

THE SIDE TRACK

WINTER

NEWS

from the Toy Train Operating Society
Sacramento Valley Division

2010

Jerry Azzaro, editor

President's Message

by John DeHaan

Well, it's been an exciting time for us since the last Side Track! We voted to build a new layout and last month we saw a prototype section built by **Dave Ashman, Mike De La Pena, Carl Curtis and Tom Wackerley**. It was the focus of a lot of attention and I heard a lot of constructive suggestions and comments. (The session carried on out in the hall long after the meeting ended.)

There are plans to have the new layout ready for operation at the TCA National Meet in Sacramento June 26-July 3 next year. We will need a lot of support – technical and logistical to get it ready, so sign up today with Dave! The first set of tables will be ready soon. Lionel is sending the Fast Track for the O ga. (and Std ga?) loops and sending their Tech Wizard, Mike Reagan to install it. We need the equivalent of that for S ga. and someone said S-helper makes it. Any contacts or suggestions you have? See me or Dave.

The present layout will be on display at CSRM for 2 days (Fri and Sat) this year and then at the Great Train Expo at Cal Expo on January 16th -17th! So sign up today if you want to see your trains go! Don't forget we will have a get-together on New Years Day at the Holiday Inn – and it will be pot luck so bring your favorite goodies to share. We didn't get our food and toy drive organized this year so if you don't bring anything to the Dec. meet you will have another chance on Jan 1st!

There was a teleconference National Board Meeting on Oct. 30th and there was a lot of good news from HQ. Thanks to the changes instituted since Aug., National expects to be well in the black next year. Thanks to the cash generous donations by SVD, Cen Cal and

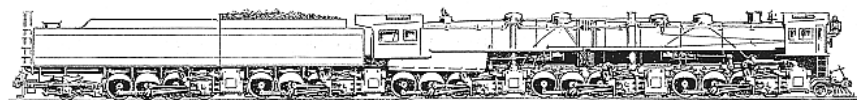
Horseshoe Curve Divisions and individual members the past due accounts at the printers (MLP) have been brought nearly up to date and Lionel has been paid off in full. The Bulletin will only be issued 4 times/year for now until the cash flow is better. That will save a lot of money. We need more how-to articles and found-treasure stories for the Bulletin to make it more fun to read. If you have a short story about a person, train (toy or 1:1 scale), museum event or your own layout, write it up. Doesn't have to be fancy – just interesting and fun!

Our motion to change annual conventions to every other year was discussed but we lost our quorum before any vote was taken. It seems that California Corporations law make it very complicated to split off 'annual' meetings! Right now the annual conventions are planned for: Charleston, SC, 2011, Santa Clara, CA, 2012, with a possible meet in Reno in 2013. Long-range plans are to have the 50th Annual Meeting (2016) in Long Beach at the Queen Mary!

Our big problem is dwindling membership. Despite recruiting efforts, our national membership is down to about 3,500 (from 4,000+ last year). Such low membership make it really hard to pay the bills. The only answer is to get all our fellow train enthusiasts to join by showing them what a great time they can have by operating, trading and talking toy trains with us! Any time we have the layout or go to a local show be sure to mention TTOS and our division. (We are up to 117 official SVD members now!)

By the time you read this, the election will be over (ballots were due Nov. 29th) so we all hope you all voted. Our new board takes office on Jan. 1st to launch another fun year!

Best holiday wishes.



Home Layout Tours

by Jack Hornor, Chairman and SVD Vice President

The November Layout Tour took us to Jack Ahearn's amazing home in Sacramento. Jack lives in a single-wide mobile home that's also home to a beautifully decorated Standard gauge layout. Oh, also in his living room you'll find "Pineville," his classic O gauge Christmas layout. The Lionel paper houses were made during WW II when our trains went to war. Not to worry, Jack still has comfortable digs with room for guests amid his "pikes," as he calls them.

But wait – the Park manager has caught some of Jack's enthusiasm for trains and has helped him

turn the clubhouse into a toy train lover's delight. She had an operating overhead G gauge layout installed, and Jack has created a truly fantastic 4 by 8 Plasticville layout. The interesting part was how inexpensive and original his creations are. Many of the plants and shrubs are made from cut up plastic flowers from Michael's, the streets, building and mountain sides are pictures copied from the internet, changed to the proper size and color, printed and cut to fit. The overall layout looks terrific. For those of us who have little or (in his case) no room for layouts a trip to Jack's might change your mind.

JACK AHEARN'S PLASTICVILLE STORY:

*Ike's in the White House;
James Dean's on the Silver Screen;
Lucy & Desi are in your living rooms;
. . and Plasticville, U.S.A. is right there with you!*

Looking at the downtown area, one can see that Plasticville has grown from a small western town of the 1880's into a fast moving and progressive town of the 1950's.

