

THE SIDE TRACK

NEWS

from the Toy Train Operating Society
Sacramento Valley Division

FALL

2017

It's not his master's voice - there's a meatball in the speaker.

Jerry Azzaro, editor

President's Message

by Curt Darling, SVD President

Hello everyone,

Wow! Summer is almost over. I would like to thank **Mike de la Pena**, **Tom Alger**, and **Carl Curtis** for opening their homes to us, it allowed us to see some amazing trains and layouts. Having these tours sure makes our club even more fun! It gives us an opportunity to socialize with our club members which makes for a stronger club. I would like to see a little more participation in attendance for the open houses.



On a very sad note, our longtime member and friend **Susane Wells** passed away. She's going to be greatly missed.

I had my teleconference with National and financially they are operating in the black with a substantial amount of money in the bank. Our National membership is down and continues to drop, It has about 2060 members. We all need to do our part to help bring our membership up. The convention cars are being produced by Lionel as I'm writing this message.

Thank you **John DeHaan** for inviting us into your home in Vallejo. We got to take a look at John's very impressive automobile collection and a potluck luncheon. Then we all caravanned to the Carquinez Toy Train Operating Museum (CTTOM). We had an introduction on how they got started at the Odd Fellows Building. In future they are planning on opening another museum in Vallejo. For

a club that just started five or six years ago. It looks like there going to have a very strong future. They also invited us back for another visit to run our own trains on their layout. Hopefully we can take them up on the offer.

News on our club layout: it seems that there's been a lot more interest in the future of the layout, so we will put together a sign-up sheet for a layout committee members. So, let's put are heads together and make this layout awesome.

One more note: we our selling off our Club cars \$25.00ea or five cars for \$100. I also picked up some 1993 Club cars, they will be on sale for \$20 each. We still have TTOS license plate frames if you're interested.

Let's have some fun!!!



August 12th: A Fun Day of Cars and Trains

By Boxcar Jack Ahearn



Members enjoy an outdoor buffet served on an actual railroad baggage cart.



If you wonder what became of the old orange SVD layout, it's set up and running at John's place



Cliff Jarrard takes in a wall of trains at John's house



A '57 Ford undergoing restoration sits next to John's fully restored Hudson Hornet with Twin-H Power.

Our SVD field trip to **John DeHaan's** home featured a bountiful buffet and his classic vintage automobiles. This was followed by a prearranged visit to the Carquinez Toy Train Operating Museum. The photos below were taken just after a warm welcoming and descriptive history of the club's impressive layout but unfortunately, just prior to several trains entering onto the main line.

Particularly impressive were the realistic rocky hills and hand carved stonework throughout the huge layout. Note the very well done rushing mountain stream with its rusted girder bridges and the daring acrobatic stunts performed by bungee jumpers from the high-above wood trestle. It's a very rewarding trip to Crockett to see this magnificent model railroad. For videos, pictures and directions go to: <http://www.cttom.org/>



Realistic waterfall, rusting bridges



Gorgeous scenery



Don't try this at home



This panoramic view by **John DeHaan** shows the magnitude of the 40' x 40' CTTOM layout

News from the TTOS Las Vegas Convention

by Phil Fravesi



Emma and I attended the TTOS National Convention in Las Vegas August 1-5. It was a good convention with tours to keep everyone busy. Tuesday night, we toured the Neon Museum. It's a nonprofit group that is dedicated to saving history through the signs from Las Vegas. The most interesting sign/story was from the Moulin Rouge Casino opened in 1955 when Las Vegas was still very segregated.

Wednesday, we toured the Mob Museum, all about the rise of organized crime, quite riveting. We had time to walk two

blocks to Fremont Street, site of the original Las Vegas casinos. The signs and architecture take you back in time. Then it was on to the National Atomic Museum where some of the docents worked on the projects and related some of their own experiences.

Thursday it was off to Hoover Dam, the most interesting part of the week. I was surprised that they still have tours and allow vehicle traffic across the dam. Every vehicle goes through an inspection point before entering the area. We moved on to the Nevada Southern Railway for a train ride and lunch on board. It is operated by the Nevada State RR Museum.

