



THE SIDE TRACK

NEWS

from the Toy Train Operating Society
Sacramento Valley Division

SPRING

2014

Come for the trains. Stay for the people.

Jerry Azzaro, editor

President's Message

by John DeHaan, SVD President

Well, Spring is on the horizon (although it doesn't look any different from Winter) and we are still enjoying the stuff we got at Christmas or getting out to train meets to get the stuff we DIDN'T get then. As you may know, I have appointed **Ed Strisar** (of our layout crew) to be my vice president, and he has agreed to do it, in addition to continuing as our events chair! He has already started setting up fun events for 2014, like a picnic day at the Western Railway Museum (a.k.a. Rio Vista Trolley Museum) for June 15. We are looking at mid-September for a day with the speeders on the El Dorado Western Railroad (El Dorado/Shingle Springs) maybe in conjunction with a visit to Placerville to ride on their 1:1 scale stuff! In December we will have a Christmas party in conjunction with our monthly meeting (location and format to be determined).

In between we will have the layout at the TCA Scottish Rite meet on May 24 and our own River City Toy Train Meet there on October 4. TTOS is hosting the 2014 National Convention in Buffalo, NY on August 5-9. More details are being released weekly so watch the ttos.org webpage. It promises to be a great event! TTOS National has undergone a huge turnaround, and is now stable and in-the-black, thanks to **Rick Plummer**, **Ron DiSimone**, and especially, **Jim Selvi-us**. The newly elected TTOS National Board will take the reins as of Feb 23, including

Randy Giroux as president, **Jim Selvi-us** as treasurer, **Ron DiSimone** as member-at-large, and our own **Phil Fravesi** as Secretary and **Tom Gibson** as Vice President. They have all vowed to continue the success of the last seven months. The bad news is that membership in both National and our own SVD continues to dwindle. We need to stay members and draw more new ones in. If you haven't renewed, shame on you! Get that checkbook dusted off!

National needs a new editor for the Bulletin (hasn't it looked great the last couple of issues with the new printer and all that color?) and a new webmaster. So if you have the talent and time, let Jim and Ron know ASAP. We need more of our members at shows with their layouts if not as crew for our own beautiful layout. (**Rick Rose**, layout crew chief and **Ed Strisar** are already planning to add more accessories - and more fun - even before the River City meet)

Please join me in wishing all the best for years of wedded joy to the newlyweds: **Beverly Sigafos** and **Jack Hornor**! Beverly managed to sneak in a wedding vow "To always play with trains" during the wedding service. Bravo!

Your own SVD board has drafted a new set of bylaws for voting at the March 8 meeting, so be there! No mail ballots or proxies allowed by our existing bylaws! Keep in mind that yours truly is only in the Presidency for the money and power (wait, there isn't any...). And my term ends the end of this year! So be thinking of getting out the nomination forms and ballots to get some eager, fresh faces at those Board meetings!

Gotta go. Keep safe and keep playing with those trains. See you down the track!

Meeting Notes

by Beverly Sigafoos, SVD Secretary

TTOS – SVD Meeting Minutes - December 7, 2013

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

Jack presented the Club's accomplishments and current status for this past year, q.v.

Our treasury stands in the black at about \$50,000.00 with more annual dues coming in. Current membership is over 100 members strong.

Our monthly meeting hall at the Holiday Inn Express is paid through December 2014. The annual "River City" fundraiser held in October at the Sacramento Scottish Rite Temple has been reserved with the deposit required.

We had some great outings like the CSRM Back Shop Tour and some terrific home layout tours such as seeing **Dean Busick's** great layout.

TTOS National is now running in the black by about \$50,000 after having a successful TTOS/LOTS Convention in Reno clearing \$10,000 and settling with Santa Clara Hyatt for \$9,000 instead of the \$16,000 first asked for.

The CSRM Small Train Show was a great success yet again, our layout being the most popular. It looked spectacular with even the staff at the museum commenting on how pretty and Christmas – like it looked and how well it operated.

Old Business:

Annual dues are upon us and can be paid to our Membership Chair, Tim Taormina. They are only \$20 / yr. or \$25 / family.

