

THE SIDE TRACK

NEWS

from the Toy Train Operating Society
Sacramento Valley Division

January - February 1995

1995 Convention Update

You will be hearing more—much more—about the 1995 TTOS National Convention. This will be the first national convention for many of our members, so the newcomers will be learning from the seasoned veterans as we go along. We are lucky to have so many enthusiastic workers, and we should be able to show our visitors a great time.

We are the host division, but you must register for the convention to attend even if you are working. This convention is open only to TTOS members in good standing, so be sure your national dues are paid. Members are allowed to register their spouse and minor children, and no other guests are allowed. If you have friends or adult family members that wish to attend the meet, let us know and we will send the membership applications.

The convention officially begins on Thursday, August 10, and ends on Sunday, August 12. However, the entire week beginning on Sunday, August 6, will be filled with tours and meetings.

Right now, the committee chairmen need to start lining up volunteers. If you haven't already signed up, or if you want to take a specific job, here is the menu!

Registration: Clyde Easterly (916) 274-3841. Registration desk workers. The registration desk will be open all day for as long as needed. Possibly we will need volunteers as early as Sunday, and continuing through Saturday. We won't know the exact hours and number of people needed until we know when the first tour begins.

Saturday Night Barbecue: Don and Sue Rosa (916) 682-6961. Bartenders, table hosts and hostesses, information table, and ticket takers, minor clean-up, etc.

Other Committees: Gene Knoefel, Convention Chairman (916) 444-2100. Auction and security.

Wanted: to rent or borrow professional sound system for the Barbecue and Saturday night auction. Please let Don Rosa know if you are aware of a good source.

Division Meetings

Unless otherwise shown on the calendar, the monthly meetings are held at the Sierra 2 Center (Curtis Hall), 2791 24th Street (off Broadway), Sacramento. Doors open at 9:00 for table set-up with the covered table rule applicable. Members must wear their badge while in the hall. The meeting begins at 9:45 and trading starts after the business meeting. You are welcome to bring guests who share our interest in toy trains. We ask that you stop by the membership table, sign them in, pick up a guest badge, and be available to introduce them during the business meeting. TTOS members from other Divisions are welcome to attend one meeting to buy or sell; after that, we ask they join our Division.

Please remember to sign the attendance sheet each month. You will note we have a new method for the monthly attendance prize drawing. We will still hold a drawing each month, but you will not be given a ticket. Instead, we will draw a winning line number. If your name's on the line, Bingo!

See Golden Gate's Layout

TTOS Golden Gate Division invites all Cal-Stewart attendees to join them between 3 and 6 p.m., Saturday, March 11, at their modular layout in the Great Mall of Milpitas. They now operate their layout in the Mall on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month. You must be wearing your badge to enter the roped off area.

Membership Notes

If you paid your division dues during or before the February meet, you should have your membership badge or renewal reminder by now. I will not be at the March meet, so the rest of the badges will be available at the April meet.

George Ann Hornor

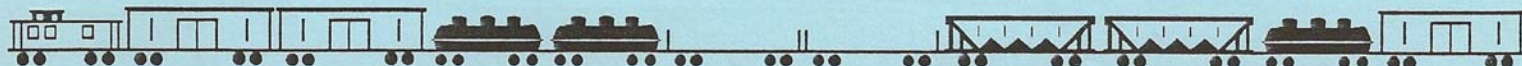
Election Results

Sacramento Valley Division:

Don Rosa, President
Ken Mizner, Vice President
Phil Fravesi, Treasurer
Stan Batynski, Secretary

TTOS National:

Bob Cloud, President
Ron DeSimone, Vice-President
Tami Jo Nix, Secretary
Ken Shirey, Treasurer
Nancy Swan, Director-at-Large





I don't care what the standards committee says. I am not wearing a "restored" sticker to Cal-Stewart.

President's Message

If you ask members why they joined TTOS you will receive lots of answers. The Board of Directors hopes to produce a survey so we can plan for the future and be more responsive to members' needs. When I look back over the last few years, it is easy to see why the Sacramento Valley Division has grown to its current 175 members.

In addition to our monthly meet, we now have a summer picnic and a Christmas meet with emphasis on family participation, a regular newsletter, a greatly expanded Fall meet and open house, educational programs, a modular layout and an active Board of Directors. We have produced a successful division car, interacted with TCA, and then some!

All of this has been accomplished because of member involvement and participation. It shows interest in working together to promote a rewarding hobby, developing friendships and sharing a common goal.

