

# THE SIDE TRACK

WINTER

NEWS

from the Toy Train Operating Society  
Sacramento Valley Division

2003

## President's Message

by Jeff Silvera

You know the Holiday Season is upon us when the eggnog and decorations start to appear! Also when it seems that our trains run, look and smell better than they did a month ago... Ah, yes! The smell of train smoke! Doesn't that bring back those Christmas memories for you? I know it did for some of the folks that came by our layout at the California State Railroad Museum.

On Thanksgiving Weekend we were set up at the Railroad Museum. We all had a very nice time operating our trains! I would like to thank all who came out and made the weekend work for us. Without you members this would not have been possible. You truly are the Toy Train Operators that our club is all about. We have a GATS show coming up in January at Cal Expo. I would like to see more of our membership get involved in our operating of trains with the layout at shows.

It is my hope that 2004 will be a Great year for the Club. We are planning a luncheon with a presentation to follow about the Sefton collection displayed at the Museum. We also have some great layout tours planned. The River City meet went well this year! And as always we'll look for bigger and better one this next year.

I will take this opportunity to wish You and Yours a very happy Christmas, and a very strong and positive new year, keeping on the Right Track!!!

Sincerely, Jeff S.

## Membership News and Notes

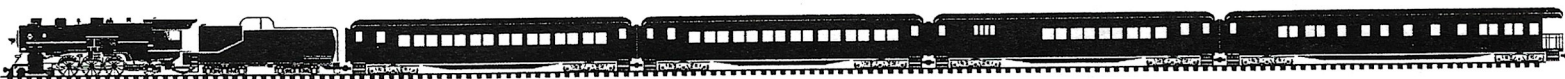
by George Ann Hornor

In the past few months, we've added several new members--**Stuart and Rebecca MacDonald** from Yuba City, **Michael McKinney** from Sacramento, **David Pfeifer** from Moraga, and **Jack Rogers** from Daly City. **Dave Dunlop** convinced the MacDonalDs to join us, while Mike, Dave, and Jack are National TTOS members and old friends to many of us. We're looking forward to seeing you at the meets.

Please join me in thanking **Barbara Rohrs** for coming forward to help with membership next year. With two of us, we'll now have a current back-up of our records.

Starting at the January meet, I'll be collecting the 2004 dues, and I'll have the new cards by then. It's \$15 for individuals and only \$20 for the whole family. I'll collect dues again at the February meet and send renewal reminders to those who haven't paid by then.

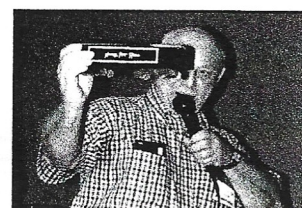
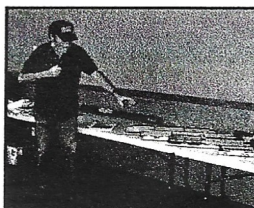
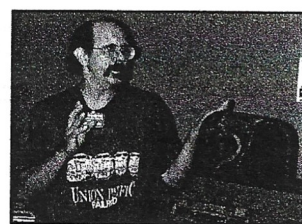
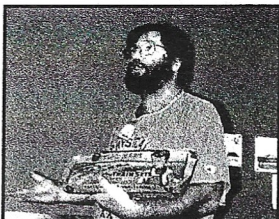
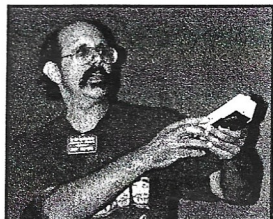
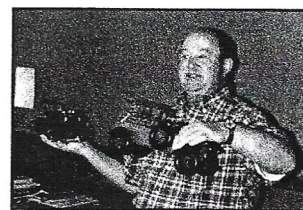
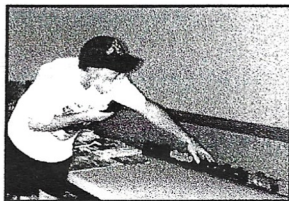
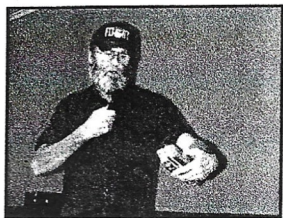
Finally, we wish **Doug and Meredith Glascock** all the best as they move to North Carolina. Meredith will probably always remember all the hours she put in at the registration desk at the 1995 Convention. Thank you both for your contributions to the club.





