

THE SIDE TRACK

NEWS

from the Toy Train Operating Society
Sacramento Valley Division

2003

SUMMER

President's Message

by Jeff Silvera

Hello All! This year is going by us real fast. It's already half over! We have been staying busy with our club layout and doing some good shows. I have started passing out applications at the Scottish Rite May meet for our River City meet this October, which will be here before we know it. If anyone has a friend or someone they know who like to be a seller, Please get them an application! We will have some at the front desk of our monthly meets.

A group of us from TTOS met at the Live Steamers annual get-together. It was a real neat day. Those guys are really into trains! There were about 40 Steam and Diesel locomotives with the rolling stock, a barbecue, and the wonderful members of their club! I am hoping that next year we will be able to participate as a TTOS Family outing...

Remember to register for the 2003 TTOS National Convention, August 20 through 24th.

★ **TTOS National Convention** ★
★ **Denver, Colorado** ★
★ **August 21-24, 2003** ★

Membership News and Notes

by George Ann Hornor

I'm sure you'll join me in welcoming our newest members, **Peter and Bonnie Bradt** from Grass Valley, and **Joseph Remillard** from Olivehurst. We now have 156 members plus 65 family members. That's still fewer than we had a few years ago, but we're starting to grow again.

Stan Hahn, one of the early members of TTOS, is home in Stockton after a hospital stay. He had planned to begin attending meetings, but he fell again and is stranded because he is unable to drive. If you would like to wish him well, his address is 4312 Lorenzo Lane, Stockton, CA 95207, (209) 478-8430

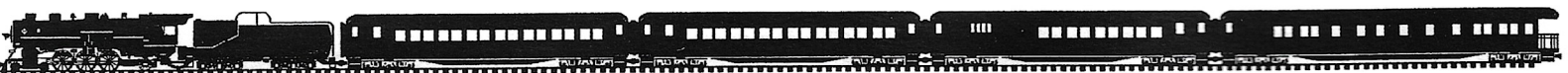
You all should have received your 2003 membership card by now. If you haven't, please let me know at 209 744-0626 or horns@mindspring.com.

E-MAIL

We've been able to collect and verify e-mail addresses from over half of the members. This has enabled us to send information between Side Tracks, so please make sure your records are current. The list is kept at the membership table.

HELP WANTED

How would you like to help me with the membership records, and to eventually take over the position of membership chair? Right now, I keep our records as a WordPerfect mail merge file, but if you use another database or mailing list the records can be probably be converted to another format without too much effort. I've enjoyed being membership chair for a long time, but my health is slowing me down to the point where it's time for someone else to take over. If you can help, please let Jeff or me know, so that we can make a smooth transition. Thanks.

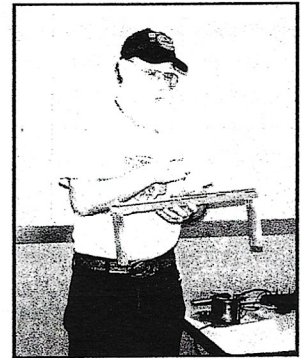


Show and Tell

By Richard Zanotti

In April we had a great Show & Tell. **Tom MacConnell** brought in two power boats, complete with original boxes, from the 1960's. **Barry Garland** exhibited a fantastically preserved Dayton Streetcar, a very hard to find item. **Clyde Easterly** had a complete set of Lionel light bulb boxes, complete with bulbs (Many eyes turned green). **Paul Wells** demonstrated how any piece of Lionel track could be converted to an operating track.

Many people shared their Cal-Stewart finds. **Jerry Azzaro** showed us a train book that he found; he had one like it when he was a child. **Chuck Stone** displayed some items that he found there including a gas pump and a Tonka school bus. He felt that the finds were not that great this year. I displayed some one gauge items including a Gunthermann trolley dummy, a Marklin dining car, a Kibri large lighted station, and a Kibri signal bridge that was so nice that a certain standard gauge operator was tempted to discard his "American Only" rule.

