

THE SIDE TRACK

NEWS

from the Toy Train Operating Society Sacramento Valley Division

Spring

2018

Behind every great man there is a woman rolling her eyes. - Jim Carrey

Jerry Azzaro, editor

President's Message

by Curt Darling, SVD President



Hello everyone,

The holiday season is behind us now. We had our annual Christmas potluck and toy/food drive. I hope you all had a good time, enjoying good food and good times while so-

cializing with our friends. I know I did! ... and of course buying trains - we had a lot to choose from.

We had our first layout display of the year at Cal-Expo in January. There were many people checking out our layout. This helps to satisfy our 501-C. Hopefully we can have a lot more opportunities to bring our layout to events in the coming months. A special thanks to **Ed Strisar** and **Dave Thomsen** for bringing their portable layouts.

I would like to thank all of those who helped out on the layout - setting up, running trains and tear-down. If it weren't for you people the layout wouldn't be a success. So thank you **Seth Parry** and son **Steven**, **Rose Craighead**, **Elias Amaral**, **John DeHaan**, **Jeff Silvera** and his son **Sean**, (Jeff's friend also came along to help us), **Don & Eileen Gueffroy** and their grandson **Christopher**, **James Henson**, **David Gray**, and **David Sandfort**.

I would also like to thank **John DeHaan** for filling in for me at the January meeting. Keep in mind that October is the month to nominate your new officers: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

Down the track: in June the CSRM invited us to display our layout and run trains on Fathers Day weekend. I've heard **Ed Strisar** has been working

a fun outing for us to go to Woodland in the month of May.

Don't forget your 2018 membership dues. If you haven't paid, they are now delinquent and a \$5 fee will be added.

One more note - we are selling our club cars at \$25 each or five cars for \$100. I also have some 1993 club cars, they will be on sale for \$20 each. And we still have license plate frames if you're interested.

Let's have some fun!

Curt

Club Layout News

By Seth Parry, Layout Committee Chairman



Welcome to another edition of "As the Layout Turns."

First, the good news. The last setup was in January at Cal Expo. We had a decent turnout for setting up and tearing down. **Jeff Silvera** didn't get hit on the head this time, so that is an improvement. The Layout is operating with full DCS and Legacy as well as conventional.

Now, for the bad news. We have gotten outshined again by a layout that is 1/4 our size, but has 5 times as many accessories. We should really look at improving the look and operating accessories.

... and finally, the ugly. We will be setting up in May and again in June. May will be the Sac-Sierra Scottish Rite meet. June will be Fathers Day at the California State Railroad Museum. We hope to see as many participants as possible to continue to represent TTOS-SVD.

January/February Show and Tell

Coordinated by Ric Wilson

Photos and text by Jack Ahearn

For January, the theme was “Military Trains”

Jeff Silvera presented a Marx Army Train set from his youth that is rare and in pristine condition. One of the cars in the set is a very rare work caboose.

Mike Shafer displayed a current (2017) MTH World War II flat car with crates containing unassembled Jeeps (the US Army stopped shipping fully assembled Jeeps after the war started). A check on the MTH website (MTH 30-76703) shows this car is available at a number of train stores nationally. **Mike** asked the membership to expand their thinking about the Show & Tell portion of the meeting and use it as an opportunity to display unusual items and rolling stock that members, especially new members, may not otherwise be able to see and experience.

Mike de la Pena presented a number of items, including a flat car with two Sherman tanks and a flat car with two halftracks and other military vehicles. The flat cars were Weaver with die-cast Solido tanks and trucks. **Mike** has very nicely modified the flat cars with wood flooring and blocks to accommodate the vehicles.



