



# THE SIDE TRACK

## NEWS

from the Toy Train Operating Society  
Sacramento Valley Division

FALL/WINTER

1999

### President's Column

Hello again folks. This year has flown by and it is time for the year-end Holiday Season again. This is the "busy season" of the year for our hobby. Lots of train shows to attend and lots of train catalogs to look at. Some of you have year-round layouts and some folks like me only put some track around the Christmas Tree for two weeks. Whatever your style, I wish you the best of the Holiday Season. Please be careful and safe so we can meet again in the New Year. Watch out for "the other guy".

This *SideTrack* contains a lot of material from the November 6 business meeting. I wish to thank the membership for voting on and approving the issues presented by the board of directors at that meeting. My thanks to all of you for supporting the club during the year. I especially wish to thank all of the volunteers who donate their time to help out on our administrative functions and at our activities and events.

Next year will be my last year as division president. I hope some of you will consider becoming more involved in the club and being nominated to run for election to a position on the board of directors. There is a lot of time to think about it. Every club needs "new blood" and new ideas periodically.

Happy Holidays to All -

Stan Batynski

### January Meet

Our first meeting in Year 2000 has been moved to January 8 so that we may all celebrate New Year's Day with friends and family (and/or football).

### National Board of Director's meeting

I attended the TTOS National board meeting on November 12, 1999 at Cal-Stewart Pasadena. The meeting was rather uneventful as national's BOD meetings go. The following is a summary of the highlights of the meeting. Half of the rooms allotted to TTOS for the 2000 Convention on the Queen Mary have been reserved already. Please refer to the latest Order Board or Bulletin for information on the convention and room reservations. The Canadian Division will probably host the 2001 Convention in Vancouver, British Columbia. TTOS membership has dipped below 7000 members. The Angela Trotta-Thomas print will be available to new members upon joining TTOS. Current members can order a print for the \$15 shipping / handling charge. Again, please refer to the Order Board and Bulletin for additional information. The K-Line Magma Arizona mine train sets are still available from national. As this is an election year for national TTOS officers, the transfer of officers to the new board will occur at the next

board meeting on February 11, 2000 at Cal-Stewart Santa Clara.

Year 2000 National board meetings will tentatively be held in Santa Clara, the convention in August at Long Beach, and at York, PA in October. Director Emeritus Nancy Swan will revise the national by-laws and present the revisions for discussion at the next national board meeting.

### Q & A on the American Flyer Crane

There have been some questions concerning the pedigree of the 2000 Convention American Flyer S-gauge Crane. A color flyer of the O and S gauge cranes was recently mailed from national TTOS to each member. The O-gauge crane will have 6-wheel trucks and the S-gauge crane will have 4-wheel trucks. National TTOS is now taking orders for all of the 2000 Convention Cars. The following text is from Brian Fields, TTOS Southern Pacific Division President, host division of the 2000 Convention.

"Answers to some questions you may receive from members regarding the American Flyer crane.

**Q,** It is not a real Flyer crane is it?

**A,** Mike Baraga at Lionel told us that the original molds, dies and drawings for the Flyer crane have been destroyed and probably will never be made again.

**Q,** Why do you call it American Flyer when it really isn't?

**A,** Lionel owns the name American Flyer and can call it as such.





**Q,** Why doesn't it have six wheel trucks on it?

**A,** At present the only six wheel trucks that Lionel has for Flyer pieces have the pivot point in the wrong place to be mounted to a Lionel crane chassis and changing the die was not a possibility for this short run of cars. The trucks that are used are four wheel die cast passenger car trucks because that is what fit the chassis.

**Q,** Will it have American Flyer printed on it?

**A,** Yes, in the same place as the original.

**Q,** Will the gondola be American Flyer?

**A,** Yes

**Q,** Will the set come in American Flyer box's

**A,** Yes"

*Stan Batynski*

## November 6, 1999 Business Meeting

**Incorporation and Sales Tax Number:** The membership voted on and approved two motions at the November 6 meet. The first is to investigate the feasibility of incorporation of the division. The second is to obtain a sales tax number from the California Board of Equalization IF the division incorporates.

