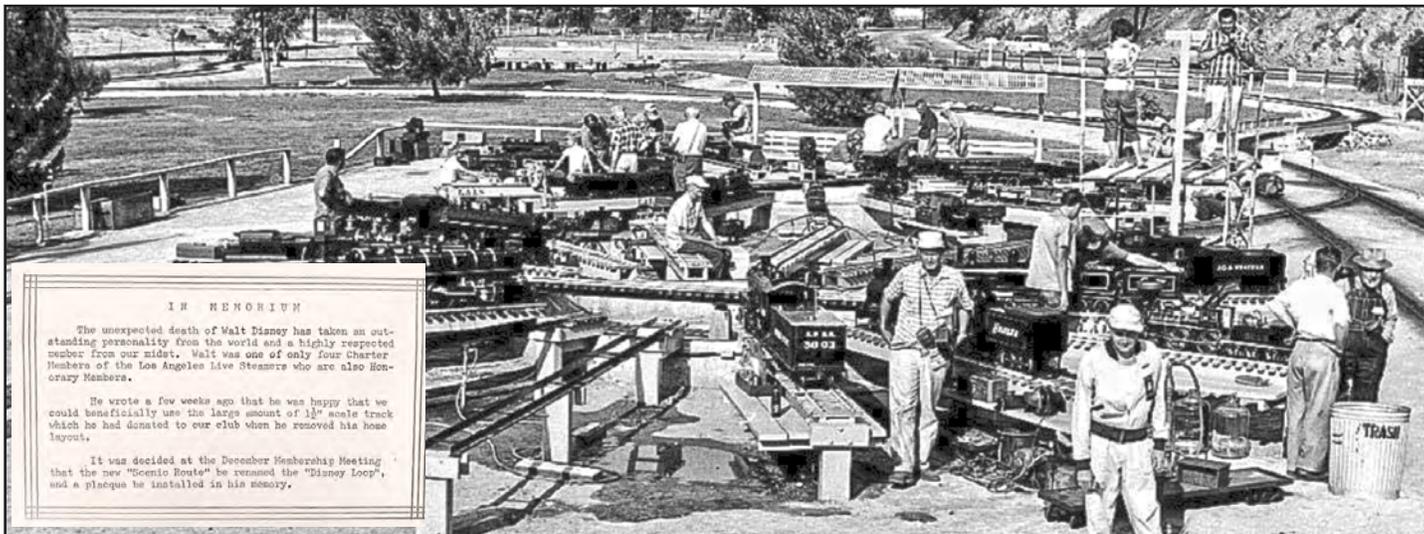
New membership in this one year was higher than ever (28 resident members joined from January to June). We had 2,000 train riders over two days at our first-ever Fall Meet. City Park officials were excited and congratulatory about our progress and community participation. Even live steam vendors were seeing a significant increase in product sales, such as Little Engines in Lomita and Harpur Locomotive Works in Wilmington.



▲ Golden Spike ceremony for completion of the Disney Loop on October 22, 1968. Left to right: Dick Priest, Chet Peterson, Harry Dixon, and Lila Schepler (Rec & Parks).

▼ Disney Loop bridge with Allen-Harpur 2-4-0 engine. Timbers and track all from Walt’s private railroad.

▼▼ IBLs 1965 Meet at LALS. The original inner loop and 1960 outer loop can be seen in the background. *Inset:* Notice of Walt Disney’s passing in December 1966 *Booster*.



**IN MEMORIAM**

The unexpected death of Walt Disney has taken an outstanding personality from the world and a highly respected member from our midst. Walt was one of only four Charter Members of the Los Angeles Live Steamers who are also Honorary Members.

He wrote a few weeks ago that he was happy that we could beneficially use the large amount of 1 1/2" scale track which he had donated to our club when he removed his home layout.

It was decided at the December Membership Meeting that the new "Uceno Route" be renamed the "Disney Loop", and a plaque be installed in his memory.

# Small Scales – Rich Legacy of the Early Decades

*First in a Series*

*By Alex O'Donnell*

The small scales have always been a strong part of the Club's rich history. From the Club's inception in 1956, the smaller scales were very popular among live steamers due to their smaller manageable size as well as their ability to better navigate suburban home railroads in the 1940's onwards. The very first loops laid on the property in 1957 were the 7-1/2" gauge Venolia Loop accompanied by the 1" scale and 3-1/2" gauge Inner Loop. While parts of the old Venolia Loop are now occupied by Retlaw 1 and the 1" Scale Car barn today, the Inner Loop still survives the same.