Mike Schafer and his flatcar of crated unassembled Jeeps



Jeff Silvera with Marx Army train set



Mike De La Pena shows his flatcar with halftrack vehicles

For February, the theme was “Love Me Tender” and “Be Mine”

Mike Schafer brought his 1960s Lionel Northern Pacific box car. The car is a factory error with the NP name printed on one side only

Richard Zanotti showed a #1 gauge ore car custom-made by an inmate of Folsom Prison. This car was previously owned by long time and warmly remembered SVD member Barry Garland. 0387 - Richard also brought a stock certificate for the Kelsey Mine Co of Placerville. Richard's father is shown as the owner.

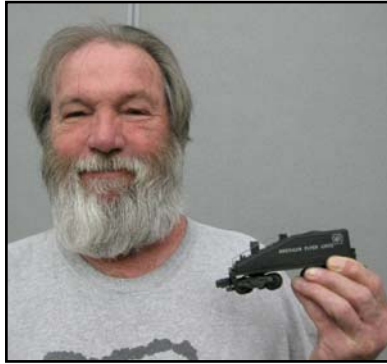
S&T coordinator **Ric Wilson** put on a display of Tender Love by showing his 1959 American Flyer S gauge slope-back tender. The slope-back design was loved by railroaders because it gave better visibility when backing.

Tim Taormina brought three items: Two U.P. water tenders - one Gray and one Black. U.P. used this type of tender to reduce water stops on long runs. The principle users for these mobile water tanks were U.P.'s Big Boy and Challenger locos. Both were made for Lionel for T.C.A.'s Rocky Mtn. Div. 2008 Convention. Tim also brought a Yule Marble Company flat car (#3, one of 250 T.C.A. 2008 Rocky Mountain Div.) The prototype transported marble from their quarries in Colorado which was used on many buildings, most noteworthy, the Lincoln Memorial and the Tomb of The Unknown Soldier.

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February Show and Tell, continued ...



Ric Wilson shows tender love with his Flyer slope-back (below)



Tim Taormina displays Herculean strength lifting a depressed center flatcar with a heavy load of marble. Below: Tim's UP tenders



Now you see it, now you don't. **Mike Schafer** shows both sides of his NP boxcar



Richard Zanotti's prison-built ore car; Kelsey Mine Co. certificate, below



Dave's Corner of the Room

Member **Dave Thomsen** brings a new layout creation to every SVD meeting. Dave's layouts are always crowd-pleasers at the Scottish Rite shows, Cal Expo and CSRM events.



Dave smiles with glee as he throttles his all red 4-4-0 American type General around his early western theme layout.



A colorful train load of cattle has been picked up from the cattle pens in Dave's ol' western shoot-em-up town on a branch line of his Rusty Spike R.R.



Teacher's Pet

By John DeHaan



In September I lectured for two days at the Southwest Virginia Fire Investigator's Seminar in Roanoke VA. I agreed to do this if they provided me a chance to visit the Virginia Museum of Transportation and visit the N&W railroad equipment there - and the O. Winston Link Museum. The Assistant Director of the Museum greeted me at the front door and offered a guided tour of "whatever I wanted to see"! What a dream!

I headed straight for the star of the museum – famous J-class streamlined loco #611. It has been fully restored and runs regular excursions from the museum.



I got into the cab and into the driver's seat to find the firebox was still warm after her last excursion a week prior. (See photos). With her 4-8-4 wheels, streamlining (by the firm of Raymond Loewy), she was used in the fastest passenger trains,

capable of more than 100mph. Built in 1950, retired in 1959 and restored to full glory in 2013.

The N&W was famous for building ALL of its heavy

haulers right there in Roanoke.

So it was great to check out the incredible A-class loco, with 114,000 pounds of tractive effort and 70" drivers. She could haul 100 full coal cars at speeds up to 100mph, and could take on any of Virginia's steep grades.



The even more massive Y6a 2-8-8-2 articulated was the subject of some of O. Winston Link's most famous photos (taken between 1955 and 1957). Built in 1942, she offered 127,000 pounds of tractive effort and a top speed of more than 50mph. The photos here give some idea of her size (virtually the same as the UP Big Boys). Sadly, her drive rods were partially dismantled for a restoration move some years ago and the parts lost. Neither she nor the A class are operational, but they are incredible reminders of the N&W power. There are many other locomotives and rolling stock (like Virginian and GE electrics).

