



# THE SIDE TRACK

## NEWS

from the Toy Train Operating Society  
Sacramento Valley Division

SUMMER

1998

### Centerfold

Richard Werner is the third Sacramento Valley Division member to have a layout published in *Classic Toy Trains* magazine. Richard's 12'x14' layout was featured in the May 1998 issue. It features mostly post-war and modern era Lionel trains and accessories with emphasis on operating accessories. SVD member John Leins helped with wiring the layout. At our June meet Richard said he will be replacing it with a bigger one. It's a great layout, Richard, and it is quite an achievement to be the centerfold layout in a national magazine. We hope to see the new layout in CTT.

### Announcements

The Division meet scheduled for July 4 was canceled by popular vote during the June meeting. We will have our next monthly meet on August 1 at Sierra Center II.

The Modular Group "MOD Squad" will have the modular layout at the July 11-12 Greenberg Show at the Marin County Civic Center in San Rafael. Come down and visit us and run trains. We could use help either day.

We have had a constant inflow of new members. We will print a new membership roster when things settle down a bit. New members will receive copies of the by-laws and membership roster after we get the new roster printed. We will have copies available at the monthly meets also.

### Cal-Stewart Award Winners

Jim Groth and Clarence Hanks were first and second place winners in the Restoration/Repaint/Kitbash Contest at the March Cal-Stewart Meet at Santa Clara. Jim won first place for a kitbashed standard gauge operating electromagnetic crane. Clarence took second place for his restoration of a Lionel #253 pre-war electric engine. From *Headlights from Cal-Stewart* by Bruce Kubik - *Nor-Cal Express* June 1998



### Star of the show

Karl Schmidt's custom operating standard gauge electric motor and Pullman passenger train was the star of the May Sac-Sierra TCA meet at the Scottish Rite Center in Sacramento. Karl's goal was to make a passenger train that Ives might have made if they had not been acquired by Lionel. The motor is a McCoy boxcab type unit similar to those the Great Northern used over the Cascades. The four

Pullman cars were made from six Lionel #418 cars that were cut and spliced to make the Pullman cars scale length. The baggage car started out as a Lionel #418 also. Karl made it into a baggage car by replacing the sides and installing an interior. The cars all have Ives trucks and couplers and American Flyer battery boxes, water tanks, and steps. The entire train is painted in dark green with off-white trim. Everyone who stopped by the layout made comments on how great it looks and runs.

### Folsom plans

Recently I gave a short talk on our Division to members of the Folsom, El Dorado, and Sacramento Historical Railroad Society (FEDS) in Folsom. This group is active in the redevelopment of the "Railroad Block". They have been given 3400 square feet of space in Folsom for temporary quarters until the "Railroad Block" is complete. There are plans for train displays along with a historical display on the City of Folsom. SVD members are invited to display items in glass display cases. I will be looking for toy train items that represent Southern Pacific engines and rolling stock that were used on the Placerville Branch. Rail service began on the Sacramento Valley Railroad in the late 1850s so some of the Lionel frontier sets may be of use. Please contact me if you have any items to loan.

Stan Batynski





## President's column

Hello folks, time for another newsletter. There is not a lot of new information to pass on. Things have been fairly quiet since the last newsletter. As you may know, Tom Gibson is in charge of the static display and operating layout at the California State Railroad Museum. National TTOS and SVD are no longer involved with those functions. The City of Folsom has been delayed a bit on work on the turntable restoration in the downtown "Railroad Block". The turntable is the centerpiece of the block redevelopment project. Activity should pick up now that it is not raining as much.

We do have some policy issues to consider at our next Division meet on August 1. First, it appears that neither GATS nor Greenberg will have any shows in the Sacramento - Stockton area in 1999. Do we want to host a one-day show in the January-March 1999 time frame to fill this gap? Some folks feel there are too many shows already. However, it might be an opportunity to do something in a different location.

The main issue is to decide if our Division is willing to host the TTOS national convention in 2001. National TTOS has expressed interest in having us host another convention. I have not heard a great deal of interest from our members. There was a suggestion for it to be held in Reno rather than Sacramento since northwestern Nevada is part of our Division's territory. That idea has a lot of merit. Reno has a lot of train tour locations nearby; after-hours entertainment is great; and they have good air, highway, and passenger train service, with many hotels, convention services, and locations. Also, there are a lot of conventions scheduled for California. 1998 LOTS in San Diego, 1999 TCA in San Francisco, 2000 TTOS in Long Beach. The last Sacramento convention was in 1995 which is probably too recent to do it again here.