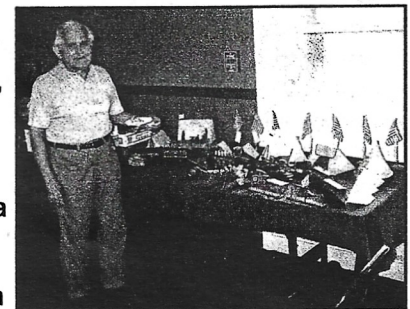


Paul Wells shows how to make Lionel operating cars work on an ordinary track section.



Tom MacConnell with a very special toy boat

At the May Show & Tell, **Paul Wells** compared a Lionel pre-war block signal with a post-war one. The signals look alike, but the wiring is different. **Clarence Hanks** displayed his great collection of Marx army toys, including: trains, tents, soldiers, guns, tanks and American flags (It is even rumored that some of his American flags showed up at a wedding reception in Norway). **Mark Boyd** brought in a rare Lionel army train set from the 1960's. It was complete with missiles, missile launchers, and exploding cars. He also had a set of the playing cards issued our troops in Iraq. **Clyde Easterly** and **Chuck Stone** went to York in April and brought in some of their finds. **Clyde** found a complete Buddy L stationary crane, a very rare item. **Chuck** acquired some prewar items in pristine condition. These included a German freight station with an operating crane, and some Lionel accessories, including a high-tension power pole, a villa, and a bungalow.



Clarence Hanks commands the Marx Army

It is indeed the participation of all these people that makes our Show & Tell such a rewarding experience.

some treasures from the Cal-Stewart Meet



Chuck Stone with his gasoline pump



Clyde Easterly was able to round out his Lionel dealer bulb display



Richard shows his Kibri trains . . .



. . . and his gauge one Guntherman trolley of WWI vintage



Club Layout News

By Norman LaClair, layout chair

On March 1-2, 2003, the layout was on public exhibition at the Great American Train Show (GATS) at Cal-Expo Fairgrounds in Sacramento. The new wide section table was added for the first time at this show with great success. The layout now measures 14 x 26 ft. (very impressive, in case you have not yet seen the full setup). The new paint with all that green carpet sure looks great!



Phil Fravesi, who donated his labor and materials, built the new table. Our thanks to **Phil** for a job well done. The table was finished and painted by **Kevin Anderson**. **Paul Wells** and **Norman LaClair** did the wiring. **Mike Boyd** donated a supply of dowels to be cut into logs for the log loader on the action accessory panel. Another addition is a large quantity of telephone poles. These may not sound like much, but the visual effect is impressive and adds a nice touch.

The Cal-Expo show was manned by several members who contributed their time and effort at the two-day show, as well as the travel and labor to set up and disassemble the layout. **Jeff Silvera**, **Kevin Anderson**, **Paul Wells**, **John Leins**, **Ted Adams** and **Norman LaClair** worked Saturday and Sunday to both set up and take down the layout; they also ran trains. **Mike Boyd**, **Tom MacConnell** and **Connor Powell** helped Saturday with the set-up and also ran trains. **John DeHaan**, **Larry Harding**, **Andy DeSmet**, **Tony Rohrs** and **Barbara Rohrs** ran trains on Sunday and also helped with the teardown and loading of the layout.

SVD members brought several fantastic trains to run, including **Mike Boyd's** Flyer U.P. passenger set. **Paul Wells** brought his 2500 series aluminum passenger set, pulled by a 2343 Santa Fe A-B-A diesel. **Tom MacConnell** brought a whole bunch of billboard reefers – very colorful! **John DeHaan** brought his pre-war Flyer cast aluminum Zephyr – a very nice set and nice to see it run. **Larry Harding** brought a #253 with #610/610/612 cars in unusual Mojave color – this set belonged to his father. **Kevin Anderson** brought a very nice 408E with matching 418/419/490 cars. Many others, too numerous to list. Thanks to all the members who contributed their time and effort to make this exhibit a success. Apologies to anyone whose name I neglected to mention.

On April 5th the layout crew put up the entire new layout at the Sierra Center SVD meet. In case you were not there, you have to come to a public show to see this new and enlarged layout as it will not be put up on a regular basis at the Sierra Center meets.

