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PRESIDENT

HILLY LAZARUS  
TEMPORARY EDITOR

## Lack of little engineers derails toy-train profits

ARIZONA REPUBLIC, December 16, 1984. Submitted by Al Bailey.

Associated Press

COLOGNE, West Germany — Lean times have come to West Germany's model-train business after years of booming sales every Christmas.

The popularity of computer games and the world's lowest birthrate — 10 births per 1,000 West Germans — have combined to cut into profits in a classic branch of toymaking. Executives of the model-railway industry for the first time are worried about the future.

"After years of expansion, during which adults fulfilled their childhood dreams by turning toy trains into model layouts, a slowdown became evident in 1983 primarily because of the lack of kids," said Wolfgang Huch, chief executive of the Maerklin model-train company, West Germany's largest.

That is not good news for the West German toy industry, which traditionally has counted on the sales of model trains and accessories for 15 to 20 percent of annual revenues. That amounted to 700 million marks, or about \$230 million, in the most recent year, industry figures show.

One of every five West German households, or about 3 million, own model-train sets. An estimated 5 million people regularly play with the layouts, according to industry figures.

Ever since the postwar economic recovery, exquisitely detailed model trains have been favorite items under the Christmas tree. But last year, computer hardware and software became the Christmas gifts most coveted by German kids.

To maintain their share of the market, model-train makers are scrambling to develop new technology and perfect ever-smaller gauges of miniature trains to lure kids and parents back to the traditional hobby.

Advertising for model trains has increased noticeably in West Germany in magazines and on television. And the toymakers are banking on higher sales in the United States this Christmas season because currency-exchange rates have made German products a better value for dollar buyers.

The industry eagerly backed a model-train fair in November in Cologne, which drew almost

80,000 people in five days to see elaborate exhibits by 140 companies and clubs. The first fair in 1983 drew 76,000 visitors.

Maerklin, which has been an industry leader ever since it sold the world's first electric trains in 1900, unveiled what it calls the world's first steering system based on microelectronic processors.

"Previously, most computer results could only be seen on a screen or a printer. The results now can be realistically linked with a model train," Huch said.

The system, which goes on sale early next year, uses a transformer-size computer and decoders built into the miniature locomotives to eliminate the need for complicated track wiring for model-train layouts.

The digital system permits up to 80 trains and 256 signals and switches to be operated at one time on a large layout. It can be connected to a home video screen using an attachment to program even more elaborate routes.

"There's no question the system will be a big hit," predicted a salesman at Hobby Haas model-train shop in Frankfurt. "It will

make it easy for beginners to advance quickly into layouts with complicated switches."

The basic system will cost 500 marks (\$166), with extra decoders that can be added to locomotives going for 50 marks (\$16) each. But the price tag should not be a hindrance, the salesman said, adding, "Eighty percent of our customers are adults. Model railroading isn't a game for kids."

Maerklin, with 55 percent of the market, employs 1,700 workers at its two factories in Swabia and produces 800 items.

A starter set in the popular HO track gauge sells for 89 marks (\$29) in a Frankfurt department store. The set includes a locomotive and two cars with a circle of track.

Extra locomotives and box-cars, electronic switches and signals, landscapes with bridges and tunnels — all beautifully built to scale — can add hundreds of dollars to the bill.

West Germany has 300 model-train clubs with 18,500 members who pool their money to afford big layouts with dozens of trains.

### ALL DAY MEET

AN ALL-DAY MEET IS SCHEDULED FOR SATURDAY, APRIL 13th AND IF YOU WANT A TABLE, BE SURE TO SEND \$5 TO SAM MATTES. SEE THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER FOR MORE DETAILS. 'TIS GONNA BE A BIGGIE.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear fellow members:

I wish, at this time, to thank each and every one of you for the fine cooperation that you have given me in the operation of our club. This really has meant a great deal to me.

