



THE SIDE TRACK

NEWS

from the Toy Train Operating Society
Sacramento Valley Division

WINTER **2012**

Come for the trains. Stay for the people.

Jerry Azzaro, editor

President's Message

by John DeHaan

I had hoped that my last missive as President of TTOS-SVD would be full of tidings of progress and contentment, but, as with the course of many human events, such plans don't always turn out. The good news from National is that the convention finished in the black (thanks to clever planning, generous donations, and a good attendance of members). The HQ office has been reduced in staff and physical size (and rental cost) with **Jim Selvius**, **Rick Plummer**, and **Ron DiSimone** doing all the work as volunteers. The regular and speedy flow of invoices, orders, checks, and membership cards has been established to everyone's satisfaction. TTOS National is well on its way to fiscal stability despite the continuing slump in membership numbers. The Bulletin with its new printer looks great! (It was delayed recently by the tragic death of Editor **Ted Hamler's** adult son.) It just needs more submissions (like the great stuff in our own Side Track - so get that stuff moving to Ted!)

Side Track is certainly a wonderful achievement - better than any of the other Division Newsletters that I see. This is due to the skill and dedication of our editor, **Jerry Azzaro**. He manages to somehow wheedle entertaining and educational articles, reports, and photos out of our members.

Our new layout garners compliments everywhere it is operated. It gets attention for the club, provides entertainment for the onlookers, and a fun chance for our operators who otherwise would not have a place to play! **Curt Darling** should get the credit for wrangling the layout and all its pieces to every meet *AND* wrangling his crew of "volunteers" to assemble it each time, often for others to enjoy.

We had a moderately successful Scottish Rite Meet in October (judging from the number of attendees and the apparent action at the trading tables), but I have not seen a final accounting. Due to possible errors in handling the table fees, there were discrepancies between the number of vendors who showed up and the receipts. These discrepancies have not been resolved.

With the threat of bankruptcy of National offered in Febru-

ary, our club voted to pursue separate incorporation (as did several other Divisions). We shared expenses with two of those Divisions to cover the cost of an attorney to draft the required by-laws and articles of incorporation (just distributed to all members). We filed with the State of California to be recognized as the Sacramento Valley Toy Train Club, Inc. (SVTTC, Inc.) We have retained a CPA to aid in the filings for non-profit status, but that is a much more complex and time-consuming task than anyone realized. That will, of course, be put on hold until the fundamental issues are resolved. We had intended to begin business as SVTTC, Inc. starting in January and request "inactive" status with TTOS. Recent developments and consultations have led me to conclude that incorporation and devolution from TTOS-National would not be in the best interests of our members at this time. We will be voting on this at the December meeting.

The transition was complicated by my failure to get an election carried out in a timely fashion. Because I was out of country for the September meeting and the August and October meetings were cancelled due to "conflicts" with the National Convention and Scottish Rite, we did not have officer nominations until the November meeting (which had low attendance due to conflict with Cal Stewart and SJV Division). At that meeting we had NO nominations offered for any of the Board positions. It was suggested that the current Board members could offer themselves for re-election but it was pointed out that our own by-laws limited Board officers to two consecutive terms in the office they hold. That term limit applies to all five current Board members. (**Tim Taormina** serves as Membership Secretary by appointment by the President.) Due to the low turnout, it was decided to table the elections until more nominees could be sought out. The election will be held at the December meeting. Only full members of SVD and TTOS National are eligible to run for office or vote. So be there and step up to help your club.

Remember that December 1st is our annual food and toy drive. **Jeff Silvera** has agreed once again to deliver all the goodies to the Sacramento Children's Home, so just bring them in the door! New unwrapped toys for all ages and non-perishable food items are needed, big time.

Continued P. 2



President's Message

(continued from page 1)

Don't forget we have three big toy train events coming up in 2013: Cal Expo in January, World's Greatest Hobby (Feb 23 -24) and Cal-Stewart in March (our layout has been specially invited there). AND, the joint LOTS/TTOS Convention will be in Reno July 8-13. See "Down the Track" elsewhere in this issue.