In August, we will host the 1995 National Convention. It took awhile to get the boiler heated and the turnouts to the mainline, but now we need to go full steam ahead! Stan Batynski has put together an outstanding tour schedule, and Clyde Easterly has been organizing registration with the National Office. Gene Knoefel, convention chairman, has received final commitments from the Convention Center and the State Railroad Museum. He is making a list of jobs and checking it twice!

Now the key ingredients of involvement and participation is necessary to assure our success.

Don Rosa

Announcements

We need a volunteer to head up the June family picnic. For those of you who have not attended before, we have the picnic right at the Sierra School. We have had hot dogs and hamburgers in the past, but last year we had fried chicken at a Albertsons. It was a big hit (even if the biscuits were still frozen) and much easier! Please let Don Rosa know if you can chair the committee, pick up the food, or help with serving or cleanup. The Board will have their hands full with the convention about that time, so someone please lend a hand.

The MODular group is continually looking for members who like to run trains, lay track and generally add fun to their hobby. It's particularly ideal for TTOS members who do not have home layouts. Be sure to sign on at the next monthly meet. For an appetizer, bring along a train and run it yourself. Look for you there!

Speaking of the MODsquad, they have temporary quarters for their layout, but they are still in need of a permanent home, so keep your eyes open for a likely spot and let Don Rosa hear about it.

Thank You

The division thanks the following members for their generosity and consideration: Clifford and Judy DenOtter for Marklin engine, Lionel catalogs and miscellaneous items for the Division monthly attendance prizes; Rod and Becky Jorjorian for their donation to the 1995 convention; and Fred McGaughey for the Orchard Supply Hardware 1995 Calendars.

Loud kudos of appreciation and thanks from the MODular group goes to Jim Kinsey for generously donating temporary space in his warehouse. This will allow the group to work on and fine-tune operations for a full month without needing to set up and tear down the whole layout at each work session.

Mini-Clin

Like many of us, I like to use original freight, passenger, loco, and accessory boxes for decor along and amid the shelves of my collection. They make a nice collage effect—whether they are American Flyer, Lionel or even just Ives or Carlisle and Finch. Unfortunately, many of mine showed every wrinkle, rip, and tear of their true age.

After an inspirational 3 a.m. brainstorm, I set about the next day rounding up sheets and blocks of styrofoam. After measuring and cutting (outdoors and upwind), I gently packed the white "loads" into the boxes. Some of the torn boxes were scotch-taped back to health on the inside and some flaps neatly replaced before packing. Boxes were then positioned to their best "profile."

Now my shelves have nice, sturdy, firm-edged, orange, blue and white boxes neatly stacked just as they appeared on dealer shelves, lo so many years ago.

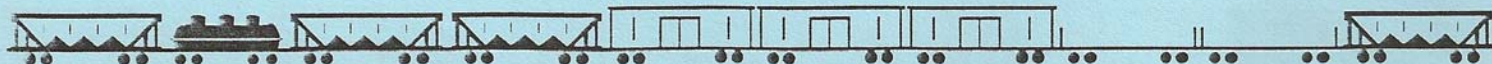
Jack Ahearn

Tracks on the Internet

More and more of us with home computers have access to the Internet. "Usenet Newsgroups" are social networks devoted to one topic and akin to a town hall forum where everyone puts in their two cent's worth. You can find the model railroad newsgroup under the heading, **rec.models.railroad**. TCA member, Christopher Coleman, has posted a three-part article "FAQ-Tinplate" (Frequently Asked Questions) which I highly recommend. He updates it regularly, and after the next update, we plan to make a printed copy available. It is over 60 pages long, so we may charge for reproduction costs. Meanwhile, I will be glad to copy it to a disk for you. Just let me know.

Soon we will be printing a new membership directory, and I have been considering adding E-mail addresses. If you would like to have the info in your directory listing, let me know. If there are only a couple of us, never mind!

George Ann Hornor
ghornor@ix.netcom.com
or VGKP83A@prodigy.com



James Arrives!

by Brady Burdge

Ever notice the one time you go out is the time the UPS person leaves that little yellow slip on your door? Lionel's Large Scale, *James the Red Engine*, arrived right after Thanksgiving. It's a great set, and is the same as it's shown in the catalog.

James the Red Engine is a 2-6-0 with a face and eyes that move back and forth as he runs, three removable faces each with a different expression, a cab with removable roof, and a six-wheel coal tender. The two "troublesome trucks", take offs on the island of Sodors four wheel "foolish freight cars", are in the set. These are the standard Large Scale eight wheel wooden gondolas in gray, each with a slot on the front for one of the three enclosed removable faces. The engine has a high starting voltage but runs smoothly, and has no trouble pulling the two gondolas as well as the two coaches from the *Thomas The Tank Engine* set.

