

THE SIDE TRACK

FALL

NEWS

from the Toy Train Operating Society
Sacramento Valley Division

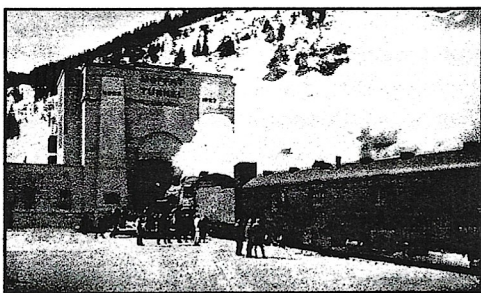
2003

President's Message

by Jeff Silvera

Hello everyone! The Denver convention hosted by TTOS National has come and gone, and it was a good one! We had productive business meetings and membership meetings. The trading was good, but I would have liked to see more sellers. Still, I saw things for sale that I don't see in our area. There were about one hundred and fifty registered members, wives and family, a good turnout considering there is not a local division in the Colorado area.

My son Sean and I climbed aboard The Amtrak "California Zephyr" for our first real train ride. It was a nice trip through the Sierra Nevada Mountains to Reno, then across Nevada into Utah. We tried to sleep during the nighttime part of the trip but the clickety-click of the rails made sleeping in our seats almost impossible. Then through Salt Lake City and into Colorado, where we had an hour and a half stopover in Grand Junction while they worked on the tracks ahead of us. Then it was forward to the Rocky Mountains! We had to pull over onto a siding so that a freight train could get down the mountain ahead of us. After another half hour we were on our way up the mountain and through Moffat tunnel, a six mile hole through the mountains. Then to Denver, a pretty sight in the twilight. We also took in a Rockies game at Coors Field, which is right next to the rail yard!



Looking ahead, our club will have its layout setup at the Harvest Fair in Placerville, and we also have the October 4th River City meet at the Scottish Rite Center. We always need volunteers to come out and help set up, tear down, and operate trains.

Let's all start making plans for the 2004 TTOS Convention in Fresno, just down the tracks from us!

River City Toy Train Meet

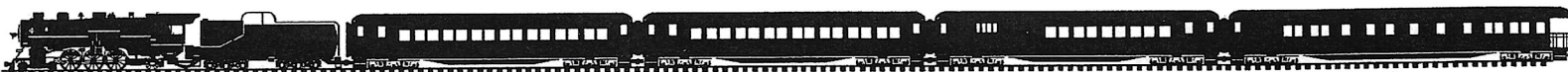
by Stan Batynski

Don't forget our annual open-to-the-public meet on Saturday, October 4 at the Scottish Rite Center, 6151 "H" Street, Sacramento. The meet hours are 10AM to 3PM. This is our yearly fund-raiser public meet; therefore the admission is \$5.00 for single admission and \$9.00 for families for both members and non-members. There will not be a meet at the Sierra 2 Center on October 4 since we will be at the Scottish Rite Center.



If you are interested in registering for vendor tables or displaying a layout, please contact SVD President and Meet Chairman **Jeff Silvera** at (916) 481-4694 or Table Registration Chairman **Carl Locher** at (530) 626-0421.

Volunteers needed: As usual, we need members to help with the club layout, security, front-desk staff, assist loading / unloading, and clean up. Please contact **Jeff Silvera** if you can help.



Show and Tell

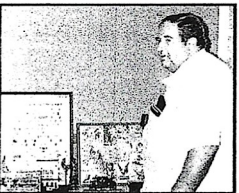
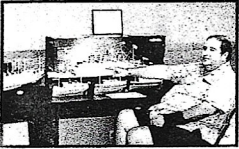
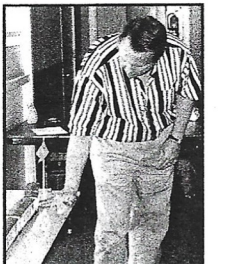
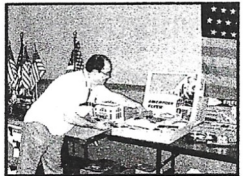
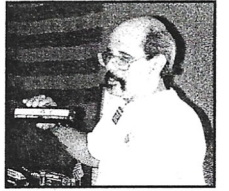
By Richard Zanotti

