



# THE SIDE TRACK

NEWS from the Toy Train Operating Society  
Sacramento Valley Division

SPRING 2006

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## President's Message

by Jeff Silvera

It's a New Year! I guess we've all aged a bit, but then again so have our trains.

I want to thank everyone for making our February luncheon a success. I thought it turned out quite well. I had fun and hope you all did also. I want to thank **Pete Keesling** for his show and tell item of an aquarium car complete with hobos fishing through the roof hatch. Pete's car was featured in a 1996 TTOS Bulletin and he brought a copy to show us. We also made \$45 on the raffle of the TTOS poker chip donated to the club from members **Jean & Meredith Hathaway**. Thank You!!! It will go in our treasury.

In the months to come, we will have a June picnic at the Western Railway Museum at Rio Vista Junction. The TTOS National Convention is in Costa Mesa this August. The Cal-Stewart meet in Santa Clara is on the weekend of March 10 - 12. SVD will set up our layout for the May TCA meet at the Scottish Rite on Memorial Day weekend.

We had a great time doing the Cal Expo show in January, thanks to all who helped with this.

As you know, division elections are just around the corner in November. I encourage all our members to get involved in the running of this club at least once during their membership.

## Membership News and Notes

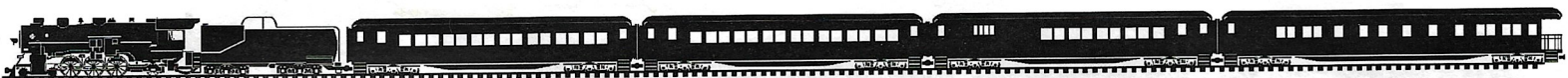
by George Ann Hornor

We're happy to welcome several new members this quarter: **Dave and Marian Ashman** and **Rod Walker** from Sacramento, **Ray Ghio** from Stockton, and **Frank and Karen Townsend** from Rio Linda. Dave and Rod are already helping with the modular layout.

We now have 155 members--just about the same as last year, and a few more than we had two years ago. If you have any friends who might be interested in joining, please bring them as guests to introduce them to the wonderful world of watching toy trains run 'round and 'round...and to collecting as many cars and locomotives as they possibly can afford plus one or two more.

By now, you should have either received your 2006 membership badge or a renewal statement. We collect dues and hand out badges at the March and April meetings, and then I mail the badges to those who paid by mail and are unable to pick them up in person.

I appreciate those of you who renew and pick up your cards during the January and February meetings. It makes it easier for both Mike Boyd and me. Thank you.



# Come to Cal-Stewart!

By George Ann Hornor

The Spring Cal-Stewart is always one of Northern California's largest train meets, and it has been expanded this year to be even better. It will be held at the Santa Clara Convention Center on March 10-12, and because the early bird deadline has passed, the registration fee is \$40. This Spring meet is sponsored by the Nor-Cal Division of TCA and is open to both TCA and TTOS members with current membership cards. Friday is set-up day and the meet opens promptly at 9 a.m. on Saturday. (Contrary to what you may believe, the good stuff will NOT be gone by 9:15.) The meet continues Sunday at 9 a.m. and opens to the public at 10 a.m. for a \$5 admission fee.

On Saturday afternoon, there will be a special auction featuring items from the collection of David Lobree, who headed sales for the scale division of Fairbanks Morse during the glory years. The auction items, which will include postwar and modern era locomotives and sets, will be set up for pre-view during the morning. Also on Saturday, there will be clinic discussing variations of the Lionel #50 Gang Car and the 3484-25 Operating Box Car.

For the first time, there will be clinics on Sunday. At 11 a.m., **Mike Raymond**, **Jack Hornor**, and **Jack Wittenmyer** will jointly present a clinic, "Introduction of Modern Toy Train Electronics." Mike will discuss MTH, and the two Jacks will talk about Lionel.

There will be some great layouts set up on both days, so be sure to save some time for looking.

