



# Western Division Newsletter



Volume 60, No. 1

<http://www.tcawestern.org>

January 2014

## 2014 Meet Notices

A very Happy New Year's greeting to all Western Division members! This year, the division and TCA are both celebrating their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The 2014 Saturday meet schedule is as follows: January 25<sup>th</sup>, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, April 5<sup>th</sup>, May 24<sup>th</sup>, July 26<sup>th</sup>, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, September 27<sup>th</sup>, October 25<sup>th</sup>, and December 6<sup>th</sup>. Please note that there will be no meets held in March, June or November.

As always, the Division's train meets will take place at the Arcadia Senior Center, located at 405 S. Santa Anita Avenue in Arcadia, California.

To get to the meet, exit the 210 Freeway at Santa Anita Avenue. Drive south about half a mile and turn right into the Arcadia Park Parking lot. The hall is located next to the lawn bowling area. Look for the sign.

The doors open at 10AM for setup, trading, and selling. Please visit the Western Division website, at <http://www.tcawestern.org> for more information and a map.

The display theme for January will be '**Your Newest Train Purchase/Acquisition.**' Show off an interesting item, tell a good story and facilitate the transfer of knowledge on collecting toy trains with your fellow members. There will be a prize offered to a randomly chosen presenter.



Lionel #1100 Mickey Mouse hand car in 'O' gauge from 1934

This year's special raffle prize will be for a 1934 Lionel 'O' gauge Mickey & Minnie Mouse clockwork handcar, with box and track. Tickets will be available at all meets

for \$20 each. Only 100 will be offered for sale. Additionally, a \$100 bill will be awarded at each month's meet to a randomly chosen ticket holder. The winner must be in attendance to claim the \$100 prize. The handcar will be awarded at the December 2014 meet. Only TCA members are eligible to win these prizes.

## 2014 Train Meet Display Themes

January – 'My newest train'	February – 'Train I love'
April – 'Non electric Trains'	May – 'Southern Pacific RR'
July – 'Best buy, Worst buy'	August – 'Box Cars'
Sept – 'Maintenance of Way'	Oct – 'Orange & Black trains'
December – 'Holiday Trains'	

## President's Message

By Manny Gonzalez, WD President

As we embark on another new year, there is once again a renewed excitement of what the future might bring us. January is always bright with the promise of new beginnings and all sorts of great possibilities. And although the days and months roll past us all the time, starting the cycle afresh and relabeling the year of reference can often serve as a "reset" for many things within our lives. I



sincerely believe it's among the reasons why we keep track of birthdays and all types of anniversaries.

But does it beg the question that all things can be renewed, or do some things have their season and then play themselves out?

Have toy trains literally come and gone? Are the clubs seeing their roles diminishing and rendered irrelevant, and have we finally priced the hobby to near extinction? While I seriously doubt toy trains will ever really go away, are we truly seeing the hobby's best days becoming more and more just a distant memory in our rear-view mirrors?

While some clubs (TCA and others) enjoy a solid, or at least stable financial footing, many are encountering increasing uncertainty. Although some have been able to get by with doable rent situations, other groups are paying hundreds of dollars to rent suitable locales for their monthly meets. With declining memberships, revenues continue to fall, but expenses only seem to keep increasing. Even at the height of the Great Recession landlords continued to raise rents. Effectively displacing many long-time tenants, some would not recover and have since quietly slipped away.

Although this may sound like a commentary on housing and commercial space, it's not. This is about the huge pink elephant in the room which few seem willing to acknowledge, let alone discuss. It's about declining memberships that can't seem to be slowed; increasingly unreliable revenue streams (with quite a domino effect); and perhaps most significantly an industry that not only appears tone-deaf to its constituents, but seems intent on killing the golden goose.

I keep hearing how people are upset about the dues' increase from National and how they're not going to renew. I get it. But for heaven's sake, this is a hobby where individuals routinely spend hundreds (if not thousands) of dollars on a single acquisition – only to then short change the club on fifty-cent coffee and donuts.

I realize now I may have been remiss in not allowing any discussion when members tried to bring the issue up at a previous meet. At the time I honestly didn't think it would serve any purpose - after all the decision had already been made. I realize now it was unfair not to let members air their concerns. However,

the question remains: how do we now choose to move forward? Is this all about fifteen dollars, or are there really other issues at play here?

Regardless of whatever choice any of us makes, I think we at least owe it to one another to be honest about what's going on.

## December Meet Recap

By Robert Caplan, WD Recording Secretary



December's WD meet was the annual Holiday Party. A large spread of food was served, thanks to the participation of the membership in the traditional 'pot luck'. The club provided sliders and punch. There were about 50 members and their families in attendance.



In the spirit of the day, the display theme was 'Holiday Trains'. Greg Pulis shared some old lithographed tin plate toys including a very interesting 4 piece German train set and a Strass floor toy train with outstanding lithographed art. Mario Liberatore brought a #164 fixed voltage Lionel crossing signal – the newer kind that can actually alternate the flashing of the red lights. Jerry Johnson brought an assortment of homemade Christmas cars. Steve Waller stood up his giant 99 cent Santa straddling a loop of track where a



Lionel 'O' gauge handcar ran through its legs.



