

THE SIDE TRACK

WINTER

NEWS

from the Toy Train Operating Society
Sacramento Valley Division

2011

Jerry Azzaro, editor

President's Message

by John DeHaan

December is here – that means toy train season! We had a successful show at the Scottish Rite (despite some competition from the Great Train Expo show at Richmond). We have signed a contract with Scottish Rite for Oct 6, 2012. They have increased the rent (to \$2100 for a day just for the main hall – the lobby is extra) but since we are long-standing renters, **Jeff Silvera** negotiated a rate of \$1300 for us. It is suspected that they will continue to raise the rent there, so I urge everyone to keep an eye out for a new venue for 2013. Several locations have been suggested by members and have been scoped out. Most are in the same rent bracket, others are much smaller or have limited parking (or charge for parking) so none have been approved. Moving the meet from a long-established venue with free parking is going to be a challenge.

Speaking of rent – **Curt Darling** has negotiated another year at the Holiday Inn Express for us. This has been a very popular venue for its easy access, free parking, and restaurants nearby.

The November meeting included a presentation by **John Bush** of the Roaring Camp and Big Trees Railroad in Felton (Santa Cruz). There are actually two operations there, so there's something for all rail fans. A straw poll at the meeting showed a lot of support for a group excursion there in the Spring. We will work with John to set up some plans. John has also been the operations chief or chief mechanic for the Cumbres & Toltec, the Georgetown Loop, and the Yukon & White Pass Railroads. We will set up a presentation by him at a future monthly meeting (in lieu of a layout tour, perhaps).

Our operating layout draws admiration wherever it's set up. Its Fastrack and wide curves gives smooth operation for even the fussiest of modern locos. We've decided, though, that the layout is too big for most of our venues,

so **Pete Keesling** has offered to store one of the rolling racks of modules at his place to give us more room in the trailer. We usually have enough O-gauge operators, but very few S-gaugers have been running. That track sits empty too often. If we don't get more operators, we may replace that track with another loop of O-gauge. That would disappoint a lot of us who really like the scale appearance, choo-choo, and steady smoke of A-F classics. So oil up those S-gauge locos and bring 'em out to play.

The TTOS National Convention is coming to SANTA CLARA in 2012. National is organizing it but the Golden State Division needs our help in staffing registration, tours, docents, and other functions. Plan now to take part – not just show up! Dates are August 7-11, 2012. E-mail **Bob Krivacic** at bobkrivacic@hotmail.com with your names and ideas.

The 2013 National Convention is planned for Reno-Sparks. There are negotiations planned to co-host it with LCCA, if dates can be shifted. Our help will be needed there as well.

National itself seems to be doing pretty well. The Charleston convention reportedly broke even, the Lionel invoice is getting paid off, and the Firefly convention cars sold very well. A lot of the "old" convention cars have been sold out thanks to Randy's Roundhouse Sales. Several of the incumbents have declined to run again. A nominations committee has put together a slate of candidates for president, treasurer and board members and the ballots should be out next week, with a due date of January 1st. So be sure to vote and show support for the new faces. They still face some major issues, one of the biggest being declining membership. Please encourage any toy train people you meet to join TTOS National (and SVD, of course).

That's it for now. Enjoy a festive holiday season with your families and your trains!



Home Layout Tours

by Jack Horner, SVD Vice President and Layout Tour Coordinator

What a treat, on September 9th we had another great layout tour to **Dean Busick's** combination Post War and Modern 17 foot by 17 foot layout. Incorporated into this beautiful layout is a Lionel Dealer Model D-291 5 foot by 9 foot operating original Super-O layout. This early dealer layout was all original including the operating trains and original operating accessories. The remainder of this artistically built layout uses Ross switches and Ross track with the roadbed. The outer main lines are O-80 and O-72 and will handle all of the modern engines and even look good with the new modern passenger cars. The layout operates conventionally, with TMCC and has the new Legacy control also. It is powered by two MTH Z-4000 transformers for the trains only and with ZW's for the switches and accessories. The accessories include an operating transfer table, a Bascule bridge and two lift bridges, plus such things as a car wash, fire station, a drive-in and many others. The lighting on the layout is mostly LED and includes two theaters, a Casino and an ice loading station using strip LED's. The train room lighting is a carry over from Dean's past occupation as a Lighting Director for theaters that put on major plays, and is outstanding. Since we were here last, Dean has added a raised section of operation with tunnels over the main lines. He built this with blue Styrofoam and painstakingly hand carved and painted all of the rock faces and tunnel portals, a great job. The layout is a mix of the old (Lionel Dealer D-291) and the new high rail with a lot of attention to detail.

