

THE SIDE TRACK

NEWS

from the Toy Train Operating Society Sacramento Valley Division

FALL**2012***Come for the trains. Stay for the people.*

Jerry Azzaro, editor

President's Message

by John DeHaan

The good news is that TTOS looks like it will survive, both nationally and locally! After a prolonged board meeting at Santa Clara, and what appears to be a successful convention, threats of impending failure of TTOS National seem to have been very premature. New President **Don Kyle**, and new Board members **Rick Plummer** and **Ron Di Simone** have put out a tremendous effort in turning the sinking ship into safer waters and stopping the leaks. Several anonymous members and several divisions (including ours) have made substantial loans and donations. Bachmann-Williams was paid off in full and they released all the beautiful O-gauge convention cars from last year (the Firefly cars with LEDs. The Silver State Division paid the postage and all ordered ones were available at the convention or have been mailed. Some are still available for purchase. The S-gauge cars were released a few weeks ago and most of the pre-purchased ones have been shipped from TTOS HQ. If you ordered an S-gauge Firefly car and did not receive it, let HQ know.

The big change at HQ is that they will be moving the office to a "shared" space with volunteer club members handling the business of the office. **Anthony Giroux** is leaving as of 31 August. There will be no paid employees. Voice mail and email messages will be picked up every day by Ron Di Simone and forwarded to the correct person if he cannot handle it. For now, the physical address, phones, and email info will stay the same. Much of the club business will be moved to virtual internet or cloud sources so that more people will have access remotely. The office computer crashed last week and took the membership database with it, so that is being rebuilt now. The "new" membership cards proved to be too flimsy for the post office sorting machines, so many have been damaged and returned to HQ. If you have not received your membership card, please contact HQ for a replacement (as I had to do recently). The Canadian Division has officially withdrawn as a TTOS Division. There were on-going problems with currency exchanges, postage, and taxes (as well as residual anger over the cancellation of the Vancouver Convention a few years ago).

TTOS National still owes Lionel for the S-gauge cars and MLP Printing for the "old" Bulletin. The balance sheet is much better with each Board meeting as Don, Ron and others have sorted out the mess. The Convention was a great event (see story elsewhere) and it looks like it may break even (with our room night guarantee nearly met). The raffles and auctions were all donated items – some of them very rare and valuable. All of the proceeds of the silent auction, live auction and raffles went to the club treasury thanks to the generosity of the donors (mostly members). The auction proceeds alone should have put the

National treasury into the black (one item, an S-gauge prototype convention loco that was never produced, went for over \$7000!).

The "new" Bulletin which is going to the printer this week, will be on lighter paper stock that will save a lot in printing and postage costs. There are no outstanding debts for convention cars (there was not one this year) as we had in previous years. Next year's convention will be in Reno and shared with LOTS. They will host the tours and we will host the train trading hall. They will meet in the Nugget Hotel; we will be in the Grand Sierra about ¾ mile away. There will be joint registrations but separate banquets, welcoming parties, and membership meetings. The combined meet will run from July 7 to 13, 2013 including the tours (with a possible extension of the trading hall days to include Sunday July 14th). LOTS is considering a wonderful array of tours including V&T excursions, Nevada and California State Railway Museums, auto museums, Lake Tahoe cruises, and others. Silver State and CenCal TTOS are the "local" co-hosts (as Golden State and SVD were for Santa Clara. We will not have any guaranteed room nights or meal obligations. Advance bookings will close June 8, 2013 to get the best rates (\$89 per night+ taxes) and free bonus amenities, so watch for the same post cards announcing registrations in January or February! (Mailing postcards instead of full brochures saved TTOS over \$5000 in postage this year!) **J Keeley** and **Brian Fields** will continue as convention chairs in light of the great job they did in pulling this year's together in just 5 months. There are NO plans yet in place for 2014 and 2015, so if you have suggestions, send them to Don Kyle!

On to our news... Our incorporation papers were filed with the State in June and we are now incorporated as the **Sacramento Valley Toy Train Club, Inc.** We are still working out the IRS, legal, insurance, and business arrangements. For the moment, the current SVD Board is also acting as the Board of Directors of SVTTC, Inc. CenCal, San Joaquin, and Golden State Divisions have also incorporated separately. They have transferred their existing treasuries to the new corporations, an action that may not be proper. We are seeking legal advice now. We are still the **Sacramento Valley Division of TTOS** for now. With the brighter outlook for National, we are ALL encouraging our members to stay members of National. If you have not renewed your membership, please do so. There will be advantages (on-line sales, insurance, Bulletins) to staying a member of National. Starting in January, the dues you pay to SVTTC will go into our own treasury to pay for our meetings, Side Track, insurance and the like.

Speaking of next year, I had planned to step down as President and **Phil Fravesi** has planned to step down as Secretary. (The incorporation issues may complicate my plans, however.) I have asked **Jack Ahearn** to be the Nominations Committee Chairman to recruit candidates for the election in November, so please contact Jack to put your hat in the ring. Phil has done a fine job as secretary

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President's Message

(continued from page 1)

and can tell you it's not a daunting job – recording motions, votes, and policy statements at monthly meetings and our rare Board meetings. **Bryan Stanton** and **Jack Hornor** are planning to offer themselves for re-election to their current posts.

