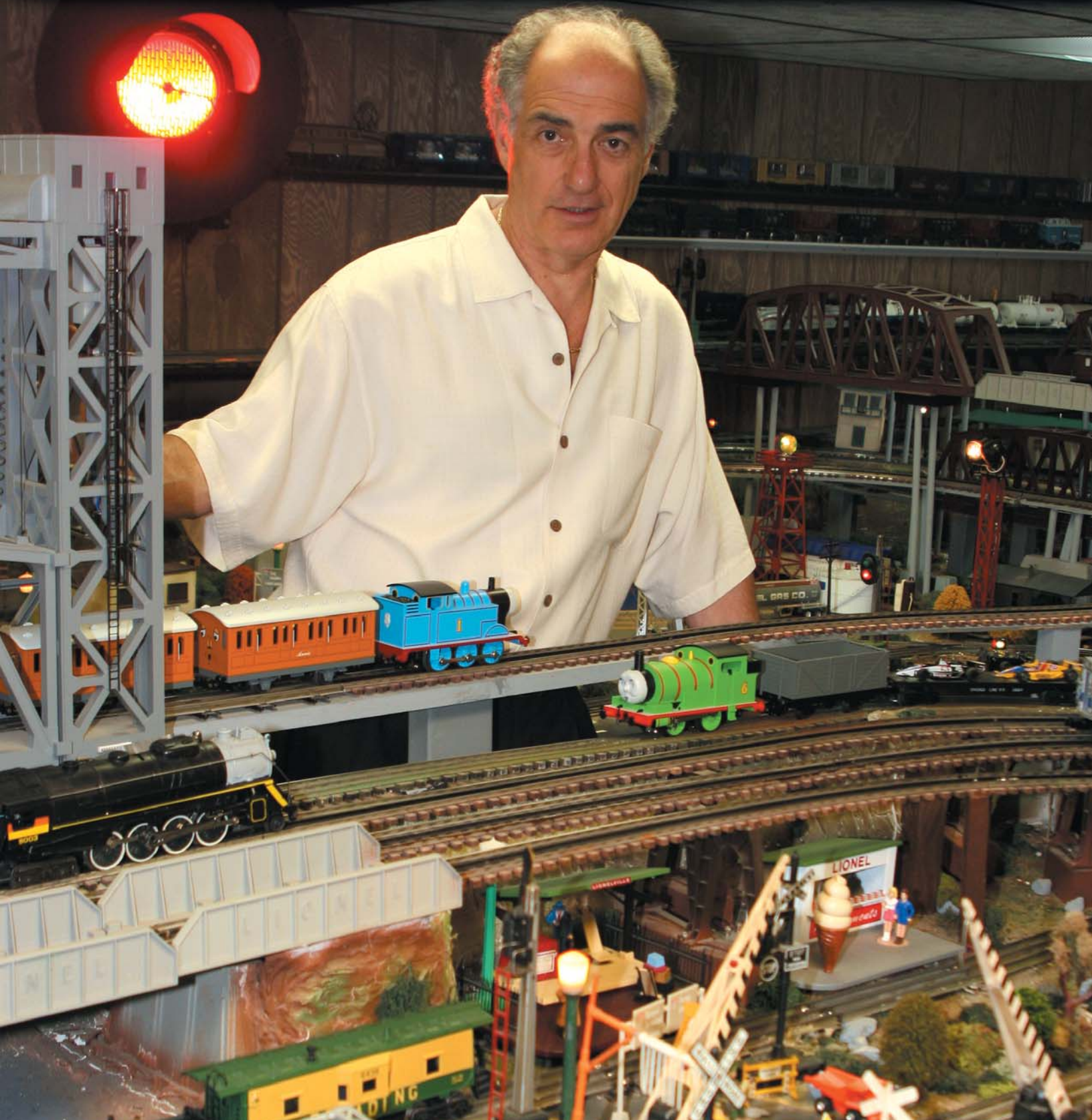


Volume 35, No. 5 June, 2006

# *The* **Lion Roars**



PUBLISHED BY THE LIONEL® COLLECTORS CLUB OF AMERICA IN FEBRUARY, APRIL, JUNE, OCTOBER, DECEMBER





# Get More Power

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Deadline is 6-30-06



Note: Figures not included

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This Union Pacific Auxiliary Power Car is the LCCA 2006 Annual Convention car. It is conceptually related to one of the highlights of our upcoming Convention in Denver – "The LCCA Special" excursion train trip with motive power from the UP Heritage Fleet.

"Power up!" with this unique car made by Lionel® and offered exclusively to club members.

The model will be a memento of the LCCA

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Prior to the 6-30-06 deadline, you can place your order at the club's website:

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If not online, mail this order form before June 30th. Delivery is scheduled in late 2006.

## ORDER FORM – LCCA 2006 Convention Car (UP Auxiliary Power Car)

Note: UPS will not deliver to a P.O. Box; a street address is required.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ LCCA # \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ St: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Check this box if any part of your address info is new. E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**ONE** LCCA 2006 Convention Car \$ 69.95

**TWO** LCCA 2006 Convention Cars \$ 139.90

### Shipping & Handling in cont. U.S. [no charge]

Members in AK, HI, & Foreign;  
add \$12 per car for extended S&H \$ \_\_\_\_\_

6.25% Sales Tax (for IL residents only);  
add \$4.37 per car \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

My check made payable to "LCCA" for the full amount  
is enclosed with "CC-0606" written on the memo line.

Bill my credit card for the full amount.

CC#: \_\_\_\_\_

Disc  MC  Visa Exp: \_\_\_\_\_

Verification Code: \_\_\_\_\_

(The last three digits at the signature panel on the back of your card.)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

I authorize LCCA to bill my account for this purchase.

Mail with payment to: LCCA Business Office • Dep't. CC-0606 • P.O. Box 479 • LaSalle, IL 61301-0479  
Or place your order online at: [www.lionelcollectors.org](http://www.lionelcollectors.org) – go to "MEMBERS ONLY" and open "LCCA Store."

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## ON THE COVER

**Stan – The Train Man – Roy has applied older-era technology to an innovative use on his automated toy train layout.**

*Photograph by Kurt Schmielau*

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Members can contact the Business Office through the club's website at [www.lionelcollectors.org](http://www.lionelcollectors.org), by e-mail at [lcca@cpointcc.com](mailto:lcca@cpointcc.com), by fax at 815-223-0791, or by mail at: LCCA Business Office, P.O. Box 479, LaSalle, IL 61301-0479.

They will provide or process **changes of address, changes of phone number**, "make good" copies of *The Lion Roars*, applications for membership, replacement membership cards, reinstatements, death notices, Convention registration, and orders for club collectibles.

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*President* - Always available and as a last resort  
*President Elect* - Schedule a train meet  
*Immediate Past President* - Complaint against another member  
*Secretary* - Any administrative action not handled by LCCA Business Office  
*Treasurer* - Club finances only

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# The President's Report

by Louis J. Caponi  
RM 8735

A few weeks ago, I returned from a LCCA Board meeting, and I'm pleased to report that our club continues to remain in great financial shape for the foreseeable future. We have not raised club dues for more than 15 years, yet the club has been able to absorb several postal rate increases, make a major financial commitment for an award-winning website, and invent e-track — the digital version of our Interchange Track. We also absorbed market increases in the cost of printing and paper for our publications; plus we adjusted to increasing clerical costs.

I also need to mention that none of your Board or appointed officials receives a salary. Imagine the increased cost if we paid salaries to these dedicated people?

We have been able to maintain a level of excellence and a sound financial footing not enjoyed by any other train club because LCCA prepares and members support our great annual club Conventions, purchase limited-edition unique Lionel® products as collectibles, and snap up great deals on selected items. Let's keep the momentum going!

## Speaking of Support

During our upcoming annual Convention in Denver, our friends at Lionel will be seeking volunteers from the LCCA to assist them with an exciting future project. Details will be disclosed at the Lionel Seminar on Friday of Convention week.

