



# THE SIDE TRACK

SPRING

NEWS

from the Toy Train Operating Society  
Sacramento Valley Division

2009

Jerry Azzaro, editor

## President's Message

by John DeHaan

Welcome to 2009 and to a fresh, new year with a fresh, new Board for the Sacramento Valley Division! We have an energetic and enthusiastic group – with **Jack Hornor** as V-P, **Phil Fravesi** as Secretary, **Bryan Stanton** as Treasurer, and yours truly as President – to get us running at full steam (or notch-8 for your diesel fans).

We have already made a few changes. I appointed **Jeff Silvera** as a Board member to take the place of **Geary Muselman** as Past President (Geary's work schedule will interfere with our Saturday fun too much). I have reappointed **Barbara Rohrs** as Membership secretary, in light of the great job she has done the last two years. We are starting each meeting at 9:30AM to give us more time to swap trains and tall stories before closing time at Sierra 2 (NOON sharp!) We have renewed our contract with Sierra 2 for 2009 but we are looking for a better home for 2010 (so keep looking!). We will alternate show & tell and layout sessions with layout visits (tours) so we don't burn out anyone or frustrate anyone trying to do both. (See Jack Hornor's schedule elsewhere in this issue). I will appoint a Sergeant-at-Arms at each meeting to enforce our members-and-guests-only policy for buyers and sellers, so be sure to have your badge each month.

We have a new Layout Committee, chaired by **Curt Darling**, who already has a list of volunteers to refresh the layout and see that it gets to all the events where we can share it with the public. We have a new survey indicating what the membership wants to see happen with the layout. We are still seeking more survey returns so if you haven't sent yours to Barbara Rohrs, do it today! We are also seeking donations of "new" rolling stock (especially Standard/Wide gauge!), small accessories and your time to make the layout a success. We mourn the loss of **Norman LaClair** who was the moving force behind the layout for so long. We want to see it become even more entertaining and popular with members and guests.

Thanks to our past treasurer, **Richard Zanotti**, we are in very good financial shape. So good, in fact, that we have ordered a special run of Weaver express cars as a special Division car. They will be here very soon and available for sale, with all profits coming to our Division.

The car is true to the prototype cars that ran from Chicago to Sacramento during the 1950's and is marked on the ends denoting the Sacramento National TTOS meet here in 2008 and the next one in Chicago 2009.



Speaking of Chicago – start making plans now to attend the 2009 National TTOS meet in Chicago, Aug 11-15. Great city (take it from a native!), great tours, and two days of great trading all compacted into 5 days. Good hotel at great rates, too!

And, speaking of National... I "attended" my first National board meeting via teleconference on Jan 17. It was a very productive meeting with a very high attendance rate (With some of the Board members reporting 3 feet of snow, they couldn't be anywhere else!)

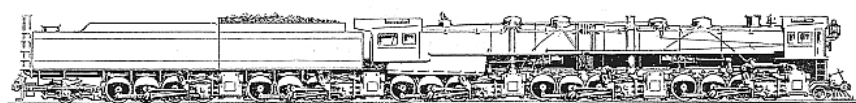
National reports they have lost some 20% of the membership since 2006 and request every member's help in recruiting new members. There was a loss of some \$29,000 from the 2008 National meet here - largely due to low turnouts for the wonderful tours they arranged and paid for, and unanticipated expenses at the Convention Center. National has a big job ahead but they are getting on with it. If you haven't paid your dues, by the way, be sure to include your 9 digit Zip code so that mailings can be expedited. The USPS has gotten really hard on bulk mailers who don't have the Zip+4 addresses. Also, be sure to tell National it is OK to share your contact info with other Divisions! There have been problems with printing the new membership cards, so they may be delayed.

Gotta get ready for the next meeting. See you there.

Happy Railroading!



Your new board (l to r): Jeff Silvera, John DeHaan, Jack Hornor, Phil Fravesi, Bryan Stanton



# TTOS - SVD SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR 2009

By Jack Hornor, SVD Vice President

Here is the tentative schedule for the special events we have planned for the balance of 2009. Nothing here is carved in stone, so there may be changes. If there are, we'll let you know as soon as possible.

