



THE SIDE TRACK

WINTER

NEWS

from the Toy Train Operating Society
Sacramento Valley Division

2002

President's Message

by Jeff Silvera

Season's Greetings, as we find ourselves coming into the Holidays and a New Year! I hope the fond memories of Christmases past and your trains are on your mind. It's the time when we can truly be proud that we are Toy Train Operators. Take them out of that well kept place and play with them as Santa Claus intended you to do in that Christmas Past.

I would like to thank all of our members who helped with the River City Toy Train Meet. I thought that we did pretty well this year with over 350 people paid. I would like to see more public attendance through increased advertising and more word of mouth. If you have any ideas, please feel free to give me your suggestions. Our goal is a thousand paid attendees.

The Golden State Division of TTOS has invited us to come and run trains with them (see article). They have their layout set up in a vacant store in a shopping mall. I am hoping to plan a trip on a Saturday in February. Please let me know if you're interested.

Just a reminder: the March 1st SVD meet at Sierra II has been canceled due to a conflict with the spring Cal-Stewart meet. That same weekend is going to be a GATS show at Cal Expo. We will have our club layout at that show, and will be in need of volunteers. Please contact Norman LaClair if you would like to help.

Please have a wonderful and joyous Christmas Holiday Season.

Membership News and Notes

by George Ann Hornor

We happily welcome our newest members, Mark Bradford Carry and his family – Kate, Cody and Colton, from San Rafael. We also welcome back Jim Groth and Frank Smith from their wanderings in Southern California.

We will begin taking renewals at the January meeting, and I'll have the membership cards ready then.

SVD Election Results

By Lee Deter

The elections were uncontested. Some "new blood" will be introduced into the Board of Directors next term with Kevin Anderson being elected to the office of Vice President.

The 2002 Officers, President Jeff Silvera, Secretary Ted Adams and Treasurer Mike Boyd were re-elected to two-year terms.

Because the Immediate Past President, Stan Batynski (besides Jeff Silvera who was re-elected to a new 2 year term), is now serving as National T.T.O.S. Treasurer, a Director at Large will be appointed to a 2 year term. The President will make this appointment with the approval of the Board of Directors.



Show and Tell

By Richard Zanotti

Show and Tell is starting up again. Jerry shared his 0-gauge Japanese trains in June. At the September meeting Jack Hornor demonstrated some new Hall-mark train ornaments. Phil shared a rare item of Lionel wartime production, a tailrace (A kind of ship's speedometer). I shared some things an that I picked up at the TCA National Convention, namely: two Fandor (Dorfan) 1 gauge passenger cars, a Forbes replica of an El Camino Real marker bell, a Wolverine Panama Pile Driver, and a mystery tinplate viaduct. At the September meeting Barry shared his collection of steam engines. He even fired one up! Jack shared a Marline Nuclear Reactor steam engine. Bill shared a mystery Japanese engine. Pete shared a restored Structo fire engine. Clyde shared a Buddy L hook and ladder truck and demonstrated the complicated ladder apparatus. I demonstrated a MTH reproduction of a Kingsbury Firehouse and Fire Engine, and a 1938 Marx Firehouse. I also brought in a mystery foot-bridge. Don identified it as being made by Mnitoy. In December we will have our annual Christmas Show and Tell, where we share anything related to trains and Christmas. In January, Ira, a retired modelmaker, will make a presentation and show many of his models. In February, Tom will show some of his steam engine models. You are welcome to share anything that you might have at anytime. We always encourage mystery items.

I am feeling a little better following my accident. My knee that has had a vacation for five months doesn't want to go back to working again. I would like to thank everybody who expressed concern for me through cards, phone calls, and emails. Your participation in Show and Tell and your response to my accident prove to me that you are a great group!



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Layout Tours

By Jack Ahearn

At the November 2nd Sierra II Meet I addressed the membership with regards to the Layout Tour Program. There was a unanimous and quite animated wave of hands in favor of continuing the program into a third year. Basic physics states that for every action there is a reaction. I am now looking for the reaction of raised hands of those who will volunteer to host next year's tours. Two things will make this "exercise" fairly easy, first, several of last years hosts have re-upped and secondly, as you may have read, there may be a supplemental "Workshop" program next year. That will call for only alternate monthly tours. What we need is about four or five raised hands. Ideally these would be first time hosts showing off something new. And remember, "in progress" layouts provide the best view of how a layout comes together and encourages new folks to start building their "dream" pikes.

Please "raise your hands" and either dial (916) 929 4455 or E-mail me at j.ahearn@attbi.com "Keeping our programs going.....means keeping our division growing!"

