



THE SIDE TRACK

NEWS

from the Toy Train Operating Society
Sacramento Valley Division

WINTER

2013

Come for the trains. Stay for the people.

Jerry Azzaro, editor

President's Message

by Jack Hornor, SVD President

Greetings - however this is not from your draft board (this joke is only for older members who may or may not remember the draft) for the new holiday season which is now upon us. Where did the year go? It was a pretty good year for TTOS SVD as we kept an even membership, had some great outings and a good show at Scottish Rite which even made a little money to keep us going. We will continue to meet at the Holiday Inn Express in Elk Grove at the same price as we have paid for the entire past year in 2014. We have also been lucky to obtain the Scottish Rite hall for the 2014 show next fall for the same price, and have put down our cleaning fee which we got back for the required deposit.

As we all know the toy train hobby is slowly going away without a massive effort on our part to bring the younger generation into this hobby. One of the real opportunities for us is the California State Railroad Museum (CSRM) show on Friday and Saturday after Thanksgiving, where 5000 or more general public and their children have an opportunity to see our and other model railroad layouts in operation, and how much fun it is to be CEO of your own railroad empire. We need members not only to operate the trains but also to talk with the crowd outside of the layout to try and drum up enthusiasm. This and the other shows we go to with the layout are where we get our members. For the vendors among us, we also want to solicit your help as this is where your future customers are going to come from.

Although there are no outings or other activities for December or January because of the holidays where everyone is just too busy, we still want you to bring food and toys in December for donation to those without this Christmas to the December meeting.

Next year is looking very good with some great outings and layout tours in the making, and sufficient funding to carry us through the new year. As many of you know I am working with National TTOS as a National board member to assure its stability and to keep it financially afloat. One of the things that you as members can do to help the cause is to vote for two of our division members in the National election this year. These members are **Tom Gibson** for Vice President and **Phil Fravesi** for Secretary. I have had several discussions with these members and with **Walter Olsen**, a presidential candidate, and they all want TTOS to succeed and will do everything they can to cut expenses and to make shows and conventions profitable.

The National election will be coming this year so be sure to vote, thank you. By the way, National dues will stay the same for next year. We are all trying to get Southwest Division back into the National TTOS as that alone will add about 400 members which National desperately needs.

I would like to wish all of our members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I am looking forward to a fun and exciting 2014 that we can all share and enjoy. May all of your trains run without problems throughout the new year!

Sincerely,

Your President, Jack Hornor

Meeting Notes

by Beverly Sigafoos, SVD Secretary

TTOS – SVD Meeting Minutes - September 7, 2013

President **Jack Hornor** called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Jerry Jacobs attended as a guest.

The main topic for discussion was the upcoming annual TTOS – SVD River City show to be held at the Sacramento Scottish Rite Temple on October 5, 2013. Volunteer workers were petitioned to help with this show.

The TTOS National election is having some problems.

Rick Plummer will be unable to run for president for health reasons, leaving only **Randy Giroux** and **Walter Olsen** in the running. As **Tony Tessori** has backed out of the running for vice president, the candidates are **Bill Arndt** and **Tom Gibson**. The secretary candidate is our own **Phil Fravesi** as **Tammi Jo Nix** has also withdrawn due to health issues.

We have an outing planned at **Dean Busick's** home immediately following the November 2 Meet. He has a fantastic layout featuring special lighting effects.

The bylaws are still in progress and very high on the priority list.

Show and Tell: **Jack Hornor** showed the Sacramento Northern PS3 MTH engine and K line 15" cars for the Daylight train.

Drawing: Won by **Bee Jay Christiansen**

Adjournment: 10:00 a.m.

TTOS – SVD Meeting Minutes November 2, 2013

President **Jack Hornor** called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Two guests were present: **Frank Palmer** and **Frank Gardener**, both HO enthusiasts.

Annual dues are upon us and may be paid to Tim Taormina. They are still only \$20/yr and \$25/yr for family. The Scottish Rite River City show was a great success. We have already reserved the site for next October's show, as the rental fee will remain the same for us. The volunteers performed their jobs competently and the new Layout Chairperson and his crew managed the club's layout proficiently, considering this was the Chair's first show with this layout. Many thanks to everyone who helped to make this event such a success!

There is an exciting layout tour and lunch at **Dean Busick's** home immediately following this meeting. There will be no more outings until after February 2014. The bylaws are still in progress along with policy changes. Examples of new policies include that for our annual show, applications must be in before the cutoff date, no money will be accepted at the door, and next year if you want to bring your small layout for pay, it must demonstrate that good effort has been made to make it look like a layout.