April - Show and Tell plus modular layout at Sierra 2

May - **Bill Wilson and Sandy Davison** are hosting a special visit and lunch in Nevada City

June - Show and Tell plus modular layout at Sierra 2

July - No Sierra 2 meeting - Meeting cancelled because of holiday weekend

August - **Bob and Janet Rhodes** are hosting home layout visit in Loomis

September - **Jack and George Ann Hornor** are hosting home layout visit in Galt

October - No Sierra 2 meeting - River City meet at Scottish Rite Center

November - Show and Tell plus modular layout at Sierra 2

December - Christmas meet; no other activities.

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## Deadline for Membership Renewal Approacheth . . .

2009 Dues Reminder by Barbara Rohrs

The deadline for renewing your Division dues is fast approaching: April 4. After April 4, when sending in your renewal, you will need to add a \$5 late fee. So renew now -- \$20 for individuals; \$25 for family membership. Send to: **Barbara Rohrs, TTOS Membership Chair, 3950 Mack Road - 57, Sacramento, CA 95823.**

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## Norman LaClair: 1940 - 2009

The Sacramento Valley Division mourns the loss of our long-time member, Norman LaClair, who passed away from the complications of diabetes on January 7, 2009.

Norman was a native and life-long resident of East Sacramento. He was married to his childhood sweetheart, Jackie Barr, and was a devoted father to his daughter, Michelle. He is also survived by his sister, Marian Somatis, his niece, Tina Edwards, and his cousin Jean Taylor. We all knew Norman as the heart and spirit of our modular layout, but in real life he traveled the US and Canada as a driver for Trailways tour buses and retired from the City of Sacramento as an equipment operator. His life passions (beyond his

family) were toy trains and deep sea fishing (out of Capitola!).



Brian Farnsworth organized a fine memorial service at Grace Church in Elk Grove on January 25. TTOS-SVD was very well represented and a section of our layout with Norman's favorite Lionel Standard Gauge was prominently displayed (thanks to Curt Darling and others). He enjoyed running trains and chatting with the public, especially the kids, whenever he could be there with the layout. We will certainly remember Norman for his friend-

ship, enthusiasm, and dedication every time we set up the layout. He will be greatly missed.



# Meeting Notes

by Phil Fravesi, SVD Secretary and  
John DeHaan, Outgoing SVD Secretary

## Minutes of December 6, 2008 meeting (by John):

In the absence of SVD **President Musselman** and **Vice-President Farnsworth**, Secretary **John DeHaan** called the meeting to order. Guests were introduced and welcomed: **Skip Grube** of Penngrove CA, guest of **Mike de la Pena**; and **Candi and Emerson Coleman** of Spokane WA, guests of **Tony Basile**. A new/returning member was welcomed: **Steve Olsen**. The Nominating Committee (**Tom Gibson**) reported that only the treasurer position had more than one candidate: **Bryan Stanton** and **Jack Dieres**. A written ballot was held to select the treasurer, with the other positions ratified by acclamation. The new board members as of 1 Jan 2009 will be: President: **John DeHaan**; Vice-president: **Jack Hornor**; Secretary: **Phil Fravesi**; Treasurer: **Bryan Stanton**.

Wishes for a full and speedy recovery were offered for **George Ann Hornor** and **Norman LaClair**.

There was a discussion of the decisions that need to be made about the SVD operating layout. Membership Secretary **Barbara Rohrs** reported that a survey form prepared by **Jack Hornor's** action group will be included on the reverse of the dues notice. ALL members were encouraged to respond to this survey (And pay their dues, too!)

**John Shelton** announced his "retirement" from his long-standing unofficial position of "bakery goodies supplier" for the monthly meets. He will continue to bring coffee but members are invited to bring "a little something" to snack on to future meets. We have signed a lease for the Sierra 2 meeting room (and PATIO!) for 2009. We will have access the first Saturday of every month except July and October (Scottish Rite event), from 8AM to NOON only.

Due to interest in attending the Turlock meet, the meeting was concluded.

