A Tribute to “Wild Bill”

It was quite a shock to hear of the sudden and tragic demise of Bill Stearns back on April 3rd of this year from a horrific traffic accident. We had just received word of this on Thursday, April 29th from Southwestern layout team director Al Vierich, then learned later that Bill’s SUV ran off the road and crashed into a tree which, as per an official report, must have killed him almost instantly even after the steering wheel air bag had activated at the impact.

As long time former and current members of both TCA Western and TTOS Southwestern and Southern Pacific, we have known Bill longer than about 95% of anyone that’s still an active member of both clubs. To us, and no doubt a good number of others, Bill was one of the Club’s most unique members, both in appearance and character. We remember him back when TCA Western met on Friday evenings at Bateman Hall in Lynwood, southeast of downtown L.A., and at SWD Friday evening meets at the Arcadia Masonic Hall before the S.P. Division was formed, when he would stroll about, wearing his slightly flopped trainman’s cap and hawking raffle tickets. And may we add that he was quite brilliant, too, as he would almost always win the top raffle prizes whether or not he was one of the ticket sellers. And he definitely knew how to work the auctioning from the buyer’s end. When items would go upon the block, and when bidders would try, as anyone basically would, to “lowball,” Bill would hit it right off the bat by bidding what the item would generally be worth as if it was still on the dealer’s table. By the time anyone would perhaps come to the notion of what the item would actually cost, Bill would already have purchased it.

Another characteristic about him was when he ordered breakfast at the Arcadia Hall before the start of a Sunday Southwestern meet. He would have his eggs scrambled into the hash continued on page 2
In Memoriam: Mervey Lew (continued from page 1)

Mervyn’s life:


“Merv attended Manual Arts High School and graduated in 1946. He proudly served in the Army as a photojournalist during the Korean War and was honorably discharged in 1956. He went on to attend USC and received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Cinema in 1958. He began his career at the photo studio of George De Gennaro, but his true love was sports photography, so he went to work at USC as a sports photographer. After many years at USC, he worked for the photo department of Hughes Aircraft, where, after 11 years, he retired in 1989.

“He was an avid collector of model trains, especially Lionel, and model airplanes. He was the official photographer for the Toy Train Operating Society-Southwestern Division, a member of the Train Collectors Association, and a member of TTOS-Toy Train Operating Society-Southwestern Division. He looked forward to going to the monthly meetings. He loved all memorabilia related to railroad trains, especially steam locomotives, and W.W. II fighter airplanes.

“Photography was his life. Whenever there was a special event he was there with his camera ready to capture the moment for family, friends, and his train and airplane pals.”

Southwestern Division members and friends will miss Mervyn Lew.

Larry Pearson and Ron Tom

In Memoriam: Bill Stearns (continued from page 1)
browns. Perhaps nothing really new in culinary, but I (Larry) called it a “Bill Stearns.” From there, when I mentioned my order to the cook, he or she knew exactly what I wanted.

Bill definitely knew trains, especially “S”, “O” and large scale. He knew what the items were worth along with what was original and what wasn’t, the newest as well as the older stuff. At one of the meetings, Larry Pearson brought a Lionel locomotive to him that wasn’t working properly. He took it, looked it over as if he was trying to juggle it, then pointed out the problem immediately — and showed Larry how to get it corrected.

Last but not least, he was also quite a giving person—at least to us anyway. Furthermore, it was learned a long time ago that he was a descendant of the Stearns family from Long Beach where he lived. They, we believe, were pioneer developers from which Stearns Avenue, near the Cal State University campus on the city’s east side, was named after.

We will miss you, Bill, now having joined, in an untimely manner, the other train club greats in that eternal meeting hall beyond. Rest easy, ol’ buddy.

Larry and Phyllis Kirk
former Division Secretaries
Get Your Engines Ready for the Train Races and Demolition Derby at Cal-Stewart 2008

Classes for Train Races
1) Stock (Non-modified)
   A. Steam with brush type motors
   B. Steam with can type motors
   C. Diesel with single brush type motor
   D. Diesel with dual brush type motor
   E. Diesel with single can motor
   F. Diesel with dual can motor
   G. Pre-War Electric
2) Modified:
   A. Modified steam with brush motor
   B. Modified steam with can motor
   C. Modified diesel single motor
   D. Modified diesel dual motor
3) Unlimited Modified (Must be electric powered by track power)

Demo Derby
1. Plastic vs Plastic
2. Die Cast vs Die Cast

The Train Races and Demolition Derby are scheduled for Sunday only at Cal-Stewart 2007. Volunteers are needed to help. Please contact Jon Pincus, Chairman, 818-889-1005.