In June we were graced by a visit of the Marklin liner, "Viktoria". The Viktoria is an exact reproduction of a meter-long toy ship that was made by Marklin between 1919 to 1930. When it arrived it was welcomed by **Jean Hathaway's** Hudson River ferry, "Lake Charles", and **Pete White's** fleet of Schuco liners and postal steamers. **Chuck Stone** was there with his prewar Lionel runabout. Pete also brought a very rare prewar Marx wheeled tractor, complete with attachments. **Paul Wells** shared a box of trains that he paid \$50 for. He discovered that its contents were worth much more.

To celebrate our nation's birthday in July, we had a patriotic Show & Tell. **Clarence Hanks** brought in a collection of American flags and banners and models of military vehicles [He also collects the full sized ones]. **Mike McKinney** brought in a forty-six star flag from the Spanish-American War. **Stan Salzman** brought in some military toys made from surplus WWII military parts. **Clyde Easterly** brought in a rare Lionel prewar Army Train. **Chuck Brasher** compared the prewar flagpoles of Ives, American Flyer, and Lionel. **Jeff Silvera** showed his patriotically painted box car. **Jerry Azzaro** displayed three American Flyer bullet locomotives and tenders - red, white (chrome) and blue. **Jack Hornor** brought in a group of postwar cars colored red, white, and blue. **Mark Boyd** demonstrated a postwar military train. **Larry Harding** proved that he could be more frugal than I in buying a cheap train. **Jean Hathaway** presented some patriotic postcards and layout buildings. Pete White shared some of his antique military toys. **Chuck Stone** had some toy soldiers set up in front of an original Lionel 116 Station. **Don Rosa** presented a pristine boxed American Flyer train set, a Gilbert Erector Rocket Launching Set, and a poster advertising a Gilbert military toy from WWI. **Dave Thomsen** brought in and operated his patriotic passenger train layout. This was a record breaking Show & Tell. We had the greatest number of people participating.

The theme at our August meeting was circus related. **Rick Wilson** made a presentation of many Fisher Price circus toys. He also had cars from the postwar American Flyer circus set. He even had suggestions on adding things that were never a part of this set, but could have been [The theme of September's Show & Tell]. Rick at one time worked as a clown. **Chuck Stone** brought in his extremely rare Ives wide gauge circus train [Only six sets are known to exist.]. **Jerry Azzaro** shared some circus books including one on Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey. **Jean Hathaway** presented some circus train cars and trucks and figures from the Crippendon Circus. **Bill Wilson** set up his LGB G gauge Wilson Brothers Circus Set [Any relationship?]. **Don Rosa** ran and demonstrated a very scarce modified S gauge American Flyer circus set that wasn't originally a circus set. Don had to wait years to get this set. The person who makes them only does a few a year. **Mark Boyd** displayed some postwar Lionel circus cars. **Jack Hornor** presented a K-Line Hudson fully detailed steam configuration locomotive. It looked beautiful and might mean that K-Line is going to take steam configuration locomotives seriously.

Show & Tell is getting more exciting. Please share your ideas and suggestions, and most of all, bring in your trains. For September it will be things that have been modified. An example of this is Jim Groth's American Flyer wide gauge crane car, a car that was never made.



Generation Gap

by Jack Ahearn

The rocking motion of the St. Hyacinth Pullman-type car was in sync with the wheel clacking sound effects as I made my way down the narrow isle. I had just been relieved by another docent at the California State Railroad Museum and was walking directly behind an elderly woman and her granddaughter, both of whom, I had just enlightened on the many features of the car. Suddenly, the woman spied a feature I hadn't mentioned. She called out to her faster walking twelve-fourteen year old charge. "Mary, Mary come back here". Motioning into the private compartment, she exclaimed, "Remember you were asking about typewriters, well"...(pointing to the top of the desk... [archaic: surface of a unit of office furniture] she exclaimed)... "do you see that machine, that's what they looked like!"

I experienced one of those generational 'kick in the gut' moments which seem to have been increasing lately. I looked (glared) at the woman, smiled and jovially advised her that I was 'gonna punch her in da nose' when we got out of the car. She tried to escape her just rewards by saying she knew the feeling of rapidly becoming a dinosaur.

