

THE SIDE TRACK

NEWS

from the Toy Train Operating Society
Sacramento Valley Division

SPRING

2002

President's Letter

by Jeff Silvera

Hello, everyone. You know, ever since I was a small kid I have had a true passion for trains - from my first wind-up set to my S gauge, and through N gauge as a teenager. The passion has always been there for toy trains - to talk about them, play with them, or just be around them! I can recall as a child, when my mother would leave me with the sitter, the first thing I would ask the sitter was whether I could play with her son's electric trains while he was still at school. I know that same passion is the reason I became president of this division, and I believe that it is what drives volunteers to step forward and help out.

There are several events coming up soon, and we need volunteers. We have the Woodland Mall show, the May TCA Scottish Rite Meet, and our very own River City Meet, for which we do not yet have a chairperson! If you would like to help I will work with you to make it as easy as possible for us. Just contact me at any meeting, or call me at (916) 481-4694.

Milepost Markers of the Sacramento Valley Division Layout Tours

by Jack Ahearn

Our SacValDiv monthly Layout Tours program has highballed nicely through the start of this year and it looks like a lot of happy mileposts ahead for the rest of 2002. January's romp was sort of a Romper Room display of **Bob Simowski's** ninety feet of high iron spiked right into the living room carpeted ballast! Flyer and Lionel fans were equally delighted with **John McLeods** new layout which features the triple play use of American Flyer Standard, 'O' and 'S' gauge trackage laid out on a real fine running pike.

As for the rest of the year, some real exciting miniature rail fan runs are scheduled. In April we'll be climbing to the High Country for a trip on **Bill Wilson's** layout in Nevada City. We might plan a special consist of car-pooling for that tour. Back in the immediate area we're looking forward to seeing the scenic progress made on some revisited 'empires' of last year's tours. Of course we're all looking forward to the Grand Opening of **Phil Fravesi's** Lionel post war 'Mega-Maximus Spectaculum'. And by year-end we'll repeat our trip to Placerville for the **Lochers' and Tom Mcconnell's** delightful offerings!

Again, we thank all participants, tour hosts and 'tourists' alike, for making this program a Class 'A' Road Show. Oh, and as an extra bonus - one of the Star layouts on last year's tour has made it to the Big Time. **Jack & George Ann Hornor's** Atlas tracked, "Galt & Southern Pacific R.R." (G.A.S.P.) will be featured in the May issue of TTOS's THE BULLETIN!

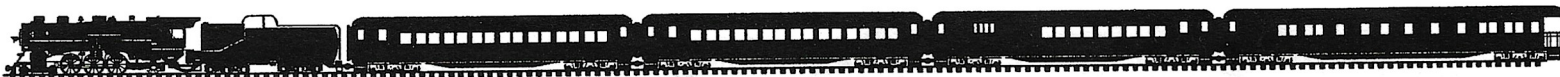
Who said "Atlas Shrugged"?

Show-and-Tell News

By Richard Zanotti

SHOW & TELL at our monthly meetings is getting better, thanks to more people sharing items to be displayed and taking an interest. At the January meeting we compared the original Dorfan crane with a reproduction of it made by T-Reproductions. We discovered that the reproduction is 1/8 of an inch taller. We also discovered that there were differences in the motor housing. We also had on exhibit some very rare Dorfan items, including large and medium Dorfan stations, electric standard gauge switches, and a semaphore. We also had on exhibit a very rare O gauge American Flyer boxcar that was featured in the SHOW & TELL at York last October.

We devoted SHOW & TELL in February to the train makers' wartime production. We had on display: three ships' compasses and an alidade made by Lionel, an aircraft sighting device made by American Flyer, a Lionel PAPER TRAIN, a Lionel ARMY TRAIN, two Marx ARMY TRAINS, and some Marx lithoed tinsplate soldiers. We even had a wartime first aid kit from a San Francisco streetcar!

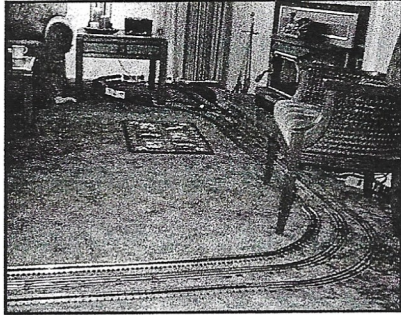


Bob Simowski's Christmas Layout - Spiked to the Floor!

