



# THE SIDE TRACK

FALL NEWS from the Toy Train Operating Society  
Sacramento Valley Division 2004

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## President's Message

by Jeff Silvera

I received a letter from **Fred and Tami Jo Nix** of TTOS Cen-Cal Division thanking our Sacramento Valley division for the help and participation in the fine National Convention the folks from Cen-Cal put on in Fresno. It was really good to see the turnout we had. I don't know the exact numbers, but I saw a lot of our members in attendance. I felt that we did pretty good. As for the convention, it was a good time for all with some great tours. The tour to Yosemite and the Sugar Pine Railroad was outstanding. A great layout tour, the dinner theater "Hot Mikado" and lots of things within walking distance. My son **Sean** and I took in a Fresno Grizzlies (triple A) baseball game. What a great game! Then we found some nice treasures at the swap meet. All in all, I thought it was a great convention. Thank you **Tony, Fred, Tami Jo** and the Cen-Cal Division.

As you know the River City Meet will be on the first Saturday of October (10/2) at the Scottish Rite Hall from 10 am to 3 pm. We will not have a meeting at Sierra 2 that day. We are looking for volunteers to help out with security, front desk, the layout and with just putting the meet on. If you can help please contact me at (916) 481-4694.

As every Thanksgiving, we will be at the California State RR Museum with our layout for the big three day show. We will definitely need lots of membership participation for this event! Sign up with me or with **Norman La Clair** (916) 457-7143. It will be a good time to really get a good look at the magnificent Thomas W. Sefton Toy Train Collection Display. It's beautiful! We should feel proud and fortunate that it's in our museum here in Sacramento. I urge everyone to get downtown to view it. You will be glad you did, it's awesome!

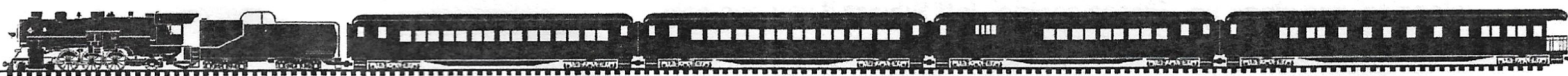
## Layout Tours

by Jack Hornor

We have had no layout tours since the last Side Track was published, but we have an exciting one coming up in November. **Paul Wells**, who was planning to host that tour, suddenly found out that he has to move, so we'll be visiting him later. **Pete and Nancy White** graciously invited us to visit their layout after the November 6 meeting. There you will see great collections of toy soldiers and Western memorabilia as well as trains. Pete has a great layout featuring both Standard and O gauges.

We'll have no tours during the busy months of December and January, but we plan to resume in February. I'll be planning the 2005 schedule soon. Several members have already volunteered or expressed interest in hosting a tour, so I'll be talking to you individually. We usually have tours from March through June and take the summer off.

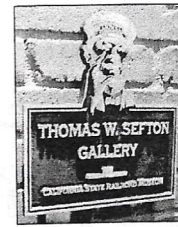
Meanwhile, let's all commiserate with Paul and Susane as they move their layout (and the rest of their belongings, of course, but first things first).



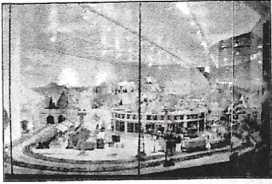
# Museum Musings

Thoughts from "Boxcar Jack" Ahearn, SVD member and CSRM docent

Photos by Marilyn Ricciardi, TTOS Golden State Division

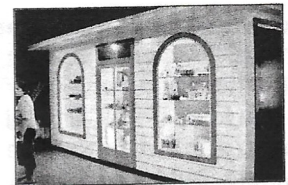


The Grand opening of the **Thomas W. Sefton collection** was, as expected, a great success! About 4,500 visitors passed through the 3300 square foot maze of exhibit cases, life sized Lionel accessories and sound activated displays. The four track, thirtyish by fifteen foot layout looked spectacular! Along with reproduced MTH standard and 'O' gauge icons running gracefully around 300 feet of track, the original accessories were overwhelmed only by the beautifully scenic tri-level layout. The folks at Exhibit Works really came through with some spectacular effects. Meanwhile a

