

"All the Exciting News of Nor-Cal"

June 2003

the **NOR-CAL EXPRESS**

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Note: The Express is printed and mailed by USPSaServiceOnline. Unfortunately, their new restrictions preclude the use of high-resolution photographs in the printed version of the Express.

FUTURE MEETS

June 14, 2003 (BC)
July 12, 2003 (IH)
August 9, 2003 (IH)
September 13, 2003 (M)
October 11, 2003 (M)
November 8, 2003 (M)

BC = Bollinger Canyon School
Talavera Drive and Bollinger
Canyon Road
M = Montera Middle School
5555 Ascot Drive, Oakland
IH = Iron Horse Middle School
12601 Alcosta Blvd.
San Ramon

Directions to Bollinger Canyon School: Take the Bollinger Canyon Road exit from Interstate 680, go west on Bollinger, then turn right at Talavera Drive. The school is immediately on the left.

DAVE PFEIFER IS #773 HUDSON WINNER



The lucky winner of the like-new #773 Hudson raffle was Dave Pfeifer #97-44624, shown at the left with the loco. The locomotive is uncomfortable on Dave's layout's 030 curves, so it will be a "roundhouse queen" until Dave's new layout is constructed!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Joseph Bergeron, San Carlos
Chris Braga, Soledad
Charles Brough, Fresno
Harry Costa, San Bruno
Richard Glendinning, Oakland
Charles Hernandez, Hayward
Jim Jordan, Orinda
Tom Laster, Redwood City

Craig Matoza, San Leandro
Michael Miller, Tracy
Karl Mogel, Petaluma
John Renz, Pacific Grove
Michael Todd, San Bruno
Hank Veloz, Pacific Grove
Andy Wiskes, Novato

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Michael Andrews #95-41371

It seems like a long time ago that I last wrote the presidents message. I have been very busy with work and family. I can't tell you what is harder, running my own business or taking care of three young children. The weather is finally catching up to the time of year; I was really getting tired of cold and rain. But Spring has finally arrived and it has turned into summer quite fast.

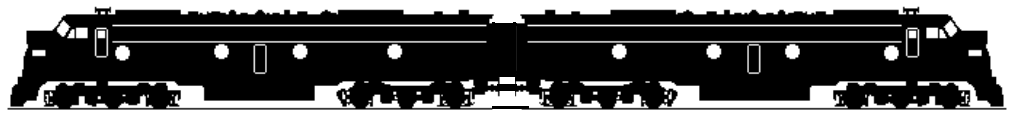
The Cal-Stewart Meet was a success, everything happened on schedule and all seemed to have had a fun time. The dues structure that the BOD set up to include all Nor-Cal meets is working well. The attendance was up at Cal-Stewart for our own

members, and the members are getting more for their money. I want to thank everyone who worked the meet, whether your job was big or small, it all helps make it a good event. We are all working on next year's event so if you have any good ideas please let us know.

The dates for next year's Cal-Stewart are March 26, 27, & 28, 2004 so mark your calendars.

Note that the June 14 meet is at the Bollinger Canyon School, then the next two are at the Iron Horse Middle School, both locations in San Ramon.

(Continued on Page 6)



Two images courtesy of Ken Houghton Rail Images

RENEE QUIHILLALT'S AMAZING RAILROAD

run his O-gauge and Standard Gauge trains, but is constructing a large-scale railroad on his 5-acre property in Lafayette. The inspiration for this was his purchase of Vichy Springs & Monticello RR #5, a live-steam 15-inch gauge 0-4-0, from a defunct amusement park in Napa, California, in 1968. It is fueled with either wood or coal and runs at a boiler pressure of 100 psi. It normally pulls a combine car, which was built by Renee and his son David, based on drawings for a Maine 2-ft. combine of the Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington RR. A gasoline-powered Whitcomb switcher was built by David using riding lawnmower mechanicals; it and a flatcar that David built, are used for construction duties. Their 5-acre property has one level loop around the house, and a new main line under construction, climbing a sizable hill by means of a series of switchbacks, at a 3 percent gradient. Altogether there is almost a mile of track currently in use with more being constructed. Engineering features include cuts, trestle bridges and retaining walls. Crossties are constructed from old PG&E pole crosspieces. Rail is 8-pound/ft. steel from various sources. David has constructed the switches, including fabricating frogs and switch throws. There is an engine house for #5 and the combine. The plan is for the main line to ascend to the top of the hill (100 feet or so rise) and then make a loop around the crest. Doesn't this somehow seem more labor-intensive than O-gauge?