Cal-Stewart Musings

by George Ann Hornor

The first major storm of the season greeted us at the 2002 Fall Cal-Stewart in Pasadena. Just ask Clyde and Erma Easterly who weathered the Northern California storm on Thursday, only to tackle the "Grapevine" in blinding rain and fog. In fact, they were so tired they missed the Friday night party — now that's tired! According to Sam Mattes, meet chairman, attendance was down a bit; but in spite of the weather and a GATS show conflict, over 500 tables of goodies were there to tempt the crowd. One highlight of the meet was the display of military memorabilia with toy soldiers, flags, uniforms, and posters from both World Wars. Another was a special display honoring Ward Kimball. There were more layouts this year, including a fantastic one made of Legos. I would have escaped with my pocketbook unscathed if I hadn't hit the auction on my way out. Anyway, it was a great show as usual, and I'm looking forward to next year. It's scheduled, by the way, in the same place on November 7-9, 2003. And don't forget the Spring Cal-Stewart at Santa Clara on February 28 through March 2.



River City Meet Results

by Stan Batynski



Kids always bring out the joy of toy trains at the SVD River City Toy Train Meet



Buyers, sellers, "lookie-lous" and "bee-backs" crowd the hall at the River City Toy Train Meet in October

The annual River City Meet has several purposes. The Meet promotes the toy train hobby to the public, it is a trading and social gathering for our members and other vendors, and the profit pays for the Sierra II Center rent for the following year. The 2002 Meet made a profit of \$2,146. We project the 2003 Sierra II rent to be approximately \$1,485 (\$135 x 11 months) so we made our goal.

General comments: The meet appeared to run very smoothly. No last-minute problems were noted. The covered table rule will be deleted for next year, it does not appear to serve any purpose. The trading hall was cluttered with litter and food plates requiring more cleanup than usual this year.

We did have a lot of vendors subletting tables and piggybacking on the table registrant's seller's permit. For 2003 we will change our table form to be similar to the Cal-Stewart Pasadena form and the TTOS San Joaquin Division Turlock form to allow for registration of the "casual seller".

Revenue: We increased table fees by \$5 per table. Door admissions were increased by \$1 to \$5 for single admission and \$9 for couples. An estimated 314 people paid admission. There was free admission after 2:00pm.

Expenses: Our expenses decreased by \$135 from last year.

Hall Rental: It appears the \$80 energy surcharge has been made a permanent part of the hall rental. The hall rental fee was increased by \$20 from last year.

Flyers : The Flyer category includes copy costs for store flyers, \$1 off postcards, and press releases. We cut back on the number of \$1-off postcards mailed. We collected 54 postcards at the door, which is typical.

Advertising: this includes paid classified ads in the BEE. This has not proved to be cost-effective.

Vendor Drawing: There did not seem to be any complaints concerning the reduced prize. A flat rate \$25 prize may be the best value. We only had one vendor leave early at approximately 1:30pm.

Layout Prizes: \$25 per layout or display seems practical and the recipients seem pleased. No complaints noted.

Door Prize: The three \$25 gift certificates appeared to be popular, easy to administer, and less expensive, especially compared to mailing a train set to a winner. 192 door prize forms were submitted.

Postage and Phone: We cut back on the number of mailings of table applications and postcards. The Lochers did table confirmations by phone, which saved confusion at the trading hall during setup.

Janitorial: The gratuity was increased by \$5 this year. The custodians had all the tables in place by the time we got to the hall at Friday 1pm. We did some minor rearrangement in which the custodians were very helpful. We felt the time saved was worth the increased gratuity.

Other: The "Other" category included a package of printer labels for name badges and vendor donuts.



Autumn Layout Tours

Following our September 7th meeting, SVD members returned to the home of **Jack and George Ann Hornor** for another look at the fine 3-rail layout that occupies most of their living room. Jack's electronic control and George Ann's culinary delights were a treat for all who made the short drive to Galt.



Layout Touristas once again hit the Trifecta when they journeyed to the Gold Country following the November 2nd SVD meet. **Tom MacConnel, Carl and Cathy Locher, and Roy Kilday** welcomed visitors to their mountain homes for a special day of toy train extravaganza. A warm and sunny November day, kind hospitality, and the spirit of SVD fellowship prevailed throughout the day.

photos by Jack Hornor



Surrounded by his eclectic collection of trains and his room-filling layout, Roy Kilday welcomes SVD members to his Placerville home



Carl Locher controls standard and O Gauge trains from his command post - as well as some OO Gauge, a Lionel road race set and a Leland Monorail - not to mention that giant crane!



Tom MacConnel at the controls of his O-gauge layout. Visitors also enjoyed his G-gauge garden railway.



New Feature: Workshops

By Jack Ahearn

As we have seen over the last few years, the social and interactive programs of our monthly meets have become quite popular. I believe they, along with our Officers' efforts, have raised the spirits of our Division. With this thought in mind, I am developing an idea to augment our club activities with an additional program consisting of several Workshops.