One last piece of good news - parking is free.

# Thanks, John Shelton!



By Jim Groth

John is the guy who always provides us with plenty of coffee and treats at our meetings. John contributes to the camaraderie at our monthly meetings by making sure that we are all well-supplied with early morning goodies. We all thank John for keeping us happy and well-fed!

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## RIDE A VINTAGE TROLLEY CAR

### Our picnic at Rio Vista Junction in June

by George Ann Hornor

Keep the first Saturday in June open because we're off to The Western Railway Museum at Rio Vista Junction where we'll have a picnic and ride trolleys all day. We haven't finalized our plans, so you'll be hearing the details later, but this is a great family trip. We'll have a sign-up sheet at the upcoming meetings so we can have an idea of how many to plan for. There's a wealth of information about the Museum and Sacramento Northern Railway on the Internet at [www.wrm.org](http://www.wrm.org) and **Jerry Azzaro**, who volunteers there on the track maintenance crew, can answer many of your questions.



# News from CSRM

By "Boxcar Jack" Ahearn

For our members who have not been to the California State Railroad Museum within the last year or so..... your next visit will bring quite a few surprises! I'm sure all of us have seen the now two-year old 3300 square foot 'Magic of Toy Trains' exhibit. Also, many of us have visited the strikingly renovated Sierra Scene along with the newly configured Great Hall area. And, just this past week, work has begun on two new exhibits which will literally, do away with the old.... and bring in the new!

Before telling of these two new features, I'll offer some thoughts on what's motivating all these changes.

The Museum will soon enter its third decade..... What, already? Yep! During the last few years of the 1970's, while the 1849 Central Pacific R.R. Station was the Museum, plans were being drawn and finances raised for the second phase of the Museum's expansion. Now in the quarter century old building which we presently refer to as the Museum, the directors and staff are planning yet a third phase....the Museum of Railroad Technology!

In the past, Museums seemed staid, static and stuffy. If you saw the place once, you saw it for ever. Only the interest of an out of town relative might prompt a revisit. Many museums were built within that atmosphere. They erected concrete walls, sectioned off an area here and there, displayed the finest examples of that Museum's interest....and then left them dormant for generations of visitors. It is that sense of permanence, with its permanent exhibits, that is permanently closing many museum doors.

To combat such malaise, progressive museums are instituting constant changes . . . many include interactive exhibits, geared to our 'hand-remote' generation.

Is it any wonder that, after twenty-five years, the C.S. R.M. Staff saw fit to do away with the tired looking, brass railed, "People Garden" and its recessed step-seating? Just consider that there were actually parents watching their children sit where they as children, had also sat! That area has been leveled and replaced with many colorful and exciting new displays!

And now, after being cannibalized for electronic parts, the flashing Train Identification Game board was dumpsterized and the adjoining glass encased scale lumber camp diorama was returned to its builder and donating club. That now emptied space will be the site for one of two new exhibits!

"Railroads and Agriculture", a new exhibit, is being installed along side of the existing vintage yellow refrigerator car. Its theme will complement that car and portray the story the railroads role in California's phenomenal agricultural growth.

That exhibit area will be backed by a free standing wall. On the other side, the cut-away, operating diesel engine display has been "put out to pasture" and in its place a second exhibit will feature concepts of the Museum's third wing, "The Future Railroad Technology Museum". The new museum building, which will be located in the S.P. yards, is tentatively slated for completion by 2011... just about 60 months from now!

For additional information concerning these, other exhibits, and scheduled events, click onto [www.californiastaterailroadmuseum.org](http://www.californiastaterailroadmuseum.org).