There is one item that I have to bring up. The management of the hall requested that I notify our members that there is to be no smoking in the carpeted foyer of the hall. No food is allowed in there either. This rule must be strictly adhered to.

The ashtrays that we provide to our members are disappearing and they belong to the hall and we are responsible for them. Please return any you might have or we may have to check them out on a sign-up sheet.

Our regular Southwestern Division March meeting will be held, as is usual, at the Arcadia Masonic Hall, 50 W. Duarte Road at 6 P.M. on the 8th. Sellers are admitted early to set up and cover their trains and then are requested to leave the hall until 6 P.M. Be sure to invite a guest and try to sign them up for TTOS and SW. At our February meeting, we had about 100 guests and nine of them joined SW, bringing our membership to 701 members. We are trying to reach 750 by the end of our fiscal year on June 30th. Please help us to reach our goal. Everyone should have received their TTOS National membership card by now so be sure to have it ready to show at the door Friday evening.

Our APRIL ALL-DAY MEET will be on Saturday, April 13th and we will not have the Friday evening meeting the night before. Bring someone to join TTOS to this meet too. All other toy train, model train and rail fan club members are invited to be our free guests at this meet. If you want a table, send \$5 to Sam Mattes who is listed in the TTOS Directory. Sellers may enter the hall at 8:30 to set up and cover their goods. The doors open for trading at 9 A.M. Please fellows, don't do any trading before 9 A.M. as it isn't fair to the other members.

Al Bailey is now on track helping TTOS in many ways. He is the TTOS National Order Board editor and prepares all the classified ads for our TTOS Bulletin. We want to build up the Order Board and ask that everyone send an ad to Al. You will see a great improvement in the March issue. Al has also prepared many man-on-the-street interviews for our Southwestern Limited in a series called the "Call Board". Al hopes that this series will get us to know one another better. For more information, call Al at (818) 242-3748. Don't forget to send your classified ads to Al Bailey every month to help us to get a great National "Order Board".

If you have a change of address or phone number, be sure to notify our TTOS National Office at (818) 578-0673. The office is open on week days from about 9 A.M. until about 2 P.M. Also, please notify David Nissen by mail as he prepares our mailing labels, or you may tell our Membership Secretary, Joan Marlatt, at any meeting. Well, Joan just got married so she will have a new last name---which we will all learn at our March meeting. Congratulations Joan. TTOS National and TTOS Southwestern Division went in together and bought Joan and her husband a new vacuum cleaner for a wedding present.

So, until next month,

P.S. Remember that the new Cen-Cal Division is holding their big meet in Tulare, CA on March 30. Call Fred Nix or A.B. Clark for information.

Sincerely,

*Ralph N. Johnson*  
Ralph N. Johnson  
President

THE WHISTLECORD

by Ron Chervin

Ron Chervin is a member of the Los Angeles Division of the Pacific Coast Region of the National Model Railroaders Association and has shared this article with us as it will also appear in the "L. A. Coupler" of the Los Angeles Division.

Have you ever wondered what it might be like to have a firsthand, close-up view of the S.P. Taylor Roundhouse without looking over your shoulder for the Southern Pacific police?

Well, fret no more! For sometime now, the mechanical department at Taylor has been giving roundhouse tours to the public free of charge right under our noses.

Thanks to the S.P. Roundhouse gang's GEORGE STRUTHERS, RAY BOONE, RICH RATOON, plus many others, the last Sunday of each month is an open-house tour-day of the Roundhouse at Taylor Yard open to you BY APPOINTMENT ONLY. Appointments must be made in advance early in the month because there is a limit of 30 people per tour and quotas fill up pretty fast. Tours are generally scheduled on the last Sunday of the respective months starting at 9 A.M. and several are scheduled per day. Some tours had been cancelled because of rain but tours should now be on schedule.

