



# THE SIDE TRACK

## NEWS

from the Toy Train Operating Society  
Sacramento Valley Division

SUMMER

2021

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Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach him how to fish and he will sit in a boat and drink beer all day. — *George Carlin*

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Jerry Azzaro, editor

### President's Message

by Carl Madsen, SVD President

Hello all members,

I haven't quit! In fact, an opportunity came up and I sold my house in one hour and 16 minutes ... and retired from Pepsi to develop a residential property in Herald CA. I am near the end of a lot of work, starting one new career and ending another.

I understand that there was a dismal turnout (15) for the meeting at **Chuck Brasher's** house, but those who went had fun. We need more members to volunteer their homes or resources to have a monthly meeting. It's too late for June so let's look to July.

The club will be having a real fall show in November at the Carmichael Elk's Lodge - same as NorCal TCA - and hopefully with the same success.

Since the layout hasn't been touched yet, the same conditions and requests still apply to operate it. Maybe someone else can step up and help replace it. I won't really be available to provide the resources for a few months.

Thanks to **Ed Strisar** for covering for me, and to the rest of the executive board for just being there. My biggest question in the forefront of my mind club-wise is ... why don't more members step in and participate more in helping the club? If you need to know the issues that are at hand, I will be happy to provide a list - the same issues we keep facing every month since before the pandemic - and will again as the state opens up.

With no nominees for office last election, SVD came extremely close to not being a division any longer of TTOS. I want to make sure I cover every issue facing every member that keeps them from WANTING to participate in club activities. Perhaps people can provide at will issues that prevent them from wanting more out of the club. It's a mixed bag as a president to see so many people pay to be here but then never want to participate. This appeal is to try to jump-start members going forward. A friendly plea before the messages spell out what will be (is) happening to this club.

At your service, at least for the rest of this year,

Carl Madsen

Boxcar Jack grabs his camera and tries to keep up with Phil Fravesi for a day.

# He's a Workin' on the Railroad

By Jack Ahearn

**Phil Fravesi** is preparing for the reopening of CSRM's Thomas W. Sefton exhibit. In the recent closed-down pandemic year, the layout was moribund but the unaffected gremlins were not. Our fellow SVD member Phil has been "keeping the trains running on time" in this plate glass enclosed 300 feet of operating tracks since that layout's opening in 2004.

Along with keeping the locomotives and rolling stock in good repair, he has also cleaned the tracks when other staff track crew members weren't available. Speaking of which, the Museum's 7 day week, 10 to 5 daily schedule can sure pile up the dust, grit and oil on the display's triple level, four track main line layout. The Museum is closed only two days a year, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

As for the housekeeping aspect of the layout; pictures of keeping them rolling are in our archived S.T. Fall-2015 issue "Let's Meet Jane" photo feature.

True, Lionel claimed their trains would run for years and years. But keep in mind that a 'Lionel year' was, generally speaking, only two weeks of a calendar year. It should be further pointed out that for durability and dependability, all operating

trains are MTH (Mike's Train House) reproductions with can motors. All electronics have been removed and a bridge rectifier installed. However, all of the static trains spotted on the sidings and other non-operating tracks, along with the accessories, are original Lionel. It should be noted that for general public recognition, the upper level features Lionel 'O' gauge trains.

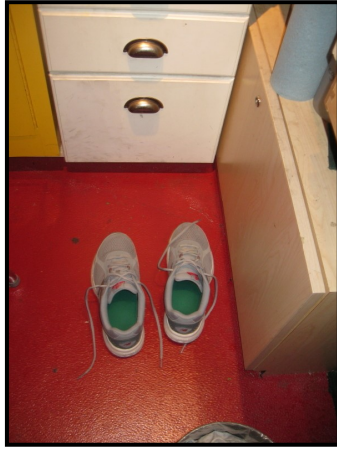
All in all, Phil has been reporting for maintenance duty on Friday mornings, before the Museum's

opening hour, for roughly fifteen years. When he leaves, as early bird visitors arrive, those fortunate folks will see the most exciting and scenic Lionel Standard and 'O' gauge operating layouts on public display. And 99% of the credit now goes to Phil's voluntary efforts.



The following is a photographic illustration of Phil's typical Friday work duties, the extent of which is verbally described above. Here you'll see what it really looks like. Enjoy!

Phil and I met early on a Friday morning at the railroad museum and got right with it. Within the next ninety minutes Phil would clean the entire three hundred feet of main line track, inspect and lube four locomotives and perform corrective action on two of them.



We left CSRM at 9:30. In less than five minutes after Phil started his track-cleaning chore, I could tell this was not going to be a "stop, pose, wipe and click-click" photo session. Phil had a chore to do and that's exactly what he did. Most folks, including myself, would start cleaning at point "A" and continue along the tracks route until reaching the "Z" point.



nearby rails were to his left, right or straight ahead, his two arms became octopus-like, as he wiped away several days of old oil, gunk and soot from the tracks. Also, his starting and finishing points were



not one end of a layout or the other. Instead, he started in the center-rear, worked outwards and then swung to the ends. It was like he choreographed a fixed routine that seemed to bring the outlying rails to him, not the other way around. He was quick, efficient and effective.