## Have You Read *OGR* Magazine?

I'm certain many of you subscribe to *Classic Toy Trains* and *O Gauge Railroading* magazines. In one of them, the June/July 2006 issue of *OGR*, there's a combination article/interview with Jerry Calabrese, President and CEO of Lionel. I have got to tell you folks, I read the article and this guy is not only going to get Lionel on track but also the entire hobby. If you don't have a copy of the magazine, go to your favorite hobby shop or newsstand and pick it up.

## Club Offers

By the time you read this we will be sold out of Lionel Esso Gas Stations. We do have a very limited supply of M&StL

Vulcan diesel switchers available, but they won't last long. Don't delay, order yours today! See page 25.



## Important Deadline: 6-30-06

Here's a friendly yet urgent reminder — the deadline for ordering the Union Pacific Auxiliary Power Car, our 2006 Convention car, is rapidly approaching. If you haven't ordered yours, please do so now. Lionel has asked us not to extend this deadline as we've sometimes done in the past. Factory production schedules are really tight this year.



## Boo Hoo!

If you missed ordering your Halloween General Add-on cars, you may already be sobbing, "Boo hoo." Almost everyone who ordered the original offer of the LCCA "Halloween" General set took advantage of this latest offering and completed their set. We will inform you of their expected delivery date in the next issue of *The Lion Roars*.



## Do You Hear That?

It's the sound of the UP Heritage Fleet steam crew firing up vintage locomotives for "The LCCA Special" train excursion from Denver to Cheyenne. I can hardly wait to ride the train and take advantage of all this Convention will offer, but also to see my friends and their smiling faces. This Convention is really going to be a hum-dinger.

On a serious note about this trip, it is extremely important that you not be late for the buses taking us from the host hotel to Denver Union Station for boarding the train. Do not drive your car to the station — there's no place to park. UP is on a very tight schedule, and we will not be able to wait for anyone for any reason! The railroad has made it perfectly clear that this train has a schedule to keep. Also, pay close attention to your assigned tour guide. Those of you who are joining us for this excursion will be receiving a letter of instruction to ensure that you have a safe, unforgettable trip.

To all of you traveling to Denver, please have a safe trip en route to the Mile High City. For all of you who are not going to be able to join us, think Chicago in 2007.

Happy Railroading ...



# At Trackside

## LCCA Members in Action

### Ringgold, Georgia (near Chattanooga, TN) Saturday, July 1, 2006

Host Bill Stitt (RM 259) and co-hosts George Baltz (RM 14094) and Ron Herman (RM 1761) will present the Chattanooga Area Train Show at The Catoosa Colonnade on Old Mill Road in collaboration with the LCCA at the beginning of the Fourth of July holiday. For registration information and table reservations, call: 423-894-1284, 423-842-6094, or 423-344-5799. There is no limit to the number of tables you can request. Tables cost \$13 each. To reserve tables in advance, contact Bill by mail: 9727 Shadow Valley Circle, Chattanooga, TN 37421. Make checks payable to "LCCA" with "Table Reservation" written on the memo line.

Dealer set-up and on-site registration will be from 8 to 9 a.m. that morning with club member trading from 9 to 10 a.m. The general public and guests will be welcome from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. closing. Members admitted free. Adult guests pay \$6 with children under 18 admitted free.

Directions to the site: From I-75 take exit 350 (5 miles south of the Tennessee state line), west on GA H-way 2 (Battlefield Parkway), go 1.6 miles, at third light west of I-75, turn right on Old Mill Road and go to the Catoosa Colonnade. This facility is in Georgia, but it's near the border with Tennessee.

### Denver, Colorado Friday & Saturday, July 28-29, 2006


The annual Train Show and Sale within the LCCA 2006 Convention in Denver will be open to members only on Friday evening of Convention week, from 6 to 9 p.m. On Saturday morning, the trading hall will open at 8 a.m. for



members only, then will be open to the public from 9 a.m. until closing at 3 p.m. Members will be admitted free, and the adult public will pay \$5 admission with children under 18 admitted free.

The capacity of the trading hall is about 150 tables, and each one will be loaded with Lionel and other goodies.

### Lexington, Kentucky Friday & Saturday, November 17-18, 2006

Because of scheduling conflicts at the facility, Harry Overtom (RM 1185) has announced that there will not be a spring 2006 train show in the Lexington area. However, the well-established fall train show will be held at the new location on November 17 & 18, 2006. It will follow the normal pattern: LCCA members will be admitted free on Friday night and Saturday, and the public will be admitted beginning at 9 a.m. on Saturday. To reserve tables, contact Bill Crace (RM 3066) at 859-299-2423. He is the sole contact for table reservations, so if you do not call him, you cannot be guaranteed a spot at this train show. 

*Photograph by Ed Richter*

## Toy Trunk Railroad

by Erik Sansom





# LCCA Board Minutes

Crown Plaza Chicago O'Hare – April 29, 2006

by Jerry Calkins  
RM 9418

## Call to Order

Immediate Past President Fogg called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m.

## Roll Call

Secretary Calkins called the roll. Officers present: President Caponi [delayed arrival]; Immediate Past President Fogg; President Elect Johnson; Treasurer DeVito; Secretary Calkins. Directors present: Black; Carter; Fisher; Ourso; Tribuzi. Guest present: *The Lion Roars* Editor Mottler.

## Approval of September 2005 Minutes

Director Fisher made a motion to approve the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting held in Denver on September 24, 2005; seconded by Director Ourso. The motion passed.

## 2006 Convention Update

Director Fisher and Immediate Past President Fogg reported that the arrangements for the 2006 Convention are progressing well. The 2006 Convention will be one of the largest LCCA events ever. The ticket sales for tours and other events are at record levels with many tours sold out. Having successfully fulfilled the number of room nights specified in the hotel contract, the host hotel voluntarily increased the number of rooms available to Convention-goers at the original negotiated price so that more LCCA members could take advantage of the special Convention rate.

Further discussion was held about The LCCA Special train excursion trip to Cheyenne. Specific instructions and information about The LCCA Special will be mailed to Tour #1 participants prior to the Convention.

Immediate Past President Fogg also stated that a waiting list for tours will be created so that as many members as possible can be accommodated. There are going to be a number of surprises for the participants especially at the social events. Lionel is planning a large public display in the lobby. Near the Lionel display, the Denver-based Youth in Model Railroading organization will display and operate two layouts for members and the public — a large modular layout and a small interactive layout.

## 2006 Convention Car and General Add-on Cars Update

President Caponi reported on the sales status for the 2006 Convention Car. To comply with production and shipping schedules, LCCA cannot extend the deadlines for ordering these limited-edition products made especially for club members by Lionel®. The expected shipping date remains late December 2006.

A draft of the design for the shipping carton for the General Add-on Cars has been received and reviewed. President Caponi reminded the Board that these cars will be the last of the additional cars for the General set and will be available only to members that previously purchased the original set.

## 2006/2007 Future Projects

Because of the success of the General Set, President Caponi presented ideas for future limited editions of unique products. These items will be unveiled for the first time at the 2006 Convention. Promotional ideas involving Lionel and *OGR* magazine were discussed. The emphasis of all of these projects was “enhancing membership value.”

## Approval – Slate of Candidates

President Caponi presented to the Board the report from Nominating Committee Chairman Kolis listing the slate of candidates for election. The candidates are: for Secretary, John (Bob) Carter; for Director [two positions available], Sal Gambino, David P. Miller, Jerry Calkins, John Ellingson.

A motion to accept the Nominating Committee's Report and the list of candidates was offered by Director Ourso and seconded by Director Black. The motion passed unanimously.

## Reports

### A. Immediate Past President

Immediate Past President Fogg reported on several complaints from members; all were in the process of being resolved. All of the complaints involved buy/sell problems resulting from interpretations of grading standards. Fogg reminded the Board that only complaints presented to him in writing are considered.