It was clear from our meetings and the National meetings that we need to make a greater effort to promote the toy train hobby and get new members. Outreach programs include show-and-tell sessions at schools, libraries, Scout troops, and the like. **Dave Otth** has created the Toy Train Heritage Foundation to promote toy trains in connection with disadvantaged, disabled, or orphaned children's organizations. Our best advertisements are the wonderful table-top layouts our members have created. We will explore ways of supporting the existing ones and encouraging the creation of new ones (and informational displays about toy trains – All gauges for all Ages!). This may entail donations of materials, time, or transport. I will look forward to your ideas. Our **River City Meet** in October will give us a chance to showcase some of the current offerings. Our operating layout is a great tool but it is so big that it takes a large crew to transport, install, and operate it. That is why it was NOT at the National Convention. I could not recruit a large enough crew to donate the time and costs involved. Too bad to miss a chance to show off what our club can do.

Our own club is in good shape. We have the best newsletter in TTOS (thanks to Jerry and his contributors). We will have numerous chances to buy, sell, and play with our trains in the next few months as the toy train season approaches (see Down the Track in this issue).

I have to be out of the country teaching in September but I will see you in October at the Scottish Rite meet. Best wishes until then.

John DeHaan,
President TTOS-SVD
-and-
Chair, Board of Directors, SVTTC, Inc.!

Footnote:

John DeHaan has been offered several commemorative medallions struck in .999 fine silver in 1991 for the 25th Anniversary of TTOS. They were commissioned by Tom Gibson and were produced here in Sacramento. They were given out at the 1991 convention but a few ended up in the hands of a coin collector in Sacramento. They are still sealed in their plastic cases. If you are interested in one for \$45, please contact John at 707-642-8023.

Membership News

By Tim Taormina, membership chair

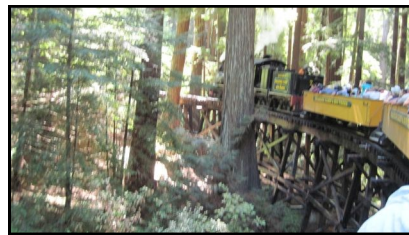
After one last round of reminders to those who hadn't yet renewed for 2012, we now have 106 current members. Since we now have a finalized Directory for the year, I will have copies available at the September meeting. We are always interested in new members, so if you know of anyone who likes operating or collecting toy trains, please have them give me a call at 916 441-4778 or e-mail me at trainfun@att.net.

Santa Clara was a great time!

Story and photos by John DeHaan

Thanks to a lot of work by **J Keeley, Brian Fields, Don Kyle, and Bob Krivacic**, the 2012 National Convention was a success and a great time for the 135+ registrants (plus family members) who attended. Back in March, TTOS wasn't sure there would be any convention and were faced with huge possible losses due to the contract for room nights, meals, and beverage guarantees. Well, we went ahead, and we had a great time. The Hyatt Hotel was wonderful, the food was fine (pricey but the restaurant, welcoming party, and the banquet were excellent). The trading hall was perfect. We had 100 tables and they sold out, so they put in a few more.

The excursion to Roaring Camp was terrific. Fine bus, 34 people, well organized. The morning ride was the narrow gauge logging route up and around the mountain (through a switch-back), in open cars



(we had our own), through wondrous scenery, with a 3-truck Shay pulling us up 8 and 9% grades in some spots. Back to the Camp for a hamburger barbecue in great weather, an hour to visit the (really) Big Trees in Henry Cowell

State Park, then down via the standard gauge line right to the Boardwalk in Santa Cruz. Motive power was a GP-9, with a mix of open and closed cars. Had an hour to explore the famous Boardwalk with ice cream, hot dogs, and roller coaster rides at the top of most to-do lists. Then back up to the Camp for our ride back.

The day at the city park with its small scale riding train and historic trolleys was also a big hit. Sadly, the day at the Winchester Mystery House and Tech Museum was cancelled due to low sign-up (probably in conflict with the trading hall that was to open that day). Refunds were issued on the spot so some of us had free money to spend at the hall. The layout tours on Friday night were terrific – including layouts at several members' houses, the big store-front permanent layout at Valco Plaza (run by Golden State Division), and a huge collection in the office of a local attorney.

The welcoming party had so much food and a bunch of really neat toy train items all donated by members for the silent auction to keep us there snacking. There was a National Board meeting at which we all got an update on the situation. There was a



membership meeting as well, but there were not enough members for a quorum, so the meeting was informational about the state of National and plans (now) for the future. The banquet had a minimum number of presentations, great food, a silent auction, a table gift for everyone, and a live auction with a lot of rare (some unique) and valuable items. The table gifts included new-in-box O- and S-gauge cars, so there was a lot of good-natured swapping at every table. (SVD donated 12 of our 2009 SP express cars, and several people wanted the graffiti decals!) Yours truly helped unload (and load) vendors at the back dock and all the vendors I talked to had a good turnover (with the public admitted on both afternoons to boost sales). There were also great raffles on both days to keep people in the hall to the end, a fine idea! All items for the auctions, raffles and tables were donated so all proceeds went to TTOS. Another great idea. So, if you missed it, you missed a really great time. Plan now to attend the joint TTOS-LOTS convention in Reno next July and don't miss another one!