I've warned everyone for the last year that this would be my last year as President! In closing out this term, my deep appreciation is offered to the SVD Board Members for all their dedication and contributions; to **Tim Taormina** for all his hard work as Membership Secretary (the hardest job of all), to **Curt Darling** for all his efforts with the layout and the hotel contracts, to **Jerry Azzaro** for magically producing the best TTOS newsletter on the planet – issue after issue, to **Jeff Silvera** and **Jack Ahearn** for their program contributions, and to all the members of TTOS-SVD. It has been an honor to be your president. **Happy Holidays!**

Treasurer's Report

by Bryan Stanton, SVD Treasurer

Balances as of 10/31/2012:

Checking account	\$2,746.00
Investment account	\$12,243.84
Fixed Term CD	\$33,904.85
Total account balance	\$48,894.69

Membership News

By Tim Taormina, membership chair

Well it is once again time to renew our memberships. For 2013 the dues remain unchanged: \$20 individual, \$25 family. Thanks to those of you who got an early start on and paid at the November meeting.

If you have not paid as yet, please plan to pay me at the December meeting or send your dues to me in the mail (Tim Taormina, 5509 DanJac Circle, Sacramento 95822-2460 (please make checks payable to Sac Val TTOS). For those of you who have already paid and wrote your check to SVTTC, I will have your checks at the December meeting and you can either write me a new check or overwrite the addressee and initial them. If you cannot make the meeting, please send me a replacement check and I will shred the old check. Please remember that your dues need to be current to vote in the election of officers. We currently have 108 members. 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 email me at train-fun@att.net.

Happy Holidays!

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.

Home Layout Tours

by Jack Hornor, SVD Vice President and Layout Tour Coordinator

It is usually but once in a lifetime that we get our fifteen minutes of fame. Well, for **Jack Hornor** that fifteen minutes came after a very successful home layout tour of his living room layout in Galt, California. Forty-five SVD members and guests attended on Saturday, September 1, 2012, including the **Mayor of Galt, Barbara Payne**, who brought a reporter from the Galt Herald newspaper. The layout tour made the front page and other pages of the paper with pictures. This brought a reporter from the **Lodi Sentinel** newspaper where again we made the front and other pages with pictures. At that point "Good Day Sacramento", a local program from station KMAX Channel 31, called and came by Monday, September 10, and gave us fifteen minutes of air time to run trains and be interviewed on the program at the house. In addition, the Mayor presented Jack with a Certificate of Recognition from the City of Galt on the air. Finally from the same open house Mark Boyd, editor of TCA's "Train Collectors Quarterly" magazine, included a picture of the layout on the cover of the fall 2012 issue.



Jack runs trains while Mike De La Pena and Carl Curtis observe

As most of the club members already know, the layout measures 15 by 11 feet with about 200 feet of Atlas track and switches on three separate levels, and will run seven trains at the same time. It is powered by several 180 watt Lionel "bricks" connected to Lionel Track Power Controllers (TCPs) operated with TMCC remotes. There are other transformers for lights and accessories. In addition the family room has a small three-train layout using Mike's Train House (MTH) DCS (Digital Control System), where Jack is slowly learning about DCS.

The food and drinks were made and served by **Betty Taormina** and **Beverly Sigafos** both of whom did an outstanding job, thank you. **Tim Taormina** was also there to help, but the ladies said his supervision - although professional - was no help . . . but thanks anyway, Tim. A great time was had by all from noon to 5PM and we hope to do it again sometime in the future.

Future Tours

The next open house will be Saturday, December 1, 2012 at the White House, hosted by **Nancy and Pete White**. Hope to see you all there. Next years schedule should be out sometime in January 2013.



Above the fold! The story of Jack's layout is front page news in the September 12th issue of The Galt Herald



Mark Boyd and Jack Ahearn relax next to Jack's family room layout



SVD members enjoy the fine lunch prepared by Beverly Sigafos and Betty Taormina

Christmas train memories from long ago

Two SVD members found pictures of their holiday childhood train

Curt Darling

A Boys First Christmas Train Set



“Young Curt Darling watches closely as dad assembles his first train set”. The previous sentence leaves open the identity of the set’s true owner. And for good reason; as was the case on many a Christmas morning, one could question whether it was the son’s or the dad’s train set.