On Sunday, April 13th, the layout was taken to the fairgrounds in Placerville for **Tom MacConnell's** show in the foothills. For the first time at at least eight years we had to rent a trailer to move the layout as Norman's 1965 pickup finally had a problem, a broken rear wheel bearing. **Kevin Anderson** came to our rescue and repaired the wheel bearing and axle the following week and did it with his blessings and knowledge. I want to publicly thank Kevin for his efforts. **Norman** picked up and pulled the trailer to Placerville with his other vehicle. **Kevin** and **Jeff** had to reload the layout from Norman's pickup into the trailer in a driving rain storm and we all got soaked.

Our layout received a lot of interest and attention from the public. Several people commented that they did not know that trolleys were made to run on electric train layouts.

Two club members were at the show operating their own layouts. **Jim Groth** brought his small layout which is well designed and runs Standard and O gauges and even an elevated trolley. He ran a prewar American Flyer O gauge set called "Minnehaha" (which resembles a Hiawatha) and looked to be in excellent condition. It is tinlitho with a wide bright orange stripe the entire length of the train. Jim's layout shows how much can be put on a small layout with a little planning. Great job, Jim.

Dave Thomsen was there with his 2-tier layout running two of his many repainted and re-designed sets. **Frank Smith** ran some MTH trains on another of Dave's layouts.



The club layout in full configuration - too big to photograph!

Members brought a variety of trains to run on the club layout. Among these are: **Paul Wells** brought his newly-acquired New York Central F-3 2344 A-A. He had repacked the grease and cleaned and oiled the train and even got the horn to work after the train had been idle for 30 years. Nice job, Paul. Paul also ran his 2500 Series aluminum passenger cars and Western Pacific F-3 and Santa Fe F-3, all of

which run really nice.

Ted Adams ran his "pickle train," an unusual train made up of cars displaying logos of various brands of pickles. **Tony Rohrs** ran his Amtrak work train.

Norman ran his K-Line switcher with slope back tender that was available only to K-Line Collectors Club members. The detail on this little switcher is really fantastic.

The Placerville Show was organized entirely by our T.T.O.S. club member **Tom MacConnell**. It was an excellent and well-attended show. Congratulations to Tom for a job well done and a very nice show. All of our members remarked about what a good time they had.



Layout Tours

by Jack Hornor

A special thanks goes to **Jack Ahearn** for his idea of layout tours after our monthly meetings and for coordinating the tours for the last three years. I know that everyone who took part enjoyed viewing operating layouts in various stages of construction. As Jack is very busy as president of the local TCA chapter and with his job as docent at the California State Railroad Museum, I have volunteered to take over the job of setting up the tours. I have some interesting layouts in mind, and Jack, Jeff and I agree that there should be no more than six tours annually, avoiding scheduling them in months with holidays or with other events making demands on members' time.

Our first visit will be to **Phil Fravesi's** immediately after the meeting on June 7. Phil's large layout is still under construction (as most will be), but he is running trains. Those of us lucky enough to see his layout before he moved are expecting great things.

We will skip July because of the holiday, and will be headed to Woodland on August 2 to see the St. John's Underground Railroad, hosted by SVD member **Frank Smith**. Again, this is not a finished layout, but they can now operate five loops. You can bring your own engines and trains to try with hand-held conventional, TMCC or DCS, all operated remotely on the same tracks. This promises to be a new experience as the operators show us how these work.

There will be two more tours this year, in September and November. These are still in the planning stages, and I will let you know the details as soon as possible. As always, there will be an announcement at the meeting, and maps will be available. If you have ideas for other tours or if you would host the group, please let me know. It could be that you hosted a tour in the past, but would be willing to have us back for an updated look.

We are the **Toy Train Operating Society**, and these layout visits have been a real success, thanks to **Jack Ahearn** and to all who participated. And I especially urge those of you who are beginning to build your layout to take advantage of the knowledge and expertise offered during the visits.

Thanks for your support and I hope to see you at Phil's.

April York Report



The TCA Eastern Division's April meet at York was enjoyable, as usual. An unofficial count showed 14,000 pre-registered, with an additional 1,000 registering at the meet. Some halls had the aisles widened with fewer rows of tables, an indication that table sales were down. Despite the large attendance, the consensus was that sales of collectible trains were off considerably. The "tin can" railway usually found in the green hall was not present at this meet.