### Membership Renewal:

We will be collecting SVD Year 2000 membership dues starting on December 4 at the meet at Sierra II. The members attending the November 6 meet voted on and approved a motion to raise SVD yearly dues to \$15 for an individual membership and \$20 for family memberships. The family membership replaces the \$2 per person associate dues we had in the past. A regular member and the entire immediate family can join for the \$20 dues. The membership renewal period runs from January 1 to April 3. A \$5 late fee will be charged if you renew after April 3, 2000. If you cannot attend the monthly meets, please mail your dues to Stan Batynski, 11126 Eel River Ct., Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-2907.

## New Members

We currently have 203 members. Please welcome our newest members: Bill Broderick from Martinez, Dean and Bonnie Busick from Carmichael, Rich Colby from Nevada City, Dave and Linda Dewey from Oroville, Mark Jines from Stockton, John and Eleanor Lewis from North Highlands, Mike and Linda Metzger from Citrus Heights, and Joe and Dottie Montgomery from Vacaville

## River City Toy Train Meet

The River City public meet was held on October 2 and was a success as usual. My thanks to all of the vendors, layout operators, club volunteers, and to the members who attended as patrons. SVD members won all three of the meet prizes. Tino Tassone won the \$50 vendor prize, John Leins won the \$50 layout prize, and Gene Bryant won the K-Line Magna Arizona mine train set door prize.

### RIVER CITY TOY TRAIN MEET RESULTS

YEAR	1999	1998	1997
<b>Revenue</b>			
Table Sales	\$1,355	\$1,635	\$2,050
Admissions	\$1,294	\$1,177	\$1,244
Total Revenue	\$2,649	\$2,812	\$3,294
<b>Expenses</b>			
Rent	\$825	\$800	\$785
Flyers	\$207	\$150	\$184
Advertising	\$202	\$162	
Vendor Prize	\$50	\$50	\$ 50
Layout Prize	\$125	\$150	\$145
Raffle Prize	\$162	\$150	\$230
Postage, phone, etc	\$266	\$59	\$126
other	\$65	\$37	\$20
Total Expenses	\$1,902	\$1,658	\$1,540
Net Profit	\$ 747	\$1,154	\$1,754

Analysis of year to year results are showing a declining trend in profit from the meet. Each year the net profit is approximately two thirds of the previous year's profit. This is primarily due to fewer table sales each year. Our database shows that we have not had the big Bay Area vendors attending as they have turned to e-Bay trading rather than attending local meets. Expenses are up due to printing and mailing flyers and other advertising. The door admissions are relatively constant. Your board has compiled a list of new things to try and change for next year. We will present these ideas to the membership in early 2000 so you may offer comments and suggestions.

*Stan Batynski*





## Atlas-O

Atlas, a longtime maker of model trains and track, especially HO and N, has recently begun manufacturing O-gauge, 3-rail track under a division of Atlas labeled "Atlas-O." This nickel silver, solid T rail track has a blackened center rail, with correctly sized ties and completely insulated rail. Although it is 3-rail, I found it to be more prototypical looking than anything else currently on the market.

I purchased about 200 feet for the 11' x 15' layout that I am building with the help of John Leins. So far, we both really like the looks and performance.

From time to time we had questions and found that Atlas has a great forum on their web page: <http://www.atlaso.com/>. Click on "Atlas-O" to reach the welcome screen, then click on "forum." Here, the company lets users and other train enthusiasts discuss products by Atlas and other manufacturers. They especially encourage the public to submit ideas for what they would like to see in the future.

One of the most important forum features is that Jim Weaver, their R & D specialist, monitors the forum almost daily and is very prompt and helpful in getting back to you with answers to your questions. In one case, he even had a track user send him, at Atlas' expense, cars with problems to try on the Atlas-O developmental layout. This forum has been very useful to John and me, and anyone can ask questions or post ideas—Atlas user or not. Recent discussion topics have included the old and new Lionel transformers, the MRC transformer, and QSI sound boards.