Outside the car she explained her daughters curiosity. "When we were over in the Mail Car'....pointing to the R.P.O....'Mary was looking at the mailed letters and asked how they typed addresses directly onto the envelopes...without using a software program'.... she continued....' I told her they typed them on." "How'....came the innocent reply....'did they do that?" "They used typewriters." The youngster's blank look negated her next obvious question.

I later reflected on the incident. From it, I deducted, the difference between 'top of a desk' and 'desk-top'.....about twenty-five years!

Denver 2003 Convention Report

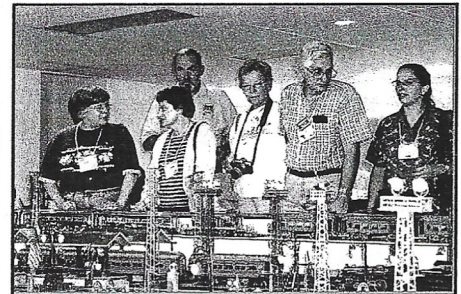
by Stan Batynski

The Denver convention was short, sweet, and a lot of fun! Occasional thunderstorms made for a refreshing change of weather. SVD members attending were **Jeff Silvera** and son **Sean**, **Lynn Cochran**, **Karl Schmidt**, **Don Rosa**, and **Stan Batynski**.

We had several tours conducted over two days; each tour was sold out well in advance of the convention. They were to the Georgetown Loop RR / Lebanon Mine, Coors Brewery / Colorado RR Museum, a Dinner Theater play, and a layout tour to four layouts and the Mizell Trains hobby shop.

The highlight of the layout tour was **Terry Johnson's** mini-Carail style building featuring a scale O-gauge layout and a huge Standard Gauge layout. **Terry** also collects vintage automobiles and displays them at his layout building. He owns President Dwight Eisenhower's beautiful 1941 Cadillac, which Ike drove when visiting Denver.

Mamie Eisenhower was originally from Denver and they visited Denver often while he was president. The Cadillac only has 25,000 original miles.



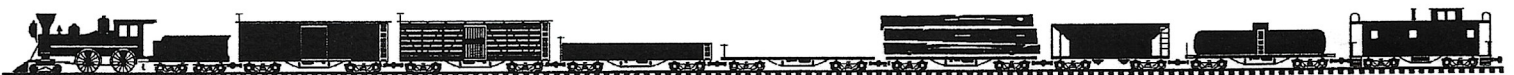
TTOS Members enjoy Terry Johnson's Standard Gauge layout in Denver

The number of trading hall vendors was smaller than usual at some 110 tables. However, there were seven layouts and some manufacturers displays, several being quite large. One layout was a garden layout on the floor approximately 35'x60'. The Youth in Model Railroading Club, a youth group having over 50 members based in the Denver area, sponsored a very nice O-gauge layout. The club is for youngsters age 8 and older.

Manufacturers attending included K-line, MTH and Lionel. The Denver convention attendees included a large Lionel delegation to include Lionel President / CEO **Bill Bracy**, VP of Marketing **John Brady**, Lionel Researcher **Todd Wagner**, and Western Regional Sales Manager **J. Keeley**. Classic Toy Trains Magazine Editor **Neil Besougloff** also attended the convention.

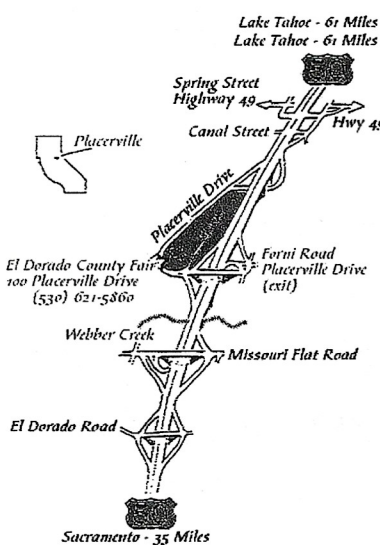
The silent auction at the Friday night Welcoming Party and the live auction at the Saturday evening banquet had some lively bidding. Approximately 150 folks attended the banquet party. **Peter Atonna** of The Grand Canyon Division served as auctioneer.

