



# THE SIDE TRACK

## NEWS

from the Toy Train Operating Society  
Sacramento Valley Division

**WINTER**

**2015**

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

Jerry Azzaro, editor

### President's Message

by John DeHaan, SVD President

Happy Holidays, everyone!

Yes, it's that time of year! It's been a fun year for the SVD members. We got a special tour of the Niles Canyon Railroad. We had the big layout to the TCA Scottish Rite meet in May (and we've already been invited back for 2016) and to Galt in August for its Heritage Festival. **Jack Dieres** and his crew have made all the difference in setting up and tearing down at those events. Our own Scottish Rite event was a success and my appreciation goes out to ALL of the members who volunteered to make it so! Thanks too to all those who opened their homes for layout tours and brought such great stuff to share at our show & tell sessions. Thanks to TCA-Sac/Sierra for the invitation to join them at the layout tour and barbecue at Nevada City/Grass Valley last month.

Our special holiday luncheon and toy/food drive is coming up on December 5<sup>th</sup>, so start your shopping and baking now! The Club will be buying the main course (barbecue and salads) and soft drinks. The side dishes and desserts are up to you! Contact **Ed Strisar** (916) 395-3169 to get your name on the "food" list right away. See you there! Let's see if we can beat the amount of non-perishable food (and toys) we donated last

year to the Sacramento Children's Home and the Food Bank.

Next year will be my LAST year as president, so start thinking now of how you can help keep the club going and growing the way we have. TTOS National is doing very well and is well on its way to qualify as a 501(c)(3) non-profit but we have to do our part in taking part in educational and public events in our area. Your suggestions are welcome. We also need folks to step up and offer home layout tours and suggest ideas for more show & tell topics. (We were all stunned by the quality and range of art works brought to our meeting last year!)

**Jerry Azzaro**, our incredibly talented Side Track editor, is always looking for written and photo pieces for ST. So there's a way to contribute to the educational effort without leaving your desk! I get to see the publications from many other divisions and I think Side Track is better than all the others, thanks to Jerry and his contributors!

My thanks, too, to the board members who have helped so much this year! Our best wishes to our members and family-members who have had health struggles this year. We hope the New Year allows you to join us again. See you ALL soon!

John DeHaan, President

# Meeting Notes

by Jack Ahearn, SVD Secretary

## Minutes, Memos and Musings

### *for the last 3 months*

John D. started the **September meeting** with his usual greetings and welcomes. He also added kudos' to **Jerry Azzaro** for another great issue of the Side Track, which is currently hot off the Adobe press. Look Ma, no ink!

John continued the congrats to those who organized the successful National Convention. Big success featuring fantastic tours and rail rides was his assessment of the big Alb. 2016 and '17 look like equal biggies with the Nationals being held on/in the Queen Mary and Las Vegas.

The anxiously awaited TTOS illuminated logo sign is now ready and offered to members at a reduced price of \$30. It's likely one of the brighter offers from National. Nice Xmas gift too!

**Jack Hornor** was applauded for his effort in arranging our appearance at the Galt Heritage Festival. In accepting the well-deserved accolades, he displayed the event's souvenir tee shirt.



*Photo by Beverly Hornor*

President John mentioned and encouraged members to participate in upcoming train shows and related events with individual layouts. He explained that this and other acts of the public's awareness of model railroading would serve well in reinforcing our tax exempt status. This would also include getting involved with Boy Scout programs.

**Pete White** took a few minutes to demonstrate his and **Jim Groth's** monorail exhibit. I foretell that photos and text telling of this spectacular exhibit will be featured within the Winter issue of the Side Track.

The president (John D.) called **Ed Strisar** to the podium for recognition of Ed's extensive work in organizing the successful Niles Canyon Tour.

The raffle's winning tickets last three numbers are #876 and 891. Congrats to the winners. Next month, I'll skip the numbers and publish the winning names! I always strive to improve!

The **October meeting** will be moved to the Scottish Rite Center, wherein we'll host hundreds of visitors and vendors, resulting in my daring prediction of a

net profit of \$1,726.73!\* And, I'll optimistically predict the two winners of our kids train raffle, with such confidence, that I'll have Jerry A. place their names and photos in another section of this issue.

And speaking of the Scottish Rite Show, my last month's net profit prediction of \$1,726.73 was correct to the penny. Hey, maybe I'll continue with my sure thing: predictions!.