What once was a small railroad depot with a bean & hash house, a row of stores and a few saloons is now reflective of thousands of small suburban towns spread all across the U.S.A.

Old-timers groaned when the back-to-back row of stores on Front and First streets burned down and were replaced with just a single row of modern looking stores, a big city bank and very wide and fancy sidewalk. They miss the old livery stable and blacksmith shop and rue the day it was replaced by the Shell gas station. They also like the looks of the landscaped path along the tracks, but miss the few old saloons that it replaced! They also wonder about the new factory across the way. And what's that about a future road to a turnpike...what's one of them things?

As for the other side of First Street, well, there was always a church on the corner, but the one-room school house sure has gotten bigger. And, the sheriff's office has gotten larger and fancier. As for the firehouse, they liked it better when it was run by the volunteer fire brigade and had a pool table and a few chairs outside to sit and shoot the breeze about the last fire while waiting for the next.

As for the town's young families: They like the modern relaxed looks of Front Street with its trees and benches. Wives enjoy the nursery, fruit stand and their station wagons, while the men just love any car with tail fins. As for the teens; their world starts and ends at the Chicken Planet Drive-In!

Pride of all the folks is the new Community Library, Museum and Park. It's the family gathering spot for meetings, picnics and holiday celebrations or, jest plain 'ol relaxing by a small pond.

Oh, yeah...ya'll see the elderly gent with his grand kids outside his hillside farm house? Well, he's jest a pointin' out that as far as they can see...was once'n all his grand-pappy's cattle spread! In a another minute, they'll stroll over to the other side of the house...and look down at all the new split level and ranch style homes being planned for the future growth of...**Plasticville, U.S.A.!**



Photos of Jack's Layouts



The Pineville O-gauge Christmas layout



Plasticville street scene



Downtown Plasticville



Jack's beautifully-decorated Standard Gauge layout



Period autos pick up and drop off passengers at the station on Jack's Standard Gauge layout

FUTURE MEETS

The 2011 Home Layout Season

Our first home layout tour will be after the February 5 meeting, and **Dave and Marcy Thomsen** have invited us back to Woodland. We all admire Dave's imagination and craftsmanship, and if you, by any chance, like John Deere tractors, then this is a must!

In April, we'll see more artistry and inventiveness when we jump up to Eldorado Hills to the **Basile's**. This will be our second trip in two years, but I'm sure **Gaetano** and **Tony** will have more surprises for us.

Then June, and it's Meadow Vista time at the **Craigheads'** and **Wellses'**. If you remember, a terrible wind storm hit our area in January 2008. A huge tree fell on **Rose and Kit's** home, completely crushing their train room and their train collection. The home is all fixed now, of course, and a new layout is up and happily running. Two doors down, **Paul and Susane** will have their home and another living room layout open, too.

In the last half of the year, we have **Dean Busick** and **John Leins** "penciled in." They both have incentives now to finish their layouts.

Jack Hornor



A New Modular Layout for the Sacramento Valley Division

Earlier this year the membership voted to replace the old layout which had begun to show its age. A new design was developed with ease of transportation and setup in mind. A prototype section was presented at the November 6th meeting.



Mike DeLa Pena (right) discusses the new prototype module at the meeting while Dave Ashman invites members to fill out a suggestion form



Module prototype constructors (left to right) Mike DeLa Pena, Dave Ashman, Carl Curtis and Tom Wackerly



Membership News

It's That Time Already!

It is hard to believe that a year has passed by and it is time to renew your Sacramento Valley Division dues. Our new membership chair is **Tim Taormina**, and he will begin collecting dues at the February meeting. If you would rather send your dues by mail, please complete the membership application form found online (go to <http://www.ttos-sv.org/Membership.htm> and click on "2011 Membership Renewal Form").

You should have received a renewal form from the National TTOS office at the time of year your national dues expired; if not, go to the National web site and download a renewal form. Just a reminder -- you need to be a member of the National organization to be a member of a division.

Treasurer's Report

by Bryan Stanton, SVD Treasurer

Since I do not know the outcome of the vote from our club election as I write this, I want to thank everyone who did vote for me for Treasurer.

The Scottish Rite TTOS club show did very good considering there were a few unsold tables and looked like attendance was down just a bit. The club made \$1625.00 after everything was paid for. Still a very good day for the club. Also thanks to all who helped out making it a successful show.

Hope everyone has a good holiday and gets lots of trains as gifts. Maybe a TTOS-SVD Club Car?

Thank you very much,

Bryan Stanton.