However, in this 1963 Christmas Morn photo...it looks like Curt’s dad had taken only temporary control of this four by four deluxe double level Marx train set. Soon after all of the lower and upper tracks were connected, I’m sure Curt would have commandeered the Marx transformer. And, being a kid, I’m also sure he would then send the steam loco’s freight train soaring up, down and around this four-by-four layout. He’d watch with glee as the train raced over the glossy black, dare devilish, trestle supports! Wow, what a train set for a kid to find under the tree!

Dad may have again taken control of the train set shortly New Years. The O-27 tracks were taken out to the garage and connected to new additional tracks. During the building of a larger eight-by-four pike, perhaps Curt learned the number one law of model railroading; in this hobby; everything always gets bigger...and bigger!

Jack Ahearn

IT WAS CHRISTMAS 1944 . . .



. . . Patton's Third Army came to the rescue in Bastogne, MacArthur returned to the Philippines and Judy Garland sang “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas!” As for myself, as you can see, I was having a very merry little Christmas. This was the third year I was watching my Lionel Litho Set race around the tree. Most surprising to me; when given this sixty eight year old “Brownie 6-20” pix earlier this year, was seeing the small cardboard building on my left. I do not remember having it!

I positively thought I remembered everything I had on my early layouts and indeed I would swear I still do. But, despite the fact that last year I wrote a special feature, in which that building was highlighted and with Jim Groth's help, purchased that same little house on E-bay...I still didn't remember having it as an eight year old! Man...am I getting mature! Oh, but there is some hope...I do

remember having the 'Built Rite' fort - but alas, not the set's soldiers and barricades...[sigh] . . .

Photo and story by Jack Ahearn

2012 River City Meet

By Jeff Silvera

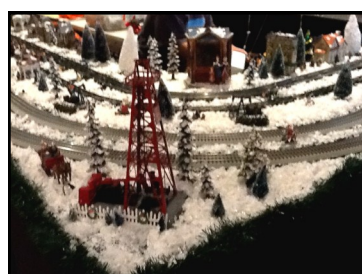
Photos by Jim Groth, Curt Darling and Jeff Silvera

On October 6, We held our annual public meet at the Scottish Rite Center. I think it's safe to say that we had a fun day. We got there early to get our layouts set up. I believe there were five or six different small layouts in addition to our club's layout. The attendance was pretty good and we were busy at the door. Lots of small kids enjoyed the trains running. We tried a different approach to the food this year with the Squeeze Inn burger mobile truck. It seemed like a nice change of pace and was very good. A little high priced, but good! I was worried about the meet going off good this year, because I always want it to be better and bring in more of the public. It is a busy day for all who helped as the day flies by so fast. It seems we are taking it all down before we know it. For all involved and your help, a "BIG THANK YOU" - you made it another successful show.



Train Time for Santa 2012 - SVD Layout at the annual CSRM Event

Photos by Curt Darling and Jack Hornor



Dreams of Big Time Railroading

By Jack Ahearn

Christmas week 1948, I was twelve and decided I was getting too old for small childish 'round the Tree layouts. No sir... from now on...I'm going big time railroading!

My first task was to see where I could fit a big pike in our five room walk through Brooklyn apartment. Kitchen and living room were out, like wise both bedrooms; hmmm that left the "Front Room"; which had a sofa, secretary desk, one couch and the soon to come down, Christmas tree and cardboard fire place. Oh yeah, and the ancient "China Closet" which never saw a plate or cup but was stacked with sheets, blankets and other non-dinning essentials.

After some proposed furniture relocating and a bended knee John Barrymore type appeal to my mom and dad...the dream of my first big rail empire was within reach. My land grant covered a five by four foot corner patch of linoleum next to the aforementioned China Closet. I couldn't even expand under it, because my biggest brother had his photo equipment stashed there! I soon realized my new rail system would have to bypass and skip a few of the larger cities... Sigh.

Okay...down to business. I read in the train books that the first thing I needed was a train board and a bunch of nails to secure the tracks... oh boy; no more tracks sliding across the slippery floor. Off I went to the lumber yard and the start a real model railroad.