We wish to thank Dean and his sister for a great pizza lunch and hospitality, making Saturday a great day well spent viewing a beautiful layout capable of operating several trains at a time.



In this view from the heights of **Dean's** new mountain division, SVD members gather around the huge layout.



The Lionel dealer layout (foreground) is the centerpiece of **Dean's** layout.



Timber is the chief industry along the mountain division.



Dean operates the locomotive transfer table.



Jack Horner, Paul Wells, Lee Deter and Jack Ahearn contemplate an action accessory on the Lionel dealer layout.



Panoramic view of the locomotive service facility.

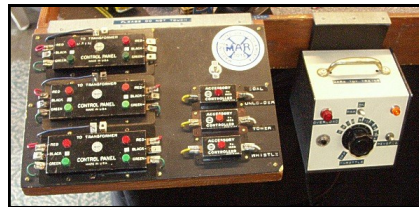
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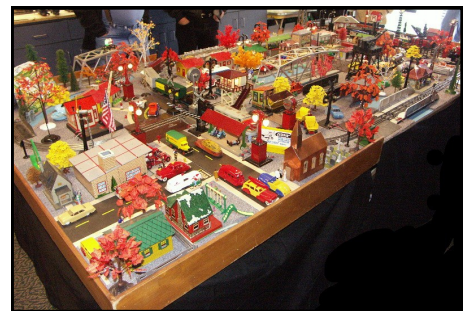
On Saturday November 5, 2011, SVD members were treated to a great Marx layout tour and lunch hosted by **Mary Lou and John Leins** at their Fairfield, CA home. John had set up a 3 piece portable 5 foot by 10 foot mostly Marx layout in his garage. His artistic and sheet metal talent was displayed on an interesting double loop layout using Marx and Lionel 027 track with Marx remote switches. Beside the artistically placed Michael's trees, corn stalks and other scenery was a scratch built copper church that was professional in appearance. The litho houses, buildings and accessories from many long gone manufacturers were lighted and in excellent shape. John's control system was also hand made by him, consisting of a variac with an output that was connected to a fixed 110 VAC to 17 VAC transformer all in a nicely manufactured box also made by John. There were many operating Marx accessories that actually operated, and Marx lights dating to before WWII. The Leins's collection of Marx was an excellent representation of Marx train manufacturing from 1934 to 1970. The streets, autos, trucks, buildings, accessories and trees were very professionally placed on the layout showing what can be done with originally inexpensive Marx toys that many of us had as kids. I know this because my first trains were Marx which was all my parents could afford during the depression years of the 1930's. However they were like gold to me at the time. Thank you **John, Mary Lou and family** for a great afternoon of train fun and a great lunch.



SVD members crowd into **John's** garage for a look at the colorful Marx layout.



John's control panel includes the variac controller he built.



Overall view of **John's** Marx empire



John seems to be saying to **Geary** and **Tim**, "It's Marx. You just hook it up and it runs."



Tour hosts **Mary Lou and John Leins**



Tim Taormina gets a lesson in Marxism from **Jack Horner**.

photos below: Things are always busy in downtown Girard. Locals have to keep an eye out for trains coming from all directions.



BOXCAR JACK'S WEB PICKS

Moved to temporary quarters -

Click [HERE](#) to jump to the
Side Track Christmas Supplement
and enjoy the Holiday Web Pick

Treasurer's Report

by Bryan Stanton, SVD Treasurer

The TTOS has rerun our ad in The Bulletin for the SP Club Car and we have sold another 24 cars. I will have sent a check for the deposit of the Scottish Rite for our October Meet by the time this is published. We also have purchased some buildings and a TTOS banner plus some Christmas items for the club layout for the Sacramento Train Museum. Should look real nice.

