

# THE SIDE TRACK

FALL

NEWS

from the Toy Train Operating Society  
Sacramento Valley Division

2010

Jerry Azzaro, editor

## President's Message

by John DeHaan

It's been an exciting summer! The TTOS National Convention was a lot of fun. The hotel was beautiful, the food was great, and San Antonio was hot but dry. There were a lot of neat things for the silent auction at the welcome party, fun sight-seeing tours and reports that the layout tours on Wednesday were terrific. There was a lot of activity in the trading hall, and the public was filtering in as I left on Friday to get back for our meeting on Saturday. Too bad not too many people attended to take advantage of all the things that **Randy** had arranged with the extensive support of local toy train people (from both TTOS and TCA).

The big news was that we held a critical board meeting (that ran 6 hours) on Thursday. Everyone who attended (and the 5 or so that participated by conference call) came with a positive attitude about keeping TTOS National alive. The Executive Board had really done a lot and had a vision statement, a respectable business plan, and a balance sheet to offer (as **Mel Stratton** and others had requested during the last teleconference Board meeting on 30 June). It was clear that the national club was in trouble financially but they had taken major steps towards correcting the downward drift. The most important factor is that membership is hovering at about 3700 full members. That figure has crept up recently with the recruitment drive but it is still way below the 5000 members we had just a few years ago. That means less income, while much of the general costs stay the same. The HQ moved to Fullerton to save substantially on rent and utilities, the Roundhouse sale has brought in a lot of money and gotten rid of a lot of "stock". Lionel is owed some \$19,000 for last year's cars. This year's convention cars (which are beautiful!) were done by Williams-Bachmann and they are very high quality. Bachmann will do next year's cars at no cost to the club in exchange for full page ad space on the back cover of the Bulletin. Printing and mailing the Bulletin are the major expenses to the club. We voted to reduce the number of issues to 4 per year for a year to reduce those costs. MLP, the printers are owed a lot of

money and will only print future issues if they are paid for in full at the time of the order. The Sacramento and Chicago Conventions lost a lot of money (especially Sacramento). Due to better negotiating, the San Antonio convention was expected to break nearly even.

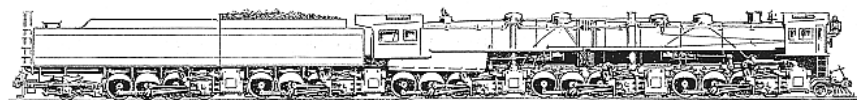
We discussed at great length the convention issue. We voted on a motion to reduce the conventions to one every two years but it was rejected when Nancy Swan pointed out that the California Corporations code requires one meeting of the membership every year. It was then moved and passed that we alternate full conventions with membership meetings (one or two-day events in an interesting location but without all the bells and whistles of a convention). The contracts for Charleston (2011) and Santa Clara (2012) are already in place and cancelling them would be much more expensive than hosting the event and losing a bit of money. Santa Clara is going to be GREAT! Golden State Division is planning wonderful things and it's close enough, WE can help! So, the plan will be to go to the alternate conventions/meetings starting in 2013.

It was decided that the corrections already put in place and others will bring the finances into line of solvency by the end of 2011. On that, the Cen-Cal Division offered \$2,500 to TTOS National to pay part of the obligation to Lionel. We voted at our meeting on August 7<sup>th</sup> to advance \$2,000 to National on the condition it be applied to the outstanding debt at MLP. These gifts were announced at the Convention banquet with great acclaim.

It is clear that the best way to keep the toy train hobby alive is through the strength in numbers of a national organization. More than 2/3 of our members live east of the Rockies, and they have a lot of trains for us out here on the Left Coast to see, enjoy, and trade! We are the first club to focus on running our trains and it is through operating layouts like ours that we can attract new younger members to keep our hobby going.

That brings me to the next big event – the LCCA

Continued next page



# President's Message (continued from previous page)

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convention in Denver. Thanks to some spectacular 1:1 scale excursions, there were over 500 registrants for LCCA. Lionel was there with a full display in the main lobby, there was a very large modular O-gauge operating layout (privately owned) in the side lobby, the trading hall looked like it was going to be busy. The hotel and food were excellent. We had a number of members there. **Dave Ashman** spent a lot of time talking with **Mike Regan**, the "repair guru" for Lionel into the wee small hours. To his credit, he got a fabulous offer from Mike. When our layout is rebuilt this winter not only will Lionel supply all the new track (which lends itself to quick and reliable joining up at the modular "joints", looks great, and comes in both O- and Standard gauge, but Mike will personally come out and install it! This will ensure that our layout will have full command control capability but will also support traditional equipment (like my prewar stuff)! Wow! Our

thanks to **Dave Ashman** and **Mike de la Pena**! This means that our limited funds can go towards improving the tables and wiring for accessories. (There were some GREAT operating layouts at the TTOS trading hall, and I scoured them for ideas of improving ours with backgrounds and simple landscaping.)

