

THE SIDE TRACK

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

President's Message

by Jeff Silvera



Merry Christmas to all and a Very Happy New Year!!!

As you know, this is the season when we toy train operators like to pull our trains out, set them up, and play with them (as we should, for this is the time that little ones' memories are made

of.) I know that mine were, I still remember that American Flyer set by the Christmas tree. I think we each have an experience or two in our memories regarding trains and the Holidays.

My hope for the club is that we will get even more good board members on our BOD. I'm thankful for those that we do have. I'm thankful for our strong membership, and for our nice layout that we take to public shows. Also, for the members who are doing special jobs for the club; membership chair, the Side Track editor, the home layout tours, Show & Tell, the coffee and snacks, the layout Chairman and committee. I want to give you all a very big **Thanks!** Without you, the club would not do much growing.

To everyone: Merry Christmas, and let's have a very strong and positive New Year!

Keeping those trains on time...

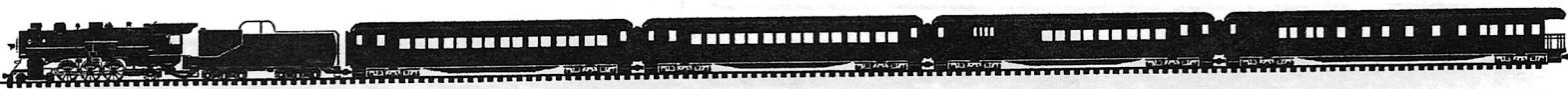
Sincerely, *Jeff Silvera*

Membership News and Notes

by George Ann Hornor

Please join me in welcoming our newest member, **Dennis Irwin**, from Carmichael, who joined during the River City meet in October.

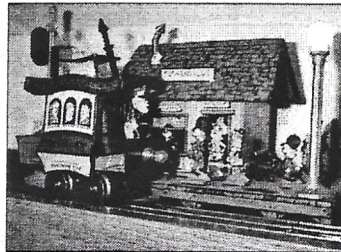
As another year rolls around, it's dues time again. Since there will be no meeting in January, dues collection will begin at the February meeting. It would help with record keeping if you wait until then to pay, but if you're so anxious you just can't wait, you can mail your dues to **Mike Boyd**, 5718 Larcom Lane, Stockton, CA 95210. It's \$15 for an individual and \$20 for your family. If you paid in October or later, you're paid through 2005. If you pay by mail, please include a note telling us if you have changed your phone number, address or e-mail address. I'll have the membership cards at the February meeting, and will mail reminders to those who have not paid after that.



Layout Tours

by Jack Hornor

I have found that in the train clubs to which I belong there are two things that go together — food and toy trains. Therefore when you came to the **Hornors'** open house after the September 4 meeting, you found a mixture of both. As you came through the door, you were first greeted by a living room filled with operating trains, and if and when you got past the trains, the kitchen and patio were filled with people chopping and stirring and eating and drinking. The hostess seemed somewhat surprised to find that her open house had actually started, but thanks to everyone who chipped in to help, it turned out o.k. At least I guess it was o.k., because the food was practically all gone by the time I finished demonstrating how a confused old man can try to simultaneously operate seven trains with TMCC remote control. The operation went as well, or maybe better, than expected with only one or two crashes before the session ended. The 11' x 15' layout contains about 200 feet of Atlas track with six mostly-interconnected loops and an industrial siding. For the most part, I used Lionel TMCC both in the conventional and TMCC mode. Four of the eight engines that operated that day were not TMCC-equipped, showing that it is possible to operate almost everything by remote control these days. One of the newer projects is the Toonerville Trolley which operates atop a long bookcase and has turntables at the ends of the single track. As the trolley progresses, the Skipper stops at the station and pauses to light the lamps along the route while calliope music plays in the background. I see in my refrigerator that we are laying in a new supply of Velveeta, so perhaps we'll be hosting another visit before long.



With great deli sandwiches and even better desserts, the post-election White House was the place to be following our November meet. **Pete and Nancy White** were gracious hosts as always and opened entirely their home to us. And what a home — it could easily pass as a museum — with Western memorabilia, antiques and toys including lead soldiers, boats, fire engines, and of course trains. They have devoted one bedroom to the operating train layout. Two loops of O gauge operate on a shelf encircling the room near the ceiling along with an operating, original monorail. The layout itself fills the room and closet with loops and sidings for running the standard gauge replicas of the classic old trains. Room was left for an operating auto race track, a working merry-go-round, a Toonerville Trolley line, and many operating circus accessories with lights and sounds, even fireworks. In the center is an original operating aeroplane. There is enough activity to delight any child, no matter the age. As always, it was a treat to visit their home, and we thank them for being so gracious.