The set includes a circle of yellow (very yellow) tied track and a transformer. The transformer is a bright red controller with an AC adapter. It has a large control handle and direction switch that's easier than the older style transformer for kids to use.

The building pack comes with a station with a removable roof that gives access to the two waiting areas, a windmill with an open door that kids can use as a house, and a water tower with a spout that can be raised and lowered. The buildings come unassembled, but are easy to put together, and are made of heavy grade plastic. They should survive lots of abuse. The accessory pack comes with three figures with removable bases so they can fit inside the engine cabs, extra faces for *Thomas The Tank Engine*, a small sound unit that makes six different sounds, and a play mat with buildings and roads printed on it, along with the track positions for the basic set track (that very yellow track) plus the add-on track pack. We are very happy with the entire 'Electric Train System', except for one minor thing, unlike last year's Thomas set, not one single item was made in the US.

What Fun!

by Phil Fravesi

"LIONEL" — Just one word. Say it and watch the sparkle in a grown man's eye as he proudly announces to the world, "I had a Lionel when I was a kid. My dad got it for me at Christmas." for a moment he is transported back to a happy and simpler time in his life. He will turn to his wife and children and tell them about a part of his life he hasn't thought of in thirty years.

A train set was the most coveted gift a child could receive. It was always the last package to be opened at Christmas. As unfair as it seemed, it had to be that way, you know! Somehow, Mom and Dad knew that once the wrapping was torn from that package, they would lose you for the day. Suddenly, you had no interest in the wonderful dinner that Mom had been preparing for days. When forced to attend, you couldn't eat and be excused fast enough. After all, someone might get to the controls first, and you'd be relegated to sit there and watch as "your" train raced around the track.

Yes, what fun. But, what was it that made these toys so wonderful? After all, they weren't to scale. The engines and cars were too short and too tall. Looking back, we realize the operating flagman must have had a growth hormone problem as he was twice the height of most cars on the pike. When fed into a computer, their ratio of size to speed would calculate at over 200 miles per hour.

What did I know of proportion? Why would I even care? After all, I had an imagination. That train could do anything I wanted it to do. With just six feet of track forming an oval, the train would pass the same station ten times on its journey to the next town. The next town may very well have been the same station it departed from just minutes ago, or it could be anywhere on that six feet of track that I wanted it to be. I was the engineer. I was in charge. Everything that happened on that railroad was a creation of my mind. Friends and relatives could watch, but I was the engineer.

A cardboard box with two holes in it became a tunnel. As any child knows, a tunnel surely separates two cities. "All aboard." You ease the throttle forward, the train departs the station, and you watch with eye at track level as the red caboose disappears into the mountain. Instantly the train emerges from the other end and is miles away heading for the next station.

What fun!

Phil is our new treasurer, and plays a major role in the modular group. As you can see, he also shows a flair for writing.

By Their Own Admission Chapter and Verse of the Tin-Plate Catalogs

So great is the demand for Lionel trains, it takes three large factories to produce enough trains to supply the boys of America.

In order to produce one year's supply of Lionel trains we require two million, three hundred and seventy five thousand feet of copper wire (eighteen thousand, six hundred and sixty miles) plus five hundred thousand feet of nickel resistance wire.

In addition, we use twenty-nine thousand pound of brass sheets to make three million, eight hundred and forty thousand name plates and other parts. Screw machine parts —thirty million, two hundred and fifty thousand. And of the best enamels, we use five thousand gallons in thirty-four colors.

This was excerpted from the 1931 Lionel catalog. I would well imagine that the Big Three in Detroit would pale by comparison.

Jack Ahearn



Down the track

1995

Division Meet, Sierra 2 Center	March 4
GATTS, Oakland Coliseum	March 4,5
Cal-Stewart, Santa Clara	March 10-12
North Valley Show, Anderson	March 18
GATTS, San Mateo	March 25-26
Division Meet, Sierra 2 Center	April 1
Division Meet, Sierra 2 Center	May 6
TCA Toy Train Meet, Scottish Rite Center	May 27
Division Meet, Family Picnic, Sierra 2 Center	June 3
Division Meet, Sierra 2 Center	July 1
Division Meet, Sierra 2 Center (tentative)	August 5
TTOS National Convention	August 9-12
Division Meet, Sierra 2 Center	September 2
GATTS, Cow Palace	September 9,10
TTOS Toy Train Show & Open House, Scottish Rite Center	October 7
Division Meet, Sierra 2 Center	November 4
Division Meet, Family Christmas Party, Sierra 2 Center	December 2



Toy Train Operating Society
Sacramento Valley Division
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