AND THAT'S NOT ALL! As a bonus, guests are given souvenirs and momentos ranging from snacks (hot dogs, usually) to buttons, pins and T-Shirts, etc. I would like to see this as a possible (hopefully probable L.A. Division activity or even as an event for the upcoming Pacific Southwest Region Convention in Pasadena. (TTOS folks---substitute for the last sentence "Southwestern Division of TTOS activity and a possible event for Cal-Stewart. Also, how about a joint activity between SW and the LA Division of NMRA?").

If you are interested as an individual or with a group, please contact me for further information as (213) 656-2387 or you may contact Ray Boone or Rich Ratoon at Southern Pacific at (213) 629-6000.

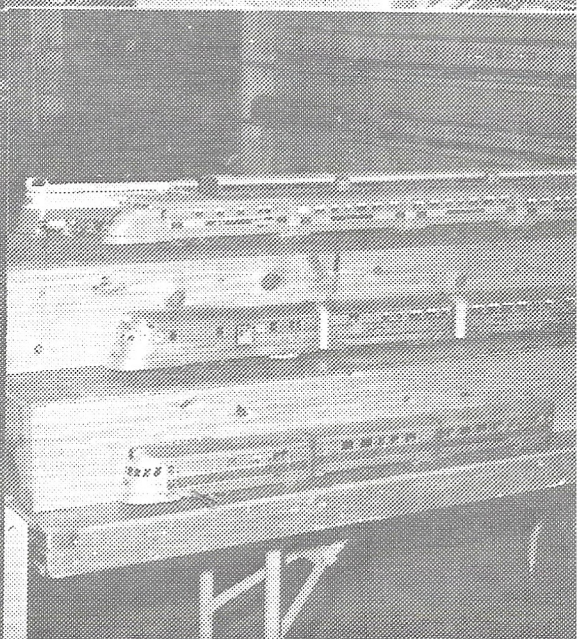
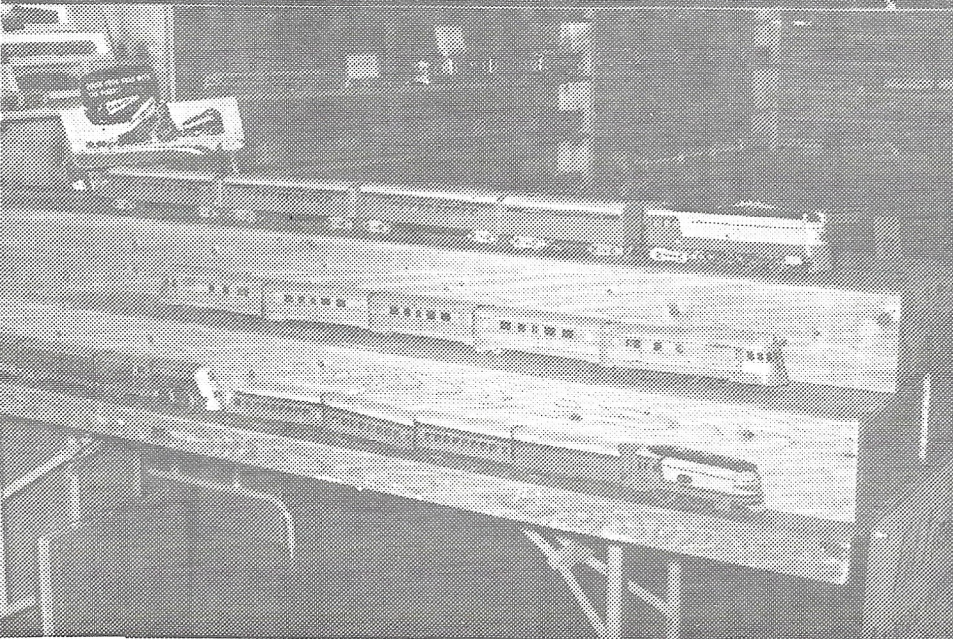
I wish to congratulate S.P. for initiating this great idea. The "FRIENDLY" certainly is finding its way back into Southern Pacific. Other railroads would do well to take a look at ESPEE'S fine example.