John and I are planning to write an article about the entire experience of designing and building a toy train layout in the electronic age. We'll begin by comparing the *RR Track* and *Atlas Right Track* layout design programs and give tips on avoiding marital discord, i.e., turn off the ceiling fans if you must rip plywood in the living room. First, of course, we have to get trains running!

Meanwhile, you are welcome to visit us in Galt and see the work in progress. Feel free to bring trains to run, but please call first to see that we're able to operate. We still have a lot of wiring to complete.

Jack Hornor (209) 744-0626

## Financial Statement

Our three main sources of income are from membership dues, profits from the River City Toy Train Meet in October, and interest on our investments. Our most recent financial statement (01/01/99 to 10/03/99) is showing a profit due to our interest income. Without our interest income, we would project a deficit. For 1999 we still have to make expenditures for the December Luncheon, publish a Side Track newsletter, and purchase door prizes for next year. We will present the year-end financial report for 1999 early in 2000. It is SVD policy to fund our activities from yearly cash flow and avoid deficit spending. Specifically, we want to reinvest our interest income so our savings principal grows as a building fund for our own location. For these reasons the board asked the membership to vote to increase their membership dues. Your board is also concerned about the declining profit trend from the River City Meet. Thank you for voting to raise the membership dues. Your board welcomes comments and suggestions from the membership.

### CASH FLOW 01/01/99 TO 10/03/99

#### Revenues

Dues .....	\$2,011.00
Interest Income .....	\$2,512.22
River City Meet .....	\$2,389.00
Raffle Income .....	\$ 295.00
Table Sales .....	\$ 60.00
Food .....	\$ 5.00
Total Revenue .....	\$7,272.22

#### Expenses

Administrative .....	\$ 288.00
Bank Charge .....	\$ 10.50
Convention Car .....	\$ 610.88
Donation .....	\$ 20.00
Food & Refreshment .....	\$ 885.17
Hall Rental .....	\$1,530.00
Modular Layout .....	\$ 56.45
River City Meet .....	\$ 875.82
Postage .....	\$ 19.80
Printing .....	\$ 400.22
Side Track .....	\$ 220.24
Total Expenses .....	\$4,917.08
Profit (Loss) .....	\$2,355.14

### NET WORTH AS OF 10/06/99

Sac Valley TTOS .....	\$ 3,051.64
Time Deposit 1 .....	\$24,564.08
Time Deposit 2 .....	\$24,827.84
Money Market Acct .....	\$15,876.29
Total Cash and Accounts .....	\$68,319.85
Total Liabilities .....	\$ 0.00
Net Worth (Loss) .....	\$68,319.85





## Collecting Magazines

by Jerry Azzaro

During the time our wonderful trains were being manufactured and sold, there was a brisk business in related hobby magazines. Prewar tinplate trains didn't generate much publication, but the immense boom in postwar train sales caught the eye of Charles A. Penn. Penn formed Penn Publications, based in Silver Spring, Maryland, and began publishing *Toy Trains* in November of 1951.

*Toy Trains* presented a marvelous look at the products, layout techniques, and general mood of the toy train hobby at the time it was in its prime. Penn employed Frank Ellison, whose incredibly detailed outside-third-rail O-gauge "Delta Lines" blended Lionel's best rolling stock with Ellison's scale-modeling talents. Ellison's construction articles always showed his creations against the backdrop of his fabulous pike. Penn also made full use of the photos provided by the manufacturers, so there are excellent views of both the Lionel and Flyer showroom layouts. Articles and photos submitted by amateur operators are fun to look at and often play up the father-son relationship of toy trains. The "Roadside America" layout in Pennsylvania is also the source of much photo material and a few articles. *Toy Trains* was published monthly through July of 1954. There was a Fall 1954 and a Christmas 1954 issue, and then *Toy Trains* disappeared.