Well, time to wrap this up. Don't forget to support our Scottish Rite meet on 2 October and plan to go to Cal Stewart 20-21 November this year. It sounds like there will be some really special events going on there (in conjunction with the Boy Scout Centenary). Also, the Roots of Motive Power (<http://www.rootsofmotivepower.com/>) holds its free annual operating open house on 11-12 September in Willits. All kinds of steam railroad (the 2-6-2T and the Heisler) and logging equipment will be running. See you down the track!

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## Dave Ashman's LCCA convention photos



*Well, the Challenger was still in the shop but the 844 did a great job on the LCCA Denver-Cheyenne excursion. Note the special lettering on the tender!*



*We did get to visit the wonderful Cheyenne UP Heritage shops and visit with the Challenger as she undergoes some repairs.*



# River City Meet—October 2nd

By Jeff Silvera, Meet Chairman

Ladies and gentlemen, it's time for our annual **River City Meet** again. "Man, that was quick!" Our meet is right around the corner on October 2nd, 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Contact me to buy a vendor table or display a small layout. Any ideas for advertising would be helpful, or any other way of getting the word out to the public. Your church or health club? The more word that gets out the better. This is a major source of income for our division, so don't be shy. As usual, we will need members to come forward and help out. We need volunteers for security, front desk staff, assisting with loading and unloading our club layout, and with tear down and clean-up. Please contact Jeff Silvera (916) 481-4694.



*Buy a table, volunteer to help out, or run trains at Scottish Rite Center, our favorite public venue*

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## Home Layout Tours

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by Jack Hornor, Chairman and SVD Vice President

**Phil Fravesi's** home layout visit after our September meeting will end our tours for 2010. We always have a good time visiting this great postwar layout, and Phil and Emma are wonderful hosts. The October meeting, of course, is our River City Train show at the Scottish Rite Center. In November, we're back to Show and Tell and setting up the club layout. We always leave December open for the Christmas party with the food and toy drives.

Now - I need some input from you as to whether to keep the home layout tours going next year or stop for awhile. Several of our hosts have held open houses at least twice. I think all of our members have had the opportunity to visit all of other members' layouts at least once. So, please think about the following and get back to me:

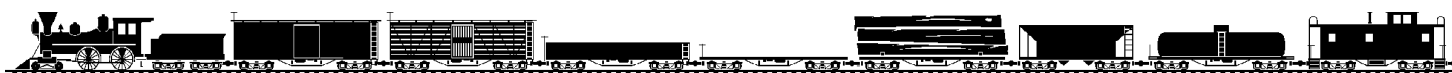
1. Are the members who have shown their layouts twice be willing to keep going for a third round?
2. Should we keep going on the home visits even though we may have seen some layouts more than once?
3. Are there new members or members with new layouts who would be willing to show them? If so, please contact me.

Jack Hornor ([jwhornor@sonic.net](mailto:jwhornor@sonic.net))

### **TTOS Vision Statement:**

The future of the Toy Train Operating Society is predicated on one simple fact. We must attract new membership. The TTOS National Club will focus on developing, in conjunction with the divisions, viable recruitment and retention plans and provide support both at the divisional level and the national level towards these goals. Potential new members are typically attracted to our hobby by experiencing our toy trains in full operation and witnessing the camaraderie that comes from sharing our passion and hobby with others, not unlike the original direction our founding members envisioned. This will be our primary focus.

Membership First – both new and old is our goal. Happy members are proud members and typically these members want to share their experience with just about anyone who will listen. Everyone likes being a part of a successful organization. TTOS National will plan and design all efforts with this in mind.



# SVD Layout at Folsom Festival

by George Ann Hornor

The Folsom, El Dorado & Sacramento Historical Railroad Association (<http://www.fedshra.org/>) has invited the Division to bring our modular layout to the first ever "Folsom Historic Railroad and Transportation Festival." The event takes place on September 18 & 19 at the Folsom Pointe Retail Center just off Highway 50 at exit 27. The event will be held on the railroad tracks behind Starbucks and the Hampton Inn at Iron Point Road and East Bidwell Street. The tracks, last used commercially by Southern Pacific in the late 1980s, date back to 1864.