Maybe next year we could bring some simple layouts (no

pay) for children to run...?

Barry and Pat Menges have moved to Madera to be near their daughter. They will be very much missed.

Jeff Silvera will be collecting food and toys for the Sacramento Food Bank for distribution at our December 7, 2013, meet.

Show and Tell: None

Drawing: Carl Curtis

Adjournment: 10:15 a.m.

All minutes respectfully submitted by Beverly Sigafoos, Secretary.

Membership News

By Tim Taormina, SVD Membership Chair

We had a very successful early start to our 2014 Membership Renewal! Over 40% of our members paid and received their membership cards at our November meeting! Hopefully the remainder of our members will be in attendance at our December 7 meeting to renew. Since so many of our members are also members of the Sacramento Sierra Chapter of TCA, I will be ready to receive your dues and have your card(s) at the December Holiday Party at Jack Ahearn's if you are not able to make the December 7 meeting. Please note that dues have not changed for 2014 -- they are still \$20 for individual membership and \$25 for family. I also would like to remind you to stay current with your national dues, as it is a requirement for membership and we are dependent upon them for our liability insurance.

Happy Holidays,

Tim Taormina, Membership Chair

Treasurer's Report

by Beverly Sigafoos, SVD Treasurer

Income Report for the River City Show:

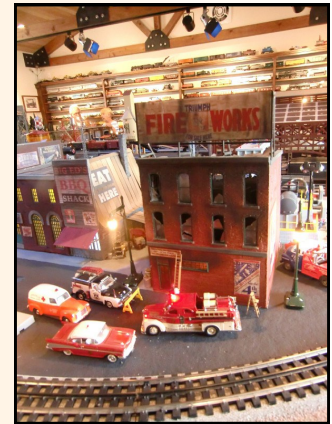
Income from Tables =	\$2,970.00
Income from Door =	\$1,283.00
Gross Show Income =	\$4,253.00
Show Expenses:	\$2,199.93
Show Net Income:	\$2,053.07

Checkbook:	\$1,739.13
Business Investment:	\$12,245.44
Fixed Term CD:	\$34,029.46
Bank Totals:	\$48,014.03

Home Layout Tours

by Jack Hornor, SVD President and Layout Tour Coordinator

On Saturday afternoon, November 2, 2013, professor **Dean Busick** with the help of his sister **Diane Crabb** and fellow SVD member **Phil Fravesi** hosted Sacramento Valley Division TTOS members to a great lunch and a fabulous 16 by 17 foot layout show. Built into the layout was a Lionel D-291 5 by 9 foot dealer display layout with all original super O Lionel track and accessories. Surrounding that were two main lines around the perimeter of the 16 by 17 table of Ross O gauge track with 72 and 80 inch diameter radius. There were inner sidings, crossings, reversing loops, and even a large transfer table in the engine yard plus four of the best bridges ever made by MTH and Lionel over the river which runs down through the middle of the table. On a second level there was a logging railroad pulled by a Shay, underway with a load of logs to the mill. The entire system was powered by two MTH Z-4000 transformers and a number of smaller ones to power accessories.



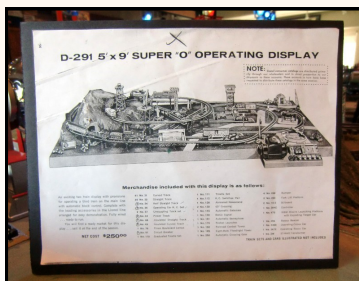
Big trouble at the Triumph Fireworks plant! Just one of many finely crafted scenes on Dean's layout



*Sans toque, grillardin and jack-of-all-trades **Phil Fravesi** handles grill duties while Dean's sister **Diane Crabb** prepares salads and desserts inside*



SVD members relax and enjoy and delicious lunch



Ad for the D-291 dealer layout

The control is a combination of Legacy, TMCC and conventional. There is no DCS at the present time. Somehow Dean has managed to integrate some of the best MTH and Lionel operating accessories, including the firehouse, Mel's diner, car wash, ice house, lumber loader, atomic reactor and others in such a way that it looks like a real miniature city - or high rail layout to use the train modeler's jargon.