All in all, it was an enjoyable convention; TTOS members renewed old friendships and made new friendships.



El Dorado Harvest Fair at Placerville

The Harvest Fair is a chance for local farmers to showcase what they've worked all year to produce including the county's award winning wines. It's a chance for the public to step into the past - to a time when life was as simple as winning a blue ribbon for a jar of homemade preserves or seeing who can saw through a giant log in the least amount of time. Grandparents will have a chance to show their grandkids how to have fun the old fashioned way, with events like the Grape Stomp, animal demonstrations, hayrides and a hay maze.



This year we will have operating layouts only...SVD, other clubs, John Leins, Dave Thomsen - and the Sac Valley Live Steamers will also have a static display. Anyone wanting to participate with the layout may contact Norm LaClair or Tom MacConnell. The fair is on Sept. 13th and 14th. at the Fairgrounds in Placerville (Placerville Drive Exit). Saturday: 10AM - 7PM, Sunday: 10AM - 6 PM .

It is a lot of fun...lots of things to do and see...in addition to the trains. We will also have a contact booth for club info, etc.

Contact Tom MacConnell (macconnell@directcon.net)

General Admission: \$5

Kids 6 and under: free

Seniors: \$4

Family pass \$20

Bonham's/Butterfield Auction in S.F.

The next auction will take place on September 21 (Sunday) at Butterfields in San Francisco at 220 San Bruno Avenue (415) 861-7500. Prior to the auction there will be a two day preview for trains and toys. The auction will feature over 250 lots of toys and trains. Some of the toys feature early cast-iron, tootietoys and space and other interesting turn of the century items.

The trains feature an enormous grouping of pre and post war Lionel and Flyer, Standard Gauge Trains. Many lots of Garden railroading by Marklin, McCoy and MTH. Also featuring McCoy, various HO manufacturers, Z and N gauge as well as a large collection of Classic Lionel trains in original condition.

e-mail contact: jfriedman@rcn.com

B & O Museum Disaster



In association with the Smithsonian Institution

The Presidents Day snowstorm of February 16-17, 2003 caused the collapse of half the roof of the 120-year-old roundhouse at the B&O Museum in Baltimore. The collapse happened in the middle of the night, so nobody was injured. However, a major portion of the museum's collection on display in the roundhouse was damaged or destroyed. The blockbuster event "The Fair of the Iron Horse 175" celebrating 175 years of railroading which had been in the works for 2½ years had to be cancelled.

The B&O Museum is one of the finest in the country. Always a pleasure to visit, it gave those of us who grew up on the west coast the opportunity to see a camel-back, a GG-1, and other "exotic" machinery. The exhibits traced American railroading from its birth in Baltimore to the modern era.

Information on making tax-deductible donations to the roundhouse restoration fund can be found at www.borail.org/support/. A word of caution: if you donate on-line by credit card, be sure to double-check the amount you wish to contribute. Amounts from \$10 to \$1,000 can be selected, but once you hit the "submit" button your donation is on its way.

-ja



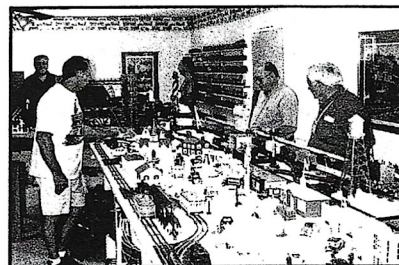
Layout Tours

by Jack Hornor

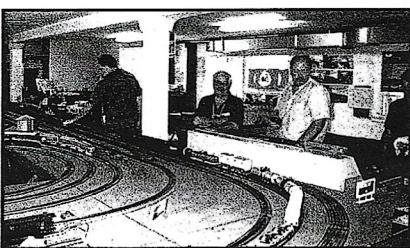
Phil and Emma Fravesi were our hosts on the June layout tour. And what a treat it was. First, Phil is far enough along in construction that you can see an exceptional layout is taking shape. Plus, Emma and Phil, demonstrating their usual hospitality, provided a great lunch. Trains and food - how happy could this group get?