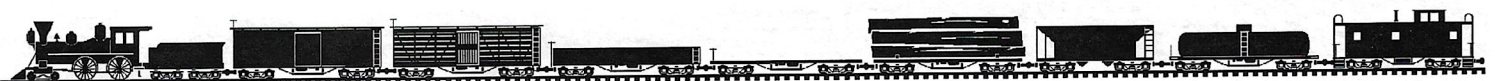
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## A Museum Footnote

As many of you know...I've recently switched *Do-Si-Docenting* from the Museum proper to its adjoining holding, The historically rich 'Huntington & Hopkins Hardware Store'. As I've previously related, I had quite a few 'generational kicks in the guts' from kids in the Museum. I thought moving over to the more subdued atmosphere of the 150ish year old store might cease the 'cute' comments. El wrong-o!

So I'm showing a mother and her youngster a sampling of vintage flat irons. Having explained that those irons had to be left on a stove for quite a while in order to heat up, I then showed them a newer type iron. Similar in shape, it sat a little higher than the previous 'older fashioned' ones. The newer model, I was demonstrating, had a hollowed out chamber above the iron's flat surface. In it, one could place a handful of coals... Voila!....the iron continued to stay warm with the burning coals supplying the heat.

I opened the upper chamber to show them the coals and.....out it came from the 12 year old daughter....."Oh?...so that's what coal looks like!"



# Show and Tell

By Richard Zanotti

The theme of our December third meet was, "Christmas and Recent Finds from any source". **Pam Richmond** shared some of the cute Hallmark train ornaments she collects. They were Santa Fe "War Bonnet" locomotives. I brought in a couple of Ets train sets which I had picked up in Pasadena. One set had a cute little LGB style steam locomotive, and the other had a steeple cab locomotive. The sets were in Christmas colors. I bought these sets from Dot Thousand, who was selling off her late husband John's stock. He had been an Ets distributor.

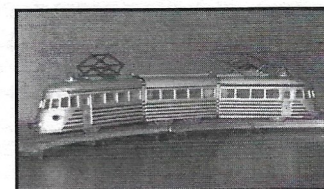
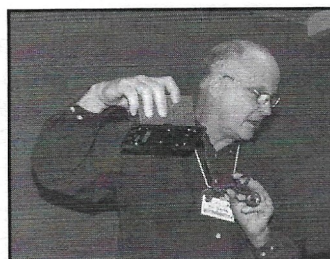
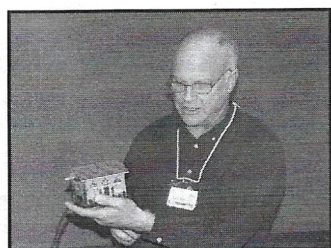
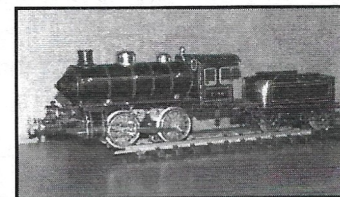
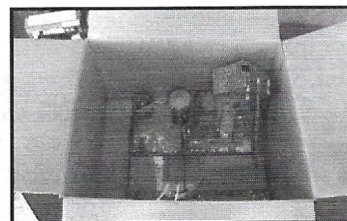
The theme of our January meet was, "Show & Ask", I brought in an O gauge articulated interurban. It seemed to be of post-war French origin. We assumed from its plastic wheels that it operated on a strange rectangular battery of four to six volts. We think this train was made by JEP.

An interesting collection of American transformers disguised as buildings was presented by **Pete Keesling**. He had a rare Straus transformer disguised as a power station. There were other transformers disguised as: stations, houses, and sheds. They were made by: Ives, Lionel (Winner & Junior), Krause, and Marx.

We did not have Show & Tell in February due to the annual luncheon.

Show & Tell has been great due to your participation, but we seem to be getting fewer participants. If you want to retain a great Show & Tell, you will have to participate and encourage others to do so. If not, Show & Tell could end up being just people showing off their awards.