“The Toy Articulated Passenger Streamliners from the 1930s” is the Theme for the special 2008 Cal-Stewart Ralph Johnson Memorial Display

Contact Hollis Cotton for more information
818-781-4910

Southwestern Division Coming Events
August 9 — Picnic—See details on page 6
Arcadia Masonic Center, 50 W. Duarte Rd. 91007
Sellers & Members 10:30 a.m. — Free Parking
Cal-Stewart: Nov. 21-23 — see page 7

We have received word that the O-Gauge and S-Gauge LifeSavers® Cars are on their way! We anticipate shipment to all who ordered cars sometime in August 2008.
The April 2008 Meet

Top: The Trading Hall in April 2008

Mid: Engines on layouts

The April Drawing Winners with the Public Winner from the March Open House meet

All photos by Herb Mayer and used with permission
Sacramento, California
August 11-17, 2008

Be sure to sign up for the following activities

Monday, Aug. 11 – Skunk Train Tour
Tuesday, Aug. 12 – Western RR Museum, Jelly Belly Factory, Tractor & Truck Museum
Tuesday Aug. 12 – Sacramento River Dinner Train
Wednesday Aug. 13 - Grass Valley Layout Tours
Thursday Aug. 14 - Sierra Railroad Tour
Thursday Aug. 14 – Welcome Party and Silent Auction
Friday Aug. 15 – Home Layout Tours
Saturday Aug. 16 – The Banquet
Trading Hall Open Aug. 15-Aug 17; Open to Public Aug 17

DO NOT miss any of the fun and fellowship sign up today!

Pre-Register on or before July 31st with the National Office
See the Bulletin for details or call 626-574-7453
Visit the Website: www.ttos.org
Or Register in Person at the Convention
Come to the
Southwestern Division Summer Member Appreciation Party at the Live Steamers in Griffith Park

Trains Running for Viewing & Riding
Plus Operating G-Gauge Layout
Hamburgers & Hot Dogs with all the Trimmings, Chips, Sodas, etc.

For Dues Paid SWD Members & Family and specially invited guests!
Children must be supervised at all times!

— Reservations Required —
by August 4, 2008
So we can order sufficient food!
Saturday, August 9, 2008
11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Food Service stops at 1:30 p.m.
$5.00 per person
Children under 12 are free

Griffith Park Live Steamers
(on Zoo Drive, east of Travel Town)
Free Parking in lot at east end of Live Steamers

Please Note: No train sales at this social -- Park prohibits sales

RESERVATION FORM--Live Steamers SWD Social--Reservations by Aug. 4, 2008

Name______________________________TTOS #_____________________
__________ No. of Adults & Children 12 & Over @ $5.00 each $__________
__________ No. of Children Under 12 Free $__________
TOTAL $_________________________

Make your check payable to TTOS SWD and mail with your completed reservation form to:
Jim Pelling, 944 Pine Grove Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90042
Your tickets will be held at the gate. For answers to questions, please call Larry Pearson at (818) 848-2653.
Join Us for the 35th Cal-Stewart Meet—3 Days of Toy Train Excitement

Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Nov. 21, 22, 23, 2008
Pasadena Convention Center East Pavilion and Conference Center at the corner of Green & Euclid
300 East Green Street, Pasadena, CA 91101

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450+ Table Sales Saturday and Sunday featuring trains pre-1900 to present
including Standard, LGB, O, Lionel, Marx, American Flyer, MTH, HO, etc.

King Welcoming Cocktail & Dinner Party
Articulated Passenger Trains Display
Parts – Auctions – Raffles
Train Races and Demolition Derby
Operating Layouts – Manufacturers Displays
Boy Scouts RR Merit Badge – Marx Show & Tell
Contact: Bruce Lazarus (818) 225-1710
or visit www.cal-stewart.org or ttos-sw.org

Welcome New & Renewing Members

Glen Alley, Kenneth Beam, Robert M. Caplan,
Albert J. Vargas, Jacob Burns, Gary Gearhart,
Bruce W. Gripkey, Glynn Martin,
Thomas E. Mercher, Charles A. Schneider,
Mike Silveria, Robert D. Sims, Charles Licha,
Ron Hall, Butch Alvarado,
Ron Tom

Train Collections Purchased

Having been a member of TIOS Southwest since 1970, many of you know me, and the reputation of my store and my auctions. Should you get serious about selling your collection, please give me a call. I will buy your entire collection, and you will receive a fair price for each and every piece. Or, if you prefer, I will sell your collection at auction.

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