# Show and Tell

By Richard Zanotti



We had a lot of participation at our September meeting. The theme was variations. We had some great variations. **Ron Hill** brought many items, including an elongated Marx New York Central locomotive and tender. **Paul Wells** displayed some freight cars that he had painted in the designs of railroads that they were not originally painted. **Kevin Anderson** continued this idea with his "Covered Wagons". **Ric Wilson** displayed his TaylorMade train set and a circus piggy-back set that he had put together. **Jack Horner** presented crane car, a radioactive waste car that he had put together, and a reproduction Ives transition water tower that was painted in Southern Pacific colors. **Ted Adams** showed us couple of wrecking cars that he had made. **Chuck Brasher** presented a couple Lionel style diners put together with spare parts by Madison Hardware during World War II. **Tom MacConnell** shared an auto transport car that he had made. **Jerry Azzaro** displayed a modified



*Richard laments the turkey shortage at the November meet*

Flyer locomotive and tender. I presented a Bing booking office that had been modified to look like something from the Nazi era. Gene Hathaway shared some freight cars that had been modified into circus cars. President **Jeff Silvera** presented a nice tunnel that he recently acquired. We were able to identify it as being Bing, **John DeHaan** shared an English station that he had recently picked up in a shop in Australia. It was lithoed in the German style and colors. We were also able to identify it as being Bing. **Jim Groth** amazed everybody with the Chicago Flyer cars and accessories that Flyer should have made, but never did. **JIM MADE THEM** from Flyer parts. They included in wide gauge: a rail work truck, a searchlight car, a crane car, a working caboose, and remote controlled stationary crane. Jim regrets that he forgot to demonstrate this crane. Maybe Jim could do this at another Show & Tell. **Pete White** brought in a couple of fire trucks that he had acquired on eBay. He was led to believe that they were antiques, but they were of recent manufacture and had been made to look old. He considered them "Turkeys".



*Ron Hill with his taxi "turkey"*

The theme of our November meeting was "Turkeys". As a result the Show & Tell turned out to be a "Turkey". Only **Ron Hill** shared a reproduction that was misrepresented to him as an Arcade taxi. We can only surmise that our members are either: too smart to be stuck with any "Turkeys" or too dumb to know that they have been stuck with them. I will leave that decision up to you.

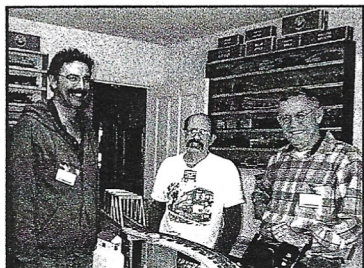
Remember, you can bring anything in. Items do not have to be theme related. After all, this is your Show & Tell.





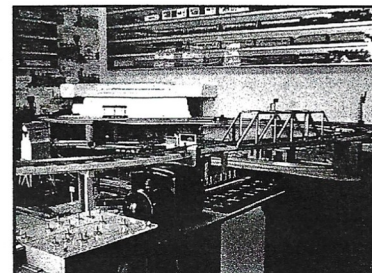
# Layout Tours

by Jack Hornor



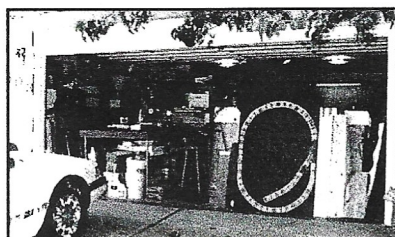
Kevin Anderson and Jeff Silvera enjoy a tour of Lee's Lionel layout

Jan and Lee Deter hosted the layout tour following the November meet. There was a great deal of interest in Lee's layout as well as in the tasty lunch that Jan provided. Lee converted a bedroom into a train room to house the 9 by 10, C-shaped, two-level O gauge layout. His trains and track are Lionel with conventional power, primarily provided with an old ZW transformer. All but two of his trains on display were Lionel, ranging from postwar to modern with loads of operating accessories. He can operate three trains at one time—one on the lower level and two on the upper. The two upper-level trains are controlled by a relay which realistically stops one train while the other catches up.