VS&MRR loco #5 and WW&FRR combine #6 pause at the swimming pool to load passengers.

Nor-Cal member Renee Quihillalt is not content to run his O-gauge and Standard Gauge trains, but is constructing a large-scale railroad on his 5-acre property in Lafayette. The inspiration for this was his purchase of Vichy Springs & Monticello RR #5, a live-steam 15-inch gauge 0-4-0, from a defunct amusement park in Napa, California, in 1968. It is fueled with either wood or coal and runs at a boiler pressure of 100 psi. It normally pulls a combine car, which was built by Renee and his son David, based on drawings for a Maine 2-ft. combine of the Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington RR. A gasoline-powered Whitcomb switcher was built by David using riding lawnmower mechanicals; it and a flatcar that David built, are used for construction duties. Their 5-acre property has one level loop around the house, and a new main line under construction, climbing a sizable hill by means of a series of switchbacks, at a 3 percent gradient. Altogether there is almost a mile of track currently in use with more being constructed. Engineering features include cuts, trestle bridges and retaining walls. Crossties are constructed from old PG&E pole crosspieces. Rail is 8-pound/ft. steel from various sources. David has constructed the switches, including fabricating frogs and switch throws. There is an engine house for #5 and the combine. The plan is for the main line to ascend to the top of the hill (100 feet or so rise) and then make a loop around the crest. Doesn't this somehow seem more labor-intensive than O-gauge?



Renee "eats smoke" as he feeds wood to #5



David with gasoline switcher at switchback



In the midst of bankruptcy like many other Depression-era roads, the Rock Island gambled on a new set of streamlined lightweight passenger trains to return them to profitability. Leading each 3 or 4 car train set was a new TA model from EMC. 601-606 were delivered in 1937 with Winton diesel engines rated at twelve hundred horses, thus the T designation. They also introduced the attractive ROCKET paint scheme of maroon, crimson and stainless steel. They were retired in 1957-58.



Lackawanna
Railroad



Two images courtesy of Ken Houghton Rail Images

EDITOR'S RAMBLINGS #3

My first TCA meeting was in San Anselmo in March 1970. By today's standards ALL the trains offered were "collection quality." There was a beautiful American Flyer Wide Gauge "brass-piper" at \$150. Another member was being laughed at for trying to sell a like-new #752-3-4 City of Portland set for \$100. I went home the proud owner of an excellent set of #332-340-341 peacock and orange Standard Gauge passenger cars for \$45.

The next month's meeting was at Frank Lockwood's house (the last ever meeting at a private residence) and the following meeting was at a hotel on Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco. There, in my ignorance I turned down a #2816 hopper car, black rubber-stamped, and an excellent set of #2613-14-15 two-tone green passenger cars, the latter for \$35. I also passed on a like-new #438 switch tower in red/white/black for \$35! Why??

I slowly began to catch on! I tried an ad in the Contra Costa Times and had some luck. A man called up and said he had some metal trains. They turned out to be a painted-over AF Bluebird loco, a set of so-so condition Lionel #1685-86-87 transition passenger cars in blue and silver, and a well-used #191 villa. This was a start!

Then I got lucky. A woman phoned to say that her late uncle had left all of his trains stored in her garage for the past 15 years. She said I could have them for \$75! My wife and I drove our Corvaire out to her house and we spent the next two hours opening Lionel train boxes. Finally we piled all of this into the front trunk (Corvaire, re-

member!) and the back seat, and drove home.

The trains were all absolutely like new and boxed, and included: #226E, #2226W, #2811 silver flatcar, #2812 green gondola, #2813 cream and maroon cattle car, #2814 cream and maroon boxcar, #2815 silver Sunoco tank car, #2816 red hopper car and #2817 red caboose (all the 1938 versions), a #2025 loco/tender, a General Models Co. diesel switcher (3-rail) black, 4 pairs of 022 switches, 3 pairs of 072 switches, and lots of 072 curved and straight track, bumpers, 3 #156 station platforms, a #45 automatic gateman and V and Z transformers.

Also interesting was a thick folder full of the owner's track plans, order forms, receipts, correspondence, etc., including a letter from Lionel dated early 1942 explaining why his order (for a semi-scale switcher outfit) could not be filled!