I will try to present pro's and con's and you folks can decide on August 1. The main problem is that a convention

requires several years' preparation by folks who have to remain committed to the project. It takes a lot more than just voting "Yes" to have a convention and then sitting back and waiting for the trading hall to open.

Trying to set up a convention 125 miles away in Reno will consume a lot more time and effort on logistics than doing it in Sacramento. A concern with Reno is how many SVD members will attend? Most toy train conventions require a solid base of local members attending to make it successful. Getting volunteers from the Sacramento area to stay overnight in Reno to staff the convention will be a problem, in my opinion.

The convention chairperson, committee chairs, and volunteers have to do their jobs actively and constantly. If no one volunteers to be the convention chairperson, this proposal collapses immediately and SVD is finished with the issue.

Please let me have your opinions and comments. I will talk about this again at the August 1 business meeting. Just a reminder, the national convention will be from August 5-9.

*Stan Batynski*

## Going to the Dickens with our hobby!

I was once asked about my adventures in model railroading and how I could best describe them. I immediately thought of that famous passage, "It was the best of times. It was the worst of times." You doubt my veracity? Read on, Oh ye, of little faith!

Watching your newest engine's headlight emerging from a double mainline tunnel, as the illuminated drumhead of your crack passenger train disappears into it!

Scratching your head with one hand, while holding your track diagram in the other, after bringing home the 'four by eight' from the lumberyard!

Your newly wired 'whoopittee doo da' junction, with auto block and non-

derail switches, works perfectly during your first test run!

Your newly wired 'whoopittee doo da' junction, with auto block and non-derail switches, works perfectly horrible when your friends are watching!

Balking at washing your real car, while delighting in giving a fifty-year-old toy car a bubble bath

Hearing your Lionel 'E' unit go buzz, buzz,...click, click...no buzz, no click...no nothing, at the furthest, out of arms reach, point on your layout!

Keeping your cool while showing off your latest, M.T.H. \$ 4-digit super deluxe, got everything plus, engine when your idiot brother-in-law tells you it's the exact same one he had as a kid..."Yeah, cost my Pa \$30!

Watching your two most favorite passenger trains coast to a rolling stop, at the same moment, in opposite directions, on either side of a long row of Wayside Platforms. Oh yeah, its night and all the lights are bright!

Hearing your wife's 'lost cat' scream bloody murder as your fastest freight highballs into your longest tunnel!

And of course, all those fun packed hours, combing through a beige carpet searching and feeling for those lively and illusive brass springs and motor brushes!

Now, I ask you, fellow ferroquino-ologists....are these not both, the best....and worst, of times? Of course they are, and I, for one, would have it no other way. Incidentally, Charles Dickens also penned these wise words...."A man must take the fat with the lean."

*Jack Ahearn*



## Train fonts

As you can see, I have been having fun playing with my new train fonts. If you're interested, the web address for the designer is: <http://robotics.eecs.berkeley.edu/~zephyr/TrainTracks.html> (all on one line).

*George Ann Hornor*





## Down the Track

Division Meet, Sierra 2 Center .....	July 4 Cancelled
TCA Nor-Cal, San Ramon .....	July 11
Greenberg Show, Marin Center, San Rafael .....	July 11,12
Division Meet, Sierra 2 Center .....	August 1
TTOS National Convention, Sharonville, Ohio .....	August 5-9
TCA Nor-Cal, San Ramon .....	August 8
TTOS Golden State Division H.E.A.T. W.A.V.E., San Jose* .....	August 9
Napa Valley Model Railroaders Swap Meet & Show, Napa Valley Expo Center** .....	August 22
Division Meet, Sierra 2 Center .....	September 5
TCA Nor-Cal, Oakland .....	September 12
Greenberg show, San Mateo Expo Center .....	September 19,20
All Aboard for Tulare Train Show, Tulare .....	September 26,27
First Annual Truckee Railroad Days .....	September 26,27
River City Toy Train Meet, Scottish Rite Center .....	October 3
TCA Nor-Cal, Oakland .....	October 10
Division Meet, Sierra 2 Center .....	November 7
Cal Stewart, Pasadena .....	November 13-15
TCA Nor-Cal, Oakland .....	November 14
GATS, Alameda County Fairgrounds, Pleasanton .....	November 28,19
Division Meet, Christmas Party, Sierra 2 Center .....	December 5
Greenberg Show, San Mateo Expo Center .....	December 5,6
TCA Nor-Cal, San Ramon .....	December 12

