

THE SIDE TRACK

NEWS

from the Toy Train Operating Society Sacramento Valley Division

Winter

2019

My heart is warm with the friends I make, And better friends I'll not be knowing; Yet there isn't a train I wouldn't take, No matter where it's going. - Edna St. Vincent Millay

Jerry Azzaro, editor

President's Message

by Mike Schafer, SVD President

As the year draws to a close I'd like to take a few moments and review what the club has done this year. To start our efforts to bring more enjoyment in doing extra events we visited Mariposa to view four layouts. We then visited Niles Canyon for a train ride and tour of the Yard. That also gave us an update on the German engine's progress towards its inaugural run. We also went to Portola for a visit that included a narrated tour of the engine shop and a self guided tour of the Yard.

The Club also put on a very successful Scottish Rite Train Show including table sales, trading and operation of the Club's layout. Many volunteers made that a great success in bringing more sellers and buyers to the show. Also many train car and set donations allowed kids to get a special gift.

The Club layout started its series of setups and operations at Cal Expo in January. Then TCA Scottish Rite in May, Galt's 150th Anniversary Celebration in the Galt auditorium on September 14, Celebration of Colfax Railroad Days on September 21 and then the TTOS Scottish Rite on September 28. Finally the layout was run on November 16 and 17 for the Small Trains Show at the California Railroad Museum. Now we're working towards Cal Expo on 4-5, 2020.

Everyone who helped set up, operate, take down and load the layout into our trailer makes all those events possible. Having trains run for a day or an entire weekend is more than just operating trains. It takes many volunteers to make it possible. A special thank you to all who helped.

A survey of Club members at the November meeting gave the year's effort either a 7, 8, 9 or 10, in satisfaction for the year.

We presented a pot luck meal on December 7 at the monthly meeting to close out the year.

As President I've done everything I can to make the year more enjoyable than 2018. My goals of trips, tours, better layout operations were all met. We also had a gifted layout to the club, help our treasury balance. I've tried to take each suggestion as a challenge to implement it into our Club's operations. However, the elusive addition of new members has not been met. Hopefully that can be improved in 2020.

Thank you all who came to me and said you support me in my Presidency efforts. Now I'll work towards a better 2020 for all of us that attend, sell, buy, do show and tell, volunteer working either on extra weekends or other days that support our end goal of a better Club.

Michael Schafer, President.
Sacramento Valley Division.
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253 219-9402



Treasurer's Report

by Ed Strisar, SVD Treasurer

The SACVAL TTOS is fluid and the October 2019 combined bank statement reflects \$46,481.59.

Tomato Car Report

by Rick Kotowski, Side Track Contributor



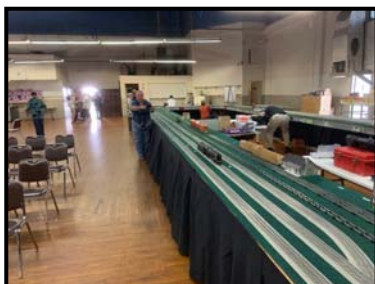
A few TTOS Contadina tomato boxcars showed up at the October club meeting in Elk Grove - for a history of this car see the Classic Toy Train magazine write-up in the 2018 October issue. It mentions our late member **Tom Gibson**.

Galt Sesquicentennial (That means 150th birthday)