Festivities will include railcar, motorcar and handcar rides, a "Cops and Rodders" classic car show, and Sacramento Regional Transit's #35 PG&E streetcar. This beautifully restored car was purchased in 1999 from the California Trolley & Railroad Corporation in San Jose. Car 35 is operated on special occasions over a portion of the light rail system. You may have seen it in 1991 when it came to Railfair at the California State Railroad Museum.

There will also be displays of early transportation items, antique police cars and motorcycles, and of course operating train layouts.



*Car #35 in operation*

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## News from Other TTOS Divisions

By George Ann Hornor

Attendees at this year's Stanislaus County Fair were treated to a new garden railway, thanks to the San Joaquin Valley Division. President **Ed Cathcart** approached Fair officials in early spring, and by the time the fair opened on July 16, trains were up and running. Club members completely redesigned the horticultural exhibit, adding tunnels, bridges, buildings and trackside accessories. The layout drew a lot of attention from the public and the feedback was very positive. There were plenty of SJVD signs and banners on and around the layout, and information sheets and membership applications were handed out all during the ten-day run. The fair and the layout, by the way, ran every night until 11 p.m. The most asked question was probably, "How many hours did it take to do all this?" Ed estimates it took a minimum of eleven-hundred man-hours. Quite an accomplishment for a club of fewer than 50 members.

Club officers also came up with the idea to make it a community railroad and earn money for the club on the side. They bought plain boxcars from Bachman for \$35.00 and sold them as "billboard" cars to local businesses for \$125. Each company provided the design for the car they purchased, and a local graphics company printed the cars in exchange for a car of their own.

The cars, which also included the SJVD logo, were run all during the fair, and the companies were happy to help TTOS and the Fair while getting their names before the public.

The Fairgrounds officials were so pleased with the result that they have contracted with the club to maintain the layout as a permanent exhibit. So all year long, people will see the signs promoting TTOS.



*A trestle on the SJVD garden railway at the Stanislaus County Fairground*



*The Dairy Queen car is one of the custom-decorated "billboard" cars operating on the layout*



# Show and Tell

By Jeff Silvera, Chairman

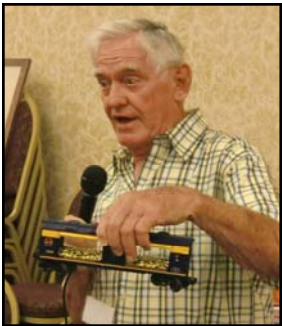
For our June 5 Show & Tell we had **George Ann Hornor** bring a real nifty very attractive Hot Dog Car. The welded-steel Hot Dog Car was made by **Bruce Hebron**, the metal sculptor who has the lighted wall displays at the Cal-Stewart shows. **John DeHaan** brought a Hafner Overland Flyer 1933 Chicago World Fair Century of Progress Special 'O' Gauge windup train set in the original very nice box. John is a Chicago native and he also collects Century of Progress memorabilia, so this is a great fit.

At our August 7 meet, **Richard Zanotti** had some really nice McCoy Division cars (1967). **Bill Wilson** brought a rare LCCA Convention car from 2009. **Steve Hamer** showed us some really nice Märklin Nuremberg cars that he picked up when he was in Germany. Thanks Steve! **Don Clark** brought in a beautiful painting he purchased at a Southern California Convention showing steam locomotives in front of a station near where he lived in San Diego. **Mark Boyd** had all sorts of little convention banquet figures and lots of neat convention souvenirs and trinkets. **Jerry Azzaro** had a set of photos he took of the actual Mystic Station during a TCA convention at Providence RI.

Thanks to all! Without you it wouldn't be possible.

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## RECENT SHOW AND TELL HIGHLIGHTS



# BOXCAR JACK'S WEB PICKS

*Like Sears and some greeting card publishers, Jack believes late summer is the right time to get into the holiday spirit*  
by Jack Ahearn

Nope...it's not too early...Fall is nea... let's whet our trainiacal appetites and let the season begin! Soon after our October rites at the Scottish Rite, the rest of the annual train meets will soon follow. (See back page for full listing.)

Set the mood of 'The Big Day': cyber-savor this ferroequinistical delight and let your model railroading hopes and dreams of yesterday and today live on forever! Click on this 10 minute Trainfest and imagine your train's high-balling along your Mainline to the delightful sounds of the Season!