TTOS National Board Meeting

By George Ann Hornor

Jeff was unable to attend the national board meeting at Cal Stewart in Pasadena, so I sat in for him. One of the first orders of business was to introduce the new editor of *The Bulletin*, **Ted Hamler** from New Mexico. **Arlen Hurt** was thanked for his years of service.

Spenser Smith, Treasurer, gave us the good news that the Fresno convention cleared \$24,462.10, the highest amount in recent history. **Tami Jo** and **Fred Nix** were congratulated and thanked for all their work. Tami Jo thanked **Nancy Swan** for not having her heart attack until she got back to Maryland. Nancy is fine, by the way, and went from start to finish every day at Cal Stewart. Regarding conventions, the Southern Pacific Division was approved to host the 2007 Convention in Costa Mesa. The 2005 convention is set for August 2-6 at the Riviera Hotel in Las Vegas. In 2006, it will be in Altoona, Pennsylvania, near Horseshoe Curve and other rail fan attractions.

In other business, Vice President **Randy Giroux** reported that the TTOS Standards Committee is working on a new set of grading standards that will be a bit different from TCA's Standards. We were given a draft of the new standards with requests for comments from members. Several sets will be available at the December meeting or I'll mail you one if you like.

Other items discussed included a new format for the Order Board, efforts to establish a new, non-profit corporation which will afford members a tax deduction if they make a donation to TTOS, and some type of membership directory.

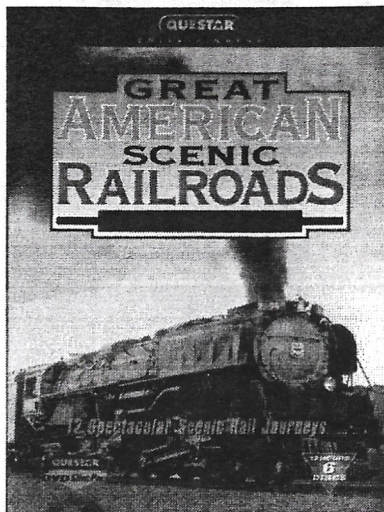
Finally, **Carol Nissen** reminded the Directors that she will be retiring no later than September 2005.



DVD REVIEW

"Great American Scenic Railroads"

QUESTAR QD3500



One thing that I have learned during the fifteen years that I have been a COSTCO member is that if you see something there you like, you'd better buy it immediately. Very often an item is no longer stocked when you go back to buy it.

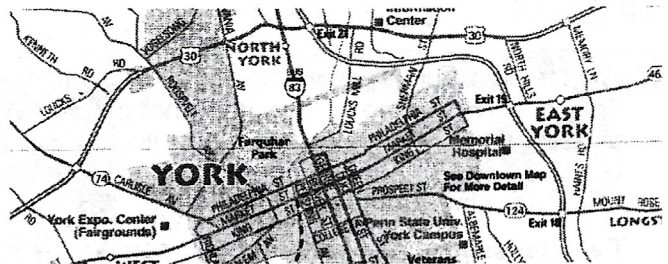
I mention this only to warn you that this boxed set might not be available there any longer. But if it is, I highly recommend it. It features twelve hours of train video on six discs, priced at a paltry \$17.99.

The segments include "Continental Divide", "Donner Summit", "The Surf-line", "California Western", "The Blue Mountains", "Mt. Rainier", "Great Mississippi", "Shenandoah", "Durango & Silverton", "Cumbres & Toltec", "Rio Grande" and "Union Pacific". Sound and video quality are good although not exceptional. These are reissues of earlier Pentrex VHS tapes.

All six discs are packed in a hinged DVD Slim Pack album which takes up only as much shelf space as two ordinary DVD keepcases.

-JA

October York Report



Attendance at the October meet was strong, with something in the range of 17,000 registered. SVD was well represented - **Jim Groth, Francis Eister, Karl Schmidt, Richard Zanotti, Pete White, Don and Sue Rosa, Chuck Stone, Chuck Brasher, Clyde and Erma Easterly, Jim Havey, Rose and Kit Craighead, Stan Salzman, Gerry McClellan, Jack Hornor, Mark Boyd, Jack Rodgers and Jerry Azzaro** were spotted wandering the hallowed halls. (apologies to anyone we missed.)