There was a BOD meeting Thursday evening which I attended as the National Secretary. It was a fairly routine meeting about upcoming conventions, issues with the old South West and Wolverine Division and financials. The good news is National is in good financial shape, all the bills are paid with a nice cushion. This was followed by the Welcoming Party. Lots of good food, drink and company. After the welcoming party, we were treated to a ride on the "High Roller". It's a 550 foot diameter Ferris wheel that takes 30 minutes to complete one revolution. Quite spectacular at night.



Our visit to the Nevada Southern Railway operated by the Nevada State RR Museum. This was the loco and HEP car (below) on our excursion while we enjoyed lunch on the train.



This is a live steam engine running a Ferris wheel in the trading hall. Rather impressive.



A self-contained tilt up modular section. It is mounted on its own wheels and levers. What a great idea!



This is a mockup of a 100 foot long device to lower an atomic device into a 4000 foot vertical shaft for detonation. The National Atomic Museum

One of the many signs at the Neon Museum



Defying gravity? Emma trying to pour water over the face of Hoover Dam. Due to the air rising up the face, the water went up and blew back into her face.

Minutes, Memos and Musings

for the last 3 months

by Jack Ahearn, SVD Secretary

June 3rd, 2017

Meeting was called to order by President **Curt Darling** at 9:00 a.m. A new member, **Keith Anderson**, was introduced. Keith tells us he is interested in American Flyer 'S' gauge which was received with loud applause from other members so inclined. At this time, Keith is mostly involved with the repair and restoration of said trains. (No comment.)

President Curt made mention of the passing of **Merlin Lausten**. **Tim Taormina** said of him; "Merlyn was a terrific person who was very well liked in our TTOS family. He always had a smile and a good word, even while he was battling this illness. He will be sorely missed."

The planned Portola Day outing was brought up by Pres. Curt who announced that a final yea or nay decision would have to be made now as the agreement with the charter bus company would have to be finalized this Monday, June 5th. A report by V.P. and tour coordinator, **Ed Strisar**, announced that the large number of member cancellations will likely cause the shelving of this trip. **John DeHaan** made a motion to cancel which was seconded by **Jeff Silvera**. A discussion brought many comments from members with one option of continuing with the trip but cancelling the bus. It was opined by Ed Strisar that the gas tab for individuals driving would be about the same as the chartered bus. President Curt suggested having the club's treasury offset the bus cost by subsidizing fifty percent of the forty dollar per person fee. It was pointed out that if we charter the bus but did not have at least twenty five of the members who had cancelled reregistration, the club would lose heavily. Not many chose that gamble and a majority of members voted in favor of cancelling the trip. The Portola outing is cancelled.

Ric Wilson, Show and Tell Chair, announced that July's theme will be "One of a Kind!" Members are urged to bring a unique train item that they either built or modified which only they have. Hmmm, that is a unique theme.

The winning ticket for the monthly raffle won a Tee shirt for **Richard Zanotti** who turned it down because it was too small and a redrawing for the

shirt was won by **Jack Ahearn** who turned it down because it was too big! Wondering? (XL)

Meeting was adjourned early at 9:45 because of the time needed for the afternoon's *grand slam tour* of three member's layouts. (**Curtis, De La Pena** and **Alger**).

Respectfully submitted, Jack Ahearn, Secretary.

July 1st, 2017

President Curt called the meeting to order promptly at 9:30 asking for any new members or guests to be introduced. **Steven Parry** was introduced as a guest by his father, Seth.

This sounds like a biggie: **John DeHaan** announced that he had been contacted by Rick Plummer, T.T.O.S Past President, concerning exploratory plans to establish a T-Toss major train show in California much like T.C.A.'s York, PA extravaganza. Show names along the theme of "Cal-York", "York West" or of similar market positioning references are also being discussed. Currently, the city of Tulare, located south of Modesto and east of Visalia off Hwy.99, is under consideration. Tulare is most known for its annual International Agri-Expo and nearby Sequoia National Park. The dates currently planned for the premier Show are in Sept. 2018. A call for a raised hands interest had almost all members pointing skywards. Sounds exciting to this member!