We are all envious of his artistic ability, and may be asking for ideas along these lines for our layouts in the future. The lighting both above and on the layout in and out of the structures is really professionally done ... after all, professor Busick was a lighting specialist in his work and it shows in this layout. This is a truly an outstanding high rail layout. Even the room which he added to his house just for the trains was beautifully done.

Everyone had an excellent visit and a great afternoon of visiting and train watching. Thank you, Dean, from all of the SVD members.



*From left: **Jack Hornor**, **Beverly Sigafos**, **Dean Busick***

WATCH IT ON YOUTUBE!



Click anywhere on the image above to see a YouTube video of this SVD visit



BOXCAR JACK'S GARAGE

by Jack Ahearn

A Christmas garage, a boy, and a magic door

"Daddy, why doesn't the garage have a door on it?" The six year old asked while wide-eying his metal red and green Christmas present. "Well, uh it's a summer-time garage!" came the reply, which was met with an oddly doubting look. "Yeah, but now it's Winter and Christmas and all." Again, the kid started to speak but relented as his imagination kicked in. He stared very hard at his no doors garage and suddenly, like magic, a real red front door appeared! "Wow, gee whiz" was about all he could lowly murmur.

Those words were hardly out of his mouth before his eyes saw and his ears heard the train coming from around the tree. He put his new toy along the side of the track and gave it, and the speeding train, his full attention. Dad uttered a quiet sigh of relief.



Look really, really hard....can't the kid in you see that red door?



Relief crew arrives at Pineville Downs Water & Supply depot

yourself become a believing kid again and see the magical red door.

What a fun reminisce this has been for me, with thanks to **Jim Groth** for his help in making it happen!



Purty little thing. As a six year old, I was thrilled to have it!

He would watch that train and place his garage near those tracks for the next six Christmases. It was in 1948, when at age twelve; he last remembered seeing that garage being narrowly missed by the locomotive. And for the next sixty five Christmas trees, I, who was that wide eyed six year old kid, would always remember but never see that garage until just a week ago, on eBay! There it was, just as I remembered it. Wow. I jumped at it!

I received the package and nooo; I wouldn't - *couldn't* - wait 'til Christmas. Not after all the years, decades and what, a half of century? Sigh, I'd better stop with this aging stuff! I opened the box, which was about five times the size of the garage, and there it was; the green sided garage with a red roof. I clasped it in my hands and placed it along the side of the tracks, just as I had done, so many, many layouts ago.

I awoke the next morn and went over to my Pineville layout. And, like so many countless mornings ago, I saw my door-less garage...but wait, looking at it real hard, once again like magic...there it was, a real red door!

I guess, for those few illusionary moments, I was a kid again. And you, while looking at the pictures of my garage, let



Workman looks for a crew to roll up real soon.



At right: Jack "a-doors" his Christmas garage

Building Don Rosa's American Flyer Layout

By Phil Fravesi

Photos by Phil Fravesi and Jack Ahearn

Phil is the Division's "go-to" guy for quality layout construction and other building chores



Photo #1

Recently **Don Rosa** embarked on constructing a large layout for his American Flyer S gauge trains and accessories, a 16' X 18' U shaped table. After much research and planning, he decided to get the jump on the whole process by purchasing a table system from [Mianne Benchwork](#). The materials consist of table legs with 8 sides at the top end, all predrilled to accept locating pins and lock pins that mate with cam locks. The rails are constructed like an "I" beam for strength as in photo 4 and 5. It includes many bags of hardware to facilitate assembly. One of the advantages to the system is the configuration can be changed, although it's not as easy as it looks or sounds. "Drop" sections can be installed to form lower areas for canyons and river beds, photo 7. We did attempt to deviate from the original plan and move one drop section to a different location but found we would need another leg, hence, we abandoned that idea. Don enlisted my help in assembling the table and this a description of the work involved. In photo 8, I explain to Jack Hornor how the grid is assembled.



Photo #3



Photo #5



Photo #7

The first step is to install locating pins and lock pins into the legs, see photo #1, along with leveling screws on the lower end. Then you assemble sets of legs forming H or V assemblies as in Photos 2 and 3. Using these leg assemblies and additional rails of various lengths, you construct corners and then begin to tie everything together according to the supplied plans. It should form a grid work with all the rails at 24" on center ... except it doesn't, which causes issues when installing 4' X 8' plywood decking. In theory, the deck material is secured from the underside with the plastic angle brackets shown in photo 6, and 1/2" wood screws. Don chose 3/4" 7-ply material which should have been stable, but eventually warped and had to be drawn down with screws from the top because the plastic brackets are slotted and flexed under the stress of the plywood. Leveling the large table was relatively easy with the use of a laser level and 6' bubble level. We did have to re-level the table due to the carpet settling under the weight of the table. Due to the 90 and 45 degree leg combinations, this system forms a stable bench. The legs and rails do not form an even surface along the outer edges of the table so Don will finish it with a fascia board and skirting.