The bylaws are still a high priority item which will be forthcoming for the members' perusal prior to voting on them.

New Business:

So far, there will be two more home layout tours and a spring outing at the Western Railroad Museum (Rio Vista Trolley Museum). The Rio Vista outing will include a picnic with hot dogs and burgers, soft drinks and a potluck of side dishes. **Ed Strisar** is in charge of that committee and it is hoped that **Jerry**

Azzaro will be docent for special tours when we are there. The Club will pay the entrance fees and provide drinks, hot dogs and burgers.

Jack read two letters to the members. One letter was a formal announcement that due to emergency health issues he must step down as our President, effective immediately. The other was the announcement that he must also leave the Club until further notice, as he believes that each and every member must pull his share to make the club solvent and successful and that at this time he is not able to do so.

Our Vice President, **John DeHaan**, immediately took control of the meeting as he automatically becomes the new President according to our bylaws.

John announced that the March meet will be held on March 8, 2014, as the Santa Clara Cal Stewart Show will be held February 28, March 1 and 2, 2014 this year.

Show and Tell:

Don Rosa talked about having visited what had been the A.C. Gilbert factory and was able to bring back some of the original bricks which are being replaced with new items.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

TTOS – SVD Meeting Minutes – January 4, 2014

President **John DeHaan** called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

There were no guests and no new members present.

2014 dues are now payable. March meet has been moved to March 8, 2014 because Cal Stewart will be held February 28, March 1 and 2, 2014. This may be the last year for the TCA Norcal Cal Stewart because of problems getting volunteers for the event.

There are no volunteers for the position of SVD Vice President at this time.

National TTOS needs a new webmaster. **Jim Selvius** has been made a lifetime member because he pulled National back into the black. The Sierra cars are in, so be looking for yours in the next week or so.

The National TTOS convention will be held (by TTOS only) in Buffalo, N.Y., August 4-9, 2014. Rail cars will be available at the convention. Order form for the cars will be in the mail shortly. The Firefly car is still available.

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Meeting Notes continued

Our Christmas food and toy drive yielded 275 pounds of food items and 55 toys and games.

Ed Strisar is our new Layout Tour Chairperson.

Drawing won by **Rose Craighead**.

Meeting was adjourned at 10 a.m.

TTOS – SVD Meeting Minutes – February 2, 2014

President **John DeHaan** called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

There were no guests and no new members present.

Dues are now delinquent. A \$5 late charge will be assessed if not paid by March 1, 2014.

Ed Strisar has volunteered to serve as our Vice President and has been appointed by our President as described in the bylaws.

National election results:

President - **Randy Giroux**

Vice President – **Tom Gibson**

Secretary – **Phil Fravesi**

Treasurer – **Jim Selvius**

The latest draft of the new bylaws will be mailed for final review and will be voted on at the March 8, 2014, meet.

Ed Strisar announced an outing on Sunday, June 15, 2014, at the Western Railway Museum. SVD will pay for hot dogs, burgers, and soft drinks for the picnic and members are asked to bring side dishes to share.

The members voted to resume the Holiday potluck at the hotel immediately following the December Meet. Beverly was asked to check with the hotel about this.

Thanks goes to **Paul and Christian Shelgren** for providing pastries for our meet!

Show and Tell: **Bill Wilson** brought 4 tractors and Life Saver cars that Sandy had given him for Christmas. **Tim Taormina** brought his O gauge Sierra Beer Club car he bought at the TTOS National Convention in Reno. Next meet bring anything you would like to bring to show.

Drawing: **Rose Craighead**

Meeting adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

All minutes are respectfully submitted by Beverly Sigafos, Secretary – TTOS/SVD

Membership News

By Tim Taormina, SVD Membership Chair

A big thanks to all the members who have renewed timely! Membership renewal has gone very well with only about a dozen members still outstanding. Hopefully I'll hear from them before this newsletter goes to press. Once again I will remind you to please stay current with your national dues, as it is a requirement for division membership and we are dependent upon national for our liability insurance.