### B. Treasurer

Treasurer DeVito presented the Treasurer's Report. During the report, the LCCA investment philosophy was presented and discussed. As a result of the discussion, the Board adopted the following resolution as its investment policy:

Be it resolved: LCCA investments will be placed in conservative FDIC-insured CDs at varied banks, with staggered quarterly timing of maturities.

A motion to adopt the proposed resolution was made by Director Black and seconded by Director Fisher. The motion passed unanimously.

### C. The Lion Roars

TLR Editor Mottler discussed concepts implemented in the magazine during Volume 35 (the current year) including: encouraging kids to become Cub Reporters and recognizing kids who appear in the magazine with Celebrity Certificates. The mag now contains more layout-oriented articles of interest to both operators and collectors. There is a potential for creating an electronic archive of all TLR issues since the beginning of the publication.

President Caponi commended Editor Mottler for his work in promoting LCCA through various media. Two

awards were recently presented to LCCA by The Communicator Awards Competition for the promotional video for the St. Louis Convention. LCCA earned an Award of Distinction and an Honorable Mention. It was further noted that the LCCA website also won a Communicator Award two years ago under the direction of website Editor Tribuzi.

#### **D. Website Changes**

Editor Mottler led a discussion of the current status of the LCCA News Media Center concept approved at the last Board meeting. The club's website now includes a link that enables the LCCA to distribute Convention publicity materials directly to news media editors and reporters, including: photos in various digital formats, news releases, and news advisories. The utilization of these materials can be tracked for analysis of cost-effectiveness.

In order to continue the development of the LCCA website and take it to the next level, increased website support will be required for maintenance procedures [Level I], web hosting services [Level II], and HTML programming [Level III]. Because of the increased time and resources required to accomplish this, after much discussion, it was concluded that independent contractors who have the necessary capabilities could handle some, perhaps many, of these functions for improved turnaround time and at lower cost.

#### **E. Interchange Track**

Director Black reported on the status of the *Interchange Track*. He indicated that more members are using the *IT*. Everything seems to be working smoothly. The database is continuously updated with the help of Director Ourso. Feedback from the members indicates good acceptance to what has been done. It appears that many members list their items on *e-Track*. This underscores the importance of having both electronic and printed publications.

#### **F. Membership**

President Caponi led a discussion regarding membership development including recruitment, retention, support systems, and adding value for members. After much discussion of the topics, the Board created a Membership Committee. Director Tribuzi accepted the President's appointment as Chairman of this committee. Director Tribuzi presented the concept for an updated version of the LCCA membership card. These cards contain important pertinent information for both new and old members.

#### **Site Visit for 2007 Convention**

Director Fisher updated the Board on the status of the 2007 Convention. The Board meeting was adjourned for a brief period for a walk-around tour of the host facility [Crowne Plaza Hotel, Chicago O'Hare]. The floor layout of the hotel will be quite satisfactory for the Convention. Locations are convenient and well suited for LCCA activities. The large ballroom complex will be ideal for the trading hall and our social events. The Board was impressed with the facility and staff.

## **Discussion**

### **A. Future Club Leadership**

President Caponi led a discussion of how to develop new leadership for the LCCA. The discussion included qualifications, apprentice programs, special interest groups, special projects, and our Conventions.

It was also felt that an agenda item for the membership meeting to be held during the upcoming Convention could explore ideas along this line from members as well as answer questions that members might have. In addition, club activities and programs that need assistance could be identified so that interested individuals could learn about club service opportunities.

### **B. Convention Sites**

Director Fisher presented the current criteria applied when assessing possible sites for future Conventions. These include but are not limited to: hotels that can accommodate 1,200 club Convention-goers, offer reasonable room rates, be readily accessible by air, and provide space for all club activities under one roof. Club activities center on families and railroad themes. Membership demographics also play a large role in site selection. The site for the 2007 Convention is the Crowne Plaza Hotel Chicago O'Hare. Future sites under consideration included Reno, Nevada, and other sites in the east and Midwest.

### **C. Attracting New Members**

President Caponi led a discussion on attracting new members. Directors Black and Tribuzi suggested how to analyze information provided by members to the club's database. Possibilities include but are not be limited to tracking interest via hits on the club's website, on-line registration versus fax/mail, retention methods including effectiveness and frequency of reminder letters. The club will continue to emphasize that LCCA is for both operators and collectors and will promote "membership value" through limited-edition Lionel products and activities that demonstrate the value of belonging to the club.

### **Next Board Meeting**

The next Board meeting will be held on Sunday, July 23, 2006 at the 2006 Convention site.

### **Adjournment**

Director Ourso moved to adjourn, seconded by Director Tribuzi. The meeting adjourned at 4 p.m. 🚂

## **CALL FOR ARTICLES**

**TLR invites submissions to ongoing features like:**

**"My Pride & Joy"  
"Train Clubs in America"  
"Bright Ideas"**

**Contact the TLR Editor**

# Train Lovers Guide for a Family Vacation

by Erol Gurcan  
RM 26800

For this train hobbyist, family trips and vacations are more fun when they include toy trains or their large-as-life cousins. In late August last year, my wife, Laura, and I — along with our junior engineers Kristine (8) and Danielle (6) — took a train trip from our home in Pleasantville, New York, to New York City, a 30-mile trip.



Pleasantville is on the Harlem Line of the Metro-North Railroad, now a commuter line. Many years ago it was a part of the legendary New York Central Railroad. At the southern tip of this railroad is Grand Central Terminal, one of the most famous train stations in the world. It received a major

interior restoration several years ago, and the exterior of the building is currently being renovated.

## A Lesson in Marketing

We traveled by train and reached our ultimate destination at Rockefeller Center — the American Girl® Doll Store. It's better known to young girls as Heaven on Earth. We enjoyed riding the rails, and the high price of gas at that time made our choice of a mode of transportation to the heart of Manhattan easier to decide.

Visiting the AG store has nothing to do with Lionel® trains. However, even Joshua Lionel Cowen — considered a master marketer of his time — would have been impressed by the variety of their products, the glamour of their catalogs, and their ambitious, if overdone, promotions. Each overpriced doll has a built-in life story, wardrobe, and accessories. Some parents or grandparents would agree that AG dolls are more expensive to maintain than real children!

## Trains as a Focal Point for a Family Vacation

A few days later, we began our vacation to Strasburg, Pennsylvania, in Lancaster County — home for many Amish people. The area is better known among train hobbyists as “Mecca” because mega-scale train shows are held semi-annually at the fairgrounds in nearby York. LCCA members who may also be members of the Train Collectors of America (TCA) know the drill for these celebrations of toy trains —

and the accompanying hoopla and controlled chaos.

On our first day in the area, we visited the Choo Choo Barn. The building contains a 1,700-square-foot, multi-train layout with many animated scenes.

Both kids and adults who remain young at heart will enjoy walking the perimeter of this layout and watching the trains in action. To me, the fascinating elements of this layout are the many animated scenes with sound, lights, movement, and smoke.

Some of the scenes on the Choo Choo Barn layout were featured on the “I Love Toy Trains” video series. Lionel



*The circus scene at Choo Choo Barn*

reproduced some of the layout's accessories and offered them for sale in its 2004 and 2005 catalogs.

Later that day, the girls shopped at an outlet mall, and I headed to the nearby Toy Train Museum. It contained several operating layouts in various scales: Standard Gauge, O and HO gauges, and American Flyer (S gauge).