Phil can run five trains at once, now, on his 18 x 34, three-level layout. His trains are mostly post war and he maintains a toy-like atmosphere with the collection displayed and operated as the catalog pictured the trains. There is a harbor with three lift bridges, a Plasticville town, freight classification yard and a passenger station complex with nine through tracks. The lower level has three main lines and the second level, one. The third level has one main line which will be a logging operation. Phil is now beginning to work on mountains and scenery, and has invited us back next year to watch the progress. Thank you so much, Phil and Emma.



On August 2, we traveled to Woodland to visit the St. John's Church Underground Railroad Club. We were hosted by **Frank Smith, Pete Martin, and Dan Stroski**, who, along with several SVD members, have been building a large layout in a church basement. The layout measures 20 x 34 feet, and features multiple gauges, multiple levels, approximately three percent grades, and five loops of track. The track is primarily Gargraves with one loop of MTH pre-ballasted track. The outside loop is the Gargraves multi-gauge track, which is wired to operate standard, G, O, and S gauges. HO and S gauges operate on a separate small layout in a corner of the room. One of the interesting features of the



main layout is a helix that allows the trains to climb to the higher levels where they cross some great high bridges. The engines, rolling stock, and controls are MTH, with the addition of a few postwar Lionel and K-line items. There are many MTH accessories, such as the fire house, car wash, gas station, and drive-in. The operating accessories have been placed close to the front edge, and will be operated by push-button so that they can be started and stopped by visitors of all sizes. Two MTH 400-watt transformers and the new MTH digital wireless remote control system supply the power. Trains can be operated in conventional, remote conventional, TMCC or the new DCS digital system modes.

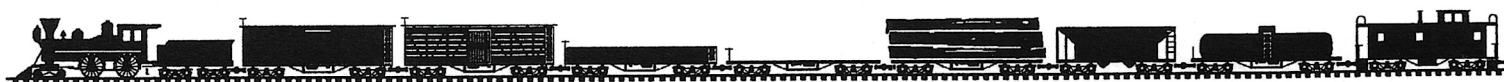
Again, this layout is under construction and the hosts invited us back for another visit after the scenery has been added. I'm sure we will take them up on that. Thanks so much to **Frank, Pete, and Dan** for hosting a great tour.

UPCOMING

The turnout for the last two tours has been very good, and I know you will be interested to see what's coming up. September takes us back to Woodland to see **Dave Thomsen's** home layout. We're all familiar with his clever ideas and outstanding craftsmanship on his portable layouts, and we're looking forward to seeing more of his work. We skip October for the River City Meet, of course, and resume in November with a return visit to **Lee Deter's**. Lee has converted a spare bedroom into his train room, and those of you who are contemplating doing that will find plenty of inspiration and construction tips. Lee lives in the Pocket Area of Sacramento, not far from the Sierra Center.

After the holidays, our first adventure in 2004 will be a bit different. In February, instead of visiting a layout, **Bruce Stiny**, Toy Trains and Scale Models Curator at the California Railroad Museum, has offered to present a slide show of some of the outstanding items in the Thomas Sefton Collection. As you probably know, **Jack Ahearn**, who is a museum docent, has been very much involved in cataloging the collection, and he'll be helping with this event. The location will be announced later.

If you would like to host a visit, please let me know. Big layout or little layout — someone is bound to have a problem similar to one you have encountered or have a new idea to help you along.



Beyond eBay, Again

by George Ann Hornor

Now that you've mastered the art of disposing of your income on e-Bay, you might want to take a look at what other train hobbyists are talking about and perhaps take part in group discussions. In the early days of the Internet, groups of people with a common interest communicated by posting messages on electronic bulletin boards

where others could read and reply to them. These electronic boards have evolved into discussion forums that include the Yahoo Group mailing lists, Usenet newsgroups and corporate discussion groups. These types of forums are all similar, but are accessed differently.

We'll start with Yahoo Groups, because they are the home of the Toy Train Mailing List (TTML), sponsored by TCA, but open to all. You can either join this list from TCA's home page at <http://www.traincollectors.org/> or through Yahoo. You may be interested in joining other mailing lists, so here are the instructions for joining through Yahoo. First, go to the home page at <http://groups.yahoo.com/>.