## Public enjoyed rides on 1" scale in early days

In the beginning, public rides were much more informal as there was no fencing around the campus. If you were picnicking with your family wanted a ride, you'd simply approach the engineer on his locomotive and ask for one. The same went for the smaller scales too, hence why our first station, Old Sherwood Station, has platforms for all three gauges. When the shift from Old Sherwood Station to Sutchville Station occurred circa 1965, the smaller scales ceased hauling public normally due to the increased tipping hazards for those scales.

## Early track and siding configurations

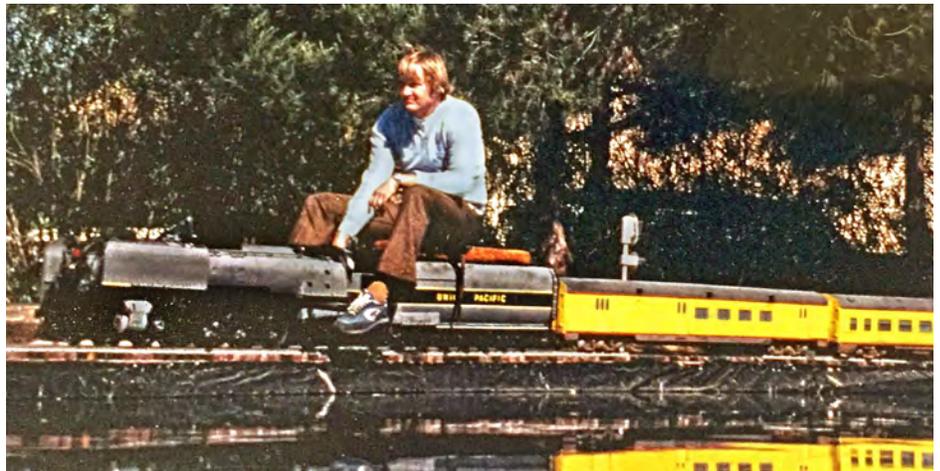
Old Sherwood Station, originally called Winnersten Station, had the first passing siding added along the Inner Loop in 1958. The original Outer Loop trackage was added sometime around 1960 and branched off of the existing Inner Loop with two switches. It had two diamonds with the old 7-1/2" gauge Venolia Loop that it crossed. The old Venolia Loop would be downgraded to a passing siding and eventually removed during the construction of the McKelvey Loop in 1979. The two through plate-girder bridges used for both the 4-3/4" gauge Outer Loop and 7-1/2" gauge Sutchville lead track were eventually removed and repurposed for crossing the sand pit along the McKelvey Loop

## Massive popularity and legendary engine

During the 1960's and early-1970's, the 4-3/4" gauge experienced massive popularity among Club members. Among the most noteworthy legends of that golden era were Joseph Foster Nelson and his 1" scale Pennsylvania K4S, Doug Alkire and his green masterpiece the B&O President Washington, Dick Stolzenfels and his monster 2-1/2" scale Maine 2-footer, Oscar Heuter and his tiny 3-1/2" gauge Invicta, Jack Sessums

▲ Jack Sessums' U.P. 4-8-4 Greyhound and coaches crossing over Lake Schirmer in 1980.

▶ Freshly completed 1" scale Cooper Yard in 1970.



and his fleet of amazing locomotives, Gordon Corwin and his multi-gauge Shay, Bernard Farnen and his beautiful Blue Jay Western 4-6-2, and many others.

## Small scales expansion and Cooper Yard 1969 - 1973

By 1969, the passing siding at Old Sherwood Station was extended with two crossovers into what we now know of as the Inner Loop. The Inner and Outer Loops became separate concentric loops, with the Inner Loop having both 3-1/2" and 4-3/4" gauges and the Outer Loop having only 4-3/4" gauge. It is unclear whether the western portions of the Inner Loop were converted into the Outer Loop via third rail removal or included as part of the existing Inner Loop, but either way the addition allowed for more traffic on the small scales in general.

Cooper Yard was constructed circa 1970-1973 using Doug Alkire turnouts and a transfer table constructed by him in 1969. The yard was named after Bill Cooper who was very active in 1" scale during the 1960's at LALS. Bill was a retired steam locomotive engineer from Canada who lived in Arcadia, and was considered to be one of the 'old timers' - a master mechanic and builder in his day according to member Ray Cadd.