Following the above announcement, approximately thirty minutes were spent discussing our club's apparent lack of attendance to, and enthusiasm for SVD outside events. The June Portola cancellation and low attendance for last month's triple layout tour are recent examples. In my view and in the views offered vocally by several other members, this state of laxity is an on-and off-condition and has been discussed for many years. However, this matter should be addressed as it is demoralizing to our group and in particular, those volunteer members who plan and execute activities, such as field trips or equally discouraging, to those who open their homes for layout tours and experience minimal visitation. Many opinions and several options to encourage group participation were offered from the floor, such as:

Setting a continuing date for an annual event that has full membership input and approval. It was suggested that a holiday, such as the Fourth of July, could grow into a much looked forward to happening as is TCA's annual October barbecue.

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Minutes, Memos and Musings

from the previous page

Another suggestion introduced the idea to not have a multiple layout tour or other outside activities held following the monthly meeting. It might ease a full day or busy schedule to have it on another day, perhaps the second of each month or alternating Saturdays. Another suggestion would be to have on-site, after meeting activities, such as clinics or hands-on instructional workshops for advanced procedures such electrical, scenery or a novice's guide for hand-held or computer train control applications. The latter may encourage a younger membership interest.

Finally, although not "Toy", might it be time to consider opening our doors to scale-minded enthusiasts? "Operating" *is* another word in our Society's name, and let's face it; in many respects, we have not been operating too well.

Note: The above is obviously editorial in nature based on suggestions voiced by members. They were noted by me as Secretary and feel they are an accurate representation voiced during this month's meeting. I think it appropriate to report them within Minutes, Memos and Muses.

On a more positive note, **Ric Wilson** organized and participated in a very interesting Show & Tell program. We had four of the absolutely one-of-a-kind entries from several of our most talented and creative members. Thanks to all who did such a great job of imagineering!

Next month's Show and Tell theme is: My Failures that Seemed like oh, such a great idea!

The Raffle brought recent new member **Gene Edwardsen** the fun-mon-tener! And kudos' again go to Paul Shelgren for helping us to stay overweight with donuts and assorted gooey-gooeys!

Meeting adjourned at 10:15. Respectfully submitted, Jack Ahearn, Secretary

August 5th, 2017

A guest, **Joaquin Murphy**, was introduced by **John DeHaan** upon the usual opening request by President Curt Darling. He stated his interest centered on pre and postwar Marx but his biz card states a wider range – "Planes, Trains, Automobiles, Antiques and other interesting stuff."

John DeHaan took to the podium to announce details and request sign up signatures for his August 12th open house and scheduled side trip to the Carquinez Toy Train Operating Museum. I'm

confident as you read this you'll have pleasant memories of that exciting event.

John DeHaan, whom we thank for volunteering to be Show Chair for our Scot Rite Fall Fabulosa, also advised that prospective sellers can simply cyber down-load table applications and other required forms. He also called for members to sign up for the various duties, regardless as to how much time they can participate. He added that it takes twenty folks to perform the varied tasks required to make our show run smoothly and successfully.

He also reminded us that this year's show date is Saturday, **September 30th**!

It was noted by Prez Curt that due to a lack of SVD participants for setting up our club's modular layout at the annual Galt Heritage Days event, that portion of our clubs representation will not happen. However, several members will participate by bringing their individual layouts to that show. We thank those members and ask for more members to join in and help promote our club! The date is September 9th, so if you're reading this, you still have time to put together a small layout and drop it into your car's trunk and put big smiles on little and, some big faces!

Speaking of participating members, new member **Keith Anderson** offered us a very brief but comprehensive explanation of railroads braking systems. If you have a further interest, Keith will be more than pleased to oblige you.

Alas (not Atlas) there were, surprisingly, no participants in this month's Show & Tell feature. Perhaps the theme, showcasing not so great outcomes to some not so great project ideas, was too negative or we've got exceptionally successful, talented and creative members in our midst! **Ric Wilson**, S&T Chair announced next month's theme as being Trolleys, Trams and Traction. Let's see what kind of *clang, clang, clangs* our members can Show and Tell us about!

The winning raffle number was ...889 which brought to winner **Bob Milton** an even swap for a Lionel Cotton Belt Blue Streak Fast Freight forty foot freight car! (Try splitting that out frast!)

Meeting adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

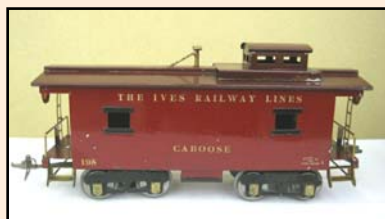
Respectfully submitted, Jack Ahearn Secretary.