Home Layout Tours

by Jack Hornor, SVD Vice President and Layout Tour Coordinator



Hosts **Kit and Rose Craighead**



Dave Thomsen and Karl Schmidt get a kick out of the Craigheads' layout

from before. The actual layout is mostly post war with some modern and even a display of prewar. The train room has two loops of 'O' around the top on a shelf with an operating Daylight train and an operating Shay pulling a load of timber (someone secretly told me that the timber was cut from the fallen tree). The main layout covers most of the room but has an aisle to get to everything. It consists of a double dog bone with many sidings and well landscaped including some great postwar and modern accessories. A nice touch is an open window with a leaning shelf from the hall to the layout room, allowing visitors and kibitzers to view the entire layout comfortably. The layout uses original 'O' gauge Lionel track (not O-27) and remote switches. The layout is controlled conventionally by older ZW transformers because, like many of us, Kit likes the feel of the handles simulating the operation of a real train. The Craigheads have a really nice scenic trolley layout in the living room high on one wall using bumper trolleys with sidings and stations as well as a great backdrop. We wish to thank them not only as great hosts but also for the yummy hot dog and chip lunch including drinks that they provided.

On June 2, 2012 TTOS SVD (before incorporation) members went on a real vacation outing and layout tour in Meadow Vista, CA. For us city folks it is not a place where you live, but a place where you go on a vacation to be in a beautiful, peaceful surrounding with wildlife and pine trees and get away from it all. We therefore might say that **Rose and Kit Craighead** and **Susane and Paul Wells** are living a continuous vacation life as well as being superb hosts for a layout tour with not one but **five** layouts between the two households.

The **Craigheads** have recovered beautifully from the fallen tree disaster and have even improved the layout



Rose stands on a table to pose with the trolley shelf layout

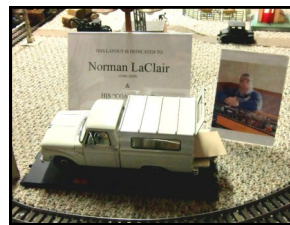


What's this?!? A **Junior Bridge** hiding on Rose and Kit's layout!

Now we walk through vacationland, two large properties away, to **Susane and Paul's** vacationland place for three more great layouts. The living room (like another member whose wife allowed him to use the living room for a layout to keep her spouse happy) is filled with a 4-train operating layout with many sidings using GarGraves track, however this is not all. There are two more operating layouts in the garage, one an O-gauge American Flyer operated by Susane and a Standard gauge layout built to honor our late layout chairman **Norman LaClair**, with Norman's coal train operated by Paul.



Paul commands the room-filling 'O' Gauge layout



The Standard Gauge layout features a model of Norman's truck built by **Dave Thomsen**. Miniature layout sections are loaded in the back.

These layouts are conventionally operated while the living room layout is being converted to TMCC at least partially. Yours truly operated the living room layout because the **WELLS' RAILROAD COMPANY** was short on engineers with three layouts operating at the same time.

It was a wonderful and fun day and we all had a good time and want to again thank our magnificent hosts **Rose and Kit** and **Susane and Paul**



John DeHaan, Susane and Paul Wells, Jack Ahearn and Frank Jablonski enjoy the Standard gauge layout (at left) and Susane's Flyer 'O' layout



Susane's layout is nicely detailed, as seen in these views



Future Tours

September 1: Jack Hornor's open house

November 1: Pete White's open house
(Pete's had been scheduled for November, but he asked to change it to December)

No plans for layout tours 2013 as of this time. There will be a California State Railroad Museum back shops privately conducted tour for our club exclusively either April 6 or May 4, 2013, if we can get a minimum of 20 members to commit to a full afternoon until 5 o'clock after either of the meet dates listed above. Because the public is never allowed in the shops there are no ADA facilities and the members must walk some distance.

TTOS Members visit Nevada City Attractions

Story and photos by John DeHaan



Nevada City Day was a lot of fun and educational! **Bill Wilson** put together quite a day for SVD members. The first stop was the Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad Museum just outside Nevada City. The line,



referred to by the locals as the "Never Come, Never Go Railroad" ran from Nevada City to Grass Valley to Chicago Park, and then to Colfax. Tons of gold from the prosperous mines of the area, lumber and passengers connected there to the main line for all points east and west. It operated from 1876 to 1942 (only shutting down when the mines were closed during the war). The museum holds a nice selection of freight cars and one passenger car, all being restored by volunteers. They have the 1875 Baldwin 2-6-0 Mogul (which was rendered non-operational during its movie career in the 40's and 50's). For motive power they have a couple Plymouth diesels and for excursions they built their own steamer (very much like a Porter). They have about a mile of track but it was operated on the grounds of a nearby hotel that changed hands and they are negotiating a deal to bring back those trips. There are a lot of excellent displays of the railroad's history and operations (including fires, wrecks, and other mishaps), but it is a museum of Nevada City transportation, so there are displays about the cars (including a locally-built "Jeffery" steam buggy), and even airplanes that kept people moving in Nevada County. It is operated by the Nevada County Historical Society so it is always looking for volunteers to help with restorations and donations to keep the doors open



