

# THE SIDE TRACK

## NEWS

### from the Toy Train Operating Society Sacramento Valley Division

Spring

2019

*If you want to make God laugh, tell him about your plans. - Woody Allen*

Jerry Azzaro, editor

## President's Message

by Mike Schafer, SVD President



I hope that those who visited layouts in Mariposa had an enjoyable day. The mileage was a little longer than other visits to local attractions but the 99 Freeway and highway 140 were outstanding for a trip that far. **Bob Jakl** said he had

over 25 visitors so the Club deserves outstanding recognition for fulfilling our commitment to the layout owners, who prepared for our visit, in having the visitors we promised. That sets the stage for future visits knowing the club can meet standards in doing what we enlist for on paper.

We'll also have a Mariposa after-visit period to discuss what we can do to improve future visits. In other words what went right etc.

The next visit is bring planned for Niles Canyon on May 4th, followed by Portola on June 6th. Niles Canyon is still being coordinated through a Niles Canyon Club member who has been with that club for some time. The German engine rebuild is complete which is significant considering they had to search all of the US and Germany to find such rare parts. This is the only such operational engine in the world. The visit will also include the engine shop and yard which is not available to the public. They also

have a large Southern Pacific steam engine that still has 5 more years left before its mandatory tear down inspection which takes 2-4 years depending on funds and volunteer man-hours.

Portola needs no introduction to such an acclaimed museum except that we'll all get a ride in an DD40X, which is not available to the public. The DD40X is the largest diesel ever built for the Union Pacific. **Seth Parry** will be helping coordinate that visit in addition to the President's efforts. Both visits will entail sign up sheets like we had for Mariposa. The upcoming visits are limited to members only and BYLAW approved family members. If a non member wants go come we'll all enjoy his new Club membership.

Departure location protocol will also be addressed at The March 2nd meeting. Some of us chose to depart from Elk Grove while others departed from home for the Mariposa trip. Table sales will be the normal operation for both the March and April meetings.

Administrative announcements: If you haven't paid your 2019 dues you need to bring a CHECK for \$30.

Remember to bring and wear your badge. We want to get to know everyone by name as we visit with one another during club meetings and visits to other locations. If you forget your badge we'll give you a temporary badge to wear. It was my privilege to arrange the Mariposa Layout visit. Remember that this club is all about YOU.

Mike Schafer  
President



# SVD Mariposa Layout Tours

by Mike Schafer

On Saturday, February 2nd, 26 members, family and friends visited Mariposa to tour four layouts operated by **Bob Jakl** (O gauge), **Tom Davis** (O), **Glen Sutherland** (HO) and **Ray Price** (HO). Everyone arrived at different layouts at different times to preclude too many viewers at one place at the same time. Many members traveled over 400 miles to see all the layouts.

Both **Bob Jakl** and **Mike Schafer** exchanged many phone calls coordinating this visit to make it a success. Hats off to all the members attending the layouts that promised visits to these layouts, keeping our numbers almost exactly as planned during the January meeting. Bob was instrumental in coordinating the open house that started with one layout that he grew to four.

The absolute star of the show was **Bob Jakl's** layout in all of its 2 Rail super detailed empire of over 3,000 sq. ft. At least 25 members saw this eye candy operating setup featuring Southern Pacific with Union Pacific as supporting cast resembling the late steam and early diesel eras of the 1950's. Lots of photos from every mobile device were testament to everyone's approval of the layout's appeal. The description of the layout before the visit did not disappoint. A great husband and wife team tend to this layout that's at least 20 years old. Everywhere one looked was another near real life piece of railroading. "Very detailed" is not doing the effort enough praise.

**Tom Davis's** 3 rail scale layout proved you don't have to have a separate building bigger than a house to create a dynamic layout based upon a well thought out track plan. Having to use 054 curves around a mountain didn't limit operations in any manner. Lots of scratch-built passenger cars that looked even better than store-bought cars. Great assortment of freight cars

too. A Southern Pacific cab forward roamed the rails with Santa Fe and Union Pacific also based upon Tom's memory of what he used to see near his home many years ago. Also lots of detailed scenes with some operating accessories. Almost lifelike mining operations to include a mine shaft in the side of a mountain that was not only very long but lit with red lamps to create an almost-real mining visit.

**Ray Price's** HO empire was missed by many due to a fallen tree blocking the road for a short period. A well thought out track plan including tracks that went into tunnels that led to a very small room that allowed continuous operations was a novel approach. Also a great collection of a huge assortment of engines and specialty freight car collectibles. To say the buildings were scratch built is an understatement as every roof covered with scale shakes was put on shake by shake. That detail was evident over the entire layout. Patience and the eye for detail was the same for every building including a huge donut above a scale donut shop next to a McDonalds.