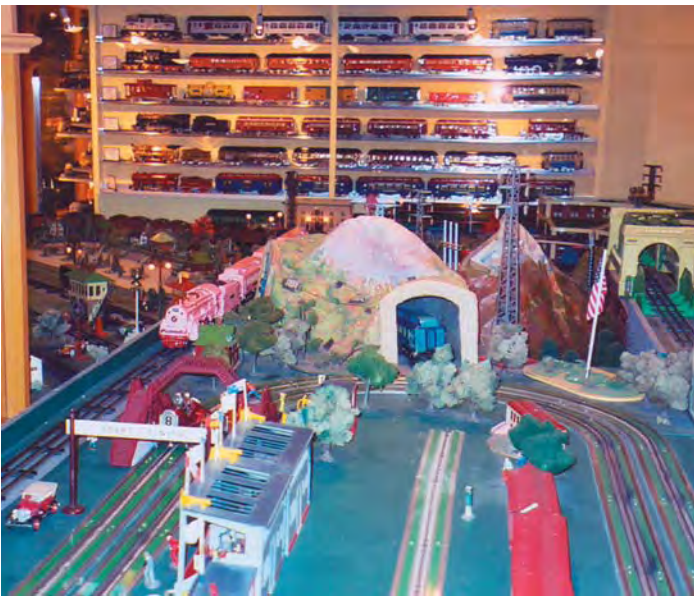
Visitors who press the activation buttons can start the trains, so kids should stay interested in the action for a while. The museum's main area includes dozens of train displays enclosed in glass cases, many of which are Lionel products. Toy-train-related videos run continuously in a small theatre. The facility also houses a large train-related reference library.

## Cabooses Galore

Located about a stone's throw from the museum is the Red Caboose Motel, a collection of real cabooses converted into motel rooms and set on rails. The cabooses are painted in the colors and emblems of many past and present railroads.

Two are named and decorated for famous enterprises: Lionel Lines (appropriately painted orange and blue) and LGB (a German manufacturer of G-gauge trains). Although





*One of several operating layouts in the museum*



*A portion of the operating layout at Dutch Wonderland*

we didn't register at this motel, we did go inside one of the cabooses to look around. Kids will like the bunk beds, but adults may find the interiors somewhat claustrophobic. At first, the girls wanted to stay there for the notoriety of it, but

cars for a ride from Strasburg to nearby Paradise and back. The a four-mile round trip feels like a time-travel adventure back to the 1890s.



Spread along the Lancaster County countryside and surrounded on both sides by farm fields, the track bed joins the present to the past. We saw Amish farmers plowing their fields with a well-disciplined team of draft horses, not John Deere farm equipment. The railroad maintenance and repair shop has restored several wooden boxcars.

The railroad offers a shop tour of its repair facility. The company maintains its own locos and performs contract work for other entities. This tour is for serious railroad buffs. If you decide to go, read the text on your ticket and notice the requirement to sign a release in favor of the

they changed their minds when we returned to our motel which included an indoor swimming pool.

On day two, we visited Dutch Wonderland, a family-friendly amusement park that your youngsters will probably enjoy as much as ours did. It offered typical amusement park rides, a water park, and a large tent-like structure with a big layout inside featuring Lionel trains. The layout isn't as elaborate as the one at the Choo Choo Barn, but it's still well worth seeing.

### **Riding the Rails**

On the third day, we boarded the Strasburg Railroad. It's described as America's oldest short-line railroad. With several operating steam locomotives on its roster, the railroad lashes-up steam locomotives to restored Pullman passenger







railroad in the event of accident or injury. They don't tell you it is a waiver, but lawyers like me tend to notice such things.

### **Pennsy Pride**

Directly across the street from the Strasburg Railroad is the Pennsylvania Railroad Museum. It features a large collection of older Pennsylvania Railroad locomotives and

passenger cars on static display in a very large, impressive space. There are more locos and passenger cars on display outside. Kids will enjoy climbing on some of the engines and passenger cars. The museum has a room with operating toy train layouts.

### **A Scheduling Tip**

I suggest families avoid vacationing in Strasburg during

the third weeks of April and October. That's when nearby York, Pennsylvania, is invaded by train enthusiasts. Although this train show is non-stop, manic fun, "the York Experience" can be overwhelming to timid souls. The local population of 5,000 residents suddenly swells to the bursting point when 30,000 toy train hobbyists show up. All the local motels will be filled, restaurants will be packed, and the fairground site of the show will be stuffed to capacity.

If you like trains big and small presented in a family-friendly atmosphere, consider a trip to Strasburg. It'll be a memory-making family vacation. 🚂



*We enjoyed a ride on a train pulled by a historic Cagney amusement park steam locomotive.*

*Photographs by  
Laura and Erol Gurcan*



# “Magic Box” in the Sky

by Peter Traversa  
RM 6835



(L to R) Train buddies George Morman and Peter Traversa loom over the layout near the wall-mounted rows of Christmas cars in his collection.

When I was six years old, I received my first train set, but it didn't last very long. It was a beautiful orange passenger train, but I don't remember the company that made it. When my parents put it on the track, started it rolling, and attempted to blow the whistle — it wouldn't blow. They took the train set back to the dealer for a check-up. That was the end of my first and brief toy train experience.

Many years later, my folks took me along to a train dealer and purchased a Lionel® set for me: a #671 locomotive with tender, an operating cattle car with corral, a coal ramp with an operating coal dump car, operating log dump car, operating ore dump car, operating milk car with platform, a mail car, crane car, and a caboose; along with a transformer and an operating track section. “Pretty good stuff,” I thought.

As an adult, I did a stint in the U.S. Navy, then found and married Mary and made a life for us and our family. At Christmas time, we set up a layout on a 4x8-foot sheet of plywood for the trains, but it came down after the holidays. As time passed, we forgot about it for several years; I was too busy working.

*The evolution of the “magic box” from start to finish ...*



Then a friend introduced me to an avid train collector. I was surprised and amazed when I saw his extensive collection of toy trains. His train room was 15x20 feet with a layout in the center area. It was filled with early tinplate and modern era trains. That's when I decided to add to my then-modest train collection.

It took all I made to support Mary and me and our family of eight kids. I did side jobs to earn additional money. I gave my wife Mary some and used some for buying trains. I read *Model Railroader* magazine and ordered what I wanted, but I directed shipments to the house of a friend to avoid calamity at home. Probably many other husbands — then and now — followed that admittedly circuitous path to collection-building.

I needed a place to run my trains — an out-of-the-way place at home. The only somewhat-available place was the patio. I built a 7x15-foot train table with three elevations, created some mountains, and added lots of accessories. It was a source of great fun for a few years.

When I went into business for myself, I didn't have much play time for my trains. Later on, Mary and I decided to build a large train room above the garage. We topped-off the garage with a second-story addition: a 22x22-foot box poised above the family cars. I wanted a large display area along the walls for my train cars, and I didn't want to give up all the wall space to an around-the-walls layout. The local building code required a certain amount of openings for light — usually provided by windows. My contractor built-in two large skylights which preserved the wall space



*Peter painted the sides of Gargraves track rust for realism. It's a curious counterpoint to the unrealistic (yet typical) spacing of buildings on a pack-it-all-in style of layout.*