I have approached several members about conducting such Workshops. They reacted very positively and would be interested in presenting some 'heavy duty' subjects. In particular, **Jerry Azzaro** has offered to give a class, using an actual computer and monitor, showing us how to effectively buy and sell on eBay. Both **Jack Horner** and **Phil Fravesi** would offer electrical and electronic symposiums. These would range from **Phil** explaining basic electricity as it applies to our layouts to **Jack** showing us how to understand, install and use the latest electronic control and audio systems. In time, there could be several more, including painting, restoration, and Hi-Rail scenery techniques.

I've discussed the above with our SVD Officers and they are unanimous in their support. All agreed the best time would be following our regular Sierra II Meets. After some discussion it was decided that the Workshops should be held off-premise. The current plan is for the hour-long Workshops to be held in the Clubhouse of my Mobile Home Park. Along with no rental charge, this would allow for advance setup of the room in the arrangement of the presenter's choice. It offers a secluded, quiet and manageable atmosphere, fewer time constraints and all amenities for attendees' comfort. The Park is located about fifteen minutes from Sierra II. I propose that 'classes' would start at noon, with coffee, beverages and perhaps light sandwiches served from 11:30 'til the first bell rings.' There are no charges planned but there may be a 'Koffee Kitty'

As stated, this is an ambitious program. Handled as outlined, it could be a notable T.T.O.S. Divisional project. Obviously the presenters would be putting a lot of thought and work into it. The Park is donating the facilities and I'll be happy to coordinate it. In speaking to Phil, Jack and Jerry their immediate concern is, will it be worth it? If only four or five want to learn about a particular topic, it would be easier just to invite them to the homes and tutor the few!

So, at this point, it is up to the membership. I know there are plenty of questions about schedules etc. but before we do any further planning, we must hear from you. We're not up to scheduling, enrollment or commitment yet. All that is being asked now is, if this is something you honestly would like to attend? There are no correct or incorrect answers. If you are interested, please call me or leave a message at, (916) 929 4455 or E-mail me at j.ahearn@attbi.com. I would like your sincere response so we can make a determination as to the merits of an **SVD Workshop Program**.

Invitation to Run Trains

by Terry Smith, TTOS Golden State Division President

This is an invitation to all TTOS division members to come and run trains with the Golden State Division on Saturday, February 8, 2003 between 10:30 and 5:00 PM. This is an informal event and the purpose is just to get together with other TTOS members and run trains.

We have our modular layouts set up permanently at a store space in the Silicon Valley WAVE (formerly Sunnyvale Town Center) Mall in Sunnyvale California about 10 miles north of San Jose in the San Francisco Bay Area. We have two modular O-Gauge layouts, each with 3 loops and one Standard Gauge Layout with 2 loops.

We open the mall to the public three times a month from January through October on the second and fourth Saturdays from 10:30 AM to 5:00 PM and on the second Wednesday each month from 6 to 8:30 PM. We run on a special schedule for the holidays in November and December.

The selected date of February 8, 2003 is the second Saturday in February and we will be open and running for the public when you come. After the running sessions, operators generally go out for dinner at one of the many nearby restaurants in Sunnyvale, and you would be invited for that as well.

Of course, all TTOS members are welcome to come run trains on our layouts anytime we are open. But we have selected this particular date with the hope of getting more people together at one time. Let me know if you want to come on any other date so I can verify that we are open. I realize it's a long way to come for most divisions just to run trains, but the invitation is open anyway. It might be fun. Hope to see you there.

Bring some trains to run at the Golden State Divisions operation layouts on:

February 8, 2003 between 10:30 AM and 5:00 PM

At:

Silicon Valley WAVE Mall
(Formerly Sunnyvale Town Center)
1041 Town Center Lane
W Washington Ave near Mathilda
Sunnyvale, CA
Room 1041, Lower Level near Macy's



Down the track

December 7, 2002: SVD Meet - Sierra II Center, Sacramento

December 7-8, 2002: Toy Train Meet, Turlock (TTOS SJV Div)

December 21-22, 2002: GATS Fresno

December 28-29, 2002: GATS San Rafael

January 4, 2003: SVD Meet - Sierra II Center, Sacramento

January 19, 2003: Golden Gate Lionel Railroad Club Meet, Hayward

February 1, 2003: SVD Meet - Sierra II Center, Sacramento

February 28 - March 2, 2003: Cal-Stewart Santa Clara

March 2003: No SVD meet - see you at Cal-Stewart Santa Clara

August 21-24, 2003: TTOS National Convention, Denver CO



We have developed a new method for distributing this quarterly newsletter. Fresh issues are brought to the SVD meeting for members to take, then we mail copies to those who were not in attendance. The amount we save in postage is substantial, roughly equal to the annual dues of four members.

We use the meeting attendance sign-in sheet to determine who not to mail to. Please be sure that you have signed in when you take your copy, and that your name is printed clearly. Guests, including family non-SVD members, should be entered on the guest register.