Then it was off to the Northridge Inn for a great lunch. This nearly legendary place looks modest from the road but it was nearly filled by the time we left for our next stop – The Empire Mine in Grass Valley. This is a beautifully organized state park with first-rate staff and facilities. The Empire Mine operated from 1850 to 1956 and was one of the richest gold mines in America, yielding an estimated 5.8 million ounces of gold from its quartz ore. When combined with its "neighbor" – The Northstar Mine, it ultimately included 367 miles of tunnels and shafts, extending over 11,000 feet in some places, reaching depths of over one mile below the surface. Only the top 50 feet or so of the main shaft is accessible to visitors but there are plans to open at least one of the upper galleries (all of the mine flooded when the pumps were shut down in 1957 and groundwater could rush back in).

The beautiful home and clubhouse built by the Bourn family have been restored. The day we were there, a special charity event was

under way and the house was open with Mr and Mrs. William Bourn, Jr., their daughter, the mine superintendent George Starr and household staff (all roles played authentically by park staff in costume and character) as they would have welcomed guests in 1905. The grounds and gardens are beautifully landscaped. much as they were at that time (the Bourns also built the Filoli mansion and gardens in Woodside.)



We also visited the Machine and Blacksmith's shops, the Refinery (where the gold was melted, purified, and reduced to ingots), and offices. The highlight of the tour was having a docent, **Orlo Steele** (Retired Maj. General.

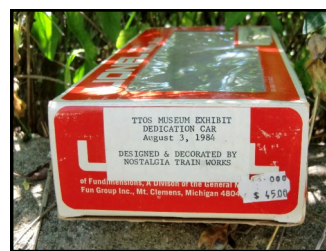
Marine Corps) who worked in the mine during its heyday in 1950 as a 16 year-old mucker before going to college. He was able to bring the silent exhibits to life by describing what it was like to be dropped into the depths of the mine, and to work with the drillers and powdermen, mules, and dangers. As the last park staffer to actually have worked the mine, he was a uniquely valuable interpreter. Our thanks to **Bill Wilson** for making such a great day possible.



Frank Jablonski's CSRM Museum Exhibit Car

Frank Jablonski brought this unusual car to the June layout tour to show us. It commemorates the August 3, 1984 dedication of the toy train exhibit at CSRM.

Frank has had the car for many years. It was a gift from his friend Bill Crook.



Bridging the Information Gap

All you've ever wanted to know, or *will* know, about Junior Bridge Company!

By Jack Ahearn

JUNIOR BRIDGE

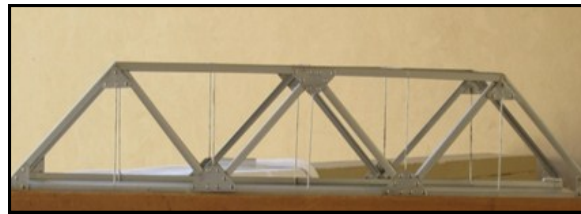
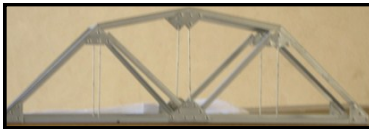
You've seen the book telling about everything that someone knew about something; turned out to be a ream of blank pages. My "tell all" was to be a pictorial history of the Junior Bridge Co. To my chagrin; plenty pix... nix hist!

Junior Bridges spanned a couple of decades and thousands of toy train tracks. Indeed, on a larger scale, they seemed to have spanned the Hudson River when showing a New York City address on some of their labeled boxes. And on even a larger scale...they bridged the Pond with a page of Junior Bridge photos on a United Kingdom website! <http://www.binnsroad.co.uk/railways/junior/index.html> 'Blimey mate...looka alla bloomen Yank bridges!'

Members of our division came forth with a plethora of bridges and the original boxes they came in. You'll see their spans spanned across this photo feature. However, the actual history of the Junior Bridge Co. could at best, be described as 'abridged.' I reached out to the "other club" research library in Strasburg and even the folks in Ridgefield Park, N.J., home of those long ago bridge builders. Alas, none could or would bridge the information gap! The 'other clubs' research librarian was very helpful by reaching out to her 'community' of collectors. They, like many others knew about the bridges, but nothing about those who had produced them. Might it then surprise anyone, that not one of the thousands of their products had a logo or any markings to identify them as being; 'Made by: Junior Bridge Co.' Sigh...those ubiquitous but anonymous bridges!

Okay, we've had a few chuckles and speculative comments. Now let's look on the positive side. Regardless of not knowing exactly the "who's, when's and where's" of those thousands of toy bridges ...we did and still do, see, buy and use them. Some guys love them for what they were yesterday and still are today. I'm one of those guys!