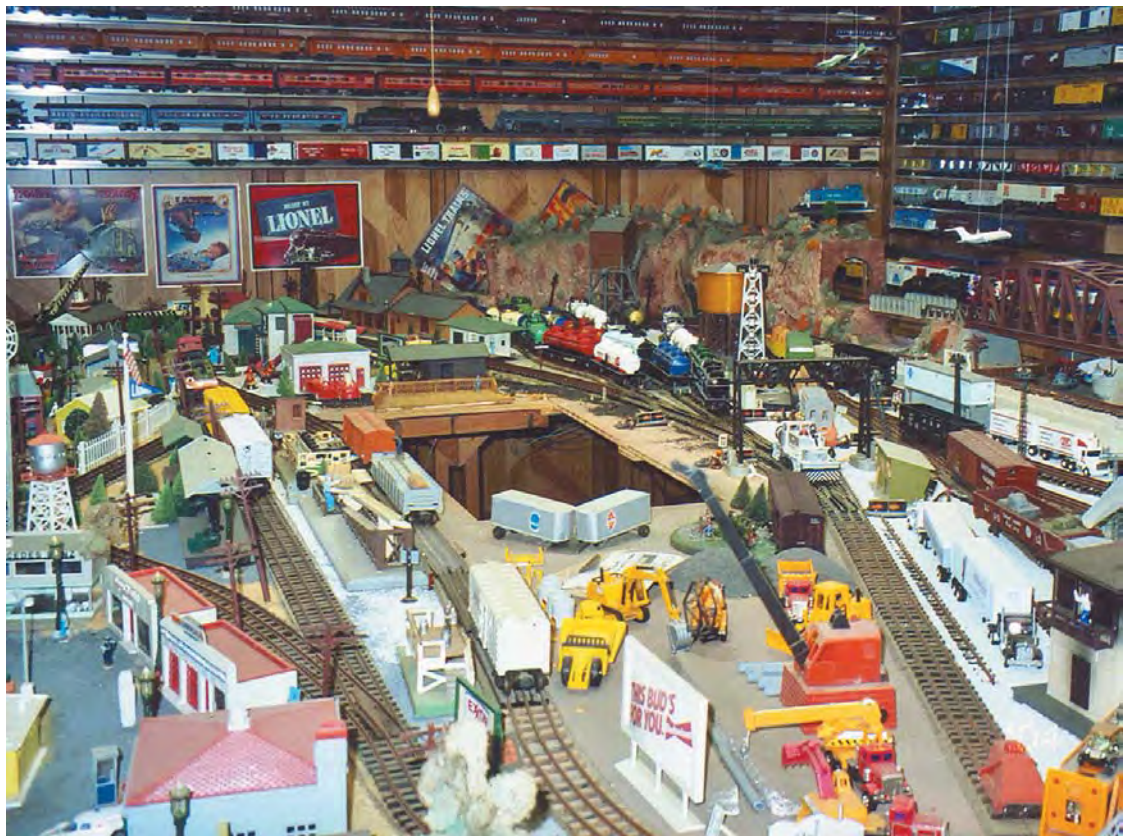
Rows of Generals, beer cars, and piggy backs are on display along this wall of the over-the-garage train room.



These shelves contain 9200, 9400, and 9700 series Lionel cars, but it's only a part of the total collection.

and met the requirement. I applied paneling to the walls for an attractive background and then installed Rail-Rax™ as “show and tell” platforms for my trains and cars.

We installed carpeting on the floor over a sound-deadening pad. Using masking tape, we temporarily laid out the track paths on the carpet and then transferred the final version of the track plan to the half-inch plywood table top. The roadbed and turnouts were three-rail Gargraves® products.



An access hatch enables Peter to comply with the “Arms Reach Rule.” A lake scene is the hatch cover.

I recently purchased all four sets of the Monopoly™ trains. They keep going up in value, so my kids may launch a spending spree by cashing them in after I've gone. Mary passed away five years ago, so I now invest my spare time in my “magic box.”

Visitors sometimes say, “Your layout is “tightly packed.” Yes, it is. But it's also packed with years of great memories. Trains and family and fun — that's a great combination. 🚂

*Photographs provided by Peter Traversa*





# A Guinness World Record with Toy Trains

by **Joe Glass RM 24204**  
and **Michael Smith RM 21988**

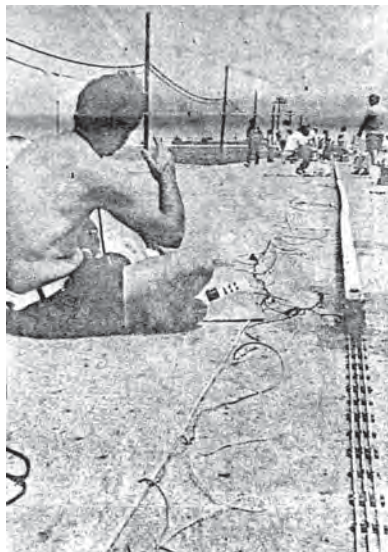
Nearly 26 years ago — on July 26, 1980 — Stewart Roberts and crew established the Guinness World Record for the longest model train ever operated using 750 cars, one caboose, and ten Lionel® engines.

A month earlier, they tried and failed to set the record. That would have ended the story for Lionel train enthusiasts. But fate smiled, and the dogged persistence of the organizer made possible the thrill of victory.

This article will give some background to the record, the cars made especially for and used in the attempt, and the variations that some hobbyists may find interesting and collectible.

This news article about the event was written shortly after the successful attempt. It is reprinted here courtesy of The Booster//SNP®1980.

In the children's story, it is the engine who chants "I think I can, I think I can." In real life, it was Stewart Roberts, 4931 Glen Burn Ave. who insisted that he and his troops could assemble and run the "World's Longest Electric Train." His pers



Photograph by Richard Clark, *The Ohio State Lantern*, 7/29/80

verance [sic] paid off a week and a half ago.

After a disappointing failure at Northland a month earlier, Roberts and his fellow model train enthusiasts broke the world record at Rickenbacker Air force Base on July 26. Ten engines pulled 750 cars for a new record. The July, 1978 record had been a train 501 cars long.

To prepare for their unsuccessful first attempt to break this record, Roberts and his fellow railroaders worked all night setting up a 2,000 foot loop which ran from Lazarus to Sears and back. In all 26 attempts, the cars derailed or uncoupled. Roberts told *The Booster* that the idea of earning a place in the *Guinness Book of Records* evolved from an idea he had when he went to see a film at Northland one night.

All the stores had closed, and when he, his wife and another couple saw the empty mall, they talked about how much fun it would be to set up trains and run them all night in that space. "The idea was to get over there and play trains," Roberts explained.

Later, determination to set a world record grew. Roberts said that when the first attempt failed, morale was low. "We were all pretty discouraged and downhearted." His wife, Marilyn, encouraged him to try again.

The aspiring record breakers decided that one cause of their failure had been the necessity of setting up the tracks in an oval which required the cars to negotiate curves.

They theorized that they would succeed if they could run the train on a straight track — a track set up on an air strip for example.

Roberts called Rickenbacker base to see if they could use an air strip. Instead, they were given permission to

## Other Train-related Records

### Most Model Railway Cars Made by One Person

The largest collection of model railway vehicles made by one person is the J.P. Richards Collection, now owned by the National Railway Museum in York, England. There are 610 models handmade to scale by James Peel Richards of the UK.

### Largest Number of O-gauge Layouts in Operation

Members of the Desert Division of TCA operated 111 Lionel® trains simultaneously for 8 minutes, 2 seconds at the Convention Center in Mesa, Arizona, at 11:45 a.m. on Friday, November 24, 2000, in celebration of Lionel's 100th anniversary (1900-2000). Of the 111 trains, 100 units represented the years when they were manufactured or cataloged along the time line of Lionel production. Eleven other trains — including an original motorized flatcar made by young Joshua Lionel Cohen — were also running on club modular layouts in the hall.

### Non-stop Duration for a Model Train

An electric toy train locomotive plus six coaches ran continuously for 864 hours, 30 minutes from June 1 to July 7, 1978, and covered the equivalent of 678 miles. The record was organized by Roy Catton at Pastimes Toy Store, Mexborough, SouthYorkshire, England.

### Longest Non-stop International Train Run

The cast and filmmakers of "The Da Vinci Code" on May 16, 2006, were on board the Eurostar train for a record-breaking trip from London to Cannes for the start of the Cannes Film Festival. An official from Guinness World Records certified the record-breaking run of 7 hours, 25 minutes, and confirmed the record distance of 1,421 km during a presentation at Cannes station after the train arrived.

### Another Attempt in the Works

Jim Barrett and partners at *O Gauge Railroading* magazine proposed an attempt to set a new record by pulling up to 1,000 O-gauge cars with locomotives interspersed throughout the consist on Gargraves™ track, powered by DCS™ technology, and brought up to speed by incremental adjustments of the DCS scale speed control. Unfortunately, at that time the DCS system was not capable of maintaining control of the scale speed of every locomotive. Jim suggested that modifications to the DCS system may make a future attempt possible — perhaps in two years or so. He indicated that many manufacturers have shown interest in the idea.

set up the tracks on a street on the base which would be closed to traffic during the attempt.