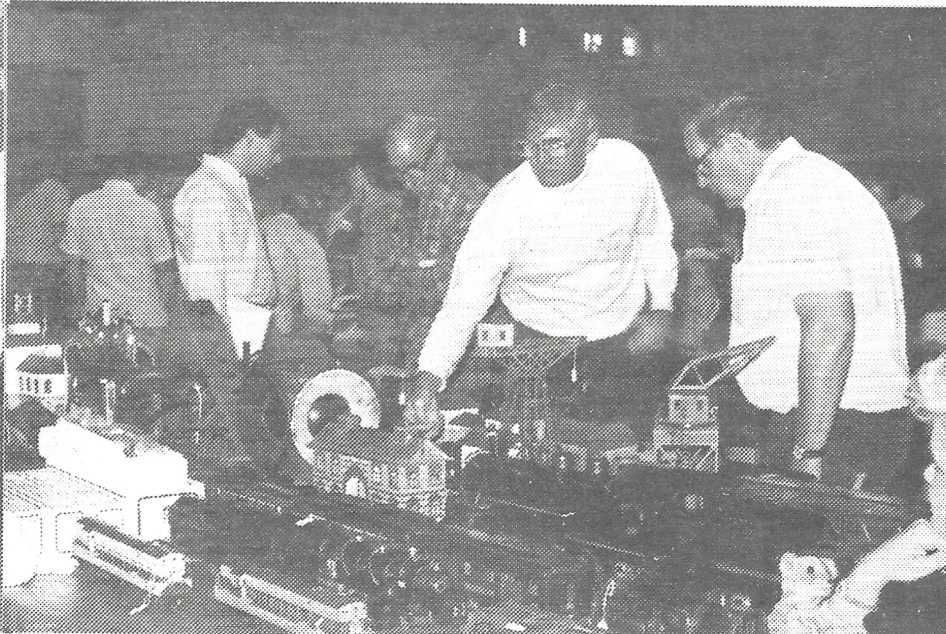
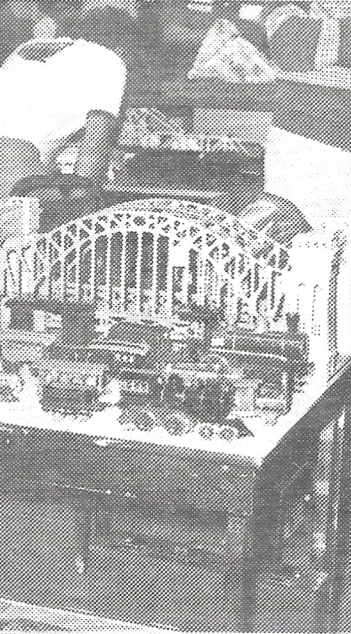
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NEWS ITEM FROM AL BAILEY: ATTENTION "O" SCALER'S  
The National O-Scale Convention is coming up on June 20-23 at Hershey, Pennsylvania and will include manufacturer and dealer exhibits and modular layouts in O<sub>1</sub>, O<sub>N3</sub>, and O<sub>T</sub> gauges. They will also have seven clinics, twelve layout tours, contests and displays, banquets and awards, door prizes, prototype tours, etc.  
For information, send a SSAE to Mary Eschbach, 1225 Bridge St., New Cumberland, PA 17070. Remember, it is at Hershey, the sweetest convention center in the U.S.A.!

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SNOWBIRD  
Did you remember to mark your calendar for August 2-3-4 for the 20th TTOS Convention in Snowbird, Utah at 8,500 feet elevation just outside of Salt Lake City? Better do it today. The hotel information and registration forms will be sent to you in just a couple of months. A couple of real railroad trips are planned.