Photo #2



Photo #4

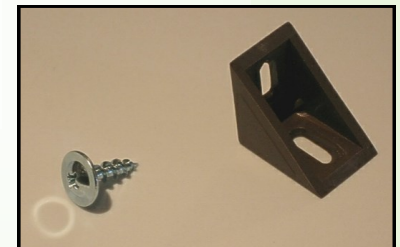


Photo #6



Photo #8

Don Rosa is Soooooo **AMERICAN** FLYER!

By Jack Ahearn

Boxcar Jack visits an SVD member who has Flyer No. 25 smoke fluid in his veins

“Is there any other kind?” was Don Rosa’s response when asked to describe his long held feelings about American Flyer trains. Ahhhh, now there is brand loyalty!

This is one of the most direct, candid and opinionated interviews I’ve ever been granted. Knowing Don (and can’t help loving him as we all do), we’re accustomed to him telling it as it is. His clear, direct and declarative pronouncements do just that! Oh yeah, there are a few mild ambiguities found within some of his responses. Don does have a way of causing one to be, jest a wee bit south of certain of what he may say next!



All those shelves of trains and all those 288 sq. feet to fill!

As you can see in the photos, there is quite a lot of surface to be railroaded. A full 18 x 16 feet of prime real estate! When asked about his track plan preferences and scenic leanings, I received similar responses to each. “Still planning, first plan didn’t work once (it was) off the paper”. I wondered if he would commit to put a second plan on paper or to just *imagineer* it? After a few more questions, I concluded he would be daring and skip the paper.

Will the layout reflect a vintage Flyer Catalogue look or a High Rail appearance? Don’s encompassing reply: “Combination of both, but lots of High Rail fun!” “Single, bi-level track plan or both?” “Single with partial bi-level” was his multitudinous response. Okay, how about track ... Post war sectional or a newer track system? A terse **“Gargraves...made in the U.S.A.!”** was Don’s concisely worded, emphatic and editorially charged declaration!

“If you’re going to have mountains or slightly raised terrain, what type of construction; plaster, paper or other?” “All foam w/ removable mountains and dioramas”. Looking at the picture of full shelves of Plasticville buildings in the high bookcase, I asked if there would be other brands of structures used? The interesting response; “Ertl 1:64, Minicraft and Gilbert and lots of animation!” And, lots of houses too, I bet! (Intended pun)

When asked to comment on the overall scenic presentation of his Empire in Waiting, Don was quite descriptive. “Mostly lumber and farming themed, kept simple for easy cleaning. Too much scenery detracts from the trains. Most trees will be already harvested!”

As to his last comment; looking at the many photos within Phil Fravesi’s related story, I’d suggest most of those “harvested” trees can be seen beneath Don’s layout, shaped to form his innovative bench work! That’s the scenic side of Don’s new layout; now let’s learn of his operation plans.

“Three or four!” was his quick answer to “how many trains do you plan to run simultaneously?”

Each loop will have its own transformer and controls. One loop will be on TMCC/Legacy.

Here’s Don’s very definitive and personal opinion



Oh look; another whole wall of trains!

Continued next page



when further queried; will the track plan include sufficient sidings for storing cars, locos or trains (and) one or several yards? **“Shelves are for Storage. Sidings are for operating!”** Only a token Yard for accessory demonstrations.”

Will the trains you run be from your many wall shelves or from the boxes presently below the layout, or both? “Both; locos with can motors are favored.” I continued; “will your ‘U’ shaped table have a bridge crossing the open end?” His single word response; **“NO!”** Hmm, sorry I asked.

When asked for his operational comments; “Some new electronics, long consists”. He then added, “Let’s face it, you can only operate one at a time ... but I plan on running three plus a trolley.” I then asked about his planned control systems. Re: the solid topped bench work: “Will you place your wiring below or on the layout surface?” “Below and underneath.” I chose not to ask for clarification.