BOXCAR JACK'S WEB PICKS

Seems like every Christmas some of us are getting older.....hey, how about this Christmas, all of us, get a little, naw, a lot younger!

by Jack Ahearn

All Gauge Page *Fun with Model Railroading*

All Gauge Page

Fun with Model Railroading



This website isn't designed for rocket scientists, perfectionists or picky-picky prudies! Rather, it's written, photo'd and designed for the whole family, in fact, the younger the better. As the banner atop <http://www.thortrains.net/index.html> states; "**Extensive Resources for Model Railroading!**"

The seemingly endless list of features starts out with dozens of layout designs for small places and offers some nice track designs and photo's of said same...some look like they were either copied from or inspired by fellow members, DAVE THOMSEN and JOHN LEINS!

As you scroll down, you'll quickly see that Marx Trains are very much present on this site. Along with plenty of Marx layout pix and catalogued items there's even have a great page titled 'Marx Blue Comet...a stunning mystery train'. Well, it is stunning and quite Remarkable!

Oh, yeah...there are some movies of Crazy Cats chasing Toy Trains...MeeeeeOOOW...WoooSH!

If you've a mind to help the grand kids build some houses for their train villages...you'll find some quaint cut-outs; easily downloadable, cut-outable and Tab-A into Slot B-able and probably "you finish it aloneable!"

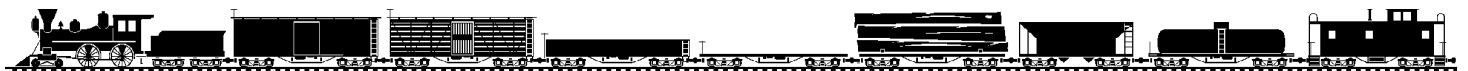
There are also pages of Lionel and Flyer in all gauges...so keep strolling down, even when you thinks it's the end...it's not!

I'll close with this thought; it's a fun site with both plenty of written information, tips and suggestions for all kinds of toy train fun...but mostly, the kind of fun...that we have fun remembering. The fun we had...when a train circling 'neath a lit-up tinsel tree...was all the fun...we ever needed!

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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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SVD Layout a star at Folsom Pointe Event

John McLeod sent some photos of our layout on display at this September 18-19 event in Folsom



Meeting Notes

by Phil Fravesi, SVD Secretary

September 4, 2010

Election of Division officers is coming up soon and we need a nominating committee. **Jack Ahearn** and **George Ann Hornor** have volunteered for the task.

It appears National has turned the corner financially with contributions from some of the Divisions. The national membership has dropped to 3700 members and we need to promote membership to sustain the club.

Building a new layout was discussed. Some suggestions for the layout are: full accounting, strong and light weight, steel framing, first build a prototype for approval, a staging area, multiple gauges, things to make it popular with young people, interactive with controls on the outside for youngsters to operate whistles, horns, light and accessories, flexible configuration with interchangeable tables, easy plug in set up.

October 2, 2010 Scottish Rite meet. No meeting or minutes.

September 6, 2010

New member, **Jim Sawyer**

John covered the highlights from the National Board meeting held via phone October 30, 2010. National has requested Divisions compare their rosters against the National membership. Membership in National is required for membership in a Division.

A prototype section of the new layout was on display for inspection and discussion by the members. The club must move forward to take advantage of the offer from Lionel to supply and install the new track.

Nomination of officers for the Division were held. They are as follows:

President: **John Dehaan, Tom Gibson**
Vice President: **Jack Hornor**
Treasurer: **Bryan Stanton, Tim Taormina**
Secretary: **Phil Fravesi**

George Ann will print the ballot and mail to all Division members. Send marked ballots to **Jack Ahearn** in the self addressed envelope. Don't forget to add a postage stamp!

There was a brief discussion about security at the October meeting at Scottish Rite. Short story made even shorter, there were numerous items stolen at the meet from several vendors.

Submitted by Phil Fravesi

SVD Layout at CSRM "Train Time for Santa" Annual Event

Our layout made its appearance at the annual Thanksgiving Weekend event, along with some SVD members who presented their own small layouts. Thanks to all members who participate in this and help to give the toy train hobby the exposure it deserves.

Photos by **Jack Hornor** and **Barbara Rohrs**



The layout occupied prime real estate next to the Santa Fe "Super Chief" dining car "Cochiti" and the hand car rides

George Ann Hornor operates the small layout she and **Jack** brought to the event



Tony Rohrs and **Dave Thomsen** share operating duties on Dave's layout



Detail view of Dave's layout



John Leins with his popular Marx layout



Detail view of John's layout

Down the track

Upcoming events of interest to SVD members

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

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

January 1, 2011: SVD Meet/Pot Luck - Holiday Inn, Elk Grove*

January 8-9, 2011: Antique Toy Show, Woodland

January 15-16, 2011: Great Train Expo - Cal Expo Center**

February 5, 2011: SVD Meet - Holiday Inn, Elk Grove*

March 5, 2011: SVD Meet - Holiday Inn, Elk Grove*

*meetings begin at 9:30 AM **SVD Layout will be in operation

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.