Sellers at the Best Western parking lot seemed to have increased in number, while the "Holidome" and Firehouse venues were about the same as last time. At the moribund "Billy Bud", several bare tables in the ballroom displayed "this table for rent" signs with no takers.

At the official fairgrounds meet, the Purple Hall was again open to handle the overflow from the new 114,000 sq. ft. Orange Hall.

The York meet and all that it entails are a fantastic experience for any toy train lover. With its membership base of 6,600 the TCA Eastern Division has the resources to put on quite a show. Everyone should experience it at least once!

Overheard at York . . .

Seller to buyer who has asked the price of an item that is not tagged:

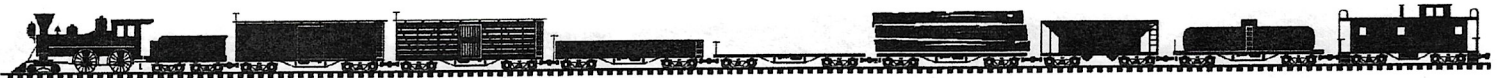
"I don't know what it's worth - you tell ME!"

Seller to buyer who has picked up a questionable item and is eyeing it:

"That just came right off my layout."

Seller displaying a Unique Lines steam loco shell from which all the lithography has been removed:

"Yeah, this was offered in bare metal for just one year."



Show and Tell

By Richard Zanotti

The theme of our September meeting was again RECENT FINDS, including the TTOS convention in Fresno. **Jerry Azzaro** brought in a small picture book. It was titled TIM AND HIS TOY TRAIN. It was published in 1949. It had some great period sketches. The original cost was fifteen cents. A nice boxed Schuco Disneyland monorail set was displayed by **Tom Gibson**. It was made from the middle fifties to the late sixties.

Pete Keesling shared pictures of his portable layout that he keeps in his old VW van. It is a two level layout with prewar Marx trains on the bottom and a mixture of Ives and other trains on top. We hear that this layout is very much in demand. Pete likes to show his layout off to kids.

Jon Lundberg shared some items that he purchased on eBay. One item was a Lionel uncatalogued "Trolley Switch". He also had a "Strong Current" one gauge Marklin 4-4-2 locomotive and tender, and a clockwork one gauge Marklin 4-4-0 locomotive that needs a tender. This locomotive is very rare because the speed was controlled by the amount of air escaping from the cylinders.

Chuck Stone had a rare Lionel flag plot and two SUNOCO Standard gauge cars, one with brass trim and dome, and the other with nickel trim and dome. The car with brass trim is ten times rarer. A lithographed locomotive floor toy was brought in by **Jim Groth**. He also had a picture showing **Clyde Easterly, Mark Boyd, and Karl Schmidt** getting their longevity awards.

Mark Boyd showed a pair of Union Pacific Alco locomotives that he had repainted green to perfectly match his green "Lionel Lines" passenger cars from 1948. He also had strong reservations about security if the TTOS Directory was posted on the internet.

Don Rosa displayed a plaque that was awarded to him at the Fresno convention. Unfortunately, he was not able to be at the convention to receive the award personally.

I posted some pictures of the TTOS Fresno convention. I displayed: a Chad Valley UBILDA Locomotive that I picked up at Fresno, some Dollar Tree Christmas things for a layout, a Kibri news cart with period magazines, a Bing double cane piece, and a Schilling Airport Control Tower where the planes fly in different directions.

In October we did not have Show & Tell due to the Scottish Rite Meet.

In anticipation of a lot of business being conducted at the November meeting, I asked that everybody restrict their presentations. Everybody over-cooperated and we only had two presentations. **Jean and Meredith Hathaway** shared the catalog for the Ward Kimball Auction on November 19 and 20 (It is a shame that so many nice things will be going back to Germany). I presented a Doll Overhead Stationary Railroad Crane, like the one shown on page 92 of the Kimball Catalog. The only thing was that mine was missing the hoisting mechanism. Unfortunately, the business that was supposed take place at that meeting was postponed until the February meeting (we will not be having a meeting in January).