June/July Show and Tell

Coordinated by Ric Wilson

Photos and text by Jack Ahearn

For June, the theme was "Tinplate Treasures"



Chuck Brasher's standard gauge No.195 caboose was made for only one year, 1928. The script on the lower right hand corner reads, Made in the Ives Shops. Notice the solid catwalk, cupola support platform and the rarely seen (in toy trains) chimney support piping. Chuck states this caboose is; best condition one there is! I believe we can all agree.

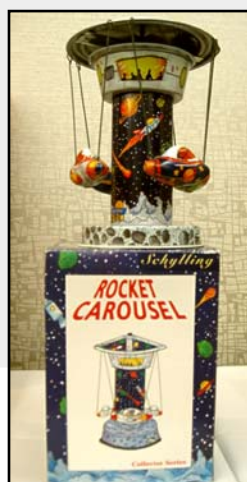
Bryan Stanton brings us a rare Lionel Standard gauge #51906 caboose! Notice the unusual window awnings and the yellow inside walls and end platform trim. The series of railroad names had a very active change of ownerships between the mid-1800's and 1907. However Lionel's initials indicating the New York Central and Hudson River Rail Road are lettered for the years up to 1907 when once again its ownership and name changed - one year before Lionel issued it in 1908! Okay, so Joshua painted and lettered it in 1907 *for issuance* in 1908.



Yes, take another look! **Bryan Stanton's** original Lionel 1904 2 7/8 gauge Baltimore & Ohio caboose is likely one of the rarest seen at our S&T program. To emphasize its rarity, it is suggested that if a collector has only two or three 2-7/8 gauge cars, he or she has what is considered to be **a large collection!**



This French made clockwork Éclair train set is a part of **Lisa Stanton's Trains From Around the World** theme of collectables. She states it is of mid twentieth century vintage.



These two pre WW-1 stations were made by the Carette Co. **Richard Zanotti** purchased both at York and they were nicely restored by his friend, **Ira Keeler.**



Lisa Stanton's Schylling carousel - An extremely colorful rocket can go on a round-trip to the moon or any other circuitous route a kid would like to imagine.

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June Show and Tell (continued)

Jim Groth modified a really neat truck into a really neat standard gauge Maintenance-of-Way work horse. He installed a Lionel engine and its drive wheels, gimmicked in some working head lights and even figured how to have the radiator over-heat and spew smoke! All that and he even remembered to remove the steering wheel. Good job, Jim!



For July, the theme was “One of a Kind”



What appears to be a page out of an early 1950's Lionel catalog featuring an Alco 0-27 A-A U.P. plain Jane diesel duo is really quite more. The added 'B' unit didn't come from the Lionel shops, but rather, **Frank Jablonski's** work bench! With clever and imaged modification, Frank built the

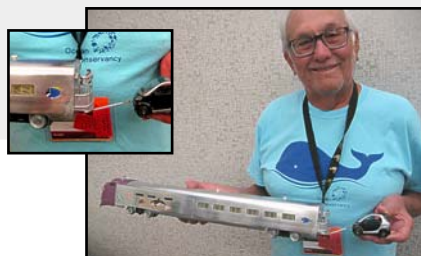
center 'B' from two 'A' units. He creatively added Lionel's TMCC and Rail Sounds. Yup, it's the only one of its kind!



Jumping crossing gates Batman, it's **Ric Wilson's** American Flyer Bat Train (uncatalogued) racing down the track! Wkaddya get when you repaint a Royal Blue loco and searchlight car black, add the Bat Sign to the lens, blacken an auto car and add the Batmobile, and do a similar total black-out on a caboose? You get the absolutely, only one of its kind, Batman Gotham City Special!



Ah, **Dave Thomsen** has added another unique piece of power and beauty to his Rusty Spike R.R. What had been a junker Lionel passenger car got chopped, painted, lettered and motorized. Adding a K-Line motor, scratch built fenders, a hood and junk-box model car parts, Rail Bus #3 clanged its bell and headed out onto the High Iron! Another of Dave's only one of its kind gems!