Happy Railroading,

Tim Taormina, Membership Chair

Food Bank Donations

Photo by Jim Groth

SVD members came through - again - with a huge quantity of food and toy donations for the Sacramento Food Bank brought to the December meeting. **Jeff Silvera** spearheads this effort each year, and delivers the goods to the charity.



At right: Jeff brought the receipt for our gifts to the January meeting



News and photos from the January 4th meeting

... thanks to Jack Ahearn

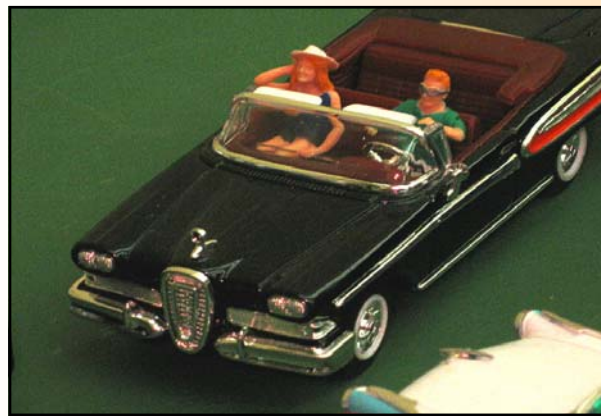
Bill Bender brought along a small but impressive layout to our January meet in Elk Grove. **Dave Thomsen** brought a layout with a Ford dealer theme.

The ever-changing portable layouts which some members bring to the meetings on a regular basis help to remind us what the hobby is about ... having fun with toy trains!

Thank you, each and every one.



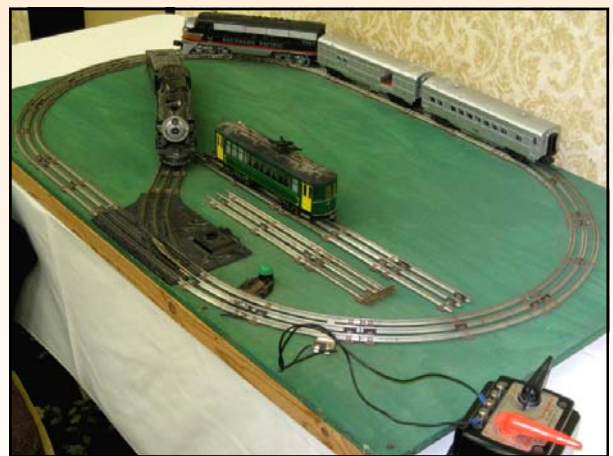
Dave Thomsen's layout features a Ford dealership. If you want to personalize your new Ford, head on over to **Dave's Body Shop** (below).



The new Edsel owner's wife waits patiently while he puzzles over the transmission selector buttons in the middle of the steering wheel.



Business is good at the local Ford dealership. If the owner is smart, he'll move that silver Shelby Cobra out of the window, put it in a safe place and sell it 40 years later.



After a short trolley car ride, passengers on **Bill Bender's** layout can transfer to a streamline passenger train pulled by a SP Black Widow. A steamer stands by to help if the F3 diesel can't handle the load.

Show and Tell

Jeff Silvera, S&T Chairman
Photos by John DeHaan

At our Show and Tell Saturday, February 1st, **Bill Wilson** brought a real nice Rail King Limited Sacramento Northern SW Switcher Locomotive and Lionel Safe Car (Lifesaver Tank Car) that was manufactured for the Cal-Stewart meet in Pasadena. Bill also brought in some stocking stuffers that his wife Sandy (I mean *Santa*) left... some neat little tractors and trailers. Thanks, Bill.

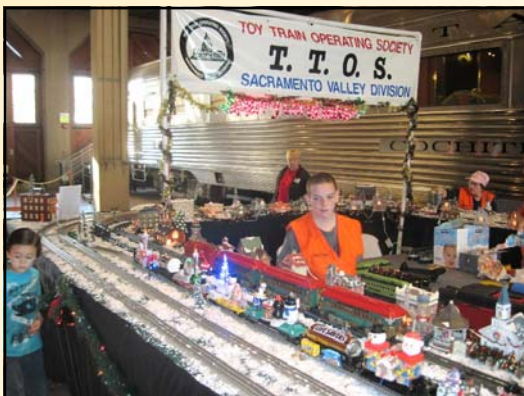
Tim Taormina brought in the beautiful 2013 Sierra Beer TTOS 'O' gauge Convention Car to share with us! Thanks, Tim.