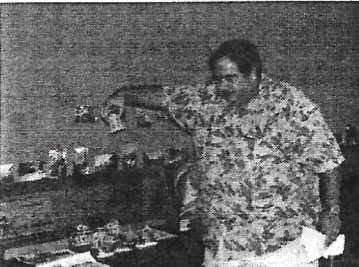
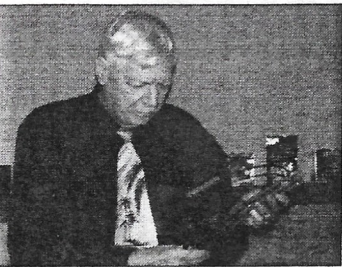
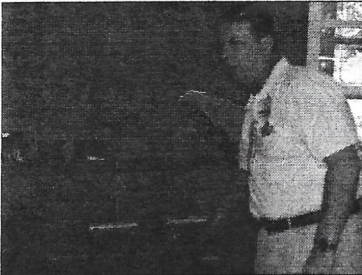
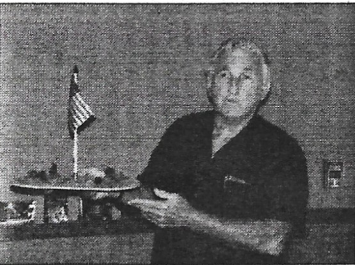
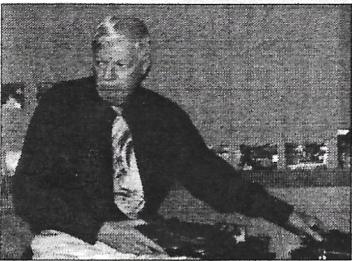
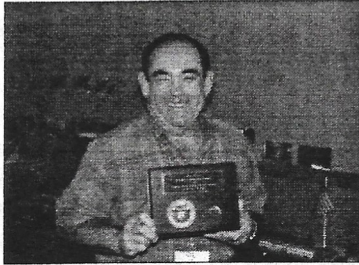
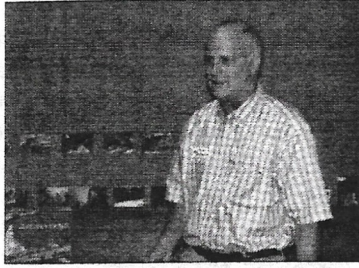
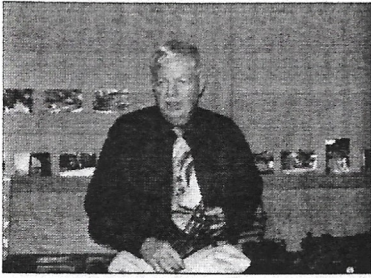
The theme of the December meeting is, WHAT YOU WANTED FOR CHRISTMAS WHEN YOU WERE A KID. We will also be sharing RECENT FINDS from the Scottish Rite, York, and Cal-Stewart meets. At the February meeting, due to the large amount of business that must take place at that time, I will request that we limit our Show & Tell to one item per person and request the we keep our presentations short.

I hope that in March we can resume our regular schedule and catch up on the "Recent Finds" that have been backing up since October. We can then explore other interesting themes for Show & Tell.

I want to thank everybody who participated in Show & Tell this year, and I hope that you have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



Show and Tell Gallery

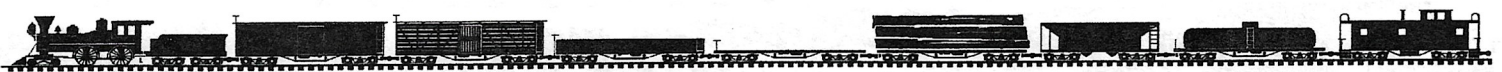


ORDER YOUR SVD CLUB APPAREL NOW!

Ron Wong has completed the project to obtain official SVD caps, shirts and vests for our members. These garments will look great when we attend train meets, go on club outings, or operate our club layout.

You can select from baseball caps, polo shirts, tee shirts and vests, all with the familiar SVD logo. Also, an embroidered patch is available for attaching to any item of clothing from bikinis to tuxedos!

If you did not have a chance to order at the December meet, you can obtain information and place your order by contacting Ron at 916/716-3847 or by e-mail at hialoha@hawaii.com



Down By The Station

By "Boxcar Jack" Ahearn

Christmas was in the air.... and in the seasonally decorated store windows. Navigating through the Mall, I felt like a kid again walking through my childhood neighborhood. I quickly assumed a Yule-tide sense of yesteryear. Looking skyward, I gleamed at the brightly lit Christmas tree as though I was a foot shorter, fifty pounds lighter and well, let's forget the number of intervening years!

I was in search of a small toy train station for my boss's daughters. Several years earlier, I had made her two pre-six-year-old daughters a toy train layout. Each year I added a little extra touch, and this year I was told a second station was wished for. The younger girl wanted her own station...with her town's name on it, of course!

So, with all the mindful nostalgia of my 1940's neighborhood, I pranced reindeerishly, through a 21st century Mall.