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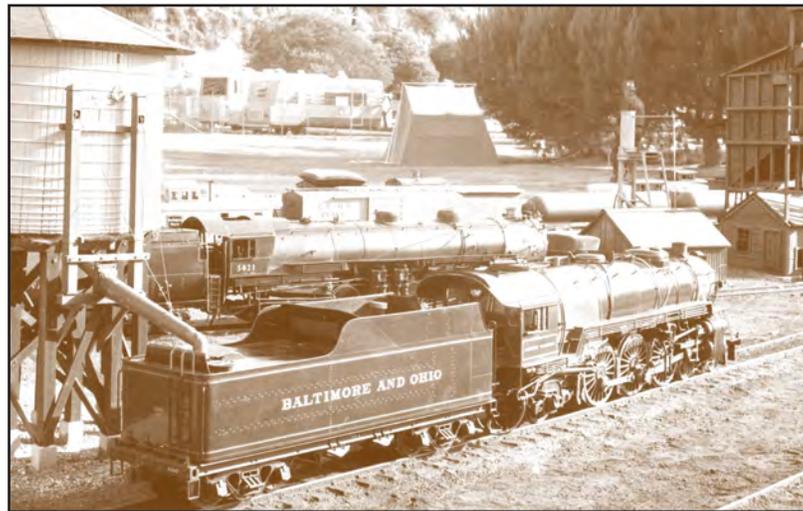
# Small Scales – Rich Legacy of the Early Decades

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## Scale replicas and siding changes

Originally, the yard had a stub switch at Cooper Jct., and the dual-gauged track marking the southernmost boundary of the yard was originally a stub siding leading into Alkire Carbarn at the west end and another undocumented yellow single-track barn on its east-most tail during the late-1980's.

The yard also had a scaled-down wooden replica of D&RGW's Chama Coaling Tower, as well as a small sanding house and an additional siding south of the original turntable lead-in. The additional stub siding south of the turntable lead-in succumbed to sinking under dirt caused by rain during the 1980's and was subsequently removed.



- ▲ Aerial view of Cooper Yard in 1970 at IBLs Meet.
- ◀ Doug Alkire's P-7 "President Washington" watering next to Jack Sessum's S.P. 4-10-2 at 1972 IBLs Meet.
- ▼ Gordon Sherwood's Cuesta Valley 4-4-2 Atlantic next to Cooper Yard's coaling tower circa 1972.
- ▼▼ 1975 IBLs Meet.
- ◀▼ Doug Alkire's B&O P-7 in 1970 at Cooper Yard.



# New Depot at “Dusty Shorts” Western Town

*(Continued from page 1)*

Billboards (the Club is yet to decide what to display on the Billboards,) Valdely Supplies Loading Dock, a rebuild of a rotted Sprinkler Valve Cover, and a Passenger Platform and Ticket Office. Still to be built are a 1950’s Gas Station and two Hillside Modern Homes like the ones found along Coldwater Canyon.

Since Tom Hansen builds the structures in his garage in Thousand Oaks and has to pack them into his SUV to transport them to the layout, each structure is constructed in pieces that are assembled on site. The base is pressure treated 2x4 lumber meant for ground contact and painted with primer and a top coat of light brown paint, each mixed with a generous amount of cayenne pepper to discourage critters from chewing the wood (a tip given to us by our Train Mountain friends.) Tom has called on Dan Humfreville to help in installation on the layout as four hands work twice as fast as two hands.

The “Dusty Shorts” Western Town front has interior LED lighting that turns on at 6pm and off at 6am. All of the other structures are ready to have timed lighting; all that is needed is a source of electricity. Also planned into the construction is building specific sound effects that can be tripped as trains roll by. Assistance is needed for the sound effects from



▲ Exquisite detail on the train station shown on front page. Newspaper racks left and ticket window right (Tom Hansen photos)



*Left top:* Andrew LaGaly saw cutting concrete for new expanded path constructed by him and father Tim. (Peter Fuad photo) *Left below:* Finished walkway (Diana Manchester photo).



*Above:* Antenna of our new wi-fi system researched, purchased and installed inside the cupola of New Sherwood Station by the Holmans. *Inset:* Closeup of antenna. (Glen Manchester photos)