FAR LEFT:  
 ED WEIDNER  
 CHUCK BRASHER  
 CATHY DANIEL  
 CHUCK STONE  
 DAVID DANSKY

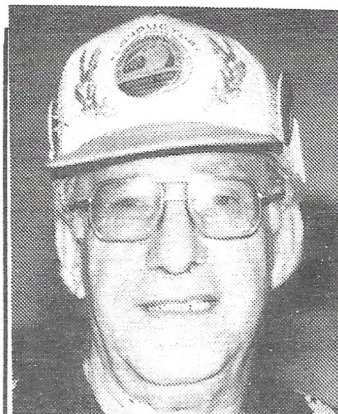
MIDDLE:  
 EARLY FOREIGN  
 AND DUES  
 TINPLATE

FAR RIGHT:  
 TAD COOY  
 PAUL VOLPP

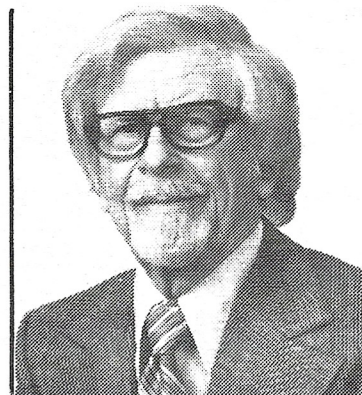
PART OF THE  
 CAL-STEWART  
 STREAMLINER  
 DISPLAY  
 ASSEMBLED  
 BY  
 BOB WALL

Once again our roving reporter swoops among our members and brings you another installment of the ...

**Southwestern Division  
CALL BOARD  
AL BAILEY, DISPATCHER**



Joe Lovi



Lyle Cain, Sr.

### JOE LOVI

You might ask, "Why interview Joe Lovi?", since this column is supposed to introduce members whom many of you may not know. The reason is that there may be some things you don't know about Joe; perhaps a hidden secret or two. Let's find out.

There's a song about going to San Jose, and that's just where Joe and his wife, Lois, were headed when they picked up an HO train set for one of their sons. It was so much fun that Joe decided to build a nice layout, but he needed seven switches, and at \$7.00 each he thought that \$49.00 for switches for a \$16.00 train set was just a little too steep. He almost got switched off, you might say. He supposed there must be someplace to buy used, and that's when he ran into Bill Harris at his Thieves Market in Pasadena!

Bill said HO is too small for little kids, but Joe said that wasn't so, his son got a big kick out of the train. Then Bill made a wise remark when he said, "You mean he loves to watch you run it!" Bill suggested that Joe go around the corner to a store run by a fellow train collector and pick out an O-gauge set. After which, he was to ask the storekeeper when his next half price sale would take place.

Joe picked out a nice Marx set and asked the question as Bill had instructed. The owner looked at his watch and shortly said, "In two minutes!" This set proved even more fun than the HO, so Joe went back for another Marx set. Yes, that was half price, too! I could stop here, for you know most of the rest of the story: the Marx marked the start of a really big collection. Joe told me how many locomotives and cars he has, and really, it is a large number.

Many of Joe's trains are displayed in boxes with closed lids, which is not uncommon with train collectors, but he does have shelves full, also. He tells me that he and Lois once had a bedroom with a couple of trains, but now they have a train room with a bed! Lois bought an 8 foot set of bookshelves to which Joe added 13 more shelves above it. He probably has the only wife in town who wakes up to trains!

He has large trains through his backyard, too, but doesn't have a transformer big enough to run them. The name on the locomotives is Southern Pacific!. Truly, it's a dream world for a train lover for the main line of

(Continued next page)

### LYLE CAIN, SR.

Have you wanted to buy an Ives water tower recently? Difficult, isn't it! If you find one that's a little play-worn or with faded paint, it's probably an original and might cost you \$400., probably more. If you find one that's bright, shiny new, chances are it was made by Lyle Cain, and you'd better grab it, for he's not making them anymore.