My neck rubber-ated and my eyes pop-ated as I looked for a Woolworth's, a Kresse's, or even just a good old toy shop. Alas, I could only find the latter. With hopes for finding a simple toy station I, naively entered the "shop".

"Yeah, can I help you find something"? the eighteenish, blue haired clerk asked. I tried to ignore his nose rings. "Yes, thanks. I'm looking for a little toy station for a six year old". His puzzled look was accompanied with a query as to..."Uh, what does it do"? I responded with matched puzzlement..."Uh, nothing...it doesn't do anything....I mean, you just place it next to the tracks". "Uh, then what? . . . he grinned, expectantly. "Then nothing....it just sits there, waiting for the train to come . . .". "Yeah, and then?" . . . he responded with a kind of 'I'm from Uranus' facial expression. "Still nothing . . . uh, the train just stops" . . . was my unexciting reply. His eyes did widen a bit when, with a gleeful sort of nod, voiced what he thought would be a reasonable or salable feature . . . "Does it blow-up or something when the, uh . . . train comes?"

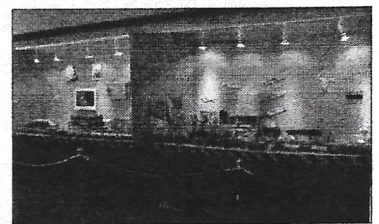
"No . . ." I replied blankly, thinking that I just may be on Uranus or some other planet . . . "it really doesn't do anything . . . just sits there". He then put an entire new facial and gruntal meaning to the unaccommodating words...."Naw, . . . sorry, . . . we wouldn't have that one"!

Cal-Stewart Pasadena

By George Ann Hornor

Larry Pearson, president of the Southwestern Division, and **Walter Olson**, co-chair, welcomed a good crowd at the John and Jay King Memorial Party that opened this year's fall Cal-Stewart. Table sales were up so sellers once again set up in the Annex. And speaking of the Annex, this year I watched the locomotive races and was surprised to find I liked them. I don't know who was more excited — the grownups chasing the trains or the kids cheering them on.

I was pleased to see that **Hollis Cotton** used Marx items in the special display. They're still my favorite trains and we took our Marx nuclear reactor to add to the mix.



The spectacular display of rare, mint Marx pieces

Karl Wandry provided several items including an original Canadian Pacific set.

I was happy to see that several members of our division were able to attend. Next is the Spring 2005 Cal-Stewart in Santa Clara which is coming up March 18-20.



Jack (and George Ann) Hornor were in rotation with other TTOSers to monitor the Marx display

Jim Havey (lower left) passes the camera as he cruises the Cal-Stewart trading hall



Club Layout News

Norman LaClair, layout chair



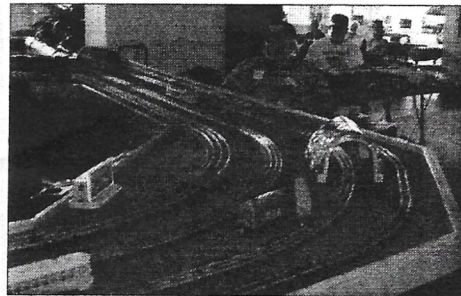
We had a very nice show at the Shriners Children's Hospital in Sacramento on September 21st. After taking all of the large layout into the hospital, we discovered that the entire layout would not fit in the lobby, so we reduced it to 14' X 14' and it worked out well. We had a lot of doctors, nurses and patients, who were mostly children. There were three kids about eight years old who spent hours just watching our trains run.

Those members who took time out of their weekly activities and who took time off work to come and run trains were: **Lee Deter, Dave Thomsen, Tom MacConnell, Norman LaClair, and Roy Kilday** who set up all of the details with the hospital. Roy did a great job. We all ate lunch in the hospital cafeteria. By the way, the hospital cafeteria staff were to be complimented for having a very good menu ready for the lunch hour.

On November 26th, 27th and 28th we will be back at the Railroad Museum here in Sacramento for the start of the Christmas celebration. Happy Holidays to each and all.

Sincerely,

Norman LaClair



There will be **NO** SVD meet in January



Down the track

December 4: SVD Meet—Sierra II Center

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

January 2005—NO SVD MEET

January 8-9: Great American Train Show, Cal Expo Sacramento

January 30: GGLRRC Show, Hayward

February 5: SVD Meet—Sierra II Center

February 12-13: Great American Train Show, SF Cow Palace

March 5: SVD Meet—Sierra II Center

March 18-20: Spring Cal-Stewart Meet, Santa Clara



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