## Show and Tell Gallery



# HOM€ LAYOUT TOURS

## Outings for 2006

By Jack Hornor

We have some wonderful home layout tours coming up in 2006. If you haven't been participating in these after-meeting visits, this would be an excellent year to begin. This is especially true for those of you planning or building your own layouts because you'll see some novel approaches to making the most out of your available space. Here's our must-see list:

**March 4** - we begin the year with a visit to the world-class standard gauge layouts of **Chuck Brasher** and **Clyde Easterly**. I hope you have made plans to make the trek to Grass Valley because it's a great opportunity to see two remarkable layouts and collections.

**April 1** - no fooling - another great trip, this time to Carmichael. For those of you who are fans of postwar and accessories, you'll love **Phil Fravesi's** layout. Phil added a room to his house just for his amazing 34' x 18' rail empire. Some of us have watched the progress as Phil has added more and more components and scenery to his layout, and we continue to admire his skill in construction and lighting. The layout is primarily Lionel, but he's added a few prewar and modern items. Ask him to run his clockwork Marx.

**May 6** - We go back to Carmichael where **Dean and Bonnie Busick** have recently added a train room to their home because his layout outgrew their living room. This layout will still be in the early construction phase, and Dean is looking forward to hearing your ideas and suggestions. The bench work is finished and he hopes to have the Gar-Graves track ready to run a few trains. His layout is particularly interesting because it is built around Dean's 5' x 9' Super O dealer display.

**June 3** - We're off to Rio Vista. Bring comfortable shoes because you'll probably want to wander around the tracks and climb on some cars.

**July 1** - July 4 falls on Tuesday this year, so the holiday shouldn't interfere with our meet; however, I haven't scheduled a visit. If you think we should have a tour please let me know.

**August 4** - We have another masterpiece and an all-day trip to Penn Valley--but worth it--to see **Chuck Stone's** layout with its mix of Standard and O gauges. Would you believe a 41-foot straightaway? Chuck has one of the finest collections of lves on the West Coast, but that's only part of his vast collection. Again, you won't want to miss it.

**September** - nothing scheduled because of the Labor Day weekend, but I'm open to suggestions.

**October** - we'll be at the Scottish Rite Center for our annual River City meet.

**November 4** - Politics aside, we're returning to the White House. **Pete and Nancy White** have once again graciously invited us to their home in Fair Oaks. Their collections of trains, toy soldiers, Western memorabilia, and antique toys, along with some fantastic artwork, make a trip to their home as interesting as visiting a museum. (Make that more interesting for train people.) If you haven't been there, you shouldn't miss it--and if you have been there, I know you'll want to return.

With the busy holidays coming up, we won't be scheduling home visits until next year. Meanwhile, please let me know 1) what you would like to see, 2) what you have missed, and most important, 3) what you would like to show the rest of us.

Thank you for your cooperation.



# Don't Get "Phished"

By Jerry Azzaro

Many toy train collectors and operators have made the jump to computers and the Internet. The ability to buy and sell trains as well as to purchase everything from CDs to travel reservations to vacuum cleaner parts on line is a great convenience.

Early on, the threat of being the victim of a computer virus or hacker was strong, but readily available security software has all but eliminated this danger. The real danger today is a form of identity theft called "phishing", and there's no protection from it other than caution and good sense.

"Phishers" send out convincing-looking e-mail messages claiming that an issue needs attention, with a link to take you to a page where you can remedy it. The problem is that the page you are taken to is not the true site, but a forgery created by the thief. Some of them ask you to enter your username and password in order to proceed. If you do, you will soon find your PayPal, eBay or similar account being used without your authorization. Others ask for your complete personal information including Social Security number, mother's maiden name, ATM password, date of birth, etc. Providing this information will soon have you in the web of trouble caused when the "new you" obtains loans and credit cards in your name (after they drain your bank account).

Some of the ploys used by the Phishers:

-Your eBay account (or bank account) has been suspended and you must re-enter your information, [click here](#)

-Your PayPal payment for an expensive piece of jewelry mailed to a person you don't know has been sent—[click here](#) to dispute the payment.