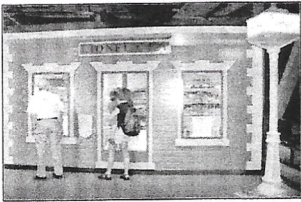


half of dozen accessories can be L.E.D. highlighted with the touch of a visitor's finger. For those who like to play engineer, all four operating trains on the layout, although on timers, can also be started with the touch of an interacting finger. And for those who could not get close enough to the twenty-eight inch low, 'tot friendly' *railroadacious* wonderland, the Standard Gauge Blue Comet offered video coverage of its trips through meadows, tunnels and bridges via a cab cam in its #400E Steam Locomotive. All that, and one could watch **Clyde Easterly** eat three ice cream cones!

A lighter observation would include **Phil Fravesi's** exhilarating and almost orgasmic reaction to one of the life sized Lionel accessories. Was it the #122 or #127 Passenger Stations? ...nooooo. Was it standing beneath a late colors, #155 Freight platform? ..noooooo.....sitting in the # 76 Bellman Shack, or passing by a full-sized # 076 warning sign? naaaaaaw. But look at his eye-popped face and hear his ear splitting glee when he looks at the eight foot tall #57 orange 'Broadway Lamp' and you can hear the buzz saws and paint brushes getting to work in his home workshop! Why, it's almost as exciting as watching Clyde eating four ice cream cones!



A very gratifying note for me were the kind comments from **Chuck Brasher**, stating "The museum did good." Equally satisfying , amongst the seven thousand pieces on display, Chuck found but seven items to offer 'critical suggestions' upon. Several of those have been kindly received by the staff and already acted upon.



It should also be pointed out that, while Clyde was eating those five ice cream cones, layout engineers and 'on-hand techies **Jack Hornor** and **Phil Fravesi** were preparing the toy train layout for the evening's V.I.P. wine and cheese 'oooh & ahhhers. Kudos to both for their *vol-untarious* and expert help in getting the trains running so nicely.

To summarize, in my opinion, this is not an exhibit you 'go to', rather one that you 'go into'. Enjoy it whenever you can, as it will be there for almost ever!

## RIVER CITY TOY TRAIN MEET

Don't forget our annual open-to-the-public meet on Saturday, October 2 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 2 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.

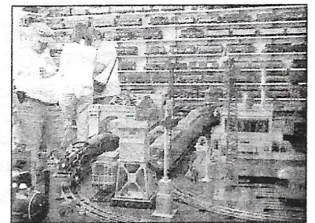
# TTOS National Annual Convention in Fresno

By George Ann Hornor - Photos by Jack and George Ann Hornor

The 2004 TTOS Convention is over, and by the reaction I've heard from those attending, it was a resounding success. It wasn't a large convention when compared to some in the past, but the friendly atmosphere left people with a good feeling about TTOS and that's what it's all about. Jack and I donned red Cen-Cal shirts to help with some of the convention details, and we really enjoyed working with **Tami Jo** and **Fred Nix**, **Tony Tesoriere**, and the entire Cen-Cal Division. Their division is small, but most of their members worked hard to ensure the convention ran smoothly.

The tours on Wednesday and Thursday were both filled to capacity and were greatly enjoyed by the participants. Cen-Cal member, **John Maranian**, was host on both tours and did a great job in keeping us all together, as well as fed and entertained. The Yosemite Tour included a tour of the Park in an open-air tram, which is a fine way to take in as much as possible in a short time. Our guide was charming, and I particularly enjoyed watching and listening to members from the Midwest and East who were visiting for the first time. We all enjoyed riding the train at the Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine narrow gauge railway, and the railfans were all excited about the Shay locomotive.