Next I got a call from a gentleman who then sold me his American Flyer O-gauge passenger set of 1934. He had bought it then for his son, but the son showed no interest so he stored it for the next 36 years! This was a #3315 brass trim loco with 3280-series green cars, and a #2116 (B) warning signal, all boxed and Excellent Plus.

Then my wife went to a garage sale in Montclair and found a cardboard box filled with like-new #225E loco and tender and three semi-scale cars (box, hopper, caboose), all boxed and wrapped in Lionel paper! There was also a nice #315 truss bridge and track. All for \$15! There was a second box of nice American Flyer trains (all like new, including "Pikes Peak" and "Niagara Falls" Pullmans) for \$15. She bought both boxes, although she wasn't sure about the Flyer!



MARKLIN HUDSON

This ultra rare O-Gauge Marklin version of the New York Central Hudson was manufactured in limited numbers in 1934, and sold for \$50.00 (An even rarer 1-Gauge version was made, circa 1936). There was also a streamlined *Commodore Vanderbilt* version, circa 1936. There were matching Pullman cars in O-Gauge. A reproduction of the #5273 version, as above, has been made (in Germany) in recent years.



The Chessie System was formed with the consolidation of the Chesapeake and Ohio and Baltimore and Ohio Railroads in 1973. The Chessie System was absorbed into the CSX System in 1987 but the "Chessie" cat logo (first introduced by the C&O in 1933) lives on with CSX..





A Lionel Standard Gauge Commodore Vanderbilt and two Williams #381E's double-headed, in front of an MTH #840 Power Station, with other MTH accessories visible in the background.



A MTH CM&StP Bipolar electric with a long string of K-Line passenger cars is pulling abreast of a Sunset/Third Rail Boston & Maine *Flying Yankee*.

REMINISCENCES OF 1960/61 NOR-CAL Warren Heid, Division Historian

Continued from the March 2003 Express

Toy train collecting was, as was life in general, much simpler in 1960. Toy trains were readily available at the Goodwill, Salvation Army, and other such organizations. The hobby was in its infancy, as TCA was organized only in 1954. Trains produced in the 1930's were only 20 plus years old that year and included many of the now "hard-to-find" prewar sets. I have to admit that \$100 went a lot further in 1960 for the normal cost of living. When I bought my (standard gauge) Blue Comet set, in mint condition, for \$100, I had to pay it off at \$25 per month. State cars were for sale at \$25 each, and Ives standard gauge locomotives with tenders, in mint condition, were selling for \$15 to \$30 each. The top dollar for a mint condition black 400E locomotive and tender was \$45. As I said earlier in this article, everything is relative!!!

Our Nor-Cal Division had growing pains but we had fine leadership with Fred Hines and Leon Jacobson, our presidents during these years. Dick Hopkins was our able secretary and he would send out hand drawn meeting notices. I can remember one meeting at Bill Austin's home in October 1960 where we did not have a quorum, so that we could not discuss geographical limits for our Division. National was requesting our input of members' home locations as an official project. We think that TCA had difficult problems now, but this is normal with a large organization.

One of the highlights for 1960/61 was the Pacific Coast

Division's Convention held in San Rafael July 22-24. 37 West Coast members were registered. The high point of the meeting was an operational display that can probably never be duplicated. Herb Morley of the Western Division and "Red" Hill and Lee Hieronimus of our Division brought two brand new condition Lionel Standard Gauge No. 10 interurban cars with trailers. These were hooked up and run around a display while members took photos. The door prize was a Lionel Standard Gauge No. 402 freight set. I am proud to say that I was the winner, and the set still sits on my display shelves.

It was toward the end of these years that the Nor-Cal Division was awarded the 1962 National Convention, to be held in San Francisco. There will be more information about the preparation for this convention in another issue of the newsletter. Incidentally, it was at this convention that Nor-Cal members first met Lou Redman, Mr. TCA!

Collecting toy trains is a unique hobby. It is still the chase, when you hear that some antique shop has an old train, that causes a member to take notice, even if it turns out to be something you do not collect. The Train Collectors Association is made up of a great cross-section of the people of our country. To me, and to many other members, the hobby is not just about collecting old toy trains, fascinating as it is that these old trains have survived through the years. What really makes the hobby great for me is the friendship of members that I have met over the years.