So, on a cold bleak and windy December morn, I headed out for the lumber yard...with little idea of what type of board or nails I was looking. I entered the yard and got a brusque explanation that boards didn't come in the size I wanted and the plywood board I needed was more than the three dollars clenched in my hand. I was told I'd have to settle for an eight-by-four sheet of upson board.* Even worse, I'd have to pay for the extra three foot length I couldn't use. My next let down were the nails; "Naw kid, you don't needs nails, they won't stay in this kind of board...you need some really small bolts and nuts and I ain't got them! Sorry kid, run along now, I'm busy. He stuck my crinkled three one dollar bills in his pocket and pointed to the door.

Soon, I realized my biggest challenge wasn't to figure out how I was going to secure my tracks to this flimsy board. It was that sheet of Upson flapping in the wind and the twelve block walk home! My freezing hands, clenching the sides of the four foot wide wavering board, were numb. Even worse were all the busy morning shoppers I kept bumping into with my five foot long shield!

Crossing the crowded street corners was the worse. I had to keep switching the side I was carrying the constantly bending board so I could see the cars entering the intersection. Fortu-

nately, some big guys helped me out and after an hour of resting in between bouts of gusting winds, I was home; WOW; so this was big time railroading...hmmmm!

Next challenge; fastening the tracks to the board! A local hardware store guy took mercy on me and found some small bolts and nuts. Next, I had to raid the kitchen drawer for the ice pick. I fed the bolt thru the track ties hole and pushed it thru the pick hole and threaded the nut under the board.

Success, but not a sweet or long lasting one; "Get that board off the floor...you're putting holes in the new linoleum! I wondered why were there so many obstacles to overcome in just 'nail your tracks to a board'.

I came up with a solution...but a hard one to come by. For the next few days, I went through several neighborhoods and a hundred cigar and candy stores; "Mister, do you have any empty cigar boxes?" Finally, I gathered up enough boxes to support the Upson board and clear the bolts from protruding into the terra firma of my vast layout.

As I scanned the completed track work of my big time model railroad, I felt chagrined to realize...I was looking at the very same track plan that I had under the Christmas tree for the last few years! I had a three straight track length oval with a switch

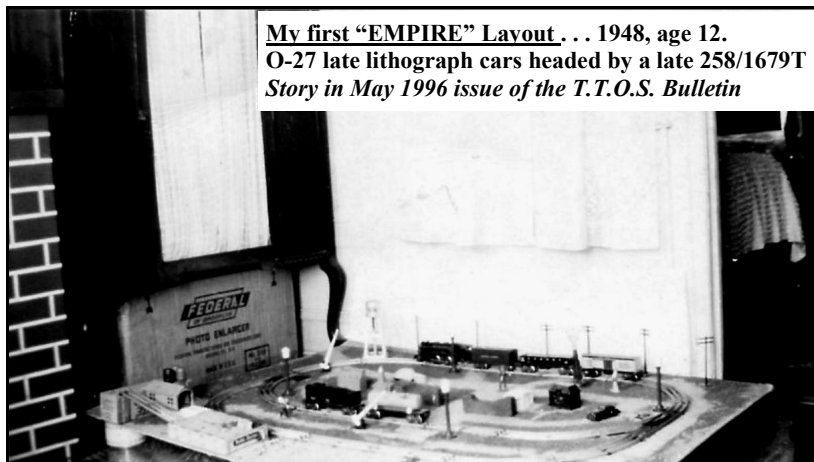
cutoff thought the center. How'd that happen? But then I thought; what else could a big time railroad mogul do in twenty square feet? The preliminary construction let downs continued...not gluing down the artificial grass and having to re-landscape whenever I had a speeding train toppling derailment... learning about series wiring of Colber street

lights, the expensive way...and on and on. But, I did have some inspired moments, for instance; unseen to the naked eye in the photograph are the white strings attached to the levers of the two manual switches. Those strings are positioned so as to run into holes located a foot from both ends of the switches. The strings extended under the board and led to my control panel. Result: I could pull one of the two lengths of strings attached to each switch lever and Shazam...remote control switches!

Looking back over the decades, do I wish I was a brighter kid...tending to read instructions... more prone to plan ahead? Yeah, that might have saved me some disappointments and frustration. But look at all the hard learned lessons and obstacles I eventually overcame and the satisfaction of learning through adversity. In retrospect, I guess I'm asking; wouldn't it have been nice to have been able to build a toy train layout then, as easily and creatively as I can today? My answer comes back a resounding 'NAW'; just think how routinely dull the last six decades would have been if I could!