As for the layout tour—the places we visited were amazing. I had read about **Joanne and Fred Albers** and their Crooked Caboose Ranch in Porterville and even seen pictures, but you have to see it to appreciate it. John was a little worried about our bus driver finding the driveway to the ranch, but we were met by 6 or 8 red hot mamas who directed us safely to the Success Valley Railroad and all the other trains, antiques, carousel horses, and other memorabilia. Robert's Sassy Classics was a big hit with automobile buffs. Several train tables with both O and G gauge trains operated in the '50s style decor beside beautifully restored classic cars.



TTOS conventioners tour the Costas' layout



Red Hot Mamas get ready to greet the bus

The trip ended at **Alvin and Katherine Costa's** beautiful ranch style home beside a Sierra stream. Alvin and Katherine, who belonged to the SVD for a time, are champion collectors. Besides the Standard, O, and clockwork trains, they have collections of dolls, pictures, a saddle once owned by Gene Autry, and on and on. Jack's favorite room is devoted to aviation-related memorabilia. But the absolute best thing about the layout tour was the wonderful hospitality shown to everyone. They fed us well (always important to me) and made us feel completely at home.

Not enough people signed up to make the Clovis antiques and quilt tour feasible, but **Marcia Crew-Yegan** made maps available to those who were interested and then led them around to her favorite places. She went above and beyond the call of duty when she realized she had told **Katie Elgar**, from the Grand Canyon Division, where to park and then realized it was a 2-hour zone. She couldn't find Katie, so she did the next best thing. She found the cop who had marked the car and talked him out of issuing a ticket because they were guests from out of state. She was so convincing that it worked!

**Richard** writes about the dinner theater tour. We didn't make that one although up until the last minute, Jack thought that "Hot Mikado" was about a steam engine.

**John Leins** operated his layout in the exhibit hall to the delight of the Marx enthusiasts.

Finally, here's a message that David Cook, president of the Canadian Division posted on the TCA toy train mailing list:

*Hi to all, I have returned from the TTOS Convention in Fresno, CA. and I have returned a very happy camper. There were more Marx trains for sale at this convention than I have ever seen before. I actually got to see and hold in my hands one of the Nickel Plate Dump cars (the black one), just like the one that sold for \$4,500 on eBay a couple of years ago.....As far as the convention itself was concerned, I personally think that it was the best convention I have attended. Tami Jo Nix and her husband Fred Nix did a fantastic job of organizing this convention. I met lots of new people and the food was excellent. I personally brought down four dozen Moslen Canadian for the hospitality suite which were enjoyed by all....David Cook, President TTOS Canadian Division.*

More convention photos on pages 6-7 →

# Show and Tell

By Richard Zanotti

The theme of our June meeting was TRAINS AND TOY TRAINS IN ART. Tom **MacConnell** shared a piece of fabric that had a pattern of trains. **Pete Keesling** brought in a small quilt with a locomotive embroidered on it. He also had a water-color of a train going through a peaceful countryside. We were not sure whether one of **John Leins** pictures was a sketch or a print. It was a picture of a train trestle. He also had an old Currier and Ives colored print of two 0-4-0 locomotives passing. **John DeHaan** displayed a print of a 1905 painting by Earnest Monteaux showing a race car crossing the tracks in front of an oncoming train. Monteaux created the art of speed lines. John McLeod showed a charcoal sketch of a train by Charles Mathios. **Jack Ahearn** shared copies of two paintings. One was a picture of an early transcontinental freight train. He thought that the picture over-glamorized the subject because two stagecoaches were being carried on a flatcar. I told him that I had seen a copy of that painting in the history room of the main office of the Wells Fargo Bank in San Francisco thirty-five years ago. He also had a copy of a Nevada Shortline train. I shared many items including: a copy of the program for Southern Pacific Day at the Panama Pacific Exposition in 1915, wartime and postwar advertisements, the "toy train collecting" postage stamp, a display of some of Ward Kimball's art works, a Southern Pacific GOLDEN PASS KEY, a thirty-two year old photograph of **Clyde Easterly**, and a sketch from the 2004 Orchard Supply Hardware calendar of the "Oakland Mole" (A picture that I remembered firsthand because I was there at the time).