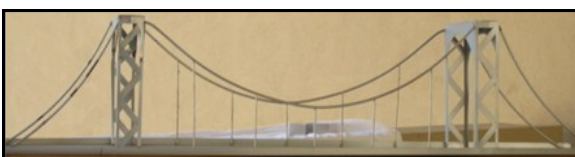
Junior Bridge packed a lot of play value into their accessories. Browsing inquisitively over many of our member's pictures will illustrate what I mean. First noticed are the many variations of their basic trestle's eighteen inch length to the twenty seven inch expanded version.



The sizes and configurations ranged from a simple girder bridge to an impressive twenty seven inch suspension type span!



The play value of this last item is fantastic! When used in its upright 'suspension' bridge position; it can be easily flipped over and used as a 'viaduct' type bridge. Just think, with a little creative scenic affect of a rocky chasm, the tall bridge towers in 'suspension' mode can be flipped over and have those twin towers act as support columns embedded in the chasm floor to support the bridge span at the top! If you want to get a little more action; custom cut the tracks as in a module. Then secure the tracks on top and bottom of the spans base plate with bolts and nuts through exactly matched tie holes. Wow, at a whim or to impress guests on subsequent visits...you could just flip the span and change the scene!



Continued next page



Bridging the Information Gap (continued from previous page)

Speaking of possible variations within one structure; how about their 'adjust-a-Bridge'...or might that be stretching "a bridge too far"?



If you choose to install a massive and realistic looking trestle on your layout, take a gander at the Junior Bridge double truss. It appears to be a couple of 18 inchers merged together to form a 27 inch cantilever trestle. Wow, can you imagine several of them used end to end!



Okay, Junior Bridge has carried our trains across our rivers and gullies, now let's see how they brought them through our mountains. Like their real counterparts; they built tunnels! (even if there wasn't a mountain to begin with.) What's interesting and unique about Jr. B.'s tunnels is the block or traffic lites on the portals. More play value for kids to avoid mid tunnel train crashes...despite the fact that the tunnel is single track. Oh, well, perhaps there's a crossing outside the very far end of the eleven inch long "mountain". Or, perhaps the layout is a pure figure eight configuration. Ah, such an uncomplicated track plan would surely get complicated, and loud, if it had two train operation to justify a block signal. Semi-realistically speaking; that sheet metal mountain would have nice varied coloration, as the makers offered it in two colorful variations.



So much for the life and times of Junior Bridge Co. As to the truth of who they were or why there is little traceable background or factual accounts of their history will probably never be known. We can wonder who the head of the company was...but, really why would we need to know? Perhaps it was a man with the last name of Bridge(s) and had the same first name as his father...or, looking out the window of 6 Eucker St., they saw the many rail and hiway bridges across the Hackensack and other rivers in New Jersey's Meadowland area. They likely reasoned their toy models were merely the juniors of all those prototypes. Wow, can you imagine their inspiration and by-product if they could have seen the famed Pulaski Skyway just a few miles South!

Perhaps my vision of a boss man dropping a bunch of metal grommets, metal strips, rods and truss forms onto the work tables of assemblers and spot welders saying; 'see what new shapes and size bridges you can come up with today'; might be about as accurate as any other surmise!

In closing, I'll paraphrase the oh-so-true inference of the young lady who maintains the toy train layouts at the California State Railroad Museum; 'Hey guys...you know these are just toys...don't you'?

Bridging a definition gap

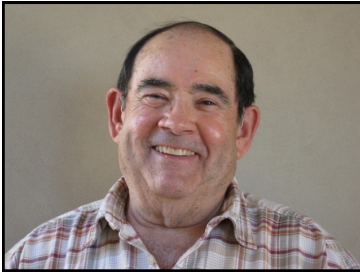
A lay person, such as I, could define the difference between a 'bridge' and a 'trestle' quite simply: A bridge is any span that connects two points separated by a natural barrier, such as a river, gully or ravine. Bridges come in many configurations and made from several materials such as steel, wood, concrete or stone.

A trestle is only one of type of bridge. It's typically made of steel, cables, rods or wood cross beams. Those materials are usually shaped into triangles or other basic support shapes.

One can state that a bridge is not always a trestle...but a trestle is always a bridge! Another metaphor which one may use, to drive home the point: An automobile is not always a station wagon...but a station wagon is always an automobile! Class dismissed.

JUNIOR BRIDGE

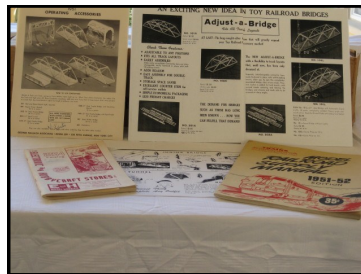
DON ROSA



"I have been collecting Junior Bridges since 1996. In fact, the interest started when Jack Ahearn asked me to look for "green bottomless bridges at York." At that time, most vendors thought these to be Marx. Indeed, the first Junior Bridge I bought at York, although in a labeled original box, was a mystery to about everyone there.

