



April 2024

Well, there wasn't much to report on as far as GCGRS events in March. We had another pretty wet month with an abundance of rain. Great for our water supply but tough on garden railroads. Back in November or December I felt like I was making a lot of progress on my railroad and I was thinking I might finally be able to host a meet sometime this summer or fall. But now, alas I can't even see my railroad because of five to six foot tall weeds. I did make a little progress this week as two of my grandchildren helped me fill up a couple of bins with weeds. All part of the fun I guess! *John Lyans*

Calendar of Meets

April 6 – Lamont Stolley
292 Odebolt
Thousand Oaks, CA
11:00 am

April 28 – Paul Bell
19138 Erwin St.
Tarzana, CA
(818)578-5883
Sunday

May 18 – Morgan
May 4 – Raymond
June 1 – Bussing
July 6 – Mele
July 20 – Siegel – (Maybe)?
Aug. 1 – 11 Ventura County Fair
Sep. 21 – Siegel – (Maybe)?
Oct. 26 – Arseneault
Nov. 16 – Siegel – (Maybe)?
Dec. 14 – Arseneault

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But cheer up Gold Coasters! All ye who are heavy of heart and full of angst about the month long garden train embargo can take hope this month. We will have two meets this month to ease the pangs of withdrawal.

This Saturday, March 4, Lamont will break the dry spell, or is it that wet spell, by hosting the first of the two April meets. Lamont pulled this off by enlisting the help of John Dillenger, Owen Miller, Larry Lowenberg and Randy Bryie. These stalwarts stepped up to help get the line open after Lamont was somewhat handicapped by just having had knee replacement surgery. Lamont expresses his gratitude to these gentlemen for their help. Lamont has worked hard at upgrading the railroad. I know he has completely rebuilt the long, curved trestle in the front yard to eliminate the bumps and the tight radius of the old trestle. That should make for some smooth running. His meet starts at 11:00 a.m. and Lamont and Barbara will provide some drinks and desserts. The railroad is battery powered.

The second April meet will be at the home of Paul and Chio Bell in Tarzana. Paul has two electrified loops, one large radius, R5 curvature track and a smaller loop with a dead rail branch line. The railroad also features a 17-20% grade, cog railway. The railroad design takes inspiration from both Swiss and Colorado type terrain. Paul has been working on the four year old railway almost every day repairing storm damage and controlling weed growth. This is a new railroad for the GCGRS and I for one am excited to see it. The meet will be on Sunday, April 28 starting at 11:00. People may want to bring their own lunch and Paul and Chio will provide snacks and drinks. The railroad is mostly electrified with a battery only branch line.

Ventura County Has Had a Lot of Rain!

Two wet winters have taken Lake Casitas from very low to almost full. The last week the water level was about 5' below the spillway. When the lake is full there is enough water to provide water for 20 years of drought.



The lake was actually much lower than this in 2021



Even this picture is out of date. As of April 4 the water level was just two feet below the spillway

Walt Thompson provides some interesting insight, possibly explaining why steam powered trains largely disappeared in the 1950's. Steam fans might be thinking, "He had it coming."

Dr. Rudolph Diesel

Dr. Rudolph Diesel was a German inventor and mechanical engineer. He was born in 1858 in France and began his career as a refrigerator engineer. For ten years he worked on various heat engines, including a solar-powered air engine.

He patented a design for his engine on February 28, 1892 and the following year, he explained his design in a paper called "Theory and Construction of a Rational Heat Engine to Replace the Steam Engine and Contemporary Combustion Engine." He called his invention a "compression ignition engine" that could burn any fuel. Later on, the prototypes he built would run on peanut or vegetable oil—and needed no ignition system: It ignited by introducing fuel into a cylinder full of air that had been compressed to an extremely high pressure and was, therefore, extremely hot.

Such an engine would be unprecedentedly efficient, Diesel argued: In contrast to the other steam engines of the era, which wasted more than 90 percent of their fuel energy, Diesel calculated that his could be as much as 75 percent efficient. (That is, just one-quarter of their energy would be wasted.) The most efficient engine that Diesel ever actually built had an efficiency of 26 percent—not quite 75 percent, but still much better than its peers.

By 1912, there were more than 70,000 diesel engines working around the world, mostly in factories and generators. Eventually, Diesel's engine would revolutionize the railroad industry; after World War II, trucks and buses also started using diesel-type engines that enabled them to carry heavy loads much more economically.

On September 29, 1913, Rudolf Diesel, inventor of the engine that bears his name, disappears from the steamship Dresden while traveling from Antwerp, Belgium to Harwich, England. On October 10, a Belgian sailor aboard a North Sea steamer spotted a body floating in the water; upon further investigation, it turned out that the body was Diesel's. There was, and remains, a great deal of mystery surrounding his death: It was officially judged a suicide, but many people believed (and still believe) that Diesel was murdered.

At the time of Diesel's death, he was on his way to England to attend the groundbreaking of a new diesel-engine plant—and to meet with the British navy about installing his engine on their submarines. Conspiracy theories began to fly almost immediately: "Inventor Thrown Into the Sea to Stop Sale of Patents to British Government," read one headline; another worried that Diesel was "Murdered by Agents from Big Oil Trusts." It is likely that Diesel did throw himself overboard—as it turns out, he was nearly broke—but the mystery will probably never be solved.