John D. started the **November meeting** with his usual greetings and welcomes. The December Christmas Party and Food-Toy donation (I didn't want to suggest anyone bring Toy Food) was discussed and the sign-up sheet for our party meal donations was placed by **Ed Strisar**. Is your name on the list? If not call Ed at 916.395.3169 or E-him at [stein\\_ed@hotmail.com](mailto:stein_ed@hotmail.com). Thank you...you know how hungry we railroaders get. More importantly; you how much a kid likes to open a present on Christmas morning. Please; make just one kid happy!

For the first time in many, many years, our Modular layout will not be appearing at the California State Railroad Museum's annual Thanksgiving show. Instead, individual members will have the opportunity to show off their smaller layouts or instructive mini exhibits. As for me, I'll again be a participant running trains on my newly constructed 120 by 30 layout! (Oh, yeah...AS YOU READ THIS the show's over and now you know. I meant to write inches.)

President John noted that **Betty Musselman** is out of the hospital and doing well. She'll be celebrating her 96<sup>th</sup> birthday next week and I'd say...that's doing really well! It's also reported that **Tom Gibson** is in the hospital. Details on Tom to follow when known.

The National Board will have a telecon meeting Nov. 8<sup>th</sup>. A proxy for John D. will likely have a report elsewhere in this, or the next S.T. issue. The TTOS National conventions were announced for 2016-17. They're in the current TTOS BULLETIN.

Policies for our annual Scottish Rite Show were discussed at some length. As of now the following areas of concern were discussed: table sales closed ten days prior to show; vendors table fee returned if cancelled for a valid reason; reduced cost for a last minute table sale; reinforce helper rules. There was also much said about security. All of above issues will be discussed at a board meeting, and preliminary findings will then be opened for members input at a next meeting.

V.P. **Ed Strisar** suggested a tour or outing event next summer be held at Portola. More to come!

Raffle winners: **Bob Milton**, Prize, Book titled "Classic North American Steam Locomotives."

**Dave Thomsen**, Prize, Book titled "Great Trains."

Fun Money: **Leroy Wallace, Jr.**

## THOSE LITTLE BLUE SIGNS AT CROSSINGS



Under an FRA rule adopted in 2012 (49 CFR Part 234, Systems for Telephonic Notification of Unsafe Conditions at Highway-Rail and Pathway Grade Crossings; Final Rule), US railroads are now required to post Emergency Notifica-

tion Systems signs at all vehicle crossings, even on abandoned lines. They must be installed on each approach to the crossing, facing the road-

way, and include a toll-free number and the name or identifying number of the crossing.

The contact number must be staffed by a live human capable of dealing with emergencies during all times when the railroad is in operation. Members of the public can call the number to report faulty crossing gates or signal lights, and if your car gets stuck on the track it's a better way to get their attention than waving your shirt at the engineer.

[Here is the FAQ page](#) for the signs.

If you want to model them, 1/4" x 5/16" would be about right for O gauge.

-Jerry A

## Treasurer's Report

By Dean Busick, SVD Treasurer

As of October 31 the club had a total of \$48,862 in its accounts or \$4,953.08 in Business Economy Checking, \$9,748.92 in a Business Investment Account, and \$34,160 in a CD account.

Let us hope that the FED raises interest rates in December because the current interest rate on the CD which has a maturity date of 12/12/15 is only paying 0.15 %.

## Membership News

by Tim Taormina, SVD Membership Chair

As of this winter edition of the Side Track the Sacramento Valley TTOS division has 100 members! And I am very pleased to report that as of our last meeting on November 7, over 25% of you have renewed your membership for 2016. Please note that in order to renew your membership, you will need to be current with your national dues. To that end we are asking that you display both your Sacramento Valley TTOS Membership Card and your TTOS National Membership Card when you come to our meetings. Since this is a requirement for our association with national and we are dependent upon them for our liability insurance, I would ask that you give attention to this if it applies to you. If you are uncertain of your current status with national, please contact me at (916) 441-4778, send me a note at [trainfun@att.net](mailto:trainfun@att.net), or see me at one of our meetings.

Happy Railroading!

Tim Taormina, Membership Chair

## Bill Bender receives CSRM award

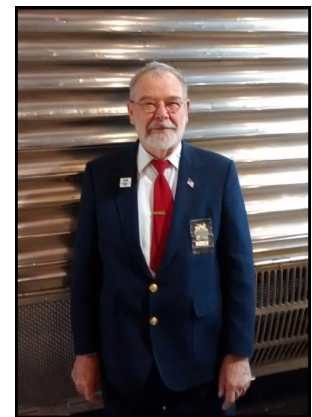
By Jack Ahearn

Congratulations to CSRM docent and SVD member **Bill Bender** as he attains three thousand, five hundred hours of volunteer service with the California State Railroad Museum!