To be included in the record book, the electric train must run a distance equal to its own length. Roberts pointed out that the former record involved cars that were half as long as the cars used in the Columbus effort. He said that his group ran 50 percent more cars which were more than twice as long.

Roberts and the people he'd gathered to work on the project — engineers, lawyers, and other model railroaders — started setting up track at 7 a.m. on July 26. The tracks had been partially assembled before they were brought to the base.

The tracks were organized into insulated 60-foot sections, each with its own transporter [sic] and assigned operator. The train was organized so that there would never be more than one engine in one block at a time.

On their thirteenth attempt, they ran a train of 526 cars pulled by seven engines. That run broke the former record. The time was 2:40 p.m. They began adding engines and cars, and at 4:10 p.m., they ran a train of 750 boxcars and the caboose. Each engine pulled at least 75 cars.

Assembling the equipment for the attempt was an expensive proposition. Roberts estimates his "out of pocket" expenses to be \$10 to \$11 thousand dollars. He bought 1,000 cars from Lionel, and the transformers were provided by Troller Do [sic] of Chicago. Lionel also loaned the group several engines.

All the boxcars from the train have been stamped with "Guinness World's Longest Electric Train, Columbus, Ohio." Roberts is now selling the cars to model railroad buffs.

Model trains have been Roberts' hobby since he was a boy, but it is a safe bet that when he was building his train layouts in the house, neither, he nor his family predicted that someday he would be the chief engineer of "The World's Longest Electric Train."

*The Booster, 48th Year, Wednesday, August 6, 1980, No. 20 "World's Longest Electric Train Runs in Columbus" by Susan Jennings*

Another article written July 27, 1980, entitled "World Train Buffs Eye World Record" was published in *The Columbus Dispatch* newspaper. "...751 railroad cars and 10 engines on a lone track Saturday at Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base. ...Roberts, ... who organized the 12-hour effort, said the train was 670 feet long, and the track ran for almost 2,000 feet. Roberts had been planning the record-setting effort for 15 months. It was his second try at surpassing the 501 cars set in July 1978 by a New Jersey railroad club."

*Quoted in part with permission of the publisher*

Additional details of the motive power used to set the world record were provided in a four-part article in LCCA's magazine during the February-October 1981 issues, quoted in part below.

One of the most important aspects of the entire operation was to characterize the engines and power supplies that would be used. "We had decided that twin-motored diesels with Magnetraction™ would maximize our pulling power and minimize decoupling and derauling problems," says Roberts. "So we asked Lionel's Pete Sopenfield for a dozen new 8850 Penn Central GG-1s, and we begged, borrowed, or bought 20 new Fairbanks-Morse Trainmasters — mostly Chicago & Northwestern, with a few Southern Pacifics and Virginians."

With 525 boxcars (and one 9289 C&NW caboose) in line, the crew readied their sixth attempt of the day ... Finally it was over. The caboose passed the point where the lead engine had started. It was a new world's record of 526 cars! Backing the train up to its original position proved the most difficult job of the day! The crews started putting an extra 225 cars on the back end, along with three more engines. This time they included all the other road name boxcars as well as 580 of the B&O Sentinel boxcars.

The 10 engines used on this attempt were also later sent to PVP and stamped with "Guinness World Record" insignia.

*The Lion Roars, 1981*

*Greenberg's Guide to Lionel Trains, 1970-1991, Vol. II* states the following: PVP/NBT over stamped over one thousand 9400- and 9700-series Lionel boxcars for the event, which took place in 1980. Fortunately, the cars are merely over stamped with the Guinness train logo and not fully redecorated, so their original identity remains intact. The most frequently encountered car is the 9420 B&O Sentinel, of which more than 800 were made, but other cars were also stamped: 9400, 9402, 9405, 9413, 9414, 9415, 9416, 9420, 9739, 9754, 9768, 9770, 9775, 9782, 9783, 9784. Only 12 of each of the other boxcars exist with the over stamping. All bear the "506-1139" PVP number on them. Also stamped were about a dozen 8850 Penn Central GG-1 electrics and about 20 8056 C&NW Fairbanks-Morse Trainmaster diesels; plus a few other engines, and eventually several 9289 C&NW cabooses.

*Reprinted from Greenberg's Guide to Lionel Trains 1970-1991, Vol. II © 1991, Greenberg Publishing, Inc. Used with permission.*

A copy of a letter, in the possession of the authors, from Stewart Roberts to a fellow train collector gives more precise numbers on the quantities of each car used in the record-making event. The letter is dated 4-3-81 and signed Stew. The letter lists in table format the Lionel car number, railroad, number made, number then available for sale ("Left"), and the price Stew asked for the cars.

Car Number	Road	Made	Left	Price
9739	D&RGW	12	3	\$40
9754	NYC	12	3	\$40
9768	B&M	6	0	-
9770	NP	12	5	\$35
9782	Rock	6	0	-



9783	B&O	1	0	-
9784	SF	12	2	\$40
9400	Conrail	24	11	\$35
9402	Susquehanna	1	0	-
9405	Chattahoochee	24	14	\$35
9413	NJ	12	4	\$35
9414	Cotton Belt	24	6	\$35
9415	P&W	12	5	\$35
9416	MD&W	24	13	\$35
9420	B&O	840	?	\$30.

The engines and caboose stated in *Greenberg's Guide* will not be discussed here as no further information on these is available to the authors.

The authors have examined several of the boxcars. These cars have very interesting markings stamped on the frames, and one can find some interesting variations. Pleasant Valley Process/Newbraugh Brothers Toys (PVP/NBT) overstamped the cars. Different colors (black, white, red and yellow) were used on the side stamping to compliment the colors of the original cars. By overstamping the cars instead of redecorating them, their original identity was preserved. They also added their logo to the frame of the car in white.

Lionel's 9420 B&O Sentinel boxcars with "GUINNESS, World's Longest, Model Electric Train, June 29, 1980, Columbus, Ohio" were overstamped in red for the first attempt. 840 of these cars were made.



Note that date stamped on the side is for the first attempt.



At the first attempt at Northland Mall a yellow hand stamp reading "GUINNESS WORLD'S LONGEST MODEL ELECTRIC TRAIN JUNE 29, 1980 COLUMBUS, OHIO" in four lines was added to the frames

of some of the cars and is also found on some of the boxes.



Another date stamp was added to cars used in the second attempt "JUL 26 1980." All these additional markings were done in yellow with a hand stamp.

The box containing the "345" boxcar had a surprise with it. Copies of three newspaper articles (two quoted in this article) and an advertisement for Troller TAC 2001 transformers that were used to power the train were in the box. All have hand written notes by Stew Roberts. The one on the newspaper articles reads: "8-14-80, Dan, Your car shipped today via U.P.S. Thanks, Stew Roberts"

On the cars examined, we found a three-digit number also stamped on the frame. It is unknown when these numbers were applied and if they represent the position of the car in the train or were just used to number the cars after the event.

The 9420 B&O Sentinel boxcar with "632" stamped on its frame does not have the PVP/NBT marking on it. Its yellow stampings indicate the car was used in both attempts. The lack of the PVP/NBT marking may be unique. A car with no markings at all on the frame could exist, but with the lack of markings there would be no way to prove the frame to be original.

The 9420 B&O Sentinel boxcar with "464" stamped on its frame does not include the date of the second attempt. An interesting puzzle here; if the frame number "464" was applied after the second attempt, was this car missed when stamping the second date? Were some of the frame numbers applied at the first attempt? The answers may never be known.

The 9420 B&O Sentinel boxcar with "222" stamped on its frame does not show the date of the first attempt. This probably indicates the car was used only in the second attempt

There may be other combinations of the markings that the authors have not seen. Does a car exist with just the early four-line date stamp applied? Is there a car that just has the number stamped on the frame and no dates? Are there any other stamping combinations to be found?