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

thanks to member participation, we always look our best in November

Photos by Zachary Liens and John DeHaan



Ride the Santa Fe El Capitan...Route of the Scenarios!

Boxcar Jack grabs his camera and takes us on a tour of Geary Musselman's toy train and slot car man-cave

story and photos by Jack Ahearn

At first glance, **Geary Musselman's** model railroad would appear to be scenically overdone. There are heaps of accessories, trucks, cars, people, trees and flowers. You name it; he's filled every square inch of his model empire. However, I submit; the jam packed look of planned clutter adds to the charm of the layout and makes it so much fun to experience!

It took several visits and some discussion with Geary before I understood why his miniature creation seemed so easy on the eyes. Easy because, after looking upon various small areas of the layout, my eyes tended to relax. Those small areas I viewed are what Geary calls his scenarios.

Two inherent traits join to produce the results seen in the accompanying photographs; a childhood aspiration for self-actualization and an adult's creative talents. Geary has raised his childhood "Carpet Central R.R" to the self-assuredness level of shouting "yes!" while viewing his present table top railroad.

When it comes to innovative ideas, I believe Geary has come up with an idea which warrants future discussion. That is, he came up with a scheme for his model railroad; a **color** scheme! Drawing attention to the large toy like tunnel, which I lightly refer to as the High Country, he points to its three colors; green, white and terra cotta. His finger than directs your eyes across the layout where one sees those three colors constantly repeated, particularly in his scenarios. My eyes and brain were in agreement as I focused on the color themed scenes of green trees, terra cotta rocks and white snow, flowers and birds. All blended together into a relaxed and colorful harmony. Perhaps this is one reason I first sensed that viewing the layout was easy on the eyes! My eyes and brain were in agreement as to the credibility and symmetry of what I was viewing.

Another reason; although the layout admittedly appears to be overly accessorized, it soon becomes apparent that it was well planned. Each of his scenarios tell a story, which I tried to relate within the photo



captions. I viewed the photograph and simply wrote of all the small details in that picture. It was a bit tricky because one never tells a reader, or viewer, what he or she already knows. When looking at a photo, one readily knows what's in it. So, I just told you all the

things, I figured you wouldn't see, with a typically quick glance.

Hopefully, as you examine the scenario photos, you'll note in some, that Geary is almost nose deep in them. That is the truth of his work and its satisfaction. Indeed, Geary has several very low stools which, on a daily basis, he sits and leans into those scenes. Then, while critiquing, he'll often change some piece of it. What might be an old truck one day may be a discarded piece of junk the next.



A white stallion (right) joins Geary in watching a fancy new inspection car make its way through a sharp curve in a forest of tall pines. Notice how the white birds atop the billboard and telephone poles blend in with the white track side flowers and snow covered trees.

Frequently, Geary also changes the trains running on his tri-oval track plan. In three visits, I saw as many different rosters of engines and cars making their circuitous trips. When viewing the photo of his wall of many, many trains, you'll realize he could continuously change rosters and still have more to draw from.

The next time you have the opportunity to speak with Geary, I suggest you take the time to learn of this man's full talents and tenacity. He never stops planning future projects and indeed, to **date, he has completed all** of his aspirations.

You may have noticed that I hadn't given the dimensions for this colorful and creative model railroad. I'd hope that you'd first scan the photos and imagine that it's quite a large empire. Well, it is; but only as large as a mind chooses to imagine. So; let your mind dream and your present, or next layout, will be as large as you think it to be. Geary and these photos illustrate that space is relative to the imagination. Look again at what Geary, with his creative ideas, developed on a table; a five-by-nine foot ping pong table! To paraphrase a truth, particularly true in our hobby; if the mind can imagine it, you can do it. Hey, ain't this a really great hobby?