Then locate a group to join. On the home page of Yahoo! Groups, you can browse the Groups directory or search for a group by topic. In this case, I know the name of the TTML group, so we'll skip searching for it, and enter **toytrains** (no space) next to the search button. Now you should see the toytrains listing. Click on the **toytrains** link and you will be taken to the TCA page. At this point, I suggest you click on the **Help** link way up at the top and far right of the page. Here, you'll learn how to join groups and read and post messages and pictures.

As you join, you will be asked to set your membership preferences, including choosing how you receive the group messages. You can receive the messages in one of three ways:

1. Receive each and every post as a separate e-mail message. Advantage: you get each message immediately as soon as it is approved and you can post a comment in this thread by using "reply". Disadvantage: your mailbox can get full in a hurry, it's not unusual for this group to post 50 messages in a day.
2. Receive digests, generally 25 posts in a single e-mail message. Advantage: fewer files in your mailbox. Disadvantage: some messages don't arrive until the day after they were posted.
3. Browse the TTML web site and read messages at any time. Advantages: no e-mail in your mailbox; access to archives, files, and photographs that are unavailable via email. Disadvantage: requires more bandwidth than text-only e-mail; access is slow via dial-up modem, a lot more ads.

My preference is "individual e-mails", but to keep my main e-mail box from being any more cluttered than it is, I use an extra mailbox devoted to group messages (gaspr@softcom.net). Then when I'm ready, I download the messages from the server and zip through them using the delete key if I'm not interested in the subject or "reply" if I think the group needs my input. (I'm usually wrong about that, and these posts stick around forever.) When I know I'll be busy or gone for a few days, I switch back to the "no e-mail" option, in the **My Groups** page.

I also belong to other groups that you might find interesting: Historic Sierra Railway, Nevada Short Lines, Sacramento Northern, Marx trains, NorCal railroading, and I Love Cats. (That last one may not be for everyone.) Incidentally, I have not received a single spam message on the mailbox I set up two years ago for group use.

GOOGLE NEWSGROUPS (USENET)

You owe it to yourself to take a look at Google Groups, and it's really easy. You probably are already familiar with the Google home page (www.google.com). To access the newsgroups, click on the **Groups** tab. The **Groups Help** link will help you learn to navigate effectively. I suggest you begin with the **Basics of Usenet** page. These posts are not downloaded to your computer unless you save them as files.

OTHER FORUMS

Other good places to exchange ideas are on corporate forums. Jack's favorites are Atlas O (<http://forum.atlasrr.com/>) and Train America Studios. (Train America's URL is so complicated, I suggest you go to Google and search for Train America Discussion Board. Then bookmark it!) Forums are also operated by O-Gauge Railroading at <http://www.ogaugerr.com/forum.htm> and Kalmbach at <http://www.trains.com/community/forum/>.



Club Layout News

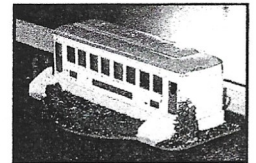
Norman LaClair, layout chair

On Saturday, May 24th, the layout was once again on display at the Spring T.C.A. Meet at the Scottish Rite Temple in Sacramento. The meet was well attended by the public and the layout received a lot of attention. Again this year **Karl Schmidt** brought in a nice Standard set for us to run. This time it was a Dorfan 3-car passenger set in a "peach" color. **John DeHaan** brought in a collection of his trains including an original 392 with three two-tone green passenger cars, the big ones. (He has two extra cars in the same color he wants to sell.) We ran a 5-car set of matching cars for a while -- really a pulling chore for the 392, but it functioned very well. John also brought in his Ives Greyhound Special O gauge set from 1927-28. The set is in excellent condition and runs very well. His Baby Blue Comet set also ran well. It ran for 1 1/2 hours trouble free as all of the pre war Lionel trains do. **Tom MacConnell** ran his brightly colored Billboard reefer boxcars. **Jeff Silvera** ran a very nice post war American Flyer set. **Norman LaClair** ran the twin Alco U.P. Diesel locomotive he got as a child together with some reproduction matching passenger cars. These locomotives were made in 1949-50 and after a bit of TLC and oil, this one ran almost four hours nonstop. Lionel sure made some good train locomotives that we still enjoy 50+ years later. **Dave Thomsen** brought his newly built American Flyer layout. As usual, it is a nice piece of modeling craft. **John Leins** also brought in his O-27 layout, which was nicely decorated. **Tom Gibson** and his family brought in a well-done O-27 layout. A lot of pre war trains were available for purchase from various vendors.