An overview of Lee's layout, distant foam scenery in progress

All areas of the layout are easily accessible from the aisles or from a single-track lift bridge at the center of the C area. The bridge alignment works well and gives a great look to the layout. Although the scenery is not yet finished, the useful design is worthy of comment. The Styrofoam-based scenery can be removed in sections for maintenance or layout changes without disturbing the rest of the layout. This scenery includes mountains and valley scenes that give the layout a high-rail look while providing great flexibility. Everyone was impressed with this good idea as well as other ideas for providing a lot of operation in a small space. Thanks, Lee and Jan.



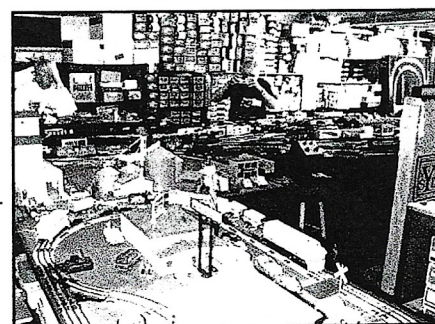
Portable layouts of various sizes are stacked in Dave's garage, ready to go.

The layout tour on Saturday, September 6, was an outstanding success. Our host, **Dave Thomsen**, of Woodland, gave us an inspiring afternoon of layout design and toy train operation as we viewed several of his layouts. Dave's garage might be described as a two-car Madison Hardware West except that his trains are from every manufacturer and they aren't for sale. (Well ... it might not hurt to make an offer.) Boxes of trains go from floor to ceiling around the walls and fill several cabinets, leaving only narrow aisles around his 6 by 20, O-gauge layout. In addition to this multi-operation, fixed layout, Dave was operating two of his seven portable layouts. The first was a postwar S-gauge American Flyer and the second, his O-27 "U-Haul" operation, where he has decorated everything on the layout in U-Haul colors and logos. Dave operates mostly conventional engines, but he is moving toward TMCC with at least one loop on his large layout operated from his Lionel CAB-1. He told me to expect more in the future.

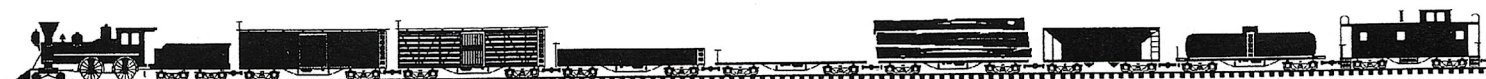
As we know, Dave is active at many train meets and shows where he operates his various portable layouts, each different from the others, but all with the innovative design which has become his trademark. The cleverly decorated trains and scenes on his layouts, whether a campground complete with RVs, a John Deere train, a military train, or the Yolo Short Line, are bound to entertain and inspire the viewer.

Dave's interests are not limited to trains, and we enjoyed seeing his model John Deere tractor collection along with models of airplanes, classic cars, racing cars and military equipment.

The Thomsens, **Dave and Marcy**, graciously offered sandwiches and sodas to those of us who made the "long" trek to Woodland. On behalf of the club, I thank you. The large turnout was an indication of how much our members appreciate Dave's work.



Dave Thomsen's layouts in a photo shoot





# October York Report

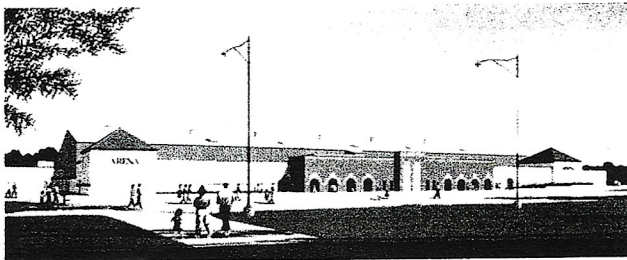


The York meet held in October was a robust one. Registration for the official meet was reported to be in excess of 16,000 - an excellent turnout. Some sources claimed registration as high as 20,000!