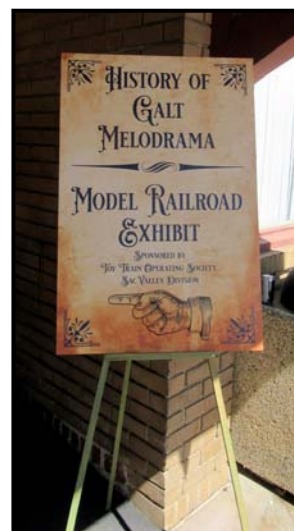
Text and photos by John DeHaan

We were invited to bring our display layout to take part in a celebration at Galt on 14 September. The membership was told it was going to be an annual Train Day celebration (that we had taken part in previously). Imagine our surprise to arrive in Galt to find it was a huge 150th Birthday Party for the town of Galt – with marching bands, theater performances, political and historical speeches, and a large attendance. We set up the newly refitted BIG layout in a huge historic theater/dance hall, so we had plenty of room, even when half the hall was set with chairs for a fun historical revue on the stage. We were careful to shut down our noisy trains during two performances of the revue! There was lots of good food from a variety of vendors along the streets and we were given discount coupons for sandwiches and drinks for our participation. It was a long, hard day for our layout crew, but it was fun being part of this special celebration.

Our layout in the historic Estrellita Ballroom



The great sign in the lobby



Galt street scene



Club Layout at Colfax on September 21st

Text and photos by Seth Parry

Hundreds stopped by to see the layout under the eaves of the 1905 railroad depot.
We were so busy running trains that I never got a chance to take photos of the big crowds.



SVD Layout at CSRM – November 16-17

Story and photos by John DeHaan

After two or three years of discussions and thwarted plans, the CSRM in Sacramento hosted a Toy Train Extravaganza with lots of local clubs exhibiting their holiday layouts. In years past, this event was held as part of the Polar Express Ride weekends, but the logistics of huge crowds and limited parking and staff made that unworkable. As stand-alone event, here were still plenty of visitors on both days (with quite a surge late on Sunday when the Kings wrapped up their game at the downtown arena). Local HO, G-gauge and O-gauge modular layouts were crowded all day. **Ed Strisar** was there with his very busy operating accessory display. The huge S-gauge club layout with several free-standing modules was a welcome newcomer. The G-gaugers had a separate “come run a train layout” whose guest seats were filled non-stop both days. The huge, action-filled Lego layout was crowded with kids all weekend.

SVD installed its BIG layout on Friday, with a large enough crew to overcome the logistics issues that accompany this layout. It is almost twice the size of the layout we set up at Scottish Rite, with room for long trains. Layout Boss **Seth Parry** and **President Schafer** organized a team that included **Mike de La Pena**, **Elias Amaral**, **Tom Alger**, **James Henson**, **Jeff Silvera** (despite his injuries from a bicycle crash the day before), and **yours truly**. TV crews from Channels 3 and 31 came in at 7AM on Saturday and on Sunday at 8AM. Luckily, **Mike Schafer** and **Seth Parry** were there to

run trains for the cameras. Both segments, including interviews with the TTOS operators, were on local TV an hour later. This was a great opportunity to showcase the Club and layout.

It was a busy weekend with very few problems (once we got the always problematic S-gauge loop going). We voted on the spot to see if the new S-gauge FasTrack would accommodate our older rolling stock and reduce track problems. We had both loops of O, S- and Standard/Wide gauge going non-stop all weekend. Our big challenge came at the end of the weekend. CSRM insists all trains must be kept running until the museum closes at 5PM and everyone and everything must be cleared out by 7PM!

Luckily, **Rose Craighead**, **Keith Anderson**, and **Sandra Amaral**

showed up to help beat the deadline.



Ed Strisar ran a point-to-point layout with seven automatic gatemen

Thanks to a concerted effort by all present (and a sympathetic Museum Security guy who gave us an extra 15 minutes), we got everything out of the building, and had it loaded and away by 7:30. Whew! The exhibit coordinator was very pleased with all the layouts and the attendance, and she indicated that it looked promising to repeat this event next year.



