



NEWSLETTER

Summertime Blues

Here's a quiz for you: If someone asked you who recorded the song "Summertime Blues" would you say Eddie Cochran (1958), Blue Cheer (1968), The Beach Boys (1962), The Who (1970), Alan Jackson (1994), or Cheech Marin (1987)? Well, any of those would be correct answers as well as Van Halen, T. Rex, The Flying Lizards, or Olivia Newton John.

Maybe it depends on when or where you grew up, or what vocal group your best friend's older sister liked. Maybe you even were brave enough to make up your own mind, but somehow we were all shaped by life and have settled into our own prejudices and predilections. I have the same feeling when I ask people what type of track they like best for their layout. Some are adamant that Gilbert track is the only way to go, others swear that S Helper makes the best option. Meanwhile, another guy is tugging at my sleeve and insisting that Gargraves is the most realistic and affordable and another voice screams that American "S" Gauge has the best conductivity.

Everyone has their reasons and preferences. The bottom line is that no one way is right or wrong, they're just different. The most important thing is to "Just Do It", as the old Nike commercial said. Maybe you like the nostalgic look of the tinplate track and don't mind tinkering with it. It's what makes you happy! If you're one of those guys that enjoys fiddling with a switch yard for hours and you're tired of sticky E units, you won't catch any grief from me if you swap in a can motor and electronic reverse unit or run your entire layout on DC...or DCC....or TMCC.....or Legacy! If you like the looks of the "Helper" track and it makes your operator's life easier, that's great! As the old saying goes, "That's why they make chocolate and vanilla", not everyone likes vanilla.



In July we met at Vern Brooks' home in Castro Valley. His S gauge underground railroad is still humming away in the basement and he decided to dispose of his Gilbert HO collection in favor of more room for S gauge.

Above ground, this V&T locomotive showed up with it's own spur from his workshop, down the driveway, and out to the street. If we could bottle Vern's ambition and enthusiasm we could turn the economy of the country around in about a week and a half.

The business meeting was dominated by discussion of next year's Flyer Fest West event. The idea is to have a location south

of San Francisco and Al DiMatteo and Paul Guaraglia have been working hard to find a suitable facility.



For show and tell, Paul brought these Mini Craft style buildings which are being manufactured by Town & Country. They are similar to the old "Whistle Stop" set and I expect that we will see them occupying suitable real estate on his new layout.

There was no club raffle due to the late conclusion of the meeting but we should have some good prizes to choose from in the future since Jake has added more trains.

Richard Ridgeway hosted the club meeting for August at his home in South San Francisco. Unfortunately, I was out of town and unable to attend but I will see about adding a report of the night's activities in my next newsletter.

This Friday night, September 17, we will be meeting at Steve Haug's home in San Jose. Come see what everyone's been up to and add your "two cents worth" to the great track debate.