## Minutes of January 3, 2009 meeting (by Phil):

Outgoing treasurer **Richard Zanotti** gave a final end of year treasurer's report as follows:

Receipts:	\$7,455.00
Expenses:	\$9,267.02
Assets:	
Checking:	532.18
Savings:	11,883.61
CD:	65,655.38
Cash Box:	98.25
Total:	\$78,169.42

**Mark Boyd** reminded everyone of Cal Stewart, Santa Clara. The date for that meet is March 20 thru 22.

## Modular layout:

There was discussion around the clubs modular layout. The main purpose of the layout outside of the club is expo-

sure to the public and a chance to hand out flyers and applications.

A survey of the members regarding the layout has been circulated and the results will be compiled and discussed with the board and reported back to the members.

It was noted that a system was needed to notify all members regarding work parties, outings and run times.

## Show and Tell:

**Bill Wilson** questioned having Show and Tell every month. He needs ideas from the members for future meetings. Possible subjects, international and European trains.

## Board meeting:

The following is the results from the board meeting that followed the regular meeting.

It has been decided that a Sergeant at Arms will be assigned for each meeting to watch for un-invited people entering the hall. This has become a problem at recent meetings.

A new position will be established for Layout Chairperson. They will be responsible for presenting an annual budget to the board along with other duties.

Home layout tours will be conducted every other month and will be opposite the months that the club layout is set up at Sierra II. This will allow layout people to attend the tours without the time constraints of taking down the layout.

Show and Tell will be held on the same months as the layout set up.

The Division has an inventory of new cars accumulated over the years. It was decided that the club will raffle these cars off on a random basis to raise funds and diminish the large number of cars being stored.

## Minutes of February 7 meeting (by Phil):

The Sacramento Valley Division cars have been ordered and it was voted on by the general membership to set the car price at \$50.00 plus tax and shipping.

**Jeff Silvera** has been appointed to the board as **Geary Musselman** didn't feel he could serve as the past president due to other commitments.

THE NEW MEETING TIME FOR MONTHLY MEETINGS IS 9:30 AM. PLEASE NOTE.

**Curt Darling** has been appointed Layout Chairperson.

There was a discussion around changing the standard gauge track on the modular layout to multi gauge. This would allow operation of more O gauge when no one is operating standard gauge. Also, it would allow operation of G, 1 gauge and S. The nature of the track does created its own set of issues on a portable layout. Further input is requested on the matter.

There was no board meeting held.



# BOXCAR JACK'S WEB PICKS

Jack Ahearn surfs the web in search of great railroad sites for you!

Let's return to the days when passenger trains had romantic sounding names, plenty of class and lots of color! Seen in this month's movie are the real Stars of the 1950's, the ones that catapulted the Hollywood Stars to and from Southern California.

In this short but exciting four minute plus movie, ride along with the Santa Fe's Chief, Super Chief and other Stars of the Union and Southern Pacific Studios...uh...Railroads. And just for good measure, a few scenes featuring Southern Pacific's mega Star... Cab Forwards, which are pictured, making tracks, along the tracks, of California's beautiful and inspiring scenery. Pop the corn and enjoy the vintage trains of the 1950's:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AS7bICcBcFE>

(see the SVD web page for a shortcut to this video)

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## SPECIAL THANKS FOR SERVICE TO SVD



SVD president **John DeHaan** thanked **John Shelton**, **Geary Musselman** and **Richard Zanotti** (photo, left to right) for their service to SVD, and presented certificates of appreciation at the February meet. Certificates were also given to **Brian Farnsworth**, who was not in attendance, and posthumously to **Norman LaClair**.

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## TREASURER'S REPORT

by Bryan Stanton, Treasurer

The final payment was sent to Weaver for our 2009 TTOS Club Cars. We should be receiving all 300 of them soon. At the last meeting I believe we set the price of the car at \$50.00 to all, plus tax if you live in California.

Members are paying their dues, but there are still a few who have not paid yet, so at the next TTOS meeting please pay your dues to our club.

Our Club received a \$150 check from the Cal-Expo train show in January for our layout being set up there.

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## THANKS, JOHN SHELTON

By Jim Groth

We all thank **John Shelton** for his many years of bringing the great sweets and coffee to our Saturday meets. Let's get behind John's suggestion that we each bring something to share when we can.