Over the years and many meets, I've continually upgraded individual items about three or four times to increase the quality of my collection. The last piece I purchased was in 2008. Because quality pieces are not readily available on the west coast, I have decided not to use Junior Bridge items on my next layout; my current collection can now be considered complete.

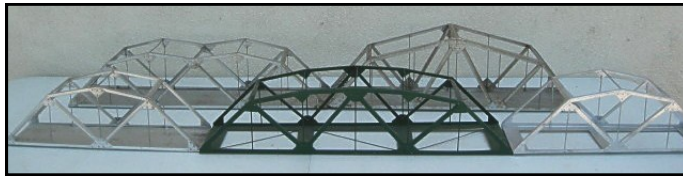
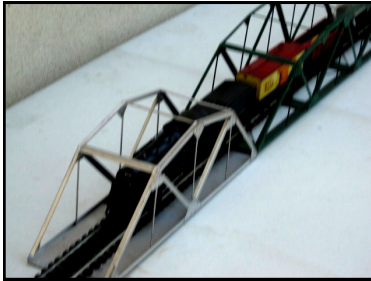
I believe the company was an industrial manufacturer of steel and aluminum products. Any history of the Junior Bridge Company is almost non-existent. Bridges and tunnels were the only toy train items produced by them. The bridges are not as sturdy or substantial as those of the 'Big 3.' Basically, the company produced a low line product with an appeal to affordability. However, because of its scarcity today, apparently it was too 'low line'."



JUNIOR BRIDGE

TOM GIBSON

Shown are several of the many Junior Bridges that Tom has in his collection. As usual, for folks seeing their first “who made it?” bridge, he knew right off that regardless of what company made it...he wanted it. It and many more! Through the years and many shows, Tom has acquired just about every variation of the Junior Bridge Company’s many trestles. Along with the structural variations, solid or open strap bases, he also has the two colors versions; green and silver. Tom sums up his feelings about Junior Bridges by exclaiming, “they’re fantastic!”



JUNIOR BRIDGE

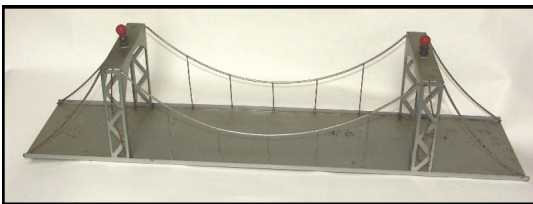


JERRY AZZARO

“I have three Junior Bridge items - the suspension bridge, the signal bridge and the truss bridge with flat top. Also, a small truss bridge I’m not sure of.

I don’t recall where I got them, but they fit a category of things I like to collect - products of little-known manufacturers from the 1940s-50s who were catering to the toy train hobbyist by hitching their wagons to the Lionel/Flyer/Marx star.

After I started train collecting in 1995, I began to notice these oddball items, including Junior Bridge. I like the way they used steel rod in the construction of the bridges because it adds interest to the appearance. I think the use of sponge rubber pads instead of spring-balanced contactors to trigger the signal lights is ingenious.”

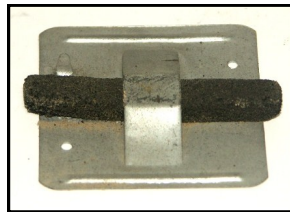


It’s a suspension bridge!

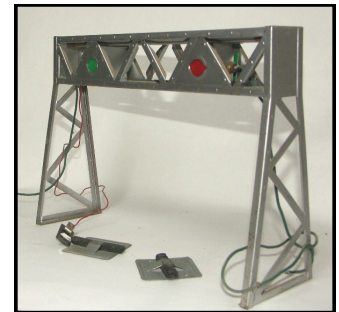
No, it’s an arch bridge!

A suspension bridge!! An arch bridge!!

*[Calm down, you two . . . it’s a suspension bridge **and** an arch bridge!!](#)*



Simple and economical. The weight of the passing train squeezes the sponge rubber block until the 3rd rail makes contact with the metal clip



At right: the orphan bridge. Does anyone know who made it?



PHIL FRAVESI

JUNIOR BRIDGE

"I acquired the silver bridge from Jim Groth. It was in a box on the floor next to his layout and it attracted my attention. At the time, I didn't have a place for it but I knew I'd put it to use. Jim wasn't going to use it so he just handed it to me. Thanks, Jim! When I built my current layout, I planned a location just for it, as you can see. It has holes in the top for lights but I haven't pursued that option. I like it just the way it is.

The green bridge was a matter of necessity. On my current layout, I had an O-31 curve feeding directly into the bridge. Lionel's #317 has a 4" opening, much too narrow for the train on approach. I checked into a Flyer double bridge but found they were "made of gold". In discussing the matter with Jack Ahearn, he thought the green Junior Bridge would work and just happened to have one not in use. It has an opening of 5-1/4 inches and filled

the bill almost perfectly. The train could now make the curve and enter the bridge, but Budd cars and Vista Domes would not pass the height test. Unlike Lionel's #317 solid bottom, the Junior Bridge has an open base spanned by narrow steel straps. I was able to move the ties and lower the rails to the steel straps, gaining the height of the "O" gauge ties (see picture). I placed thin pieces of cardboard under the rails to insulate them from the bridge. I did have to make a slight adjustment (bending) to the upper cross members, but not enough to notice. I guess it's the old "don't lower the rails, raise the bridge." I think Junior Bridges have a certain appeal to them that is not found in Lionel's postwar bridges."