<http://www.youtube.com/user/trainsjouets#p/a/f/2/hJugKH9LJRw>



Also, be sure to watch the other films on the page, particularly MTH's Leland Detroit's Mono rail and those delightful Marx layouts....Enjoy!

(Note: Click 'Liontrack-1' under 'Subscribers' for the Mono.)

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\*\*Find the link to this and to previous web picks at the TTOS web page: <http://www.ttos-sv.org/BoxcarJack.htm>  
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## LIMITED EDITION SP EXPRESS CAR



To celebrate TTOS National Meets in Sacramento and Chicago, TTOS-SVD commissioned this custom-number (#5700), O gauge "INTER-DIVISION" car by Weaver. TTOS info on end panels only!

**Limited time price reduction: \$35 or three for \$100 plus tax, available at our monthly meets**



# Meeting Notes

by Phil Fravesi, SVD Secretary

# Treasurer's Report

by Bryan Stanton, SVD Treasurer

June 5, 2010

New member: **Merlyn Lausten**

Unanimous vote for **Curt Darling** to negotiate with Holiday Inn for 2011 meetings.

**John DeHaan** has arranged for a speaker to give a presentation about the Roseville rail yard explosions at the November meeting.

July 3, 2010

New member: **Chris Shelgren**

**Dave Otth** gave a presentation for the Cal-Stewart meet in Pasadena, November 19-21. It will be held at the same time as the 100th year celebration of the Boy Scouts of America. There will be displays at the convention center for Scouting.



*Dave Otth talks about the Cal-Stewart fall meet*

There was a discussion around cancelling the 2011 and 2012 national convention, but the penalties are too costly. It was suggested to make a proposal for bi-annual conventions.

There is a proposed "bond" sale for National from the divisions in the planning stages at this time.

August 7, 2010

**John De Haan** returned from the TTOS National Convention and presented the latest from the National Board meeting. National is committed to the convention in South Carolina in 2011 and Santa Clara in 2012. The Board was urged not to make any commitments beyond 2012. A motion is being drafted to make the conventions bi-annual. Evidently, there is a stipulation in California law that requires the Club to hold a meeting once year but that does not have to be a convention. The club is founded and headquartered in California.

The TTOS Bulletin is changing from six issues yearly to four as a cost saving measure.

There was discussion regarding the financial situation with National. If National files for bankruptcy, the creditors have the right to take funds from the divisions. At this time, Lionel (\$19,000) and the company that prints the Bulletin (\$29,000) are the largest creditors.

A motion was made by **Pete White** to donate \$2,000 to National for the sole purpose of paying the Bulletin printer. The motion was seconded and passed with 40 in favor and 4 opposed.

I have sent the \$2,000 payment to TTOS National for their debt that they acquired for printing. This should help them out a lot.

**John DeHaan** announced Lionel will be giving our club new track for the layout - Standard Gauge track and Fast Track for the 3 oval loops that the layout has. The layout has been upgraded with two new MTH Z-4000 transformers and with the new track on the way. **Curt Darling** has bundles of new wire for rewiring the layout. The only thing we need now is to replace the old warped wood boards that everything mounts to, and the S-gauge track. Time has taking its toll to the old wood layout. It's time for a fresh start on the layout and to make it top notch for all of us to use and show at train shows and special events. We also have a Lionel TMCC unit in stock which we use and a MTH DCS set coming.

P.S. All of our Club cars are still for sale at \$35.00 each. This includes the new Weaver Reefer and the two TTOS Western Pacific convention cars from 1993 and 1995.

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## **Down the track**

Upcoming events of interest to SVD members

**September 4: SVD Meet - Hilton Garden Inn, Elk Grove\***  
**(Followed by a tour of the Fravesi Layout)**

**September 18-19: SVD Layout at the Folsom Historic Railroad and  
Transportation Festival at Folsom Pointe**

**October 2: SVD River City Toy Train Meet - Scottish Rite Center**

**November 6: SVD Meet - Holiday Inn, Elk Grove\***

November 19-21: Cal-Stewart Meet. Pasadena

**Thanksgiving Weekend: SVD Layout at CSRM Train Time for Santa Event**

**December 4: SVD Meet - Holiday Inn, Elk Grove\***

December 4-5: TTOS San Joaquin Valley Division Train Show, Turlock

\*meetings begin at 9:30 AM