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Bikers, trucks, buses and just about everything else on wheels and four legs jam downtown Main Street. Although the street has been recently paved, there are still lots of multi colored flowers, trees, and a few weeds lining the triple track crossing.



Geary eavesdrops on the tower switchman shouting down to the hard-hat alongside the pick-up truck. Notice all the tall pines in front of the low snowcapped ridge. Let's hope the wandering, weed eating cow, by the "Steep Grade" warning sign, doesn't get clipped before he/she jumps back into the fenced in pen around the light tower. The roof top perched white bird is also taking it all in.



Sacramento Northern #712 leads a double headed freight about to pull into the Yards after climbing a "Steep Grade". Along with a lot of signage, Geary's layout has lots of almost unnoticed little detail such as half hidden trucks and cars, people, birds, planks, boards and an abundance of flowers, trees, weeds ... and of course tall and stately snow covered pine trees!



Two trains pass through the double tracked Hell Gate bridge. The freight on the left is pulled by Sacramento Northern's #712* and its sister #711. Wide eyed passengers watch from Santa Fe's El Capitan featuring a dove-tailed observation car. Meanwhile, passengers await their train as a Maintenance of Way train passes thru a smaller trestle. In observance of this three rail, tin plate triple track train treat, an Honor Guard stands at attention atop the overpass walking bridge.

*Note: Sac. Northern #712 was painted in late colors by fellow SVD member, **Dave Thomsen**.



Looks like a busy holiday weekend as town folks gather at the terminal and its several platforms. Either that, or looking at the armed troops atop the terminal building, maybe their waiting to see the arrival of a very, very VIP! Along with the people, there are many birds on the roofs and water tower watching the goings-on.

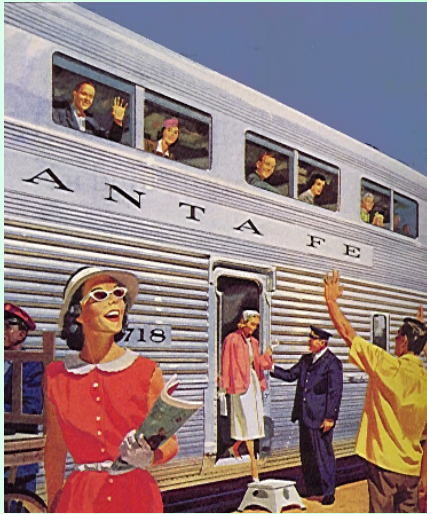


#712, Sacramento Northern's work horse, rumbles around a curve in the backwoods. A few *Royals of the Rails* rise from their luncheon repast as the freight roars by. What's pictured in the right foreground could be taken to be one of them thar stills that might be found in these here-about hills. Or, it could be just an old discarded chimbley! The horses to the left seem indifferent to the happenings behind them. Like many other spots along these tracks, there are the ubiquitous flowers, trees and assorted castaway junk.

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A parade, led by a fire truck, marches down Main Street on Geary's vintage layout. Like his larger layout, there's plenty to look at. Crossing Main is a Lionel #251E engine pulling a string of #800 series 'O' gauge freight cars. Notice the two visiting (lost?) guards on the walk bridge.



Geary carefully watches the clearance of a recently placed cattle truck as two trains carefully wind thru a sharp curve. Seen rounding the southern slope of the High Country is **Santa Fe's El Capitan** crack passenger train. Also, notice the birds atop the lookout tower and telegraph poles.



What's a wall without dozens and dozens of freight and passenger cars on display? Geary seems to have as many locomotives as cars on the twelve shelves of his garage's west wall. And, there are more on the north wall. And, if they're not enough, he's got twenty-eight boxes of full train sets under the layout! Wanna bet there'll soon be a 29th?



MOW cars are spotted next to construction site where more towers will be *creatively* squeezed in. This apparently is a joint effort by Gulf and Sunoco. Note the converted tank car in the rear left. Also seen is the **Santa Fe El Capitan**. Hey, there's a high perching bird on the nearer tower, keeping an eye on Geary.



Here's a look at Geary's smaller layout featuring an early vintage of trains and accessories. A very portable 3x4 feet, it has often appeared at our TTOS meetings in Elk Grove, Scottish Rite and other area shows. The Lionel dealer window displays (repro) are positioned very well, making for an attractive and colorful display.