Cal-Stewart Clinics by SVD Members

by Jack Hornor

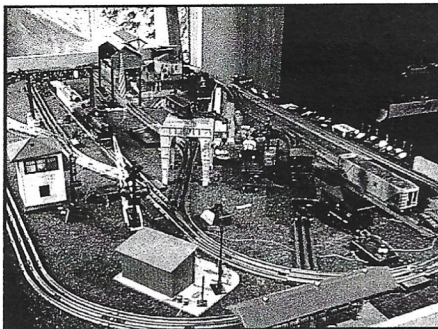
As you read this, the Simowskis may very well be pool-side at John Ascuaga's Nugget as Bob attempts to calm the waters after he laid 90 feet of track throughout the living room and fastened it down with screws through the carpet.



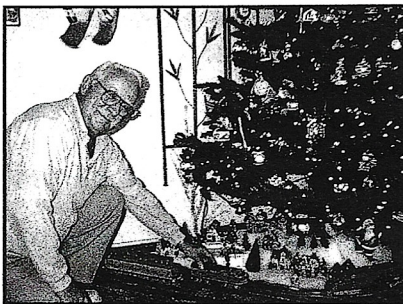
Yes. After the January meet, visitors were treated to the sight of two dog-bone loops of track encircling the Christmas tree (complete with lighted villages), a straightaway spanning the entryway to the family room before making a 90 degree turn to cross the living room in front of the fireplace and a second loop wind-

ing its way under the end table beside the couch. For us old-time toy train operators it was a thrill to see our Christmas morning dreams come true as trains sped around the room. Some of our wives, however, expressed misgivings about the effects of using a drill on carpet, let alone the inconvenience of stepping over tracks for weeks.

Bob also has a more conventional layout in the sunroom. His 4' x 8' layout features trains of the Lionel postwar era with lots of operating postwar accessories. We all took turns operating the trains and accessories and found you can actually make postwar accessories operate—with enough time and patience, of course.



Bob enjoys a mixture of manufacturers.



Lionel, MTH, Marx, and Williams trains were in operation on the table layout, and of course, on the floor. Trains are also displayed on shelves and cabinets in his den.

We all enjoyed seeing and operating the trains. Thanks, Bob, and especially, thanks, Dorothy! Have a good time at the Nugget because Bob talked about plans for a more elaborate setup next year!

Layout Tour Honorees

At the January meeting, SVD President Jeff Silvera and Layout Tour Coordinator Jack Ahearn



presented certificates of appreciation to members who have opened their home layouts to SVD visits. Not all recipients were available for the photos.

Sacramento Valley Division members conducted three clinics at the recent Cal-Stewart meet in Santa Clara. The first was by **Jack Ahearn**, who demonstrated ways to display trains and accessories to their full advantage.

Second was **Jack Hornor**, who discussed powering trains and accessories. He demonstrated some simple electronic components to improve the operation of accessories while not interfering with the operation of the trains.

Richard Zanotti explored the world of wind-up tinplate toys. This was a fun session in which Richard operated many wind-up toys from his extensive collection and discussed the history of the original toys.

The clinics were all well attended and popular with the audience. Plans are in the making for next year's clinics.

Order Board Disorder

SVD member **Steve Gower** wrote to the Side Track to report an unsatisfactory transaction with a TTOS "Order Board" advertiser.

Steve said that he contacted the advertiser to buy a specific item, but that the seller offered to substitute another item "just as good". When Steve received the item, he discovered that it would not perform as the seller had assured him it would. Steve asked to return the item but the seller refused to refund Steve's payment, which was nearly \$400.

One purpose of an organization like TTOS is to assure fairness to both buyer and seller in toy train transactions. It is most unfortunate when this trust is broken.



Local Boy Makes News

Norm LaClair and his work with the SVD modular layout at the El Dorado County Harvest Fest earned favorable comments in the February 2002 issue of *Classic Toy Trains* magazine. The photo that ran with the article shows two youngsters catching an eyeful of trains in operation on the layout. Just the kind of new recruits we need. Thanks, Norm!

O-Scale West Meet Car

By Jack Hornor

Many of us who attended Cal-Stewart in Santa Clara also attended the O-Scale West show next door. Each year they produce a meet car, and they are considering doing the Tidewater Southern 50' boxcar (with the cornucopia logo) for next year's meet. The car will be the Atlas 50' PS-1 and will be decorated by Peterson. Their meet cars are normally only produced in two-rail versions, but next year they are considering also doing a three-rail version.