The Reliance Fire Co., "Sheraton", and Best Western pre-meets were fairly brisk, but the "Billy Bud" appears to be on its last legs. There were no more than six sellers in the parking lot, which used to be filled to overflowing. Only one seller was set up on the lawn across the street, and he folded his tent after a few hours. Sellers blame the hotel's stiff table fees and the local taxing authority for the decline of this event.

York Fairgrounds are building a new 114,000 sq. ft. exhibit hall at the west (Highland Ave.) entrance to the property, and it will be ready in time for the October 2003 meet. At this and all future meets, sellers who have occupied the "dealer" halls (yellow, gold, black and purple) will be moved to this new hall. It should be a pleasant place to shop for trains; however, the bad news is that it will be even further from the other halls.

- JA



Layout Tour for June: Phil Fravesi's post war work in progress

by Jack Hornor

Our next TTOS layout tour will be in Carmichael on Saturday, June 7, from noon until 3 p.m, following the regular monthly Sacramento Valley Division meeting. **Phil and Emma Fravesi** will be our hosts and will be serving a light snack of rolls and cold cuts. Phil describes his layout as follows:

"The layout is 34 x 18 feet. It's post war era with a few new items. The collection is being displayed and operated as the catalog displayed the trains. I am maintaining the toy-like atmosphere. There is a harbor with three lift bridges, a Plasticville town, freight classification yard and a passenger station complex with 9 thru tracks. The lower level has three main lines and the second level, one. The third level also has one main line which will be a logging operation. There are no mountains or scenery at this time but there are five trains in continuous operation (except when they go off the track). The control consists of conventional transformers. four ZW, one KW, one Z."

Those of us who saw Phil's old layout in Orangevale and who are familiar with his work and knowledge of trains know that this will be an outstanding layout. It will be exciting to watch as the work progresses. This is a good chance to pick up some tips you can use on your own layout. I hope to see you there.

Maps will be available at the meeting.

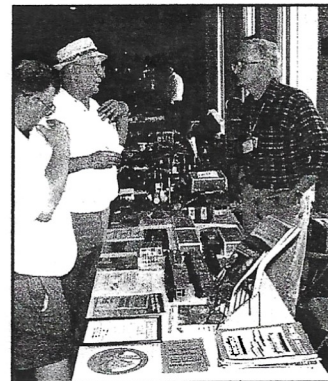
Images from the May 24th River City Meet



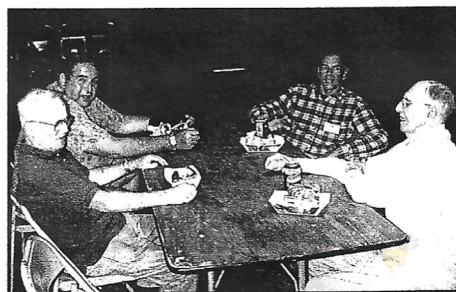
Buyers and sellers pack the Scottish Rite hall at the River City Meet, sponsored by Sac-Sierra Division of Nor-Cal TCA.



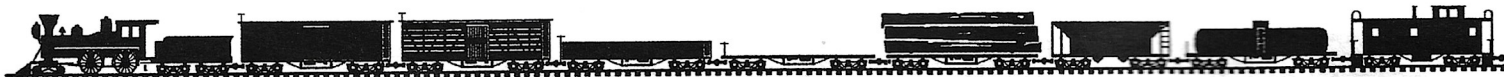
Dave Thomsen drew jeers from his 3-rail friends when he showed up with his new 2-rail S-gauge layout.



Stan Batynski promotes TTOS and SVD at the meet. Here, he's preaching to the converted.



Tired and hungry from prowling the aisles, SVD members Karl Schmidt, Richard Zanotti, Jim Groth and Francis Eister pause for a meal.



FLYER FEST WEST 4



The Sacramento Valley American Flyer Club hosted the 4th Annual Flyer Fest West on May 3, 2003. This event is the only such activity in the West to promote American Flyer and S gauge trains and we are happy to report enthusiasm re-

mains strong. This year's Fest was held at the Chabolla Center in Galt, CA.