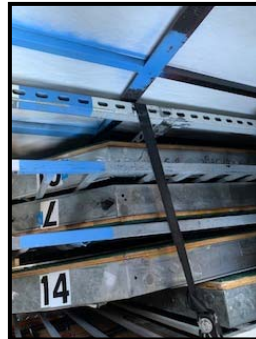
Left to right: HO, S and G-gauge layouts at the CSRM Toy Train Extravaganza

SVD Layout at CSRM

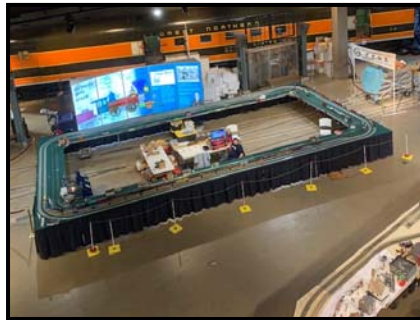
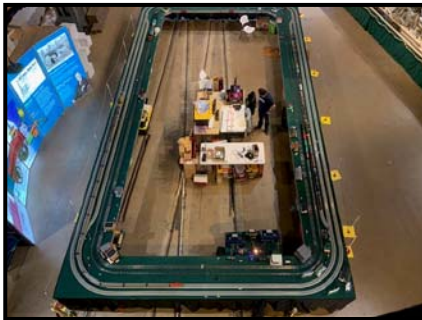
Photos and comments by Mike Schafer



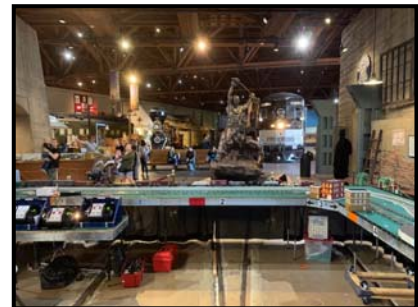
Unseen by most. All the tables strapped in before unloading the trailer. All hands on deck. In about 2.5 hours the layout should be ready to test trains. Six to set up and seven to take down and put back into trailer.



Keith Anderson checking out a long Union Pacific Train.



Club layout from 4 stories up



Cab Forward in the background of our layout.



Early morning with all trains and all gauges ready for visitors.

Outside: lots of carriages giving rides.

Model Railroading is Show Business

Boxcar Jack adds an ADA-compliant walkway for his tramway passengers

Story and photos by Jack Ahearn



At times, such as club layout tours or simply showing friends and neighbors your own *world-in-miniature* can be like putting on a show.

Lately, I've been a director, producer and the scenic stage manager doing just that; getting ready to put on a big Opening Nite Show!

In a recent Side Track I told and showed how I designed and built the base operations building for my aerial sky tram. The tram was designed to air lift theatre goers to a medieval British Castle high atop the background mountains of my latest toy train empire. That open-air showplace is appropriately named Theatre Under the Stars. The castle is currently being renovated to serve as a live performance theatre for tourists visiting the British village below. Its repertoire will feature hit musical shows with some presentations of English drawing room type dramas or mysteries.

Sounds great, doesn't it? There was only one concern that had to be addressed. One can ride the tram up to the mountain, but one cannot gain access to the theatre! Those who saw the Side Track feature mentioned above might have noticed that the tram went up to the clifftop castle, but unless the passengers were equipped with ropes, picks and other assorted climbing gear, there was no way for them to transcend the sheer twenty-foot cliff to reach the castle's entrance.

The pictures shown here will illustrate how this awkward challenge was overcome.



Tram nears top of castle area with no way to unload passengers.



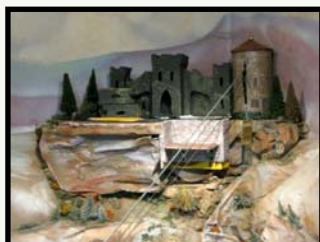
Construction of the passenger platform starts with scale dynamite to lower and level the area.



Rear stone retaining wall looks pretty meager at this point.



East side retaining wall joins in and begins to look good.



With the east, rear and west platform walls in place, the station platform is laid in place.



Looks like it's ready for the passengers.



Perfect!



Hey look. Steps!



More steps!



We have a stairway to the stars.