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## In the Spirit of Sharing

By Jeff Silvera



*Donations fill the front table at the December meet*

At the last few December meets I've been delivering the donations of unwrapped toys and non-perishable food that SVD members bring. The toys go to the Sacramento Children's Home and the food goes to the Sacramento Food Locker.

Doing this at the holiday time always gives me a warm feeling, knowing that it is surely appreciated by these organizations.

Thanks to all members who participate in this annual charity drive.



# As Seen in the CSRM “Inside Track”

*Our modular layout exhibit and SVD members' layouts were reported in the December 10, 2008 issue of Inside Track, CSRM's membership newsletter. Edited and submitted to us by **Jack Ahearn**, courtesy of the California State Railroad Museum:*

**The busy, three-day Thanksgiving Weekend is now over, and—as always—what a weekend it was! The Museum was quite busy, with a line out the door much of Friday and Saturday.**

**Among the groups showcasing their Small Trains to the visiting public in the Museum Roundhouse were the Toy Train Operating Society, Sacramento Valley Division and individual exhibitors, Dave Thomsen, John Leins, Joe Montgomery and Pam Richmond.**

**Thanks also to the many docents who staffed the busy Museum and ensured guests a great time as they viewed the “Small Train Holiday”. Thanks to everyone who helped make this busy weekend a success!**

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## Members Speak Out About SVD Layout

### Responses to our layout questionnaire

Twenty-one members returned the questionnaire we sent out with the last Side Track. Of those, twenty were in favor of having a layout and nineteen were in favor of using Division money to fund the project. Eighteen thought that the layout draws new members and most members felt we need a layout committee.

Although not all members indicated they would participate in running trains or working on the layout, there were no completely negative comments in that section. A sampling of the comments: Some members have nowhere else to operate their trains; some joined only because we have a layout; some felt that having the layout up and running at our meets or at public

events is good for the club; and some pointed out that the word "operating" is part of TTOS. There were a few one-of-a-kind suggestions relating to the design of a new layout or layouts.

A summary of the survey results was presented to the members at the February meeting and the response to continuing with the layout was overwhelmingly favorable. A layout committee, headed by Curt Darling, has been formed. Their mission will be to review the current options, i.e., keep maintaining the current layout as it is; upgrade the current layout by adding remote control, replacing track, electronics, accessories, etc.; or build a new layout. They will present the Board with estimates for cost, manpower and time lines for all options. You'll be hearing more from Curt about this.

*-Jack Hornor*



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# A WINDOW into CHRISTMAS PAST

By Jack Ahearn

In the midst of the recent Christmas Season, I was scanning thru midtown New York City via Windows Virtual Earth. My mission to locate a new structure failed. Rather than simply logging off, I chose to take a cyber trip across the river, to my childhood Brooklyn neighborhood.

Within minutes I was looking at the house (walk up, cold water flat, above a drug store) in which I lived 'til I was five. As I stared at the two front windows, I envisioned the Christmas tree that was annually placed between them. In particular, I recalled the Christmas of 1942 and the wondrous train set my Dad had placed beneath the tree. (T.T.O.S. BULLETIN, May, '96)

Feeling a nostalgically dry lump in my throat, I walked into the kitchen for a cooling glass of water. Returning thru the living room, I looked beneath my tree at the current duplicate of my first train set. I thought it would be timely to 'fire her up' en letta run! I left it to its circuitous

route. It ran and sounded; ...wondrous, just as it had, so many Christmases ago!

Returning to my 'puter, I looked back at the screen, refocusing on those two windows, as though being magically drawn into them. I zoomed into one and felt like I was five years old again, perched on its sill.

Magically, I imagined hearing the sound of that train making its way around the tracks....what an illusion...feeling like I was outside that window and again hearing those thrilling sounds of my childhood train... If only I could look in and see the train and feel my childish glee!

Then, illusion became reality. I imagined the past sounds of my first train set as I 'looked' into the 1942 window, but was hearing ....the same sounds from the duplicate set running in my living room...sixty-four years later!