**Glenn Sutherland's** layout modeling the Sierra Railway's mainline and branches of the mid 1920's covering three levels was not only put together in a very detailed operation that was both enjoyable and educational as most scenes no longer exist, either from being covered by a water from a dam or track abandoned years ago, along with the loss of depots of the day. His use of switchbacks mimicked the real method of overcoming steep grades throughout the Sierras. The hidden second star of the show was in his house tucked into a separate room that had a scratch built Sierra Railway's caboos. He made trips to the actual caboos to take measurements to get everything to match the real caboos. The caboos entrance led to the center of the caboos with cupola bunk beds on each side and a scale curved roof overhead. A pot belly stove also created the ambience of a real caboos. Many train nuts have bought a real caboos. Glenn built one in his house. Yes, his wife supports his rail fantasies.

Mike Schafer  
President, TTOS Sacramento Valley Division.

Mariposa continued next page



Bob Jakl layout photos by John DeHaan



Tom Davis layout photos by John DeHaan



More Mariposa photos next 2 pages



**Next two pages: Mariposa layout photos and captions by Mike Schafer**



Big City background



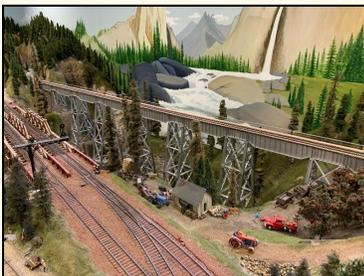
Scratch built cargo ship



Diesel facility



“Diner” is actually a working telephone. Note the coil cord



Trestle with painted background

**Bob Jakl layout**



Helicopter on flatcar



Flying saucer stealing a cow-  
“We Take Your Steak”

**Rail yard**



Farmers’ co-op

**Overhead views**



### Tom Davis layout



Complex track arrangement



Mostly Southern Pacific in this photo



Combined passenger-freight yard



Looking down a long mineshaft



Scratch built Santa De station modeled after one near Tom's home in Southern California



Santa Fe streamline passenger train passing a SP mixed passenger train

### Ray Price layout



Scratch-built steam era depot



Scratch-built modern era over steam era trestle. High speed modern passenger train over early steamer below.



Building after building scratch-built using homemade lumber, siding and shake roofs, each shake applied separately. Great donut shop next to McDonald's.

### Glenn Sutherland layout



Sutherland's Sierra layout



Lumber facility



Gravel unloading facility



Gazebo



Replica of 1920's Sierra Railways caboose built inside home of Glenn Sutherland.

# Club Layout News

By Seth Parry, Layout Committee Chairman

It's time for another riveting episode of "As The Layout Turns"!



In this episode, our reluctant minimal volunteer army was given an almost Mission Impossible type task: setting up the layout for the Cal-Expo show. Little did the layout crew know what perils lay

ahead for them. With the crew operating like a well-oiled train, they managed to get the layout up and operating in 2 hours on Friday. The usual motley crew of operators showed up Saturday morning ready to take on the crowds. Our president charged head-on with his Lionel



engines, never slowing for the curves. **Young Adam** wowed the crowds with his Reese's Pieces train. **John DeHaan** and **Jeff Silvera** faithfully manned the S gauge and Standard gauge rails with their trusty locomotives. And

our narrator lost his mind and decided to pull 26 cars in a lash-up including a DDA40X leading and a Centipede bringing her home.

After running trains again all day Sunday, when evening came around, our battle-hardened team faced their biggest challenge. Fighting through torrential rains, and hurricane-like winds blowing rain and people sideways as we loaded everything after tear down in the outside pitch-darkness due to a rare monsoon-like weather front that was peaking as we were ready to leave Cal Expo.

Though transformers were blowing out and the streets were flooding, at the end of the weekend, the crew rode off into the eye of the hurricane with their heads held high and water in their shoes.

Click [here](#) to view a short video of the layout at Cal Expo.