\* See TTOS Order Board ad for details

\*\* Contact Dave Maffei 415 883-7740 (See June NMRA Bulletin for details)

## Membership news

Let's all thank Stan Batynski, who wrote to the TTOS national members who live in our area, inviting them to join the Sacramento Valley Division. He's also been faithfully promoting our Division wherever the modular layout appears. As you can see, he reached far and wide, and we're glad to welcome Paul Christmann, Jr. from Pleasant Hill, John DeHaan from Vallejo, Lee Deter from Sacramento, Scott Grubbs from San Leandro, Steven Harris from Reno, Glenn and Nancy Hill from Dayton, Bill Meglen from Gardnerville, Gary Nelson from Loyalton, Daniel Neumann from Santa Rosa, Greg Pasiuk from Placer-ville, Robert Powell from Roseville, Michael Radest from Novato, Bill and Alene Schwartz from Tracy, John and Tom Vieira from Novato, William White from Sacramento, and William and Sandra Wilson from Nevada City.

Welcome, all, and I hope you'll enjoy our meets.

If you are one of the members who paid in May, I apologize for the delay in depositing your check. We were suddenly called out of town because of a family illness and I wasn't able to send the checks to the treasurer. Everything's back to normal, now, though. That is, as normal as it can be for someone whose husband is drawing plans to tunnel through the wall from the train room for a 7-foot loop through the living room so that his new bascule bridge can be properly displayed!

As we mentioned previously, it's time for a new Division membership directory. I know that several of you have new e-mail addresses or would like to make other changes in your listing. Please send the changes to me as soon as possible so I can include them. (I think we have picked up all the 530 and 925 area code changes.) My new e-mail address is [hornors@mindspring.com](mailto:hornors@mindspring.com).

George Ann Hornor



Yes, we're back to the 4-page news-letter. We're still awaiting input from someone with bright, new ideas for stories. We also aren't quite ready for the advertising page, so if you want to be included, please let Stan or one of the editors know. We can either use your business card or help you design a small ad.

Thank you, Jerry Azzaro, for suggest-ing we print the calendar on the back side of the *Sidetrack* address section, so that it can be cut out without damaging the rest of the copy. Speaking of the calendar — please let George Ann know of events that should be posted.

Sidetrack Editors:

Jack Ahearn & George Ann Hornor





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### Jordan's Train Day, Part I.

The first of Saturday of each month is one of the most exciting days in our household—TTOS Meeting Day! Is it an exciting day for you, too? For some of you, it must be because you help make it exciting for us. "What?"... you are thinking.

Many of you know my grandson, Jordan. He has missed few meetings in his almost four years, and looks forward to each meeting with great anticipation. For Jordan, this is a day which will be a learning experience, a day of asking questions and enjoying toy trains and accessories. It is a pre-set day in which he and his grandpa bond together in a hobby they both love. It is a joy to see them with their heads together, talking and learning, running and just enjoying trains.

But you, too, might have been responsible for some of this excitement for Jordan and other children that attend

TTOS meetings regularly. Some of you glance at them and quickly dismiss them. Some of you glare at them, just daring them to touch something on your table; and if a finger comes within an inch of any item, you jump on them (and I understand the fear, but I have observed items dropped by adults, too.) Thankfully, others take the time to acknowledge their presence, stoop down to their height, look them in the eye, answer their questions patiently, and take an item off the table to let them look at it. I thank those of you who have and continue to take the time to share your love and knowledge of trains with Jordan. This is the future of the toy train hobby.

Because of this opportunity to share a love of trains, TTOS day should be exciting to you, too. And because of YOU, it is an exciting day for my household. I thank you — and Jordan does too.

*Barbara Rohrs*

### Jordan's Train Day - Part II

After I read Barbara's article, I thought to myself, "Yeah, but he's picking up bad habits." To illustrate, let me tell you about a conversation I overheard at a recent meet. It went something like this:

"Grandma, I like that train."

"That's nice, Jordan."

"But Grandma, I REALLY like that train."

"I know, Jordan, but I don't think you have quite enough money to buy it."

"But Grandma, I REALLY, REALLY like that train."

"I know, Jordan, but you'll have to wait until you have enough money."

"Well, maybe if I talk to him, he'll come down a little."

And so another collector begins the long, down-hill slide!

*George Ann Hornor*