Two musicals being considered for the Grand Opening night.



River City Meet – A Fun Success

Story and photos by John DeHaan

Our big annual River City Toy Train Meet on 28 September was a big success, with lots of trains, lots of people and lots of good weather! We had the largest number of tables sold and the best “gate entry” of recent memory.

We squeezed over 145 tables into the main hall (plus 12 more for **Mike Marple**, the parts guy, who comes all the way from Lompoc just for us). All were sold, and late requests filled the few that were cancelled at the last minute. We had 306 adults and 25-30 kids arrive over the day. We had our club layout roaring in the lobby and we had members **Ed Strisar**, **John Leins**, and **Dave Thomsen** with their fun small layouts. **Bob Remley** came all the way from San Jose with his wonderful operating accessory layout that entertained everyone the whole day. Our thanks go to all of them for sharing them.

We gave an O-gauge train car to each guest under 13 as they entered the drawing for two complete train sets – a Lionel battery Polar Express for those under 7 and a nice sealed box Lionel 027 set for those between 7 and 13. The winners were thrilled! (I want to thank **Joaquin Murphy**, **Chuck Brasher**, **Jack Ahearn**, **Phil Fravesi**, **Bryan Stanton** and **Jerry Azzaro** for their donations.)

We could not have done this without our members stepping up to fill all the jobs that made the meet a

success. Advertising: **Jeff Silvera**, set-up: **Jeff Silvera**, **Don** and **Eileen Gueffroy**, **Dennis King**, **Mike Schafer**, and **Ed Strisar**. Registration: **Barbara Rohrs**. Security: **Spencer Bole**; Admissions: **Bill Wilson**, **Jack Ahearn**, **Jack Hornor**, **Phil Fravesi**, and **Richard Zanotti**. After the doors closed, we had a crew for clean-up: **Jeff Silvera**, **Keith Anderson**, **Mike Schafer**, and **Don Gueffroy** and **Eileen Gueffroy**. We did such a great job, Scottish Rite applied our security deposit as a deposit for next year (planned for 27 September 2020)

Our great catering was provided by **Rachelle Marshall** and her crew, with all those great salads, pulled pork sandwiches, hot dogs, drinks and snacks. She has already agreed to help us next year!

Including table sales, gate entries, we showed a profit of some \$3000 after advertising costs (and the \$1975 rental fee to Scottish Rite). Hope you will start planning for it now. My thanks to all who took part (and my apologies to any I may have overlooked).

John DeHaan, River City Chair



Around the Scottish Rite Hall

SVD members and friends enjoy a day of toy trains

Photos by the editor

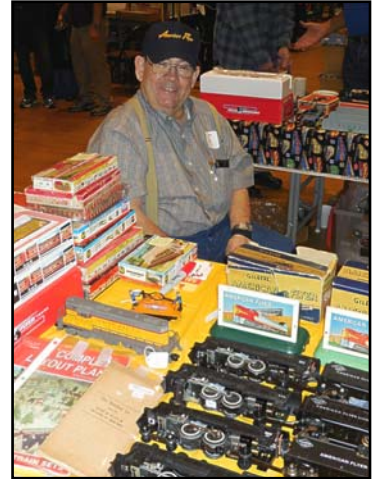


More members
and friends next page



Around the Hall (continued)

SVD members and friends keep the “S” in TTOS



Down the track

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

January 4-5, 2020: SVD Layout at Cal Expo**

January 11, 2020: SVD Meeting - Holiday Inn Express, Elk Grove*

February 1, 2020: SVD Meeting - Holiday Inn Express, Elk Grove*

March 7, 2020: SVD Meeting - Holiday Inn Express, Elk Grove*

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

**** SVD layout will be in operation**

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

Contact us:

Club business: Mike Schafer, president - (253) 219-9402 lineswest@hotmail.com

Membership questions: Barbara Rohrs - (916) 730-1415 tjbr@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.