Another type mimics the eBay "question from a member" message and looks exactly like the screen you see when a buyer or seller contacts you through the eBay system. These usually demand to know where the item they supposedly purchased from you is. When you go to reply to tell them that they have sent it to the wrong person, you are taken to a replica of the eBay "sign in" page. If you complete this, you have just given your eBay name and password to a criminal.

The best protection is to avoid "clicking through" on the links contained in the e-mail messages. If you get a message that says one of your accounts needs attention, then go to the true website for that account to see if the claim is true. If you need to change any personal information, do it through that website and not through the e-mail you received. And look for the **https** (rather than http) at the beginning of the URL, indicating a secure encrypted website.

A recent report stated that 70% of phishing recipients took the bait. Be sure you're not among them.

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## NEWS FROM OTHER DIVISIONS by George Ann Hornor

Several members of the **Golden State Division** are taking The Central Coast Railway Club's "Feather River Express", a scenic round-trip rail excursion between Emeryville and Portola, through the Feather River Canyon. This trip will begin on Saturday, April 1, and return on Sunday, April 2. Most of the trip will be over freight-only trackage, formerly belonging to the Western Pacific Railroad. This will be a great opportunity to experience this "rare-mileage" and spectacular scenery. To round out the trip, an evening and overnight stay in Reno, via comfortable motor coach, will be provided. There is a Sacramento stop, so if you are interested in joining them, you can learn more at [goldenstaterails.com](http://goldenstaterails.com). I'm sorry, but I couldn't find a telephone number. The address is Central Coast Railway Club, PO Box 434, Santa Clara CA 95052-0434.

**Cen-Cal Division** will hold their Spring Toy Train Meet on Saturday, March 25, at the Kings County Fairground in Hanford. For more Information, contact Tony Tesoriere at 559 584-7664.

And our neighbors in the **San Joaquin Valley Division** are busy planning for their December meet in Turlock. They are going back to one building, and this time it's the one with heat. You'll be seeing flyers later in the year.



# February Luncheon Enjoyed by All

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Nobody left hungry after the February 4th SVD family luncheon. Two kinds of lasagna, deli cuts, fresh-baked rolls, salad and homemade dessert made for a fine repast.

What could be better than good food, good friends and a roomful of trains?



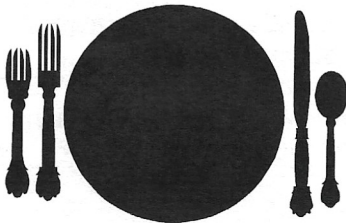
Members line up for the buffet



Rose Craighead, Rosalind Knoderer and Bob Knoderer work their way past the buffet table



If you're stuck in the food line, at least there are some great trains to see while you're waiting



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## Winterail 2006

by George Ann Hornor

This is the 28th year for Winterail, the Railroad Photography Exposition and Railroadiana Show coming March 11 to the Scottish Rite Center, 33 West Alpine Avenue in Stockton. The photography show features multivisual slide presentations and photo print competition. The railroadiana show begins at 9 a.m. with many dealers offering railroad memorabilia, books, slides, videos, etc.

Several railroad historical societies and support groups will have displays. The photography show begins at noon, and runs until 10 p.m. Theater seating is limited and tickets sell out early, but entrance to the railroadiana show only is \$5 at the door. For more information, see <http://altamontpress.com/winterail/2006.html>



## Down the track

**March 4: SVD Meet, Sierra II Center**

March 10-12: Cal-Stewart meet, Santa Clara

March 11: Winterail, Stockton (details inside)

March 11: GWATS Show, San Mateo

**April 1: SVD Meet, Sierra II Center**

April 1: GWATS Show, Fresno

**May 6: SVD Meet, Sierra II Center**

May 27: TCA Train Show, Scottish Rite Center

**June: NO SVD MEET at Sierra II Center**

**June 3: SVD Picnic at Western Railway Museum, Rio Vista Junction**



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