THE BLUE COMET CAR by Fred Braun #67-1910

In the 1920's and 30's every kid had an aunt or uncle who really wasn't a relative at all. Close family friends presented a problem. No youngster would dare call an adult by their first name and "Mr." or "Mrs." was usually a bit too formal. So "aunt" Sally or "uncle" George solved the problem nicely. Mine was "Uncle" Bill White, an old friend of my father. Uncle Bill's generosity soon earned my great and enduring affection. Each Christmas I soon learned to eagerly await an envelope addressed to "Master Freddie Braun." Lifting the flap disclosed an oval window from which a steel engraving of George Washington looked forth. A brand new one dollar bill was inside, that "Uncle" Bill had obtained at the bank.

The year was 1932, just about the bottom of the Great Depression, and like most urban industrial areas, things were tough in Toledo, Ohio. Most people worked for less than a dollar an hour. At the American Coffee House, for example, you could get a cup of coffee and a doughnut for five cents. Thus my gift was a significant one, and the things a dollar would buy boggled the mine!

Our family celebrated Christmas according to German custom, opening gifts on Christmas morning. Therefore the dollar was not officially mine until that time. On the day after Christmas mom would take me downtown and allow me to spend my dollar, pretty much as I chose.

On this particular Christmas mom took me to LaSalle and Koch's Department Store, my first choice for shopping. LaSalle's sold Lionel and where else would a boy spend a dollar but on trains.

A year before I had received O gauge Lionel Set No. 293, an olive green No. 252 loco with four wheel freight cars, as a gift from my grandfather.

My dollar would now buy another car or something compatible to my set. Of course I had seen the big Standard Gauge trains but they were only for wishing.

Upon arrival, LaSalle's Toyland was the picture of chaos. Everywhere displays were being dismantled and stock returned to the storeroom. The magnificent operating train layout with "O" and Standard was gone. A lone passenger car stood in the middle of the table.

But what a car! It was a Lionel Blue Comet Pullman. Although brand new, it was missing one pair of wheels and their axle from one truck. Obviously someone had "robbed" this car to correct a discrepancy elsewhere. Holding this "jewel" with loving care, I noted that it had been marked down to clear out. The price had been reduced to \$2.00!

I was quick to proclaim to mom that "that's what I want." Logically, she pointed out the fact that it wouldn't fit on my track. No matter to me— the Blue Comet car was my choice. Now the hard facts of life began to emerge. Mom reminded me that I only had one dollar. "But can't you give me the other dollar?" I pleaded. At the age of ten, I'm sure that I was completely insensitive to mom's embarrassment as she informed me that she didn't have the other dollar. And so dejected and virtually inconsolable, I followed her out of Toyland.

To this day I have been unable to recall what I eventually purchased with my dollar. After the loss of the Blue Comet car, what matter. But I can say that when my interest in trains was reawakened in the 1960's, one of my first pursuits was a Lionel Blue Comet set. And it remains one of my most prized acquisitions.

Notes from the Editor by Richard White #70-3387

A few members have heeded my call and submitted articles for the Newsletter. I particularly wish to thank Warren Heid and Fred Braun. Warren is providing historical insight into Nor Cal's early days; Fred has twice whipped up an article for me, knowing that I was short. Honestly folks, your Editor can only spin off so many "Ramblings." (The Ramblings were originally to be just one article, but I thought I'd better run them on a bit for fillers!). I would like some reminiscences, including humorous anecdotes, descriptions of how you made a "GREAT FIND," "how-to" articles, and articles on your special area of knowledge. You can send these in longhand, or typed, and I will retype them (and correct grammatical errors if you request that). I would also appreciate receiving digital photos. But remember, TOY train related items only.



President's Message (continued from Page 1)

We are fortunate to have the National Convention in Ontario California this year, hosted by the Western Division. From what I have been hearing it is going to be a great one. For us it is a short drive or flight so get your tickets. One of the best parts of the convention is meeting up with old friends and catching up, so hope to see you all there!

- Mike



RARE IVES #1118 "F.A.O. Schwarz"

In the period 1916 to 1919 the Ives Company put out a special version of its #1118 electrically-powered locomotive, for sale by the

large New York City toy store, F.A.O. Schwarz. Instead of "Ives No. 1118" stamped under the cab windows, this version was stamped "F.A.O.S." The eight-wheel No. 25 tender was stamped "Limited Vestibule Express," at least in the example shown here. The F.A.O.Schwarz #1118 trains are so rare (the recent Greenberg Ives O Gauge book didn't even have a photograph of one) that it is uncertain what cars might have completed the set, but the Ives #60 series passenger cars, seem likely. Incidentally, Ives was somewhat behind the times in using "Vestibule Express" labeling. By 1900 almost all main line passenger cars had enclosed vestibules, as opposed to open end platforms, and the railroads no longer needed to advertise the fact!