JUNIOR BRIDGE

BRYAN STANTON

"Here are two of the Junior Bridges we have. They're both about 27" long and in their boxes. Those are the only two that I found boxed in the train room. There may be another bridge in one of large boxes with a bunch of items in it. I'll keep lookin'. No story, just a train show find."

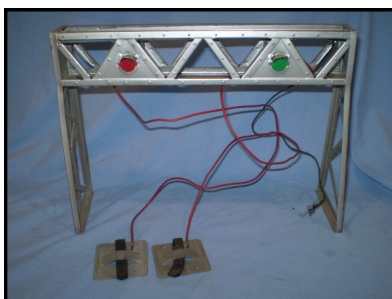


JUNIOR BRIDGE

RON FOWLER

"In a collection of Lionel that was picked up from a storage unit was this no 401 Signal Bridge by the Junior Bridge Company. I have held onto this piece for awhile now, not knowing anything about it until you and Boxcar Jack sent out your e-mail about this Company. I was lucky to have the box and some old wire and cardboard insulators that came with the box."

Jack's reply: "Ron...thank you for sharing your great find and pictures. Unknowingly, you've perhaps opened a new dialogue and speculation about the Junior Bridge Co. That is; the mailing address on your original carton seems to indicate that the company 'bridged' its way across the Hudson River from New Jersey to New York City. (Or might it be the other way around?) I'm checking into this and will hope to clarify the 'mystery' elsewhere in this special Junior Bridge Co. issue of the Side Track. Box-car Jack"



The things that dreams are made of

...a summer's day reminisce by Boxcar Jack

Christmas 1942 was the magical morning I decided I would not run away from home anymore. For under our tree that wondrous morning ...my five year old eyes saw their first toy train...and it was in my house...it was mine!

JUNIOR BRIDGE

My oldest brother yelled; "look a train!" ... another shouted "and switches!" Me, naw - I didn't

say a word. I just stared at the green bridge as my brothers raced the train on its first lap around the tree. But my eyes remained glued on that bridge and I soon realized why. It was the same bridge as the one I saw when I'd tag along with my brothers to the train tracks where we weren't supposed to be, especially me wasn't!

In the weeks that followed I'd beg my brothers to take me with them. I wanted to see my bridge, not the one now packed away, but my other one...the one that had real trains on it. On one of those visits, I looked real close and realized that the big real one was black instead of green. But, I thought, that was okay; my brothers and I could paint ours black. I also learned, in later years...that my eighteen inch long bridge was made by the Junior Bridge Co. and that they painted some of their bridges silver...just as my real bridge would be painted many years later. But I would always leave my Junior Bridge the color I first saw it...green!

A few years later, I'd go up to those railroad tracks alone or with my friends. We'd spend hours playing around the tracks and what I called my "real" bridge. That large heavily wooded area was about a mile square and in its center was the Long Island R.R.'s North Shore Branch. Their trains sped by a switch tower and quickly passed under the N.Y. Connecting R.R.s Bridge #35. Of course, I didn't know all that stuff back then. But I could understand why the bridge was black instead of green. My locomotive didn't belch smoke and didn't go under my bridge like the real ones did. If their bridge was green...it wouldn't have stayed that color for long!

One of my favorite things during the summer months was to rest under a big tree after a few hours

of running around the tracks. My favorite place was a short ways down from my real bridge where I could look up at the real trains passing through it. Gee they were long...a lot longer than my toy ones! And those trains had a lot of box cars with different railroad names; not like the one I had in my train. Odd; I always looked, but never saw... a real 'Baby Ruth' box car like mine...sigh.

Sure enough, one hot day, despite the roar of both railroads, I fell asleep under my tree. About the last thing I remember before dozing off, was a train racing across my real bridge toward, what I'd learn in later years, was the famed Hell Gate Bridge.

While sleeping that day, I had a sort of hazy dream. In it, the real trains were not racing across the bridge...but my toy train was. It was confusing, I guess, because my train was at home, in the closet. Also strange was; in my dream, instead of seeing a bunch of box cars...there was only one...a brightly colored maroon and yellow one and, hey guess what...it had 'Baby Ruth' painted on it!

When I awoke, there weren't any trains on the bridge. All I could remember from my dream was seeing my toy train racing across my real bridge. Gee, that summer day was oh...so, so long ago...but I remember it, and my dream, just like it was yesterday!

It really was... just a dream...wasn't it?



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.

Meeting Notes

by Phil Fravesi, SVD Secretary

June 2, 2012 General Membership Meeting

Meeting called to order by President **John DeHaan**
There were no guests or new members.

The articles of incorporation will be filed in a few days. **Bryan Stanton** will take the papers into the state office for filing. The incorporation will change the way the club does business.