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*Upson board: prepared mainly from ground-wood and recycled paper products.



My first "EMPIRE" Layout... 1948, age 12.
O-27 late lithograph cars headed by a late 258/1679T
Story in May 1996 issue of the T.T.O.S. Bulletin

Meeting Notes

by Phil Fravesi, SVD Secretary

September 1, 2012

No guests or new members.

Incorporation is not complete at this time but hopefully by Jan. 2013. New club will open an account and slowly transfer funds with the guidance of an attorney. A public outreach program will be necessary for the new club.

Jack Hornor made a preliminary announcement regarding a tour of the CSRM backshops (the old SP shops). It would take place April 6 or May 4. There are limitations on the number of people, there is no ADA access or wheel chairs. You must be able to walk a long distance, long pants and shoes required and you'll have to stay with the group.

The National Convention should break even. 2013 Convention will be in Reno. There will be no hotel contract and the club will only be responsible for the hall rental. It will be in conjunction with LOTS.

November 3, 2012 (transcribed by John DeHaan)

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

No new members or guests present.

Update from the National Convention. They are still negotiating with the hotel for the final bill based on the fact that the hotel was able to sell out its rooms. John encouraged everyone to maintain their National membership.

The new club known as the Sacramento Valley Toy Train Club, Inc. now has a tax ID number. A new bank account will be set up after Jan. 1, 2013.

John has put out a request for the name of a CPA that would be interested in handling the new club.

It was mentioned that the new club, SVTTC Inc., will transfer most of the old funds into the new account and that some undetermined amount would be donated to National.

A question was raised why we are donating Division funds to National especially since the layout funding has been cut? Is there anything in writing that states that the Division must do this?

Answer from John D.: There is no formal rule for a Division separating from National but our balance was acquired over many years of being under the National auspices. A precedent has been set by other Divisions to donate a portion of their treasury to National.

Question regarding the Treasurer refusing to pay \$200.00 for a matter that was approved by the membership at the July 7, 2012 meeting.

There was discussion of what the intended payment was for. A motion was made to authorize **John DeHaan** to issue a check or obtain cash from the Division account to make payment. The motion was seconded and carried.

Question from **Dave Ashman** regarding the veto power of the Treasurer. During this discussion, the matter of stopping funds to the layout was raised. It became apparent that the new issue was going to be a matter of "he said, she said" and **Jerry Azzaro** suggested that both of the issues be tabled until both members could be there to defend themselves. Everyone agreed.

Next on the agenda was nominations for officers. There were no nominations. Nominations chair **Jack Ahearn** reported he had had no success in finding nominees. With the proposed advent of the new club starting Jan. 1, 2013 and the old Division ceasing to exist, a motion was made to hold off on elections which would be held under the new bylaws. Motion passed unanimously.

Jerry Azzaro will send out an e-mail notice regarding nominations and a copy of the new bylaws/articles of incorporation. You must be a member in good standing to vote in the NEW club so everyone must pay their dues by Jan. 5, 2013 in order to vote. Many members present paid the new dues in advance.

The board authorized the purchase of folding tables for the layout before the Thanksgiving display at the CSRM. (**John DeHaan, Jeff Silvera** and **Phil Fravesi**; **Jack Hornor** and **Bryan Stanton** absent). John agreed to provide interim funding for those purchases.

GEARY'S CHEERFUL LAYOUT



Past SVD president **Geary Musselman** always brightens our monthly meeting by bringing along (1) his mother **Betty**, and (2) his Lionel display layout. For the November meeting, he decorated the layout in a Christmas theme.

Thanks, Geary!

Down the track

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

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

January 5, 2013: SVD/SVTTC Meet - Holiday Inn, Elk Grove*

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

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

February 1, 2013: SVD/SVTTC Meet - Holiday Inn, Elk Grove*

February 10: [GGLRRC Show](#), San Jose

February 23-24: Worlds [Greatest Hobby on Tour](#), Cal Expo

March 2, 2013: SVD/SVTTC Meet - Holiday Inn, Elk Grove*

March 8-10, 2013: Spring Cal-Stewart Meet, Santa Clara

July 8-13, 2013: Joint TTOS/LOTS Convention - Reno NV

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

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