NOR-CAL DIVISION OFFICERS

President	Michael Andrews
Vice president	Bob Nichelini
Past president	Cliff Jarrard
Sac-Sierra President	Jack Ahearn
Secretary	Mark Boyd
Treasurer	Pete Goodier
Newsletter Editor and Webmaster	Richard White

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor:

Two points regarding Dave Dansky's call for a one-day Cal-Stewart open to the public at noon. First, because at least one-quarter of the tables stay covered for an hour or two after the show opens, members would have little time to return to them before the public arrives. Sellers should be required to uncover and be at their tables at 9:00 a.m., even as the show now stands.

Second, Dansky is a dealer and wants as much exposure as possible, which a one-day venue achieves. Then add the fact that other shows are scheduled at the same time, so dealers could possibly pack up Saturday and set up for the other show Sunday [Editor: GATS doesn't allow this].

I'm not disagreeing with the suggestion, but any changes should accommodate both buyers and sellers.

Joel Fugazzotto TCA #84-20874



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*Submit all address changes to:
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NOR-CAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Meeting convened April 1, 2003 at 7:51 PM Alidini Restaurant, Lafayette.

Voting members present: President Mike Andrews, VP Bob Nichelini, Treasurer Pete Goodier, Editor Rich White, Secretary Mark Boyd, Immediate Past President Cliff Jarrard, Karl Schmidt in place of Jack Ahearn for Sac Sierra Chapter.

Also present: Jim McCarthy and Rich Hoffmeister.

President Mike Andrews called the meeting to order.

Pending dates for 2004 Spring Cal Stewart Meet discussed March 27, 28, and 29 back in halls C&D like we used to be. Proposed contract calls for \$13,360 in trading hall rent and \$2000 for tables. Mike will negotiate for better terms. \$1650 for Friday night room rental. Mike Andrews will keep us posted. These are the only dates offered at this time. February date with O Scale West is not an option.

Mark Boyd M/S/C motion up to \$250 for Rich Hoffmeister to research the Cal Stewart attendance.

Bob Nichelini M/S/C motion to run a continuous ad for Spring Cal Stewart in the TCA National Headquarters News.

Mark will ask John Parker for a table in Ontario at the National Convention to promote Cal Stewart attendance. Purpose is to display past pictures of previous Cal Stewarts.

Mark Boyd M/S/C motion to investigate the feasibility of a "Karen Rodgers Banquet" on Saturday evening of the Cal Stewart as a sit down banquet in lieu of the Don Church Party on Friday Evening of the Cal Stewart. A nominal fee would be charged. Rationale: The current Don Church Party is costing \$3000 for "finger food" to serve about 100 people. That money could be better spent by asking for a nominal charge to cover expenses above that amount for a nice sit down banquet dinner and get more for our money.

Cliff Jarrard M/S/C motion to accept Audit and Financial Report as presented.

Mark reported 447 paid Norcal members as of this date compared to 430 in all of last year. 55 have not renewed 2002 membership.

Mike talked about a proposal he wants to develop for the National BOD to consider a program to have members adopt members who for whatever other reason, cannot afford dues or are perhaps dropping out of the association for health or other reasons.

Meeting adjourned 9:30 PM.

Buy/Sell Send your personal ads to the Editor (or phone)

Wanted: American Flyer 9-1/2 inch prewar freight cars with black frames and trucks, brass name/number plates— 3210 tank car, 3207 gondola car, 3211 caboose. Also the 1940 style diecast caboose, and the #1625-type streamlined passenger cars in 2-tone green. I need all these in Excellent condition, please.

John April (925) 254-4436

Wanted: Any French "scale-like" O gauge trains, including Marescot, Fournereau and Munier, incl. kits, parts, catalogs. Six-wheel "Great Western" tender for Hornby (O-gauge) "County of Bedford." Richard White (925) 376-5821

For Sale: Various Hornby O gauge accessories Richard White (925) 376-5821

Wanted: Always buying Marklin, Hag, Fleischmann, and other European trains. Dennis King (530) 877-



Two scenes on an O-gauge layout.

the NOR-CAL EXPRESS

Baldwin 4-4-0 American Standard locomotive
Courtesy of Ken Houghton Rail Images