Other magazines very similar to *Toy Trains* appeared briefly during the early 1950s—*Hobby Railroading* and *Electric Trains* to name two—but they did not have the staying power of *Toy Trains*. Only a few issues of each are known to have made it off the presses.

Kalmbach Publishing, publisher of the scale model magazine, *Model Railroader*, thought they could fill a niche by publishing a magazine that would appeal to those in the gap between toys and scale models,

thus *Model Trains* was born. Actually, *Model Trains* (also known as "HO Monthly") had been in existence for several years as a small "HO only" magazine when Kalmbach bought it in 1954 and put out their first "All Ages - All Gauges" issue in March of 1954. These magazines were interesting in that they tried to simplify model railroading to the point that it would appeal to the toy operator and get his "rug railroad" up off the floor. Editorially, MT was aimed at the beginner, and "how to" articles dominate the pages.

*Model Trains* was published monthly through 1956. There were seven issues in 1957 and six each in the years 1958 through 1961. There were only two in 1962 and then *Model Trains* vanished. *Model Trains'* Spring 1960 issue was the last one to carry the "All Ages - All Gauges" banner; the following issue declared it "The Buyer's and Builder's Guide". The cover banner for the March 1961 issue boasted "HO Railroading Made Easy"—*Model Trains* had come full circle and was again focused on the HO modeler. No doubt Kalmbach felt by 1962 that they could reach the burgeoning HO market with their flagship magazine *Model Railroader*. *Model Trains* thus was committed to the dustbin of history, as previous toy train operators became HO scale modelers.

Collecting these magazines has been a fun and satisfying sideline to the hobby for me. I still have several original *Toy Trains* issues that were given to me when I was a kid, so it was only natural that I would try to collect all volumes. I subscribed to *Model Trains* in the late 1950s, so this was also good rootstock to build upon.

*Toy Trains* had one fatal flaw—many of the issues featured a cut-out construction project on the back cover (drawn by Hal Carstens), so it is wise when buying these to check to see if the back cover has been snipped off by some enthusiastic child in 1952. I plead guilty!

## First Love

by Jack Ahearn

What a bore....High School and first year civics. The teach' thinks the most important thing about October is the start of the Supreme Court's new session. What October really means is cooler weather, a sure sign its time to get out lots of paper, rulers and compasses to start planning for the new Christmas layout. Also, its almost time for the neighborhood stores to start putting small train displays in their windows, even if its just some straight track with an engine, a few cars, a caboose and phony looking snow. At least they understand the important things in life!

The bell sounded and school was out. Maybe, on the way home, I'd stop at a few of the stores and offer to set up their window displays, for free! Even if it's just a train on some straight track, at least I'll get all the wheels on the rails. And, if that jerk butcher has that auto log car again, I'll be sure to position the drop side to face the unloading bin. I'll never forget the year that idiot florist put a caboose in the middle of the train. What a disgrace! Yeah, now that I'm in High School they could definitely use my professional services.

As I slammed my locker shut a shrill voice rang out. "Hi, you gonna walk me home?"

It was Linda, a girl I met and dated during summer vacation. "I...uh, had some business deals I was gonna take care of but walk yer home...uh yeah, maybe, sure!" Train biz can wait...I silently rationalized. "What kind of business deals?"...she asked...."sounds impressive!"

I winced, "Oh, just a few propositions for some store-owners 'round town. I noticed how the sun beamed on her beautiful blonde hair as I casually added, "...you wouldn't understand."