Bill started many years ago, graduating from the second CSRM docent training class in 1981. In 1986, he

signed up for, was accepted and took part in the very first Amtrak Interpretive Group.

Since then, although he appears off and on in the museum as a regular docent, Bill loves riding back and forth to Sparks, NV on the California Zephyr. During the several hour (?) trip he points out the various scenic and historic sites across the Sierra. Like all Interpretive Guides, Bill's narration is live, not a pre-recorded spiel.





# River City 2015 - our big annual public event

**Beverly Hornor** reports that the meet had a gross income of \$4,311.00 and expenses of \$2,584.27, with a net income to the Division of \$1,723.73

Captioned photos and captions by Jack Ahearn (John Leins' layout, prize winners). Other photos by John DeHaan



The Walgreens drug store seems to have a few well laid out leaks in its roof. Perhaps they can be patched by some suckers; all day suckers, that is.



**Mia Brister** gives the camera a big smile as the six year old winner from San Lorenzo gets an assist from **Beverly Hornor** showing off her colorful Lionel 'Wizard' train set.



Overhead view of **John Leins'** 30 by 36 inch layout shows lots of color and activity. He sure got a lot of detail into just over a thousand square inches!



**Jack Jester** shows the Lionel Penn Flyer freight train set presented to him by **Beverly Hornor**.



All kinds of busy stuff going on! Hope that reefer gets those cans of milk to dairy before they sour!

## Galt Heritage Festival

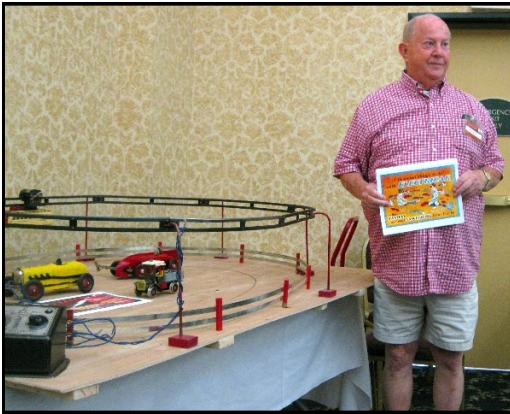
Galt residents learned about the toy train hobby and about the railroad history of the area when our big club layout and several members' layouts were set up for this event in August.





# Rails above, rails alongside

*Track isn't always for running on. Sometimes it's for hanging from or rubbing up against. Boxcar Jack Ahearn reports on Jim Groth's and Pete White's vintage electrically-powered transportation toys that aren't trains.*



## A very well exhibited

1930's Leland-Detroit monorail and an Electricar Co. oval of double rail track comprise the mainlines of this jointly owned transportation system displayed at the River City show and the November 7th SVD meeting. The two race cars and a dump truck which run on the lower level and are owned by **Pete White**. Whereas, **Jim Groth** owns and operates the upper level monorail, on which he runs his beautiful electric powered red and yellow passenger car. Their colorful and exciting action-packed display invokes deep interest and popping eyeballs from all who watch this rare treat.



Special attention is given to Pete's two racing cars and green dump truck. Made by the Electricar Company, all three have interchangeable bodies mounted on a common chassis. The electric motors in each allow them to run on the lower two rail track system which resembles a fence.

The colorful catalog covers (repro) of Electricar products show they also offered a green colored bus and other vehicles. Apparently they made kids smile in the 1930's, and eighty years later this kid and others I saw at our October meeting are continuing with those long ago smiles.

**For additional information** on the Electricar Co. and their products, read the article in the October 2015 issue of the **Train Collectors Quarterly** (Page 27).

*-Jack Ahearn*



## **Down the track**

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

**December 5th: SVD Meet – Holiday Inn Express, Elk Grove\* \*\***

**January 2016: (to be determined)**

January 5th: National Lionel Train Day

**February 6th: SVD Meet – Holiday Inn Express, Elk Grove\***

February 27-28: Great Train Expo - Cal Expo, Sacramento

**March 5th, 2016: SVD Meet – Holiday Inn Express, Elk Grove\***

**\*Meetings begin at 9:30 AM**

**\*\* Holiday luncheon; food/toy drive**

**BRING YOUR SVD and TTOS NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP CARDS**

### **TTOS-SVD Mission Statement:**

*Our mission is to bring together persons interested in the hobby of collecting and operating toy trains.*

*The focus of activities shall be on promoting the best interests of the hobby through fellowship, a sense of good will, camaraderie within the membership, and exposing the general public to the hobby, encouraging greater interest in it and increasing membership.*