Only in its fourth year, 114 people registered for the event. With spouse and friends joining in on the fun and activities, attendance reached 170. Beyond expectations, visitors from 7 states and Canada were present. Vendor tables and other exhibits filled the hall to capacity. The selection of Gilbert, Lionel Flyer and other S gauge was more than adequate and interesting. A commemorative FFW water tower was also offered. Participation in the clinics, train races, and modeling contest was high.

The 3 clinics, **David Dewey** on AF repairs, **Sue Rosa** on Gilbert non-train items, and **Jack Hornor** on two rail track electronics, were well attended.

The train races always attract a cheering crowd and this was no exception. The honors went to **Steve Blackburn** for diesel and **Jeff Silvera** for steam.

Honors in the modeling contest went to **Dave Butterfield** for his K-Line Big Boy conversion to S gauge steam, **Ed Stephens** for diesel with a British Railway repaint, **Jeff Silvera** for scenery with a LV Branch Line Station and **Barry Menges** in freight for a SF caboose conversion.

Sixty-seven people attended the first Flyer Fest Dinner, a western style BBQ, with the usual short program and an auction.

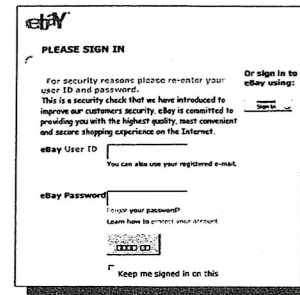
The following day, the self-guided home layout tours were well attended. **Barry and Pat Menges** presented their layout and extensive train collection. **Jack Hornor** opened his O gauge layout as shown in CTT. The last stop was that of **Don and Sue Rosa**. In addition to Gilbert appliances, toys, Erector sets, and trains, fresh strawberry milkshakes made with an A.C. Gilbert commercial malt mixer were the treat of the day.

Thanks to all who participated and supported our efforts.

Internet Criminals!

Use of the Internet has become second nature to many toy train enthusiasts. However, things are not always as they appear.

Enterprising scammers have been sending "spooF" e-mail messages to eBay and PayPal users, as well as others. These messages are very convincing, and mimic the host site



by inserting its logo and including links to actual host site web pages. The e-mails pretend to be from the subscribed service, and ask you to re-enter your personal information (such

as password, credit card number, bank account, etc.) Often, a threat is expressed that failure to do so will result in termination of your service.

DON'T DO IT!

Entering the requested information will place your information in the hands of identity thieves. Most of these are operating from foreign countries, and if they manage to obtain your information you will have little recourse.

If you receive this type of e-mail, report it immediately to the host site. eBay, for example, has a procedure on their "safe harbor" page for reporting such scams.

- JA

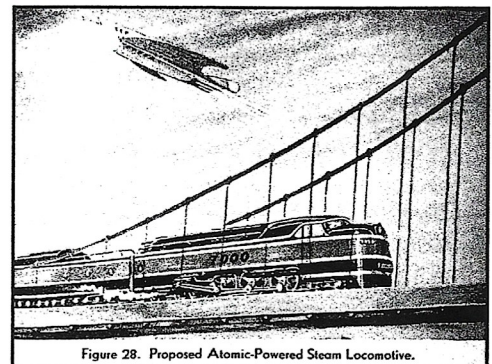


Figure 28. Proposed Atomic-Powered Steam Locomotive.



GATS reorganizes, cuts some shows

GATS Limited, operators of the familiar Great American Train Shows, announced corporate restructuring and cancellation of previously scheduled shows at Phoenix AZ, Greenville SC, Hartford CN, and Des Moines IA. Increased table rates were also announced. Their press release is below; complete information is available at www.gats.com.