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## Calling All Flyer Fans

Flyer Fest West 2009, The West Coast's Largest "S" Event for American Flyer and "S" Hi-Rail Enthusiasts, will take place on Saturday May 2 in Elk Grove, CA. The trading hall is open from 11am to 4pm. Registration is \$10.

**Flyer Fest West Trading Hall Location:**  
SES Hall, 10427 East Stockton Blvd., Elk Grove, CA 95624  
(Highway 99 at the Grant Line Road Exit)

For registration information, call Don Rosa at (916) 682-6961 or email [FFW2009@comcast.net](mailto:FFW2009@comcast.net)



Passengers boarding the B&O's luxury train, "The Capitol", in Washington's Union Station are greeted by this new theater marquee at the train gate announcing the current movie playing on the train. The B&O's "National" also features movies. Films are supplied by Intransit Motion Pictures, same firm that supplies the airliners.



# Show and Tell

By Bill Wilson, Chairman

January's S&T was on International and European trains with displays by **Carl Curtis, Bill Bender, Richard Zanotti, Jean Hathaway, Dean Busick, Bill Wilson** and **Mark Boyd**. An excellent display. Many brought ETS product which seem to be the most popular international trains. They are being represented by Weaver in the U.S.

February saw a good selection of cranes and crane cars with collector items (especially Richard's 1905 crane), kit bashed cranes and international cranes. Contributors were **John DeHaan, Bill Wilson, Richard Zanotti, Jack Horner, Jim Groth, Paul Wells, Tim Taormina** and **Jean Hathaway**. It was a interesting display of cranes and crane cars.

I think Show and Tell displays contribute aspects of our hobby that show the various approaches and interests each of us has in collecting trains. I hope you all enjoy these displays. We are now on an every other month S&T schedule, so the next is April 4. For this meet the subject will be "Your Rarest or Most Memorable Piece".

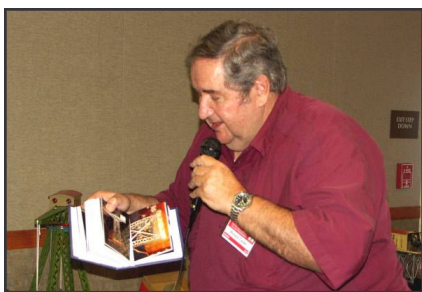
After that will be the June 6 meet. Subject is Kit Bashed (including Custom Painted) Train Items. Use your imagination on this one.

One last item: For those who bring S&T items, please let me know before the meet starts so I can acknowledge you during the S&T session.

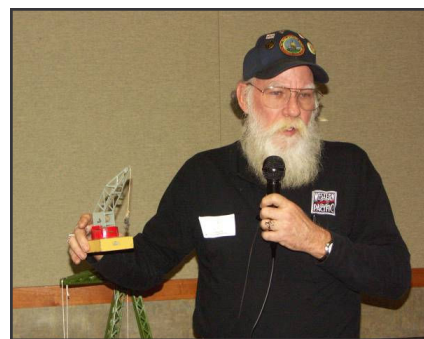
Thanks, Bill

## RECENT SHOW AND TELL HIGHLIGHTS

February's theme was "Cranes and Crane Cars"



*Jim Groth's homemade motorized "American Flyer Wide Gauge" electro-magnetic crane (above) caught our eye. Jim says: "It's a one-of-a-kind standard gauge working toy. Cab rotates, boom goes up and down, cable works with a magnet on the end. Great operating toy. Two Skil cordless screw-driver motors and gears are in the cab to run things. Clock motor under the base to turn the cab. Electric power by a modified Tyco HO transformer."*



## Down the track

## Upcoming events of interest to SVD members

March 14-15: Great Train Expo, Cow Palace, San Francisco

## March 20-22: Spring Cal-Stewart Meet, Santa Clara

## April 4: SVD Meet - Sierra 2 Center\*

May 1-3: Flyer Fest West, Elk Grove

## May 2: SVD Meet - Sierra 2 Center\*

## May 23: Sac-Sierra TCA Meet, Scottish Rite Center

## June 6: SVD Meet - Sierra 2 Center\*

\*meetings begin at 9:30 AM



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