The theme of our July Show & Tell was, RECENT FINDS: SCOTTISH RITE, TCA CONVENTION, EBAY, AND FLEA MARKETS. Tom **MacConnell** brought in a "Coffee Can Train" train from the 1930's. It was part of a sales campaign by Tasty Food Products. Each can came with the necessary parts to convert the can into either a locomotive or train car. He also had an original sign that advertised this promotion.

**Clarence Hanks** had a set of green 0 gauge passenger cars made by Williams. They were very similar to those made by Lionel, the only difference being the lettering. These cars were pulled by a pair of Alco 2023 locomotives that he purchased in pieces. Clarence also displayed a standard gauge Mickey Mouse train made by Pride Lines. The lithoed cars were very similar to cars of the 1935 Lionel Mickey Mouse Circus Train. Pride only made a few of these trains, as they could not secure the copyright from the Disney Corporation. Clarence found the train at Carter's Toy Shop in Gettysburg, PA. It was only after he and his wife had left Gettysburg and were heading to Lancaster that they decided to purchase this train. They completed the transaction over a cell phone. The train had been delivered to his home a day or two before our meet.

**Bill Wilson** shared an Ets 0 gauge model of a Garret locomotive. These locomotives were very popular in Europe and Africa. They operated like our Mallets, basically two steam engines under one boiler. The only difference being that each set of cylinders and drive wheels opposed each other rather than being in line.

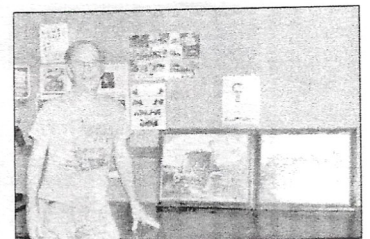
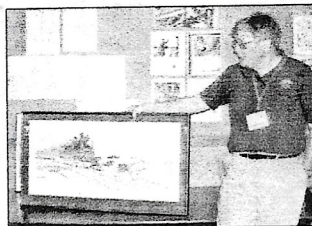
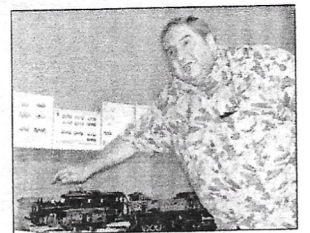
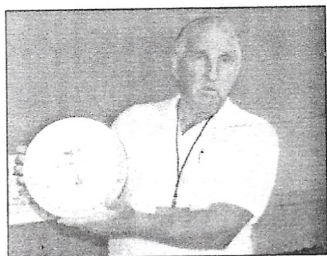
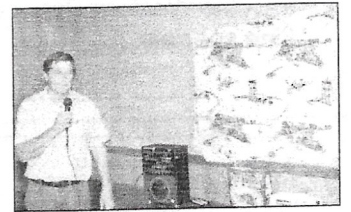
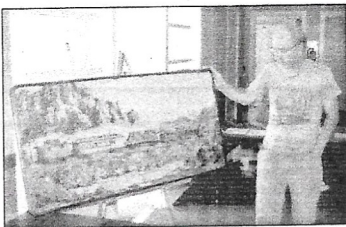
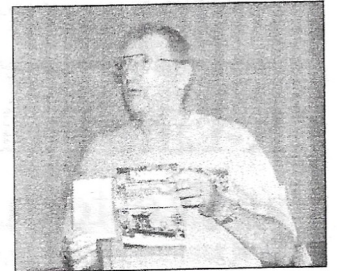
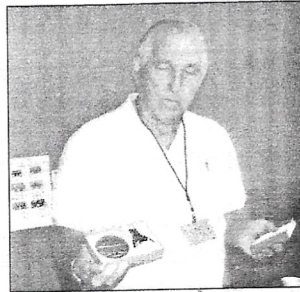
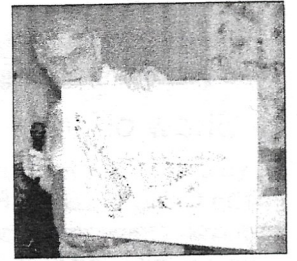
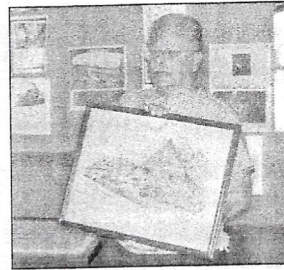
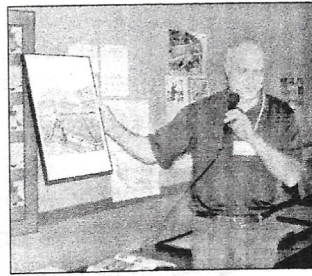
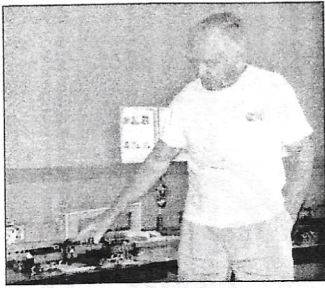
**Chuck Stone** sang the praises of the 50th annual TCA convention in Pittsburgh. He showed us a special convention plate, medal, and a huge 0 gauge hopper car. He also displayed a hundredth anniversary Lionel medallion that he had won. He showed a Lou Redmond pin, made in Lou's likeness, wearing his famous train suit. Chuck told us about the Ives transition bell signal that he found in pristine condition.