Trading at the "pre-meets" seems to be starting earlier in the week, with trains being traded as early as Monday. Tables in the "Sheraton" ballroom were set up by Monday afternoon, and the "Billy Bud" ballroom was in full deployment by midday Tuesday. The tent that has usually been located on the "Billy Bud" lawn was moved to the parking lot, just outside the ballroom door.

Intermittent rain on Tuesday drove most of the buyers inside as parking lot sellers closed their tables. Rain was followed by blustering wind on Wednesday. The sound of Marx tin-litho cars hitting the pavement could be heard everywhere (they seem to be the least wind-resistant). Sellers at the Billy Bud were (as usual) grumbling about the permit fee charged by the North York municipality. The number of sellers at the Best Western parking lot seemed to have increased, even though the fees there had been raised.

## MILES AND MILES OF AISLES



The new 114,000 sq. ft. Orange hall at the fairground was opened for this meet. Sellers who had previously been in the Green, Black, Purple, Yellow and Gold halls were now housed in this edifice. The building is absolutely immense, and it is hard to believe that it is merely the total of the five shuttered halls. The universal response by members entering this hall was of the jaw-to-ground variety. However, train people being what they are, the new hall was quickly adopted as members plotted the routes through the maze of aisles. -ja

# The Super Suds Express

By Jack Ahearn

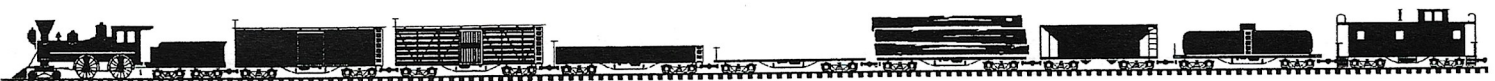
Every so often, Docents of the California State railroad Museum are treated to a little break from their 'in car' interpretive talks to museum visitors.

These lapses come in the form of self appointed experts who take it upon themselves to lecture their small group of friends or family. Docents usually just lean-back and allow the blowhards to tell of their personal, true life, experiences. Such tales of annually riding the Canadian National's Sleeper Car to a Miami Beach vacation or dining on Santa Fe's 'Cochiti' enroute to a Niagara Falls honeymoon are examples of such 'creative' reminiscences.

Recently, the verbosity of one such less-than-fully-informed expert raised eyebrows and elicited gasps from even the most veteran 'heard-it-all' Docents!

While working in the Mail Car, a docent sensed what was coming, leaned back and yawned himself into silence as a senseless spokesperson turned to his family members and with an authoritative tone revealed, hitherto unknown, knowledge of railroad rolling stock. Pointing to all the canvas bags lining both sides of the mail car, he intoned the following gem of previously unbeknownst wisdom . . . "You see, the old time railroads were so fancy and luxurious . . . that they even had laundry cars . . . so the passengers could have their clothes washed and pressed!"

Two senseless scenarios come to mind: The image of the most prestigious and highly paid postal clerks ironing shirts on the mail sorting tables and even more preposterous . . . a steam engine, after having it's tender fully watered, pulls slowly forward and spots the 'laundry car' under the water tank's spout so as to . . . well, what ever! And....wouldn't you just love to have a snap-shot of a couple of pairs of long-johns . . . hung out to dry on the mail bag hooking rod!





# In Memoriam: Tributes to two fallen SVD members

SVD lost two long-time and dedicated members on October 4, the same day as our River City meet.

## Barry William Garland 1935 – 2003

By Ron Hill

I was proud to call Barry Garland my friend for over 15 years. He was my mentor in all things Railroad, and spent many hours teaching me the many nuances of model and toy trains. Barry had a keen interest in everything that operated under power, and possessed a great deal of knowledge about them. His love affair with railroading dated back to his boyhood, and one of his first jobs was with the New York Central Railroad. After moving to Sacramento in the mid 1950's, he continued his railroad career with Southern Pacific for a number of years.