I probed a bit deeper; “One master control board to operate all trains or, will you also have optional hand held remote controls?” Yuppers, his answer was: “Both.” I added a follow-up: If both, what brand name or type of hand held controllers? I am planning on running TMCC traditional Flyer locomotives (both diesel and steam)



Plasticville: Enough buildings to have a large city plus suburban sprawl!



For SVD old timers; I guess we now know what was in Don’s Bountiful Barn of Bader Road Boxes!



Don couldn’t wait. Damn the track plan - Full speed ahead!

and a few TMCC/Legacy American Flyer steam locomotives by Lionel. *Since these newer locomotives are made by Lionel, the company who provides no parts or customer service, they will disappear onto the scrap heap when they quit working!*

“Don, will you have multiple blocks for traffic control, or simply run different trains on individual loops or routing?” He replied, “A few blocks for downhill speed control”. I followed the Block system question with others about his sound system. Nostalgic Flyer “Choo-Choo” or an advanced sound system? “Both” came his reply, adding; *Choo-Choo sound can’t be beat! But kids, of all ages, want more these days.* He then elaborated: “I wouldn’t call these sound systems advanced...they are actually organized noise!” So sayeth the Don. Undaunted, I pressed on; if a newer sound system, which one? “I Have a few Lionel, AF w/TMCC and Rail Sounds.” “Don, your train room is very well lit; will you install any additional lighting or spotlights?” “Track lighting in the shelf display area.” Concluding the interview, I queried, “Do you have an approximate Gold Spike date in mind, or will your dreams continue on for e’er?” “It will be done when it is done! Hopefully, it will never be 100% complete.”

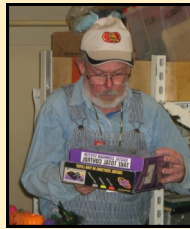
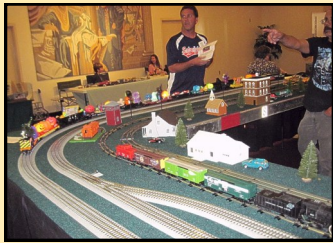
I gratefully thank Don for his candor, time and his “just the way it is” answers. I couldn’t ask for anything more or better than that.

MEMBER PHOTOS

John DeHaan and Jim Groth took some great shots at our River City Meet in October

Top row: photos of our layout by **John DeHaan**. All others: photos of SVD members and friends by **Jim Groth**.

Bottom-right: **Tim Taormina** considers an alternative to cash for getting the trains he wants

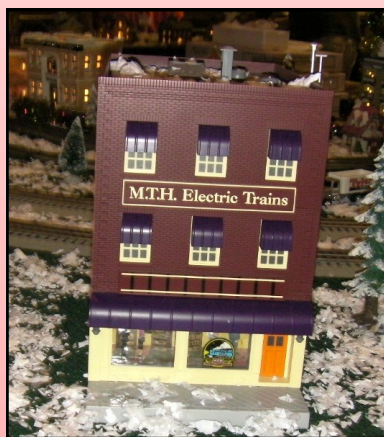
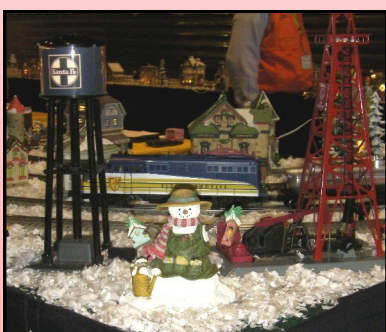


SVD Club Layout at the CSRM “Small Train Holiday” Event

by Rick Rose, SVD Layout Coordinator

Candy Train photos by Jack Ahearn, all others by Rick Rose

Our club's layout was in operation at this annual two-day event. The museum was pleased, they estimated the attendance at 3,500 people for the two day event. There were lots of SVD members running trains, and we all had a great time. To all of you members who participated at the California State Railroad Museum, a hearty “thank you” for your work on the layout and the time you spent running trains. This is the kind of event we need to help grow the club. Many attendees showed great interest in joining! - *Rick Rose*



Down the track

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

December 7: SVD Meet - Holiday Inn Express, Elk Grove*

ANNUAL FOOD AND TOY DRIVE

December 7-8: [SJVTTO Show](#) - County Fairgrounds, Turlock

January 4, 2014:SVD Meet - Holiday Inn Express, Elk Grove*

February 1, 2014:SVD Meet - Holiday Inn Express, Elk Grove*

March 1, 2014:SVD Meet - Holiday Inn Express, Elk Grove*

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

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.