Cal Expo photos by John DeHaan



Cal Expo photos by Barbara Rohrs

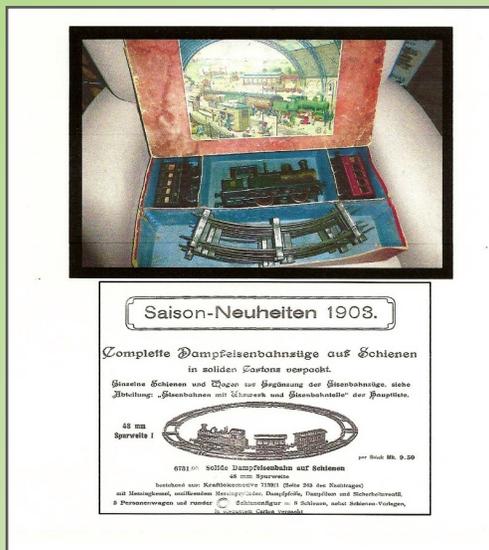
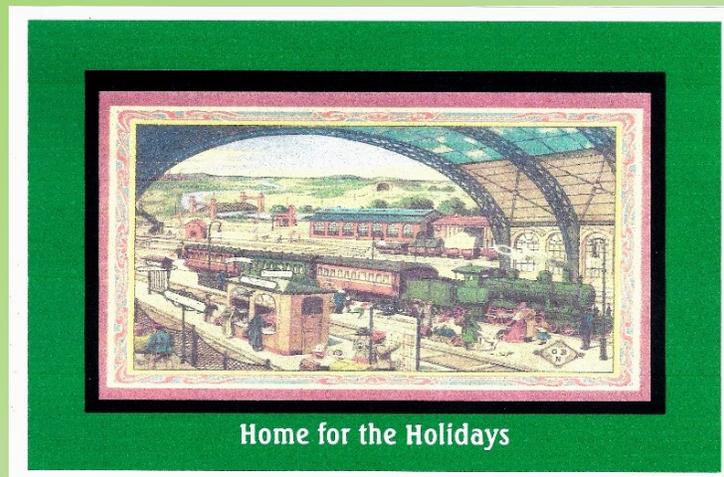


# Christmas with the Zanottis

**Richard and Dina Zanotti** submitted their Christmas card for the Side Track's annual post-holiday layout lookback feature.

Their cards always feature an item or items from Richard's eclectic train collection. For 2018, a Bing Gauge 1 boxed live steam set, at least 115 years old, was the main attraction.

Richard manages the trains while Dina designs and produces the cards.



*May your holiday season  
Be filled with joy, happiness,  
And good health!*

*From the Zanotti Family*

# Where have all the trolleys gone?

Opinion by Boxcar Jack Ahearn

**When I was a kid, trolleys looked like ironclad behemoths ... not a paper wrapped billboard!**



In olden days, trolley cars didn't look pretty! The large dark red and cream cars I rode looked dirty inside and out. They had wood seats and all the advertisements were inside the car.



This is typical of the Brooklyn trolleys I rode on (uh, in.) For more photographs of Brooklyn trolley cars click [here](#)

It seems odd that in the 1950's all billboards along federally funded highways were banned. This was done so as to preserve the natural beauty of the countryside. Now we have replaced those distracting signs with two sided, forty foot advertisements, rolling through downtown areas in many of our major cities every fifteen minutes!

## MiniToy Trolley No.102

The Minitoys Trolley Cars were originally sold by Hobbyland in New York City. The model was a Pittman trolley sold as a ready to run vehicle instead of being sold as a kit. The trolley was painted bright yellow with red doors and had an AC motor in it with a non-switchable reverse unit (like Marx). There were two main variations, no. 102 Public Service and no. 103 Rapid Transit. Pickups were slide shoes that were the same as Thomas models used on their 3-rail trains.



MiniToys Incorporated trolley No 102 Public Service, 'O' gauge. Length 10.5 inches For additional photos and information on model #102 click [here](#) (scroll down past the accessories)

**continued next page**



... alas, nowadays all I have to bring back those memories are the trolleys I run on my yet-to-be-completed home layout. Below are photos of my non-wrapped trolleys taking around the few almost completed scenic areas on my new layout:



A brightly painted yellow #102 Public Service MiniToy trolley clanks its way past the backyards of new homes.



A So. California Red Line trolley gets a high ball to pass a local car heading into Pineville.



#102 rumbles on further up the line as it passes Lionel's 1948 catalog Paper Town bonus.



A three way meet calls for an odd-man-out finger decision. No radio-tower calls back then.



Looks like a maintenance crew has been called out. That's Pineville that their passing,



Looks like the hand car crew wants to take a shower at North Corners Maintenance Depot.



Here's that local at the Pineville station.



Here's another view of the three way meet at Pineville Junction

***Where have all the trolleys gone? Gone to scrap piles everywhere...[sigh].***



## **Down the track**

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

**April 6: SVD meeting at Holiday Inn Express, Elk Grove\***

**May 4: SVD meeting at Holiday Inn Express, Elk Grove\***

**June 1: SVD meeting at Holiday Inn Express, Elk Grove\***

July: **No SVD meeting**

**July30 - August 3: TTOS National Convention - Wichita KS**

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

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

**Contact us:**

**Club business: Mike Schafer, president - (209) 286-9402 [lineswest@hotmail.com](mailto:lineswest@hotmail.com)**

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