A recently purchased urban trolley, #331, is now used for construction workers to reach the various work areas in and around the High Country. Geary seems pleased with his railroad's new acquisition. The 'X' on the front of the trolley would likely indicate that it had previously served on a city crosstown route.

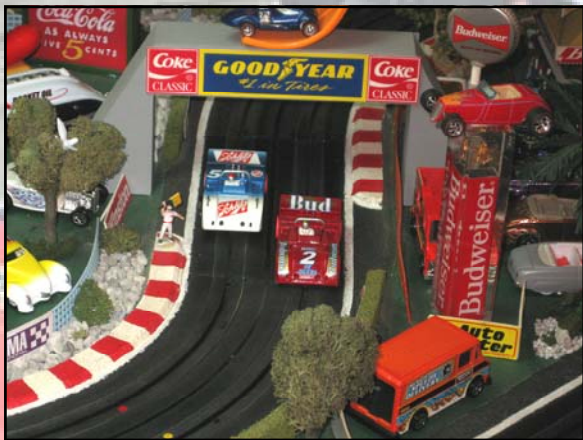
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Y'all are in NASCAR Country ... time to "trade some paint"!

Like many of us, Geary has multiple interests. You'll see that when you first enter his garage. Along with a huge, or rather vast, collection of slot cars of all racing classes, he has an exciting layout on which to run them. You'll be very welcome to race on his beautifully landscaped and crowd filled, four-by-eight foot Auto World Raceway!

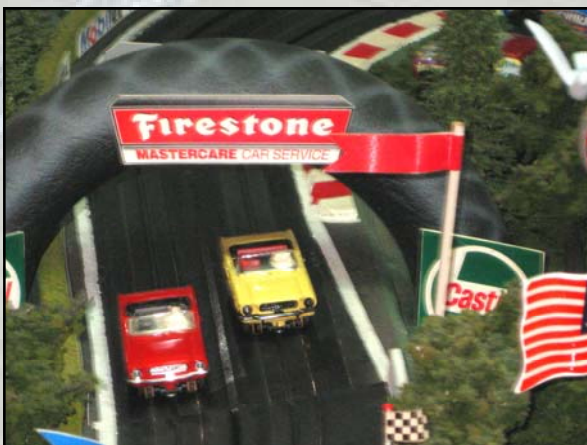
Also seen within the front area of the garage is a colorfully displayed collection of Tonka and other toy trucks and vehicles. There is also extensive NASCAR and Budweiser memorabilia. Trust me, this area is as loud as it is colorful, and it's all WOW!



Bud's leading Schlitz at the Goodyear 'S' curve arch. This area and the entire raceway is blanketed with signs regularly seen at auto raceways across the U.S.A. Along with using clip art, Geary simply cuts out advertisements from racing fan magazines and brochures.



You can almost hear the roar of engines and cheers of hundreds of NASCAR fans at the AUTO WORLD RACEWAY located in South Sacramento. Yes, there are literally hundreds of slot cars of all sizes and classes in his collection and his ready to race roster. The raceway is very well detail with scenery and Geary's well placed scenarios.



The Red is leading the Yellow car as they screech around the Firestone Tire turn. What seems to be a blur above the Firestone sign is actually a giant *tire* arching across the track. Geary custom built the tire using a piece of rubber tubing and painting on the treads.



Pit Row is packed with crews splitting seconds to get their drivers back in the race. Seen adjacent to the pit stop is the Winner's Circle, where one of these drivers may be awarded a trophy!

Down the track

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

March 8 (2nd Saturday): SVD Meet - Holiday Inn Express, Elk Grove*

April 5: SVD Meet - Holiday Inn Express, Elk Grove*

May 3: SVD Meet - Holiday Inn Express, Elk Grove*

May 16-18: Flyer Fest West, San Mateo

May 24: TCA Show - Scottish Rite Center, Sacramento

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

June 15: SVD Picnic - Western Railway Museum, Suisun

August 5-9: TTOS National Convention, Buffalo NY

***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.