The beautiful Art Deco passenger station nearby has been remodeled as the O. Winston Link Museum. Link was a renowned professional photographer from New York who volunteered several summers to capture the end of the steam era in the N&W. Hundreds of his photos, diagrams of how such dramatic photos were taken (using giant slave flash guns), and his equipment are beautifully displayed.

Roanoke is a beautiful small city, whose downtown is being lovingly brought back to life (largely by Virginia Tech) in the scenic hills of the Blue Ridge Mountains along the western edge of Virginia. Well worth a visit by any train enthusiast.



Dave Thomsen, Model Maker Extraordinaire

Dave helps Jack resolve the “To buy or not to buy” conundrum
by Boxcar Jack Ahearn

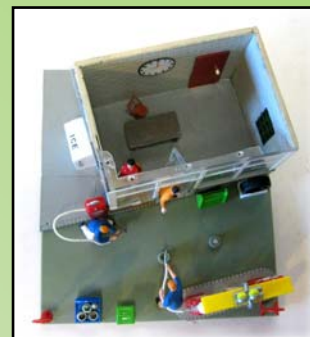
It was at a train show that I reflected; *why would I buy this thing?* about something usually found under a vendor’s table. My rationale was twofold; it could be paid for with coins rather than paper or plastic and secondly, I just liked it. What was it? Well, it certainly wasn’t a complete “what is it?” Alas, it was only about half of what it should have been. When I got home, I examined my half a gas station. It had a very well detailed front service area and an inviting front windowed wall. But, that was it - all of it! The remaining floor area failed to have a back or any side walls and to top that, it didn’t have a roof!

What to do with it? My inspired answer was to place it in the hands of our club’s creative modeler, Dave Thomsen. A month or so later, Dave gave it back; a fully walled in structure with a nicely detailed interior and above all, an attractive removable roof ! It was a clean, fully detailed model that’s well worth the few expended coins. Thanks, Dave, for a truly great job!

Photos of what
Jack handed to Dave



Photos of what Dave handed back to Jack



SVD Layout at Great Train Show, Cal Expo

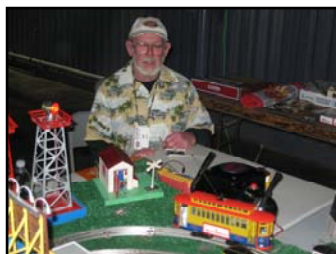
Text by Jack Ahearn

Photos by Jack Ahearn and John DeHaan

Our participation in the Great Train Show January 6th-7th at Cal Expo was very successful. Many thanks to **Seth Parry, Layout Chair**, and all those who assisted him. No one is keeping records, but the entire table was set up in 45 minutes which had to be very close to the fastest time it has ever taken to do so. Many thanks also to all those who were there to run trains. While we were able to keep the trains running the entire weekend, more volunteers would have been appreciated so that those who did run trains would not have had to stay as long. The ideal time of a couple of hours apiece is still our goal. Hopefully we will be able to fill out a schedule of this kind on our next run. **John DeHaan** encouraged all members to participate in the running of trains, including those who run Standard and 'S' Gauge. The diversity of gauges in our layout is always an exciting draw. A number of members point-

ed out the diversity of gauges in the other layouts at the show. We saw a very nice turnout by train show attendees at our layout, so much so that we ran out of membership application forms. It was noted that a number of other layouts seemed to have a bit more interest because they had a greater variety of accessories to draw viewers. For that reason the board is open to ideas from members as to how we may be able to improve our layout in this regard as we also continue to review how we can modify the layout to make it easier to transport. At the January meeting **John** asked the members to consider donating used small, operating accessories that the club could utilize on the layout to make it more attractive. **Mike de la Pena** suggested that the club may want to consider the current "Plug and Play" accessories that are on the market today, since they greatly reduce the wiring necessary to make the accessory operational. A "demo" replacement cart and table were presented to hopefully give members some ideas to improve our layout. Overall **John DeHaan** noted that participation by vendors at this year's show was down from previous years as only the main floor was used. Nevertheless our club was paid a tow fee of \$150.00 for the use of our layout.