It's interesting to know that in our Southwestern Division we have some old fashioned entrepreneurs who are able to take a model, like Lyle did (he bought a faded one!), and convert it into a desirable item for sale. Not only was the water tower put on the market, filled a need, and sold out, but he followed up with the LCL merchandise containers--another neat standard gauge item--and there are still some available. And after that, the skylights for all the Lionel and Ives stations and the two small power houses. And he also makes replacement parts for the Dorfan crane. He says all these parts were originally made of pot metal, which as you know, often falls apart after a good many years, and some not so good. These parts that Lyle makes are of nickel plated bronze. They'll last the lifetime of the crane--and probably well past the lifetime of the collector! If you want to know about how these things are done, ask Lyle.

Lyle's layout is medium size, he says, and occupies one end of the living room floor. It's just like playing trains when you were a boy and wore out the knees in your knee britches (that may be before your time!). But this layout is really something--awesome, as the saying goes--for it contains all the principal accessories, from the Hellgate bridge up and down. So many collectors ignore the accessories that it's indeed a pleasure to see what Lyle has assembled.

And there are open shelves from here to beyond. One prime item is an Ives Olympian with Lionel cars. This beauty is pulled by multiwheeled locomotive #3245, loco and cars all in resplendent orange, and one of the most sought-after of the wide gauge Ives trains. He bought it from Bob Vickers, whose extensive collection is colorfully pictured in the Iron Horse publication, "Toy Train Treasury Vol. 1." If you don't have a copy in your library, you're the loser. You'll also find Lionel and American Flyer wide gauge in a variety of models and colors, and there are Dorfan and Boucher, too, if you look over to the right.

(Continued next page)

## MEMBERS' MODULES MULTIPLY

Not Copyrighted by Al Bailey

A number of our members have formed an informal group to have the fun of operating trains in addition to collecting and displaying them. Dubbed the "Tinplate Trackers", they're building modules that are eminently compatible so that when assembled into a rectangle they provide a large layout.

First suggested by Lew Chilton, this idea seems to be catching on--not only among our own members but also with other clubs on a national basis. The Lionel Operating Train Society (LOTS) and the Lionel Modular Operating Society are both examples of this. According to Fred Nix, TTOS members in the Sacramento area are also into this activity.

### JOE LOVI (Cont'd)

the SP runs only 15 feet from the rear of Joe's property; but do you know what? Joe doesn't like real trains, only toy ones!

Snowy, the Lovi cat, also likes trains, but just watches, except for the LGB. When these big ones are set up on the living room floor, Snowy chases them around the room, but doesn't catch them (although he could). LGB is the largest size train in the Lovi collection (except for the SP, that is), that also includes standard, O, O27, O72, S, HO, N, and Z. Mini-Club will probably turn up soon. Joe claims that today he specializes in prewar standard and O Lionel, but before that he just specialized in trains.

Occasionally Joe gets out his 4 by 8 foot train board that features 63 feet of O27 track, including six remote control switches. That's when the rolling wheels really get the fun going. Sometimes, Joe points out, he's had friends over who have the same trains that he has, yet have never seen them run. So it's double enjoyment for all concerned.

What about a good buy or a lucky day? One that he recalls is when he put a small advertisement in a local paper offering to trade old silver coins for trains. He had lots of replies, mostly offering everything except trains. But, finally, he did fill his station wagon with trains from someone who wanted the silver coins. That put some money in circulation!

Joe is retired today--at least from his job. You don't see him around club with a camera, but he has operated big ones, for he was a color-separation cameraman for a large printing firm in Los Angeles. His expertise is still in demand, especially when the plant is overloaded with work or runs into a problem. But that's his third interest. His first? No, it's not trains. His family is first. His wife and five wonderful children are what makes it all worthwhile, Joe says.

You know that Joe was Southwestern Division president for two years and is now the past president. The day he joined the club he asked then-president John Daniels what he could do to help. Since he's a big guy, John made him Sergeant-at-Arms. After two years at this, he spent three years as a member of the Board of Directors, then five years as Treasurer. These stints, he avers, are what have made belonging to TTOS especially enjoyable. So, you see, it pays to volunteer. Line forms on the right!