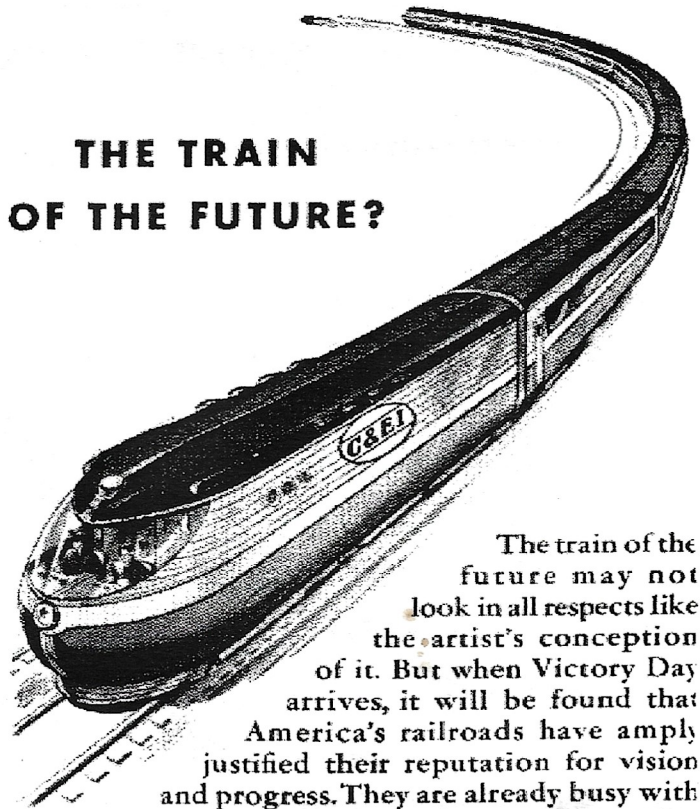
Text of the GATS press release:

The Great American Train Show (GATS Limited) has sold Greenberg Shows to CIA Inc. CIA inc. is the sponsor of the Great Midwest Train Show and has extensive experience in the Train Show Business. The terms of the sale were not disclosed but the proceeds of this sale will be used to restructure debt and provide funding to enhance the Great American Train Shows. GATS Limited is terminating their Great American Computer Show business which was sponsored in conjunction with the Great American Train Shows, as it was a significant drain to the company's cash flow.

Additional cost cutting moves include cancellation of four unprofitable Great American Train Shows, which represent approximately 7% of the remaining 2003 train shows. The company is closing their office in Chicago and reducing their number of employees by 25%. GATS Limited will also be taking both future pricing and purchasing actions to insure its longevity.

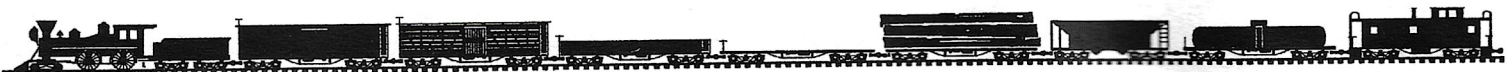
When asked about the actions Moe Geoghegan, GATS President said the following: "We are refocusing our efforts solely on the Great American Train Shows. Business conditions dictate that our limited resources be dedicated to our core business, which is why we have eliminated computer shows. While the recent acquisition of Greenberg Shows had significant benefits, the sale to CIA Inc. will retain almost all of the benefits without the management distraction of absorbing a new business operation. Our sale contract to CIA Inc. insures that Greenberg and GATS shows will not conflict on dates. We are aligning our show operations and overhead costs to the realities of the marketplace. While some of these actions have been very difficult to take, we are confident that they will significantly improve Great American Train Show for both attendees and exhibitors in the coming years."

THE TRAIN OF THE FUTURE?



The train of the future may not look in all respects like the artist's conception of it. But when Victory Day arrives, it will be found that America's railroads have amply justified their reputation for vision and progress. They are already busy with plans that will provide finer transportation than the public has even dreamed possible. Railfans will find C&EI right up among the leaders.

**Chicago & Eastern
Illinois Railroad**



Down the track

June 7: SVD Meet - Sierra II Center

June 24-29: TCA National Convention, Ontario CA

July 5: SVD Meet - Sierra II Center

July 12-13: GATS, Reno NV

July 19-20: GATS, San Mateo

August 2: SVD Meet - Sierra II Center

August 16-17: GATS Santa Rosa

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

September 6: SVD Meet - Sierra II Center

October 4: River City Meet - Scottish Rite Center, Sacramento

November 7-9: Fall Cal-Stewart Meet, Pasadena CA



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