The 9420 B&O Sentinel boxcars comprise the majority of the cars used in the two attempts. Therefore, one can expect to find the most frame stamping varieties on those cars. The other road names used in the attempt offer a chance for a colorful collection.



## Other cars in the consist of the record-setting train



9400 Conrail, 24 made



9416 Minnesota, Dakota & Western, 24 made



9414 Cotton Belt, 24 made



9770 Northern Pacific, 12 made



9415 P&WRR, 12 made



9784 Santa Fe, 12 made






Several interesting questions arise when comparing the total quantity of engines, boxcars, and cabooses that were stamped with the Guinness information.

*Greenberg's Guide* stated that about a dozen 8850 Penn Central GG-1 electrics, about twenty 8056 C&NW Fairbanks-Morse Trainmasters, and a few other engines were stamped for the event. *The Lion Roars* stated that a total of 10 engines used in the event were stamped. These two reports show a significant difference in total numbers, but regardless of how many actually were stamped, the number is quite low. Reports on the engines would be welcome by the authors.

Using the numbers from the letter signed by Stew, we know the actual quantity of each car number. This differs from the quantities mentioned in *Greenberg's Guide* but is believed to be more accurate data as it is an original document written by Stewart Roberts. The total quantity of boxcars prepared for the event was 1022. The actual quantity used in the record breaking attempt was 750 boxcars.

According to the article in *The Lion Roars* they included all the other road name boxcars as well as 580 of the B&O Sentinel boxcars. Let us look at these numbers. Excluding the B&O Sentinel cars there were a total of 182 boxcars. Adding the 580 B&O Sentinel cars to the 182 other cars gives a total of 762 boxcars — 12 more than the 750 reported as used in the train. Can anyone report a car that was not used in the final attempt (does not show the second date on bottom or just the PVP/NBT logo), especially a car other than the B&O Sentinel which we know 260 were not used?

Only one 9289 C&NW caboose was used in the record-setting train. *Greenberg's Guide* states several of these were eventually stamped. The authors have no further information on the cabooses.

The table below contains a list of the boxcars by number. The authors would like to hear from any readers about additional information on the engines, boxcars, cabooses, and any original letters or papers that they may have in their possession. 


Photographs by Michael D. Smith

### Freight Cars in the Consist of the Guinness World Record Columbus, OH – July 26, 1980

Car #	R.R.	Quantity Made	Box Stamped	PVP/NBT	June 29, 1980	Frame Number	July 26, 1980
6-9400	Conrail	24	No	Yes	No	245	Yes
6-9402	Susquehanna	1					
6-9405	Chattahoochee Industrial	24					
6-9413	Napierville Junction R'way	12					
6-9414	Cotton Belt	24	No	Yes	No	574	Yes
6-9415	Providence & Worcester	12	No	Yes	No	231	Yes
6-9415			No	Yes	No	236	Yes
6-9415			N/A	Yes	No	230	Yes
6-9416	MD&W	24	No	Yes	Yes	501	Yes
6-9420	B&O Sentinel	840	Yes	Yes	Yes	621	Yes
6-9420	"		Yes	Yes	Yes	364	Yes
6-9420	"		Yes	No	Yes	632	Yes
6-9420	"		No	Yes	No	No	No
6-9420	"		Yes	Yes	Yes	464	No
6-9420	"		No	Yes	No	222	Yes
6-9420	"		N/A	Yes	Yes	437	Yes
6-9420	"		Yes	Yes	Yes	345	Yes
6-9420	"		N/A	Yes	Yes	435	Yes
6-9420	"		N/A	Yes	Yes	475	Yes
6-9739	D&RGW	12	No	Yes	No	297	Yes
6-9754	NYC	12					
6-9768	B&M	6	N/A	Yes	No	207	Yes
6-9770	Northern Pacific	12	No	Yes	No	275	Yes
6-9782	The Rock	6					
6-9783	B&O Timesaver	1					
6-9784	ATSF	12	No	Yes	Yes	544	Yes
TOTAL	CARS MADE	1,022					

#### The Questions for the Lionel Puzzlement.

1. What is the spacing (gauge) of standard railroad tracks?
2. How can you identify the different kinds of steam locomotives?
3. What is a stock car?
4. What is the caboose?
5. What is a switcher?
6. What is a lounge car?
7. What is a Railway Post Office?
8. What is the right-of-way?

9. What is a freight yard?
10. Who controls or directs the movements of all the different trains?
11. Who are the men that walk along-side the train in the station looking under the cars?
12. What are semaphores?
13. Who invented the steam locomotive?
14. What is the longest railroad bridge in the United States?
15. Who was the first President of the United States to ride on a railroad train? 



# A Magnificent Obsession

**by Stan Roy RM  
8656**

*Editor's Note:  
Many train  
hobbyists welcome  
visitors to their  
home layouts,  
especially during  
the holidays. Stan  
Roy regularly opens  
his fully automated  
layout in the  
basement of his  
home to visitors and  
serves as a  
gracious, self-  
appointed  
ambassador for the  
train hobby.*

## **An Anti- collision Layout**

The first reaction of a visitor looking at the blur of motion on my layout might be, "Stan, look out! That train is going to crash into the Santa Fe!" But it doesn't; it stops just in time, allows the SF to pass, then continues on. My automated layout could support up to 32 trains running simultaneously without collisions. It's done — not with computers or "smoke and mirrors" — but by relays. That older, but still reliable, technology controls the toy trains in action — lots of action — on the layout.

## **Visitors Very Welcome**

One of my neighbors had a visitor in his home and somehow Lionel trains came up in the conversation. My neighbor said, "Why don't I take you across the street to Stan Roy's home layout?" The visitor asked, "THE Stan Roy lives across the street from you? Do you think he'd let us see his trains?" My neighbor called, and of course I welcomed them. I've had some weekends when six or seven



groups of people have come over, and I'm delighted by it.

A person who lived in the area walked into a local train store and mentioned to the owner that he had heard about my layout. He wanted to come and see the train layout. So, he called me from the store and I invited him to come on over.

One of the local train hobbyists called and told me that a child had written an article about me at school. "This eight-year-old considers you his idol, and all he wants is to come over to your house and see the trains," he said. I got the phone number of the youngster and

invited his entire family to drop by — mom and dad, aunts and uncles, grandparents, everybody. I was thrilled about that.

Over the years, busloads of school kids have visited the layout as a science project. For some, it was probably a few hours of "legal hooky," but they enjoyed seeing the trains. The teacher valiantly tried to focus their attention on the underlying science and technology of the layout.

My grandchildren are coming to the age when they can enjoy it too. Their response to the layout affirms my belief that interest in toy trains has never died. In fact, it's growing. The train hobby is a wholesome activity, and it helps keep kids away from crazed videos with extreme



violence and gory or oversexed television shows. The train hobby is a great way for youngsters to learn applied physics without telling them so.