Did you know? Ventura actually had three passenger/freight depots.



Downtown Ventura
Southern Pacific Depot.
This depot was located on
Front Street just south of
the siding by Ash St. Up
until about ten years ago
the foundation was still
visible. Now there is a
self-storage business at
this location.

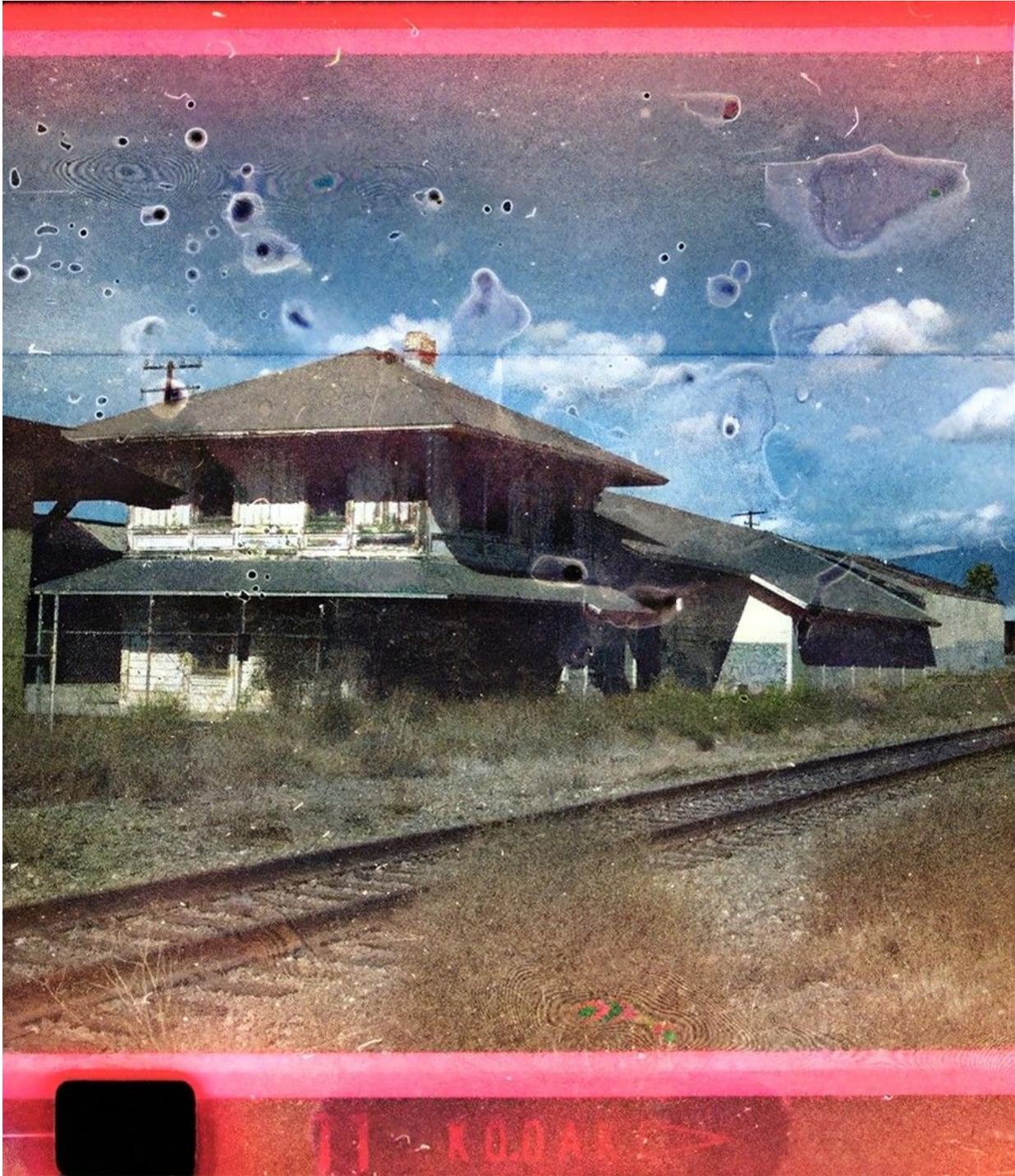
Located where the East
Ventura Metrolink
station is now. The
“Montalvo” depot is
right about where Byron
McCracken lives now.

*Unknown photographer
Colorized by John Lyans*



The “Saticoy” East
Ventura Depot is
still intact. I think
this may have been
a troop train during
World War 2 being
pulled by a SP GS-
4 locomotive. The
depot was used by
Newton Building
Supply for a
number of years but
it is now vacant.

*Unknown photographer.
Colorized by John Lyans*



Fun playing around with old film. Southern Pacific Saticoy train depot. I took this picture a couple of years ago with some 40 year old Kodak 126, Instamatic film. I didn't expect to get any image at all on film this old but I was pleasantly surprised. Despite the loss of resolution and damaged age spots the color actually looks pretty good.