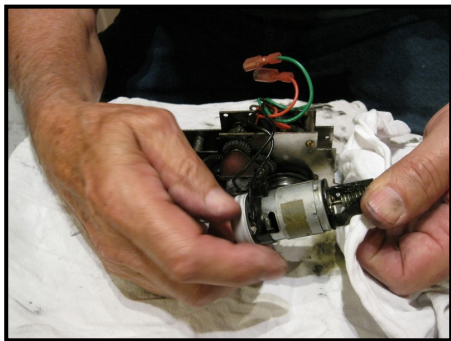
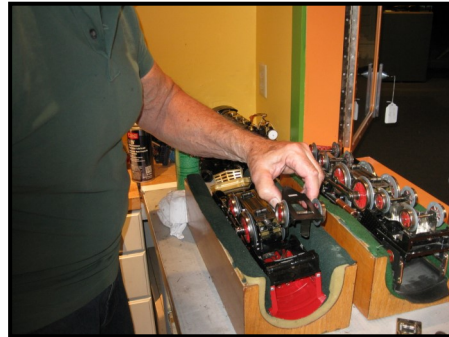
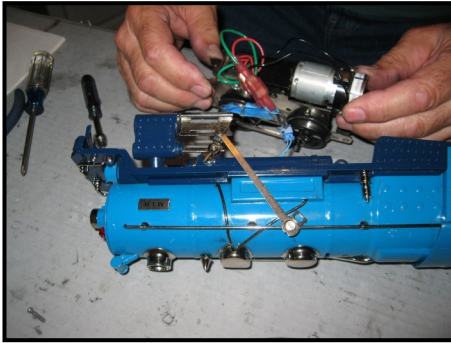
I snapped many photos, indeed, my Canon camera sounded like a cannon, firing quick shots at an even quicker moving target. All in all, it sounded and looked like Phil was gandy-dancing to a Sousa march.

The above track-cleaning session serves as Phil's One Man Track Crew photo tour. The remaining photos will take you into the shop where you'll see Phil's surgeon-like hands do their talented best to keep several locomotives running until their next tune-up. The entrance to the repair shop is built to resemble Lionel #76 Bell Ringing R.R. crossing signal.





The pictures of Phil's workmanship at the workbench match the efficiency, speed and experience described in the above track cleaning segment. On this day, Phil concentrated on oiling and lubing the four locomotives that were on this coming week's roster of motive power. Also shown is his ability to quickly wire and/or rewire several different key contact units. What one cannot see in a photograph is the speed and certainty of his workmanship.



Kudos to Phil for his unique contribution to the California State Railroad Museum, and my thanks to him for allowing me to witness and record just a small portion of it.

# Photos from the April 10th and May 15th meetings

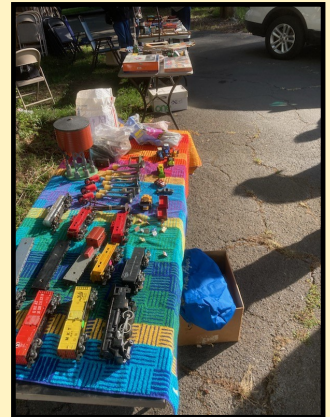
April 10 at the Sacramento home of **Lisa and Bryan Stanton** - photos by Lisa



Photos by Rich Kotowski



Our hosts Lisa and Bryan



May 15th at the Grass Valley home of **Sue and Chuck Brasher**

**Ed Strisar** with his trolley car layout in operation.

Photo by John DeHaan





# The Taxman Cometh to eBay - Again

by Jerry Azzaro - with apologies to Eugene O'Neill

When eBay came upon the scene in its present form in 1997, the first collector/trader group to embrace it was ... Beanie Babies! At one point, those Ty Inc. stuffed toys accounted for 10% of all eBay listings.

Other groups, including toy train lovers, soon migrated to the online auction platform, upsetting the business models of private sellers, antique stores, hobby shops, public sales events and live auction houses.

Those early days had a "wild west" feel compared with today's structured environment. eBay gradually introduced new rules and regulations to protect buyers, sellers, and (of course) eBay itself.

Taxes, both sales and income, had been on the "honor system". In 2011, under the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008, eBay started sending IRS 1099-K statements to sellers who exceeded a predetermined annual sales threshold. In 2018, a Supreme Court ruling made it possible for states to collect sales tax on internet purchases regardless of point of origin. This is handled seamlessly by eBay with no effort required on the part of the buyer or seller - other than to pay it, of course.

For this year (2021), the threshold for 1099-K statements remains at \$20,000 or 200 items. For next year (2022) under the terms of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, the threshold is a flat \$600. This is a government mandate and certainly not something eBay wants to do. It can only harm their business.

How this will affect your eBay experience in 2022 is anybody's guess. Here's mine:

- 1) If you are an occasional seller on eBay, you might think twice before listing an item and then having to pay all those fees AND income tax on it.
- 2) If you are a full-time seller on eBay you already receive the 1099-K form. You will not notice any change unless you also do some buying on eBay. Also, you will have less competition.
- 3) If you are a buyer who likes to browse eBay looking for rare or unusual items, you will not find as many offered due to #1 above.

Meanwhile, watch for small sellers, many of whom have items they planned to put on eBay "someday", rushing to offer those for sale before the end of 2021.

## **Down the track**

**Due to the changing COVID-19 restrictions there are no set dates or locations for future events. Members will be notified by Email as each event is scheduled.**

### **Contact us:**

**Club business: Carl Madsen, president - (916) 204-8217 [laststoptrain@aol.com](mailto:laststoptrain@aol.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.*