**Dave Dunlap** also went to the Pittsburgh convention. He told us about the silent auction where they raised \$60,000. A very interesting 1 gauge 3240 Ives locomotive was shared by **Clyde Easterly**. It was made between 1909 and 1912. This locomotive had a 15 volt motor and a transformer that stepped it down to 1 1/2 volts to operate the headlight. It seems that at that time they had no mini-bulbs that could take greater voltage. Clyde said that this locomotive is a good runner.

I presented a 1 gauge steam locomotive that I picked up on eBay. I think it was made by Schonner. I also had an early Marklin crossing, a small Marklin station, two Bing bell houses, and a Marklin 1 gauge baggage car. I also had a 1 gauge Karl Bub passenger train from the mid 1920's. It had a very rare electric American configuration (having a cow catcher and a bell) and three cars. The only problem was that the cars had no roofs. I also displayed a Karl Bub car from 1930. It was obvious that in those few years Bub had "thinned their product". The car was smaller and had less details, like opening doors, than the earlier cars.

We did not have an august meeting due to the TTOS Convention in Fresno. It was a great convention. We had a great tour of Yosemite, climaxed by a delicious dinner, a ride on the Sugar Pine Railway, and songs around a campfire. The layout tours were fantastic (I will be discussing with you some of the great things that I spotted in these collections). The dinner show, HOT MIKADO, was spicy and as good as any production that you could find in either Sacramento or San Francisco. The people in Fresno went out of their way to provide us with a great time. I would like to thank everybody involved, especially **Tami Jo** and **Ted Nix**.

# Show and Tell Gallery



# RUN WITH THE BIG DOGS

Show off your layout at the California State Railroad Mu-

The California State Railroad Museum will be holding its seventh annual Thanksgiving 'Trains on Parade' show during that weekend. This year **Jack Ahearn** will be coordinating with **Pete Scott** to recruit folks to bring a layout or diorama. The Museum will have a lot of additional first floor space to fill this year. So, if you have a portable tin-plate or scale layout, and would like to have your talents on display, along with the other two biggies, The Thomas W. Sefton and the T.T.O.S. Sacramento Sierra Div. layouts, please contact Jack Ahearn at (916) 929 4455 or E-mail him at [boxcar-jack@comcast.net](mailto:boxcar-jack@comcast.net)

