

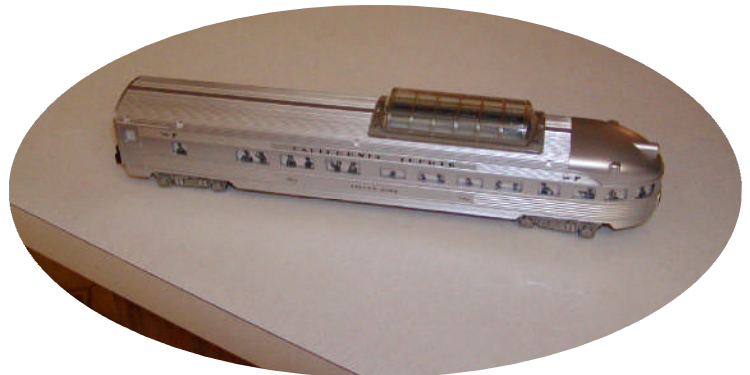


NEWSLETTER

The Summer of '09

It must be a sign of growing older when you think that the Fourth of July was last week but you realize that it's dark at 7:00P.M. and people are already starting to put up Halloween decorations. That's my summer of '09, a blur and a whirlwind sprinkled with club meets, train shows, long days at work, and warm evenings in the tomato patch. I remember once hearing that, "If you want to get something done, give the task to someone who already has too much to do" and I used to believe it, but I'm now sure that it was meant for the "under 50" crowd. I've got proof: Rich Lenart hasn't finished his remodel yet and Vern Brooks has decided that he's dug out enough of his basement!

Do we need some inspiration here?! My dad turned 80 this August and still drags a 5th wheel bigger than my living room around the country to see the sights, my grandmother is 103 and can still kick my butt (yours too) at Pinochle, and my wife has been looking at my sorry face for 30 years and is still glad to see me when I get home (well, OK, most nights), and all I have to do is get out this newsletter and let the rest of you train-crazed guys know when the next meeting is. I have no significant excuses for being such a slacker this summer but I'll blame it on a bumper crop of tomatoes and raspberries, a house that we lovingly refer to as "the project", a few too many vacations, and the fact that I still have a day job. Besides, it's coming up on election time for club officers and anyone who is interested in my job can probably run uncontested.



Way back in June, Paul Guaraglia brought this 1935 Gilbert Tele-Set to share with the club at Ken Wilson's house. It looked like it had never been out of the box and the graphics were just stunning. Paul also brought the rear dome Zephyr car that was produced by Tom Hodgson (Tom produced the Shell tank cars for our Flyer Fest West show in 2008) and his work is first class.

There were 17 members at Ken's house as well as guest, Dan Gomez. We had two raffle winners: Frank Portera went home with a B & O tank car and Dave McMullin picked up a 947 Northern Pacific boxcar.

July 17 found 10 of us at Rich Lenart's home for a great evening of train talk and camaraderie. Despite my earlier jab at Rich, I have nothing but admiration for his abilities. I lost count of how many trees he's taken out and how many cubic yards of dirt he has rearranged in his backyard but I can tell you that both numbers are substantial, and this is on top of all of the construction work that he's done by himself! And, yes, he still has a day job as well. Only one question for Rich, "When will that train room be done so we can see some more of your great layouts?"



Jake brought this stretch limo version of a Baker's Chocolate tank car that he picked up on eBay. We have affectionately dubbed it "double white" and expect to see it parked next to a mobile home park on his layout some day.

"King of Show & Tell", Paul Guaraglia, brought this Fluid Dynamics Physics Set by Gilbert from 1959. We're beginning to wonder if he has the keys to a time machine or maybe is cranking these things out in his basement. Where the heck does he find this stuff? Is it possible that he had a rich uncle who bought it all brand new and kept it locked away for 50 years? Honestly, Paul is probably one of the foremost Gilbert detectives and we're lucky to have him share his finds with us.



Don Matthies reported that he has closed his Hayward store and moved Nor Cal Trains to Auburn, CA. The new store is at 11899 Edgewood Road, Suite F, just north of I-80 and features "O" (Oprah has trains?), "o27" (is that a rock band?), "S" (**YES!**), "G" (Golly, that's big), "HO" (Oakland street walker?), and "N" (anything alphabetically lower than S and I can't tell if the wheels are on the track). We wish him all the best with his new location, be sure to stop in and visit if you're in the area. Don will also take care of your consignments, repairs, and special orders. Telephone (530) 885-4037.

August 21 we were back at Vern Brooks house in Castro Valley. I asked Vern's wife, Vickie, how he managed to get so much done and she said that he is just always on the move. It's not just the number of projects that Vern has going that is impressive, the amazing thing is that he *finishes* them. It seems that the digging phase of his basement train room is now done but I'm sure that there will be more changes to the room as time goes on as well as another car restoration or two in the garage since it's apparent that Vern doesn't spend too much time in a recliner. I think that I'll invite him over to my "project".

Twenty one members spent the evening at Vern's looking over his Buick Champagne Coupe (1929?) that is being restored, the G Gauge trains circling the backyard, his S Gauge underground empire and his Gilbert HO static display. We had a short business meeting and then Jack Rodgers talked about his trip to the LCCA meet in Sacramento and Don Gholson talked about the first train in 70 years to run on the Virginia & Truckee alignment out of Carson City, Nevada. The V&T originally served the Comstock silver mining district and the restored 12.8 mile right-of-way reopened for tourist traffic after 17 years and \$50 million in restoration efforts.



Some of Vern's Gilbert HO



Arnold Kloian's detailed version of an S Helper tank.

Arnie showed off his detailing handiwork with an ongoing tank project (above right) before we went on to the monthly raffle. Dave McMullin won a 922 GAEX boxcar and Richard Ridgeway selected a 9203 ATSF boxcar.

There was no club meeting in September due to our sponsoring host being called out of town on short notice, but we will be getting together October 23rd at Alan Teruya's home in Livermore.

I recently spent a few weeks in New Zealand and was just infatuated with the people and the scenery. We visited a tourist train operation in Keri Keri which was not yet open for the season but there were a few workmen about and one of the proprietors climbed out from under the M.O.W. car that he had been servicing to take me on a tour of their car barn, workshop, yard, machine shop and business office. In Christchurch, we went into the largest train store in New Zealand which was full of OO (HO as we know it) trains, mostly British and New Zealand road names but some Santa Fe, Union Pacific, and D.&R.G.W. as well. There was no S gauge to speak of but he did have some interesting S scale locomotive kits which would run on HO track. New Zealand standardized on 3'-6" track when it was first being settled, the explanation being that it would save a lot of money in sleepers (ties) and roadbed considering the vast areas that they were attempting to cover, so I guess that the S/HO hybrid would make sense for their modelers.

While driving across their countryside I stumbled upon a massive HO layout that had been 30 years in the making. We spent about an hour talking about trains, watching the owner operate on four different mainlines, and looking at the display cases lining the walls. Although he had a track cleaning car that could be pulled around the layout, he said that he preferred to use a plain piece of balsa wood rubbed along the tracks to keep them clean. His trains ran effortlessly so it might be worth a try.

Until next time, "The days are getting shorter and the weather wetter so go play with your trains!"

Michael