The set-up crew included **Jim Groth, Kevin Anderson, Jeff Silvera, Tom MacConnell, Norman LaClair, and Paul Wells** with his injured shoulder.

Club Layout

Andy DeSmet is making two new carrying boxes for the layout's two 275 watt Model ZW transformers. **Carl Locher** gave the club a very good price on these. These boxes will provide safe transportation for the transformers plus allow us to hang them on the edge of the layout table when in use. **Clarence Hanks** made a base for Norman's Lionel pre war #442 illuminated diner for use with the layout. He made it from acoustical ceiling tile, hardboard, loofa sponge and Lionel grass and it looks just like the one on the original 1940s diner. Stop by the layout and see this marvelous addition to our operating accessories. **Jules Loventhal** has donated a T.C.A. Convention tank car to the layout to add to our S gauge rolling stock.



John DeHaan located a Western Coil and Electric Zephyr set on a trip to Southern California. It was made about 1934-1936. Train hobbyists know this company for their manufacture of the "Tru-Trak" system. The Zephyr was the only train produced by this company, was made for only two or three years, and only 200-300 sets were made. It has an unusually smooth and polished aluminum finish that was acquired through the use of very fine sand in the casting process. Perhaps among the reasons for its low production numbers are its original cost -- \$34 compared to the \$12-\$15 cost for a Lionel at the time, that it was a forward-only running train, and it did not come with track and transformer. There is a good article in the February 1998 issue of Classic Toy Trains that compares the Zephyr and Yankee Flyer trains (which were virtually identical) made by Western Coil and Electric, American Flyer and Lionel in the early 1930s. This is a beautiful set. Maybe we can talk John into bringing it to run on the layout again soon.

St. John's Underground Railroad Club

This club was started in the late 1990s by two S.V.D. members, **Dave Thomsen** and **Pete Martin**, who set up an 8 X 16 foot layout in the basement of St. John's United Church of Christ in Woodland. After a few years, they were joined by **Norman LaClair, Ted Adams, John Leins** and **John McLeod**. Work began in April 2001 to expand the layout to 24 X 36 feet. **Frank Smith** and **Dan Strawski** were later added to the core group. Frank lent his expertise in helping to design the track layout before his move to southern California. After a considerable amount of team effort and expense, the club had five working loops of track by the end of 2001 and were able to get together twice a week to run trains. As word spread about this new train club and its permanent layout, significant donations of trains, equipment and a full HO layout were made by friends of the church and by a hobby shop in Fairfield.

When Frank returned to the area last year he modified the wiring to accommodate new sound systems, and built some bridges and a helix which will become a mountain. The layout has a loop of multi-gauge track which will run O, S, Standard and G gauge trains on the same tracks. It also has four loops of O gauge-Gargraves track and a loop of MTH Rite-track with plenty of room for operating accessories. Members can operate trains built in the 19-teens at the same time and on the same layout as trains with new electronic sound systems.

This is an ongoing club project. Frank is on-site nearly every day working to make this an even better layout. The goal is to eventually have scheduled viewings of the layout open to the public. Contact Dave, Norman or Ted if you are interested in joining this exciting permanent layout operation.



Down the track

September 6: SVD Meet - Sierra II Center

September 13-14: Harvest Fair, Placerville

September 21: Butterfield Toy/Train auction, S.F. (preview 9/19-9/20)

October 4: River City Toy Train Meet - Scottish Rite Hall (no Sierra II meet)

October 17-18: TCA Eastern Div. York Meet, York PA

November 1: SVD Meet - Sierra II Center

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

November 29-30: GATS, Pleasanton

December 6: SVD Meet - Sierra II Center

December 13-14: GATS, Fresno

December 27-28: GATS - San Rafael



TTOS Sacramento Valley Division
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