Following employment with Aerojet Corp. and KCRA TV, Barry accepted a position with the State Park System, and until his retirement, spent a number of years with the California State Railroad Museum in Old Sacramento, where he was very instrumental in the formation and growth of the Museum into the World Class status it enjoys today. Barry was very active in several of the local Steam and Model Railroad Clubs. He also was on the Board of Directors for the Towe Auto Museum. Barry is survived by his wife Marge, his three sons, and other family members. He will be missed by all of us who had the privilege of knowing him.

## Jules Theodore Loventhal 1944-2003

By George Ann Hornor

Remembering Jules — The other day, I walked into the gift shop at the California Railroad Museum, and there was a little train, hanging from the ceiling and chugging merrily along. And it made me remember Jules standing beside the display he took to the train shows with Lisa sitting by his side. Tonight as I sit here, I remember how proud and excited he was when his son was born. And I smile when I remember how he told me that he named him Jeremy Max Lionel Loventhal and that he was just a tad longer than a Lionel postwar Daylight.

Aside from the trains, many of us were lucky enough learn that he was a fabulous host and a fine cook. I had been unaware that he had a fine singing voice, but he had performed with several choral groups throughout the country including the Harvard Glee Club and the Roger Wagner Chorale.

Jules served two years in Malawi as a Peace Corps volunteer after graduating from San Jose State with a degree in business. He subsequently earned post-graduate degrees in African Studies at UCLA and in education at Harvard.

Jules brought pleasure to thousands of people he never met in person with his toy train layouts. They hang in hospitals and clinics, retail stores, restaurants and private homes all over the United States, including the homes of two "Make-a-Wish" children. They can be found Asia and in Europe, as well. Jules' legacy will live on as Jules' Toy Trains will continue to operate under the direction of Lisa, and Jules' good friend, John Freitas.

And in Jeremy Max Lionel's grin.





# 2003 Fall S Fest

By Don Rosa

The St. Louis AF Club hosted the 2003 Fall S Fest October 31-November 2. As usual the show was an outstanding success. With over 225 tables of American Flyer and other S gauge trains, the trading pits at the Holiday Inn Westport were jammed. Unlike our train meets in the west, the trading hall opens at 2:00 pm and closes at 10:00pm on Friday. On Saturday, it opens at 8:00am and closes at 4:00pm so the train races and incline contests can be held. During the two days, seminars, clinics, films, model and photo contests, silent auctions, and other programs were held. Manufacturers, such as Lionel, were well represented.

The featured layout display was the acclaimed large "AF Double Helix." The banquet was sold out, the guest speaker entertained us with the history and interpretation of "hobo signs" and the auction was fast paced. There were nine home layouts to visit on Sunday. Also available was the National Museum of Transportation and the WF&P Steam Railway (a 12 inch gauge mini steam) with its 2-mile round-trip excursion.

While not as large as some other S Fests I have attended, the annual Midwest activity is always exciting to look forward to and this year was no exception. By the way, the fall colors across Missouri were in full bloom.



# STUPIDITY

## on a Grand Scale

Jim Hightower's comments

### A MODEL OF CORPORATE GREED

11/10/2003

In addition to being genetically disposed to greed, do CEO's of big corporations also carry the stupid gene?

Take the case of Dick Davidson, CEO of Union Pacific railroad. It's now our nation's largest rail corporation, having swallowed up such other companies as Southern Pacific, the M-K-T, Chicago & North Western, and several others. Apparently, though, Dick is not content merely to control the big trains, for he's also making a grab for the miniature ones – as in model trains.

How stupid. Like a bear being chased by thousands of angry bees, Dick has incurred the wrath of everyone from model-train makers to the hobbyists and kids who buy the models.