Jim Kenney

Santa's Helber Manny Gonzalez



Greg Pulis

Dave Mabee

Dave Mabee had his latest holiday Christmas Submarine flatcar and his automated Santa/Xmas snow ball flatcar. Wayne Sheriff shared his latest purchase which was a G gauge Hartman 4-4-0 American loco & tender Christmas "Lady Bell" in its original presentation case. Robert Trimble displayed a Christmas tree he felt needed a home when he saw it.



Wayne Sheriff

Les Cochran

Les Cochran presented his latest Christmas accessories which included a #1206 Lionel Christmas gateman and Christmas tree lot! Jim Kenney showed a black & white enlarged photographic print, circa 1930, of a living room Standard gauge train layout.



Bob Trimble

Steve Waller

Santa was good to almost everyone at the meet (especially the ladies) and there were lots of Raffle prize winners (see photos on next page). Steve Eastman won the Lionel Hudson loco and streamliner cars set grand prize (he has since reported that "the Hudson runs very nice"). Dave Mabee won the final 2013 monthly meet \$100 bill. In addition, there was a special raffle conducted for an MTH Rail King AA unit that was won by Bob Nord.



Raffle Prize winners



Ladies Raffle Winners

## Hoge Trains

Article Compiled By Harold Shapiro



Hoge #900 Streamliner Set in 'O' gauge made 1934 - 1939

Pronounced 'hoagy', the company was originally founded in 1909 in Manhattan, NY, by Hampden Hoge to produce office supplies. Although the company retained his name, Hampden Hoge subsequently left the company in 1919, thus the toy trains which bear his name, were not his idea. Henry Katz had started in the toy business as an employee for Ferdinand Strauss in 1917 and by 1928 had started his own toy business. In 1931, Katz dissolved his own company and came to manage Hoge's new toy division. The firm contracted construction of their toy designs to Mattatuck Manufacturing Company in Waterbury, Conn. Train products included stamped steel passenger and animated circus cars as well as electric and clockwork locomotives made to run on three rail 'O' gauge tubular track.



Hoge Tom Thumb Railroad #1904 caboose, #1901 gondola, #1902 Fast Freight boxcar and #990 steam loco & tender in 'O' gauge circa 1931

The first train products introduced in the 1931 Hoge catalogue included the Tom Thumb Railroad #881 three car electric passenger set in 'O' gauge. It was stamped steel tinplate

construction. The electric outline engine featured an operating headlight. The set included a Pullman and an observation car. Also introduced in 1931 was the Tom Thumb RR #990 passenger set, powered by a steam type electric powered locomotive in an 0-4-0 configuration. The set featured the engine, tender and three passenger cars - two Pullmans and the observation car. Each set came with track and transformer. Extra track and transformers were also available for separate sale.



Hoge 'O' gauge New York, New Haven & Hartford Comet Streamliner circa 1935

The early electric sets included a transformer that was concealed inside an orange and green tin-plate lithographed ticket office station named the #655 Tom Thumb Power House. In 1934 Hoge introduced the Tom Thumb steam freight set. It featured a steam locomotive, tender, box car, tank car, gondola and caboose. These cars used a hook and slot coupling mechanism. A Union Pacific M10000 articulated Streamliner; set #900 was also introduced in 1934. It was a popular train and remained catalogued throughout the company's production years. It featured a polished chrome finish and sold for \$3.50.



Hoge Tom Thumb #881 Passenger Set with locomotive, Pullman & Observation car in 'O' gauge circa 1931

In 1935, Hoge introduced its New York, New Haven & Hartford Comet streamliner, based on the real prototype that was unveiled that same year and ran on the eastern seaboard of the US. That same year they released the #750 Circus set, featuring a Commodore Vanderbilt type locomotive, tender, three animated Circus cars and a caboose. The animated cars contained circus animals that moved back and forth inside their cages as the train rolled down the track. The circus set sold for \$3.50 with track and transformer. Hoge's top of the line set #1000 featured the Commodore Vanderbilt engine and polished chrome streamliner passenger cars. The engine had a 0-6-0 wheel arrangement and measured over a foot long. This model featured the first use of a reversing unit in Hoge train production. It sold for a whopping \$6. Hoge also offered set #500 which was a great running mechanical streamliner (clockwork powered) version of their electric diesel style streamliner. It sold for \$1.50. Hoge's 1935 ad campaign was "See Hoge Before You Buy." In March 1936, C. L. Rivenburgh, who eight years earlier had been a sales manager at Ives Manufacturing, was brought on at Hoge Manufacturing, with similar duties.



Hoge Circus Set Animated Lion Car

Hoge Ticket Office transformer

Train line manufacturing ceased completely in 1939 although sales of inventory was continued through 1942. Hoge was then bought and eventually dissolved by Mattatuck in 1958. Mattatuck converted the tooling and dies for the toy trains to other product lines. Henry Katz and Company subsequently purchased Buddy L trains. The Hoge Company lay dormant for almost forty years until it was purchased on March 19, 1981 by Newbraugh Brothers Toys, Inc. of Berkeley Springs, WV. Newbraugh Brothers purchased the Hoge name, trademark, and rights to make and manufacture Hoge Toys. The Hoge name is currently the property of Robert Hoge (no direct relation to the founder), of Wasco, IL, a Hoge collector, who acquired all rights in 1991.