Update from the National Board Meeting:

National is continuing to sell more of its inventory of cars. The outstanding bills are slowly being paid. They plan on paying a large portion of debt to Bachman and hope that Bachman will ship the Convention car order based on that payment.

Forms for the upcoming National Convention August 8-11, are available on-line only.

The Sac Valley Division meeting scheduled for August 4th is cancelled due to the Convention.

There was a discussion around the expense of mailing the Side Track. It is currently mailed to 18 members. The remainder access it through electronic media. According to Bryan, it currently cost \$12.50 per member per year to mail 4 issues. Some options were discussed:

Turn over the process to USPS for a lower rate.

- (1) Reduce it to a postcard with important information only, i.e.: meeting dates.
- (2) Copies available at meetings only.
- (3) Limit the number of pages per issue.

Members were asked to consider the options for further discussion at the July meeting.

Meeting adjourned. Board meeting to follow.

Board Meeting

Jerry Azzaro addressed the idea of having an assistant Web master to back up **Craig Benner**. Also, an assistant Side Track editor. An e-mail should be sent to the members asking for help with these issues. **John DeHaan** announced the National is asking for loans from the divisions of \$5,000 for 1 year @ 5% interest.

July 7, 2012 General Membership Meeting

Meeting called to order by President **John DeHaan**

Guest: **Stewart Armstrong**

New member: **Kevin Walker**

National announced that Bachman is shipping the "Firefly" cars. They have moved to an all volunteer staff and the National Membership cards are slow in mailing out. President **John DeHaan** announced that we are now incorporated as the "Sacramento Valley Toy Train Club Inc." There will be an election in November for board members for the new club. Please consider running for office.

There was a motion to donate \$200 toward the balance to upgrade engines for **Don Gueffroy**, a Division member who was seriously injured in an auto accident. The motion carried.

Meeting adjourned. Board Meeting to follow.

Board Meeting

National membership is no longer necessary. National will continue to pay insurance for meetings and shows. National insurance will cover Board members for the remainder of the year. There was a discussion around the issue of a new account for the monies in the old club account. How and when it can be used. There were too many unanswered questions/scenarios, so John will contact the other new clubs and also the attorney with a list of questions.

Treasurer's Report

by Bryan Stanton, SVD Treasurer

In four months, I will have served 4 years as treasurer of our club. During those 44 months we have spent \$36,000. At the beginning of my tenure we had \$82,000 and now we have just over \$46,000 left. We spend at a rate of almost a \$1,000 a month more than we take in from the membership dues and our yearly Scottish Rite show. But we have a new club layout which benefits all club members. We must be more prudent in our spending.

Also, it is improper to pay any club member's personal expense bills from the club's treasury. To do so would almost certainly cast suspicion on the entire club's business practices and open the club up to audit and/or investigation.

In July, we had our club-sponsored outing to the Empire Gold Mine and Nevada County Railroad museum. I was hoping more of our members would attend, especially since TTOS picked up the tab. The club spent a whopping total of \$84 for admission to these two great places. What a shame!

-Bryan Stanton

Fiscal report submitted by John DeHaan:

Checking: \$733.44

Investment acct: \$12,242.66

CD \$33,859.68

This is a total of \$46,835.78 plus the layout and trailer in non-cash assets

Annual TTOS River City Meet

by Jeff Silvera, Meet Chairman

October is the time for our annual public meet at the Scottish Rite Masonic Center, 6051 H Street, Sacramento. The meet will be on October 6, with admission \$5 per person or \$9 per family.

Vendor tables are available at \$20 for a six-foot table. Mail your registration and payment (payable to TTOS-SVD) to Tom Gibson, 2721 16th Avenue, Sacramento 95820. Contact Tom at the e-mail or phone number listed in your member directory with any questions.

The meet is open from 10:00 AM until 3:00 PM, but we get started at 7:00 AM with the set-up. We always are in need of help with this and with advertising, layout set-up, clean-up, helping with loading, the front desk, and security. Please get in there and volunteer to help out! It takes all of us together for a successful and profitable Meet.

Let's have Fun!!!

Editor's note: Due to new energy-efficient lighting installed last year, be sure to bring a flashlight. -JA

Down the track

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

September 1: SVD Meet - Holiday Inn, Elk Grove* **

September 8-9: [Roots of Motive Power Steam Days](#), Willits

September 14-15: [Flyer Fest West](#), Elk Grove

September 21-23: [Redwood Empire Train Show](#), Sonoma County Fairgrounds

September 29-30: [Union Pacific - Building America for 150 Years](#), CSRM

October 6: River City Toy Train Meet, Scottish Rite Center

October 13-28 (weekends): [Pumpkin Festival, Western Railway Museum](#)

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

November 23-24: SVD Layout at CSRM Sacramento

December 1: SVD Meet - Holiday Inn, Elk Grove* **

January 12-13, 2012: [Great Train Expo](#), Richmond

January 19-20, 2013: [Great Train Expo](#), Cal Expo

***Meetings begin at 9:30 AM. BRING YOUR MEMBERSHIP CARD**

**** followed by a Home Layout visit**