"Oh, I see, *Hokay*"...her eyes had watched mine,..."if you think your big deals are all that complicated and way over my head let's talk





## Down the Track

<b>Division Meet, Holiday Party, Sierra 2 Center</b> .....	<b>December 4</b>
TTOS Meet, San Joaquin Division, Stanislaus County Fairgrounds, Turlock .....	December 4,5
TCA Nor-Cal, Holiday Party & Silent Auction, Montera Jr. High, Oakland .....	December 11
Great Western Train Show, Marin County Civic Center .....	December 19

### 2000

<b>Division Meet, Sierra 2 Center</b> .....	<b>January 8</b>
TCA Nor-Cal, Iron Horse Middle School, San Ramon .....	January 8
Golden Gate Lionel Railroad Club - Hayward Show and Sale .....	January 23
GATS, Alameda County Fairgrounds, Pleasanton .....	January 29,30
<b>Division Meet, Sierra 2 Center</b> .....	<b>February 5</b>
O-Scale West, Santa Clara Convention Center .....	February 10-13
Cal-Stewart, Santa Clara Convention Center .....	February 11-13

(See article regarding special combination event tickets)

<b>Division Meet, Sierra 2 Center</b> .....	<b>March 4</b>
TCA Nor-Cal, Montera Jr High, Oakland .....	March 11
<b>Division Meet, Sierra 2 Center</b> .....	<b>April 1</b>
TCA Nor-Cal, Iron Horse Middle School, San Ramon .....	April 8
<b>Division Meet, Sierra 2 Center</b> .....	<b>May 6</b>
TCA Sacto-Sierra Meet, Scottish Rite Center .....	May 27
<b>Division Meet, Sierra 2 Center</b> .....	<b>June 3</b>
GATS, Cow Palace .....	June 3,4
TCA Nor-Cal .....	June 10

about something real simple like, uh Friday night."

"Friday night"...I echoed..."what about Friday night?"

"Our date Friday night." Her voiced went alto. "did you forget, Mr. Big Business Man?"

"Oh no, no sir, uh M'aam I mean Lionel, uh Linda, where would you like to go?"

"Well, actually, Mr. Executive, we really wouldn't have to go anywhere," —there was a glint in her eyes—"unless you'd like to do something complicated, that is." Her voice trailed off, but her glint didn't.

"No, no, anything real simple, you'd like to do is fine with me." My reply instantly registered a dooming "uh-oh" in my brain.

"Oh good," —her glint got more pronounced—"because, you see, my parents are going out and the house will be empty except for simple little 'ol me and I thought instead of us going somewhere..." The glint brightened. "we could,

well, we could just uh."

"Uh, yeah?"...my glint interrupted..."oh yeah, that sounds real good." My glint widened.

"But...she replied," as her glint hit its apex, "isn't it too bad."

"Bad?" my glint dimmed. "Yes," her glint interrupted. "I just remembered, I'll be real busy Friday night, I just simply must do my hair and nails. I'm going out Saturday, with Harold! Her glint completely disappeared as her, now raised, beautiful blonde eyebrows, banged into her beautiful blonde bangs. However, her glint did return momentarily as she whispered "...We, I mean, I'm home now. Thank you for taking time out from your busy schedule. Bye, bye.... Stupid!"

I retreated from Lionel's house, convincing myself that when I explained to her that my business idea had to do with my love for Linda trains, she'd more than understand.

Jack Ahearn

## Spring Cal-Stewart

The next Spring Cal-Stewart Meet will be held February 11-13, 2000, at the Santa Clara Convention Center. Concurrently, on February 10-13, the folks at O-Scale West will be holding their annual convention at the same site. Two hours after either meet has opened its doors, attendees of the other meet will be able to enter after showing their badge and paying an additional \$5. The Cal-Stewart registration desk will open at noon on Friday so that registrants will be able to attend the O-Scale West meet any time after that. Several SVD members have attended O-Scale West, and trust us, this is a great opportunity!

Cal-Stewart flyers and applications have recently been mailed to previous attendees and will also be available from Nor-Cal TCA. The O-Scale West web page is located at: <http://www.rodmillier.com/osw.shtml>.

George Ann Hornor





Layouts from the 1999 River City Toy Train Meet  
Photos by Jerry Azzaro



Dave Thomsen's pike draws  
an ardent admirer



Ken Mizner, uncoupled

Happy Holidays  
from the *Side Track* Editors  
Jack Ahearn  
and  
George Ann Hornor



John Leins shows how it's done