What's up is that Union Pacific has suddenly demanded that model-train makers pay it a royalty on all sales of trains that bear not only its logo, but also the logos of any of the former railroads that it has absorbed. As the outraged editor of Mainline Modeler magazine put it: "The Union Pacific has interposed itself into the model railroad industry, demanding a percentage of revenues . . . without any investment whatsoever. It's simply a method of skimming a profit without providing a service. It is an outstanding example of greed."

Over the years, railroad corporations, including Union Pacific, have been delighted to be the subjects of model trains, seeing it as a form of flattery, free promotion, and goodwill. For it now to threaten and demand loot from these small modeling companies is an act of PR suicide.

Sure enough, train buffs are fighting back against what they now call "the great yellow goliath." Among other actions, they're organizing UP stockholders and buying stock themselves so they can go to next spring's shareholder meeting en masse to rail against Dick's railroad job.

Dick stupidly is buying a trainload of ill will by trying to collect this pittance in royalties. To tell Dick to wise up, call him: 402-271-5000.

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*Norman is taking some time off to recover from surgery. His reports will resume in the next Side Track. We all wish him a speedy recovery.*

## 2003 River City Toy Train Meet

by Stan Batynski

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 Meet made a profit of \$2337. Total revenues were \$3832; total expenses were \$1495, with a profit of \$2337. Single and family public admissions totaled 500 persons. The 2002 results were total revenues of \$3799, total expenses of \$1653, and a profit of \$2146.

## Lionel Offers B&O Museum Car

Submitted by Stan Batynski

Lionel, L.L.C. and the B&O Railroad Museum announced the availability of a specially designed boxcar, limited to 500 copies, to support the Museum's Roundhouse Restoration Fund. Lionel created and designed this boxcar in B&O Sentinel Service livery marked with the Museum's logo, "Roundhouse Restoration Fund" and a car number "021703" which represents the date that the Museum's historic Roundhouse roof collapsed under the weight of a record snowstorm. The boxcar is accompanied by a numbered certificate of authenticity and aerial photo of the collapsed roof. The boxcars were donated by Lionel to the Museum and are available for \$250.00 each on-line at [www.borail.org](http://www.borail.org) or by telephone 410-752-2490. The Museum is a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization and the purchase is partially tax deductible.

## February Members' Luncheon—A Catered Affair!

Our February 7, 2004 meet will be a memorable one! In addition to a catered luncheon prepared fresh in the kitchen of the Sierra II Center, we will be treated to a slide show about the Thomas Sefton toy train collection presented by Bruce Stiny of the California State Railroad Museum. The luncheon is open to SVD members and their immediate family only.

If you wish to attend the luncheon **you must make reservations** with Jeff Silvera by January 15th. This is required in order to give the caterer an accurate headcount. Members and family who arrive at the luncheon without having made reservations will be charged a fee of \$10 each at the door.

Reservations are FREE and EASY. Simply contact Jeff Silvera in person, by phone (916/481-4694) or e-mail ([afjeff\\_56@yahoo.com](mailto:afjeff_56@yahoo.com)) with your name and the names of family members attending.

*Be sure to RSVP!*





## **Down the track**

December 6-7: San Joaquin Valley TTOS 25th Annual Toy Train Meet, Turlock

December 13-14: GATS, Fresno

December 27-28: GATS – San Rafael

**January 3, 2004: SVD Meet—Sierra II Center**

January 3-4: GATS—Cal Expo, Sacramento

January 18: GGLRR Club Show, Hayward

**February 7: SVD Luncheon Meet—Sierra II Center**

**Members luncheon—no guests this meet**

**RESERVATIONS REQUIRED (details in this issue)**

**followed by slide presentation and talk by Bruce Stiny of the CSRM**

February 28-29: GATS-Cow Palace, San Francisco

February 19-21, O-Scale West, Santa Clara Convention Center

**March 6: SVD Meet—Sierra II Center**

March 14-15: Woodland Modular Club show and sale, Woodland

March 26-28 Spring Cal-Stewart meet , Santa Clara

**April 3: SVD Meet—Sierra II Center**

April 4: Placerville Show and Sale



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