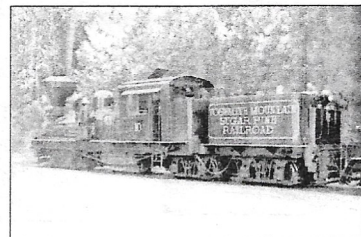
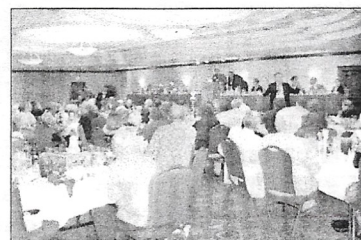
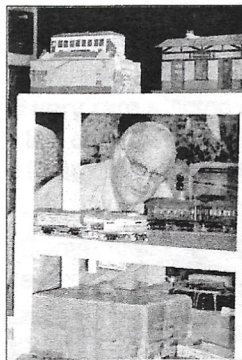
## K-Line Fall Fair Days at Western Depot, Yuba City

SVD member **Robert McBratney** will be hosting K-Line Fall Fair Days at his store, Western Depot in Yuba City. The date is October 2, the same day as our River City Meet at Scottish Rite Center. Members who want to make a full-train day of it can travel to Western Depot after the River City meet to take advantage of in-store K-Line specials.



## More photos from the Fresno convention

Photos by Marilyn Ricciardi, TTOS Golden State Division



# Club Layout News

Norman LaClair, layout chair



I know my "thank yous" are late but I want to take a moment to thank all of the members who attended the Day in the Park in Coloma. And an extra "thank you" to those who brought trains to run. I really enjoyed myself and hope everyone had as much fun as I did.

We were scheduled to go to the fairgrounds at Vallejo for the Great Western Train Meet sponsored by Great American Train Shows. I received a phone call from GATS six days before the two-day event and was informed that the show was not going to have room for layouts. This was the first occasion for me to be told that there would be no layouts at a train meet. What a shock.

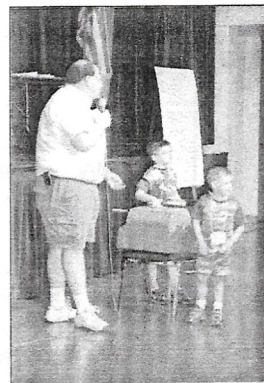
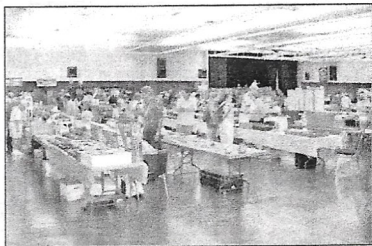
I have sent in the paperwork for the Great Western Train Meet at the Stockton fairgrounds. The GATS organization will let us know if they are going to have layouts or if it will be a repeat of Vallejo. This will be on September 11 - 12 or September 18 - 19 ... I don't remember which now with all the contacts I've had to make with GATS. (*editor's note: as we go to press, the GATS/GWTS web page says the Stockton meet is September 25-26*)

On September 21st, we will be putting the layout on show at the Shriner's Hospital in Sacramento. If you would like to help show trains to the hospitalized kids, please contact Norman LaClair.

On October 2nd, we will be at the Scottish Rite in Sacramento for the fall meet.

On November 26, 27 and 28, we will again be running trains during the yearly three-day show at the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento. If you want to help with set up and take down or to run trains, please contact Norman.

Thanks to all, *Norman LaClair*



## **Down the track**

September 21: SVD Layout at Shriner's Hospital, Sacramento

September 25-26\*\*: Great Western Train Show, Stockton

**October 2: SVD River City Meet, Scottish Rite Center**

October 15-16: TCA Eastern Div. Meet, York PA

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

November 12-14: Cal-Stewart Meet, Pasadena

November 13-14: International Rail Fair, Roseville

November 26-28: SVD Layout at CSRM, Sacramento

November 26-27: Great American Train Show, Pleasanton

**December 4: SVD Meet—Sierra II Center**

December 18-19: Great Western Train Show, San Rafael

*\*\*subject to verification*



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