They do need some sense of whether the demand would make the car feasible. If you are interested, I have a picture of the prototype, and I'll pass the information along to the O-Scale West group.

In Memoriam

Glenn Smith of Fair Oaks,
TTOS #17616 August 27, 2001

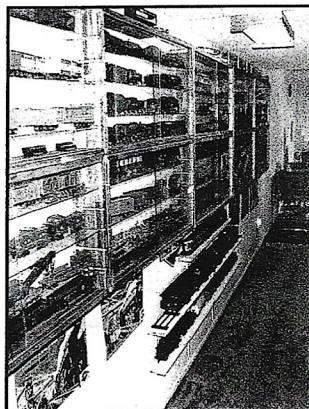
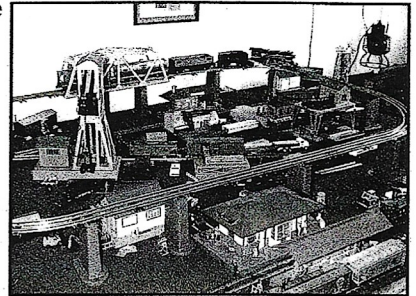
Garry Meyling of Stockton,
TTOS #17614 February 4, 2002

Myron "Mo" Rose Jr. of Concord,
TTOS #13069 February 23, 2002

John McLeod's Love of Flyer Shines Through

For our January layout tour, we revisited the Flyer layout of John McLeod and Terry Lee Young. The layout we featured a year ago has been moved to a new apartment, and a smaller room dictated that the layout be re-configured.

The new layout is 5 x 8 ft., and like the last one it is chockablock with Gilbert action accessories. Gilbert produced many fine action accessories for their postwar trains, and John has managed to cram most of them into this layout. Even though it is compact, John has a good eye for placement and the accessories are grouped in logical scenes.



The "Wall of Trains"

Rather than crowd the layout room with static displays, John has taken advantage of the apartment's long hallway for his display cases, where Flyer S, O, and Wide Gauge trains are displayed.

John's love of Flyer trains runs deep, and his layout and displays convey it thoroughly.



Visitors admire John's handiwork while John (under layout) tends to some last-minute repairs

January Buffet Meet

The annual luncheon meet, held on January 5 as a New Year's feast, was (as usual) a huge success. Members and family turned out in great number for an enjoyable buffet. Thanks to the committee members whose efforts contributed to this event.



Membership News

By George Ann Hornor

We're happy to begin the new year by welcoming four new members: **Kevin Anderson** from Sacramento, **Jon Lundberg** from Roseville, **Robert Scheel** from Reno, and **Leonard (Ski) Wynosky** from Elk Grove.

The 2002 membership cards will be available at the March and April meetings. If you have renewed your membership and not picked up your card, I hope you can attend one of these meetings. If not, however, I will be mailing the new cards after the April meeting.

And I am counting on you to renew. We all are!



Down the track

March 9-10, 2002: GATS, Cow Palace, San Francisco

April 6, 2002: SVD Meet, Sierra II Center

April 19-20, 2002: York Meet, York PA

April 20, 2002: Gold Country Model Railroad Train Sale/Swap Meet (see below)

May 4, 2002: SVD Meet, Sierra II Center

May 25, 2002: TCA Nor-Cal Sac-Sierra Tray Meet
Scottish Rite Center, Sacramento

June 1, 2002: SVD Meet, Sierra II Center

June 1-2, 2002: GATS, Sonoma County Fairground, Santa Rosa

September 21-22, 2002: El Dorado County Harvest Fair Train Show, Placerville

Gold Country Model Railroad Train Sale/Swap Meet

Saturday April 20th, 2002 ☼ Setup for vendors beginning 7am ☼ Hours 10am - 4pm

Veterans Memorial Bldg, 130 Placerville Drive, Placerville

Vender space available. 3' x 8' tables are \$10

The County Museum located right next door to the train show will open up their train building so folks can also see a real 1907 Lima narrow gauge Shay in the process of restoration. Plus they have some other interesting old railroad items and lots of other neat old stuff. Contact **Tom MacConnell** at 530-626-3640 or macconnell@directcon.net



TTOS Sacramento Valley Division
Attn: Jerry Azzaro
291 Bella Vista Way
San Francisco, CA 94127-1811