The Side Track certainly doesn't have to list this entry with **Carl Curtis's** name. Who else would/could come up with such a hybrid as a Rail Road Recreational Vehicle? (RRRV) What you're looking at, or rather, would have been looking at, is a Kasinger dining car kit. Carl was thoughtful enough to add a speeder in tow for a possible emergency or a beer run into town.



Three layouts in one day !

June 3rd home layout tours

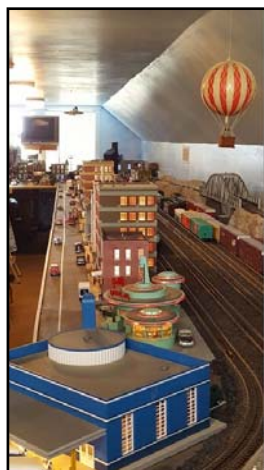
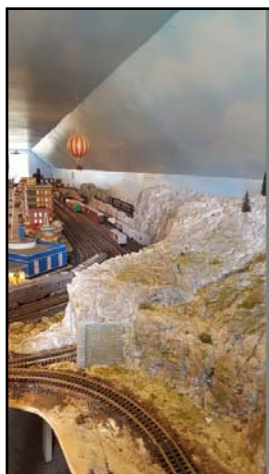
Organized by Ed Strisar

Photos and comments by Curt Darling and John DeHaan

Thanks to builders/operators Tom Alger, Mike De La Pena and Carl Curtis



*The drive to **Tom Alger's** was very picturesque, with a panoramic view of the Sierra foothills. Tom's house is on a hilltop and the train room is above his garage. The layout size is 15'x40' with very nice scenery. Tom, a retired firefighter, was very proud to show us his operating firehouse. Most of his trains are of the modern era, with all the "bells and whistles".*
- C.D.



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Three layouts in one day (continued)

Some views of **Mike De La Pena's** fantastic layout during the recent SVD layout tour. Mike has a great selection of post-war and modern rolling stock but really likes the **BIG** scale-size models and has the long radii curves to operate them! - J.D.



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Three layouts in one day (continued)

Here are some of the fun corners and dioramas on **Carl and Elizabeth Curtis's** great layout seen on the recent SVD layout tour. Carl's a great kit-basher and scratch-builder (as we've seen in some of our show-and-tell sessions), with a sly sense of humor. - J.D.



SVD Layout in Full Mode at TCA Scottish Rite Show

text and photos by Jack Ahearn

Sac-Val-Div had a good showing at T.C.A's Scot-Rite Show. John Leins was there with his typically colorful and accessory crammed Marx layout while **Ed Strisar** "Left the driving to Greyhound" on his layout. Our layout crew brought out the club's large-modge layout and soon had it running. Pictured is a K-line Ladies' Pink Special pulling several of her pink clad followers. **Seth Parry's** MTH U.P. crack passenger train heads up to the Sierras doing double duty by delivering a much needed MOW snow plow! Turning back the pages of auto history is an antique beauty on a piggy-back trip to an auto show. The car was designed by **Elias Amaral** and **Paul Wells** and built by **Dave Thomsen**. Wow, a classy chassis on the high rails!

Curt Darling, Elias Amaral, Seth Parry, Jenni Parry, John DeHaan, James Henson, Jeff Silvera, Rod Walker, Pam Richmond, Geary Musselman and **Paul Wells** all worked on this layout presentation - many serving double-duty.



John DeHaan adds:

"Set-up went very well because we had a good turnout of volunteers. **Jeff** takes on the S-gauge sectional track each time. **Seth** is now a key member of the team, willing to take on any job (and young enough to crawl under the layout to get the electrics sorted out)! **Curt** had the challenge of figuring out which size layout we could fit into the lobby to meet the requirements of the Temple". John also sends these photos -



Down the track

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

September 2nd: SVD Meet - Holiday Inn Express, Elk Grove*

September 30th: SVD River City Toy Train meet, Scottish Rite Center

October 7th: SVD meeting at Holiday Inn Express, Elk Grove*

November 4th: SVD meeting at Holiday Inn Express, Elk Grove*

**December 2nd: SVD Toy/Food Drive, Christmas Party - Holiday Inn Express,
Elk Grove***

***Meetings begin at 9:30 AM 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.