The basic idea is to build modules, or layout sections, small enough to fit in the average car, light enough to carry, and easy to set up and connect, so that when the group gets together they can quickly have trains in operation. The basic module size is 4 feet long and 2 feet wide, although it is optional to have 30" and 3 foot widths. Longer lengths in 4 foot increments are also possible. Detachable or folding legs, adjustable in height, put the top of the rails 40" above the floor.

The other key dimensions that make these modules compatible are the distances between the center rails of the two main line tracks, and the distance of the center rail of the first track from the front edge of the module top. Track is O-gauge or O-72 and the corner sections have O-72 or O-45 curves. Electrical wiring is standardized and color coded with plugs and sockets for quick connections.

There is a lot of opportunity for individual creativity for each module builder can decorate or add sidings and accessories as desired. If you want further information, ask Lew Chilton, Howard Packer, Al Bailey, Ralph Johnson, Pete DeBeers, Myron Moore, Mike Roman, or Roy Severin. Then, come join the fun!

### LYLE CAIN, SR. (Cont'd)

Lyle got started in collecting by his son--now that's a switch--who also is a standard gauge collector, hence the Sr. we often see on Lyle's name--so it was only natural that he started in standard, too. He also found TCA through his son, and joined that first, then TTOS Southwestern and TTOS Southern Pacific Division that meets in Anaheim.

But the standard gauge trains that actually got Lyle interested in trains were those built to a scale of 12" to a foot. He was Chief Electrical Engineer for the M-K-T lines (Missouri-Kansas-Texas) back about 1923. He worked for them several years and since has always carried a torch for the railroads. But in spite of this fact, his electrical expertise carried him to the Westinghouse company in Denver (they were in the railroad business!), when he found a new interest in radio. Radio was in its early days (and the big W was in the radio business, too!). This lead into sound work. Stay with us and you'll see how paths that might seem to meander actually do go forward.

As a broadcast engineer for KSL in Salt Lake City, he laid out and installed all the sound equipment for the first radio broadcasts from the Morman Tabernacle, no mean undertaking. Then to KEX in Portland, Oregon, and down the coast to Hollywood, about the time the motion picture moguls were turning to sound to lure customers back to their theatres. After working in several studios, he joined Universal Pictures and remained there in the sound department until he retired a few years ago. And the circle completed itself with Lyle Cain back in the railroad business.

I'm tempted to say that if you'll sound off about standard gauge to Lyle, you'll be rewarded by a veritable font of information about trains and accessories in the bigger small sizes.

# Southwestern Division No. 1 Toy Train Operating Society

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## TIME DATED MATERIAL



HELP T.T.O.S. GROW  
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We have two Divisions of T.T.O.S. in the San Francisco Bay Area. Our GOLDEN STATE DIVISION meets monthly in San Jose, under the very able leadership of Barbara Jones. Golden State is trying to expand and grow and is a fun club to attend. If you know of a train friend in the San Jose area, let them know that we have a division there and perhaps they will join T.T.O.S. and our Golden State Division. The other Division in the Bay area is the T.T.O.S. Cal-Neva Division that centers around Oakland California on the East Bay. Allan Strand is the new President of that Division and hopes to promote some good T.T.O.S. activity there. Although Cal-Neva has been established a long time, it hasn't had much activity in recent years. Let's do what we can to help Allan to give our division there a growth spurt. Tell your friends in Northern California that they should contact Allan for information.

The cable cars are funning and running again in San Francisco and they make a nice tourist side-trip along with the BART system and the underground municipal railway system. If you are in the Bay area, all three real rail activities are a must, plus you should plan to take in the meets of Golden-State and Cal-Neva Divisions of T.T.O.S.

We are aiming to have 5000 members in T.T.O.S. by the end of 1985 and to do so will take the work of all of us. Let's help by recruiting right now!