Photos of SVD club layout, SVD member layouts and some nearby layouts at Cal Expo



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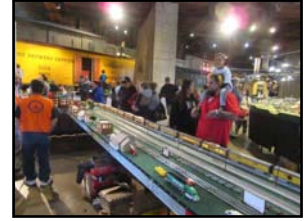


HOLIDAY LEFTOVERS

Some things from 2017 that were too late for the winter issue



Photos of SVD Layout at CSRM November 7th Thanksgiving Holiday Event - by John DeHaan



Photos of SVD members' home Christmas layouts

This is where the toy train magic happens. Thanks to everyone who contributed



Mike Boyd says, "Here's a 4X6 Flyer table I did for a 5 year old nephew. Oval with one siding, manual switch and a simple Atlantic with the reverse switch. Added a smoke unit and headlight and *voila!* a happy guy. Put a flyer whistle on there too, for the grownups to enjoy."

Paul Clement's Standard Gauge MTH Blue Comet makes the rounds on Christmas morning



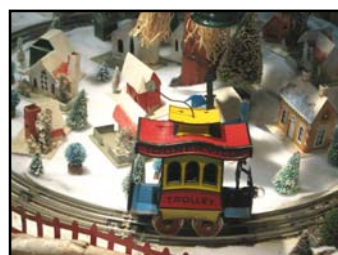
John DeHaan's Christmas involves classic cars, no surprise. He positioned the Menard's car repair (with Hudson and Studebaker signage) and parked a couple of the Dinky Toy models in front (in the correct marques, of course)



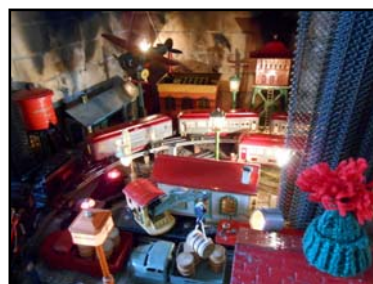


Above: **Jack Ahearn** found some photos of Christmas layouts from previous years

Below: **Jack** says, “These photos show a rework of the previous Pineville setting on the upper level of my five-by-four foot empire. Those wartime offerings have been replaced with postwar vintage dime store snow covered cardboard houses. They’re similar to the ones I’ve retained on the lower portion but are smaller in size and just as quaint. The tree is not illuminated and has an early 20th century flavor of cinnamon sticks, birds in a nest and an assortment of wood carved and cut brass ornaments.”



Steve Bertolucci's layout runs through his fireplace! Steve says, “Here is my Christmas layout. The theme is Dingle Bay, Ireland and the airplane is Charles Lindbergh’s. In the movie ‘Spirit of St. Louis’, Lindbergh recognizes Ireland by the outline of the coastal town of Dingle Bay. The layout is entirely pre-war with the exception of the Lionel billboard with my custom Dingle Bay sign.. The layout is virtually all Lionel and Ives with an AF water tower and a Marx dwarf searchlight illuminating the Spirit of St. Louis.”



Down the track

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

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

May: No meeting (we will be going on an outing this month)

May 26th: Sacramento-Sierra TCA Train Show , Scottish Rite Center **

Fathers Day Weekend: SVD Layout at CSRM **

July 31 - August 4: TTOS National Convention, Tyson's Corner VA

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

BRING YOUR SVD and TTOS NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP CARDS

**** Club layout will be in operation**

Contact us:

Club business: Curt Darling - (916) 822-4425 curtspempire@yahoo.com

Membership questions: Barbara Rohrs - (916) 730-1415 tjbrr@hotmail.com

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.