The membership dues payments have started to roll in. I want to thank all who have renewed their memberships before they are expired at the end of 2011. Still \$20 for a basic single membership and \$25 for a family.

TTOS club cars are still available at a price of 35.00 each.
Great Stocking stuffer!

Happy Holidays to all.

Bryan Stanton

Membership News

By Tim Taormina, membership chair

Where has the year gone? It's fall and time for 2012 registration renewals. Members attending the November meeting had the opportunity to not only get reregistered for 2012 but also get their new Membership Cards. For those of you who didn't have the chance to get this done at the November meeting, please be sure to see me at the December or January meeting to reregister (\$20 for single and \$25 for family) or renew by mail: 5509 DanJac Circle, Sacramento, CA 95822. If you know of anyone who is interested in joining TTOS, please have them contact me. Now is the time to join to get full value for membership dues!

New members joining us at the November meeting included **John Bristow** and **Dave and Pat Kennedy**! Welcome folks!

Meeting Notes

by Phil Fravesi, SVD Secretary

September 3, 2011

Guests: **Mike McKinney**
Paul Shelgren, Jr.
Ira Keeler

New Member: **Brett Taylor**

The loss of **Donna Shelgren** and **Mike Kalina** was noted.

The club will sign a new contract with the Holiday Inn Express for another year.

The club will be checking for another location for the River City meet in October for the future. The Scottish Rite has raised its rates again and will continue to do so. The cost in becoming too prohibitive.

There is a conflict with another event the first Saturday in January. There was a show of hands to cancel our monthly meeting.

Jerry Azzaro discussed surviving spouse membership again. He will re-write the proposal for the next meeting.

October 1, 2011 River City Meet (no general meeting)

November 5, 2011

Guest: **John Bush** from Roaring Camp RR
Paul Shelgren, Jr.

Reminder: The club will be collecting food and toy donations at the December meeting. The Sacramento Valley Division always make a big showing for this event so please bring your food and or new unwrapped toys to donate.

The rental agreement for Scottish Rite was discussed. The hall rent is \$1300 plus \$150 each for the lobby area and the kitchen area (not including food prep area). Our attendance was down this year due to a competing show; therefore, our revenues were down from table sales and admission at the door. A motion was made and carried to renew with the Scottish Rite for the next meet in October 2012.

A motion by **Jerry Azzaro** to allow surviving family members to receive the Sidetrack and attend meetings carried.

John Bush representing the Roaring Camp RR gave a presentation about the railroad and what they have to offer visitors.

NOTE: Dues are now payable through February for 2012. The dues are \$20 for single membership and \$25 for a family membership. Avoid penalties for late payment. If you are not attending the December or February meeting, please send your check to **Tim Taormina**. His address is in the membership directory.

Phil Fravesi

Happy Birthday, Betty!

SVD member **Betty Musselman** celebrated her 92nd birthday by displaying her Marx layout at C.S.R.M.'s Thanksgiving "Small Trains Holiday".



Mrs. Santa Claus delivers a birthday card to **Betty** at C.S.R.M.

Photos: Jack Ahearn



SVD President **John DeHaan** brings good wishes and shares a bit of birthday cake with **Betty**.

SVD Layout at TCA Sacramento Convention

Don Geoffroy sent these photos of our new layout in operation at the Sacramento Convention Center. These were not received in time for our last issue.



Geary's Lionel Dealer Display Layout

SVD member and former president **Geary Musselman** brought his Lionel "Dealer" layout to the September meeting. Geary put his excellent model-building skills to good use, creating a small layout that closely resembles a Lionel pre-war dealer display.



2011 River City Meet

Poor lighting in the halls kept us from getting photos of all the displays.



Down the track

Upcoming events of interest to SVD members (SVD events are in **BOLD**)

December 3: SVD Meet* - Holiday Inn, Elk Grove

December 3-4: TTOS San Joaquin Valley Division Train Show, Turlock

January 2012: NO SVD Meet

January 14-15: Great Train Expo—Cal Expo

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

March 3: SVD Meet* - Holiday Inn, Elk Grove

*Meetings begin at 9:30 AM

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.