### **American Flyer for Realism, Lionel for Automation**

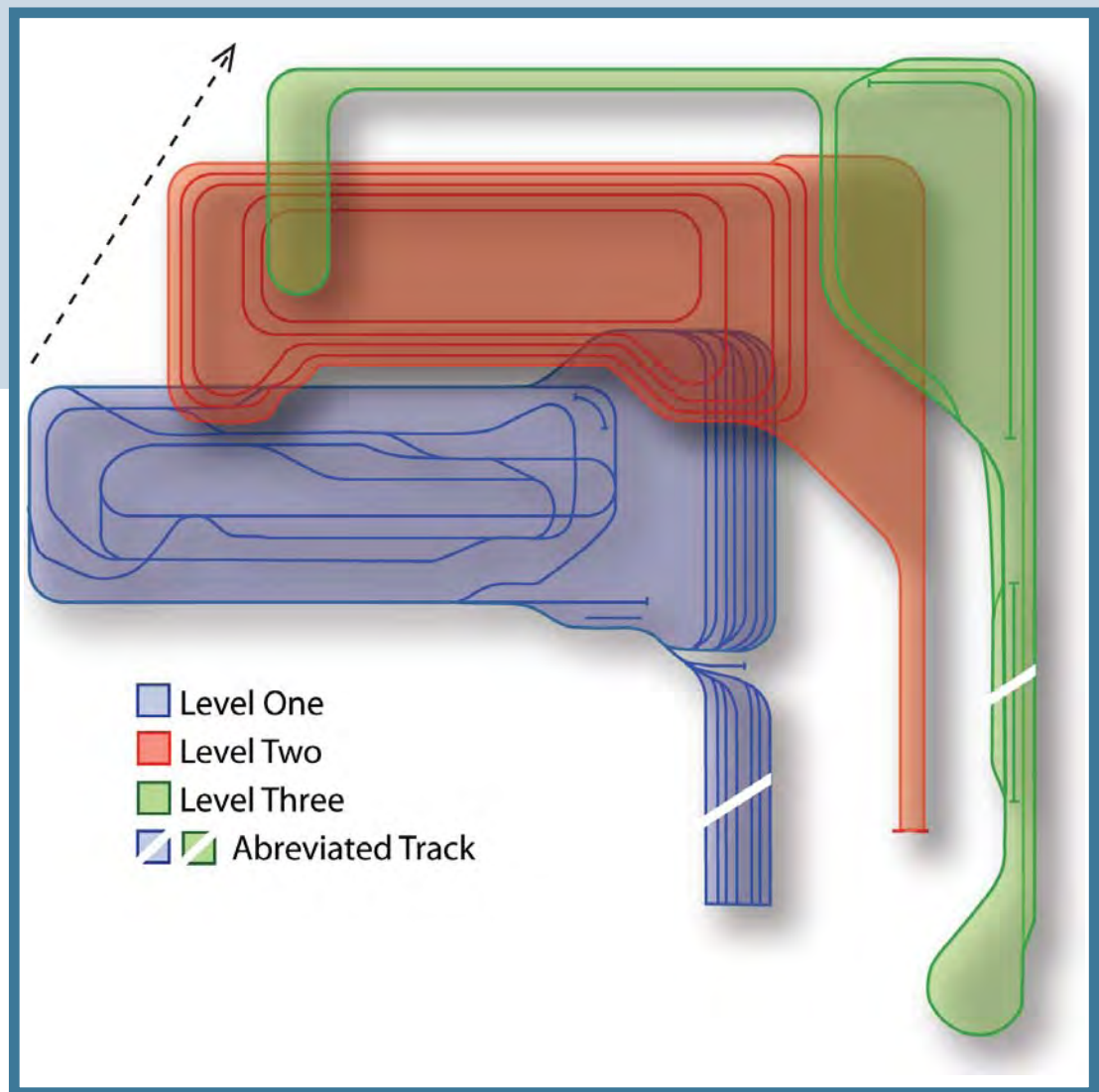
My first train was an American Flyer® set. My dad bought it for me when I was nine years old. Other friends at my school had electric trains too, and I went to see their train layouts. Everybody else had Lionel® trains. I was the only one that had American Flyer. The ongoing argument, then as now, was — “American Flyer is more realistic because it has two rails.”

I noticed when a Lionel train approached a switch the “wrong way,” the switch would turn automatically to the correct alignment and allow the train to pass without a derailment. I was fascinated by the fact that Lionel trains were more automatic than AF. That feature of three-rail trains stuck with me, and you’ll soon learn how that turned out.

### **Chasing Electrons**

I wasn’t proficient at anything in school. I have a twin sister, and she was always good at everything. I heard my teachers explain to my parents, “Stanley seems like he has a lot of capability, but he always looks out the window. He doesn’t pay attention, and he isn’t thinking.” I liked to take things apart to see how they worked. My dad was right, sometimes I couldn’t put them back together.

After high school, I wanted to pursue electronics. My first training in this field was for the Naval Air Reserve at Lakehurst Naval Air Station in New Jersey. I attended classes there and joined the service; then they sent me to Memphis, Tennessee to learn more about electronics.



Everything changed when I was in electronics school — I enjoyed it and realized I was good at it.

Later on, I attended RCA Electronics School in New York City and earned an Associate Degree in electronics. I was very interested in radio and television communications. I passed the test for a First Class FCC license and planned to seek a job in the broadcasting industry.

IBM held interviews for grads of the RCA school, and I accepted a job offer from IBM in the late 1960s. I stayed with the company for four or five years and became a technical specialist when computers were in their infancy. I learned how to fix key punch machines, card sorters, and verifiers — equipment considered dead as a dinosaur today. I became an expert in the field of relay logic circuits.

### **An Opportunity in Duplication**

I left IBM to pursue a career in radio and television broadcasting. I obtained a job interview at a company in downtown Chicago that wanted to enter the high-speed audio cassette duplication business. At that time, audio cassettes were an emerging idea; eight-track tape cartridges dominated the market. The company owners foresaw a trend in the music industry for audio cassettes and a need for high-speed, cassette-duplication facilities. They intended to build their own equipment.





I worked there for about eight months. The owners, even though they had all the money in the world, decided to get out of the business. The company had no sales, and they tried to find a buyer for the company. One day, they came to me and another employee and asked, “Why don’t you two guys buy the company?”

We had no money to invest, but the owners had friends in high places in the banking business. One banker listened to the business plan, offered a financing package, and presented more favorable terms to me and my fellow employee (who later became my partner) than the company owners envisioned. The rest is history. We built the company into one of the largest independently owned duplicator of audio cassettes in the world. At peak capacity, we made more than 120,000 audio cassettes a day.

### **From Electronics to Layout Fun**

At that time, I had an idea in mind — if I ever had the time and the money, I would apply my knowledge of relay logic circuitry and create an automated train layout — the biggest ever built. I still held a fascination with the circuit built-in to an O22 Lionel switch — making it “think” straight or curved to accommodate an oncoming train.

I did a lot of testing in that facility, ran tracks on the floor, ran two trains at each other, and made one stop for the other. I knew how to use insulated track sections that could become, in effect, a switch that could be used to energize a relay. I could make that relay do anything I wanted.

In electricity, there’s no such thing as a tie. One of two moving trains will activate a relay before the other. When the first relay is energized, it locks-out a complimentary relay so that track power to the other train will be interrupted. “Complimentary” means, the two relays are wired through each other. The train arriving at an insulated block first will activate its relay and prevent the second relay from energizing; avoiding a stalemate by shutting off track power to the other train approaching the same switch or crossing. Simultaneously, the power to the block behind each train is also cut off to ensure that a train stopped in a block will not be “rear ended” by a following train; also avoiding an accident. When the first train leaves the insulated block, that relay drops out; the second train receives track power and starts running again.

### **Running Good**

When I moved to this house, I made sure it had a large enough basement for a large train layout. I started the layout small, then it grew from Phase One to Two to Three — which is what one sees now. I just kept adding and adding. There were problems with continuous contact of the train wheels to the track. With relays, if contact is lost for even a fraction of a second, it will react. That’s all it takes to break a circuit and the next thing is — a train accident.

I came up with the idea of plating all the train wheels to provide better electrical contact between the trains and the rails. I sent thousands of wheel sets to a plating company, and they applied copper-flashed, nickel plating to them.





That really helped; it kept the relays from chattering — especially on the bottom level where the paths of the trains intersect at many crossings and switches.

### **Looking Good**

My brother-in-law, a design architect, has an eye for aesthetics. After I built Phase One of the layout and the trains were running on a plywood platform, he said, “This looks terrible. We need to put in a school yard here, a road over there, and an airport, and ....” Over a span of years, he designed the layout scenery and tunnels and everything. He slathered wallboard joint compound, not plaster, over stapled-in-place window screening to form the hills and tunnels. Then he spray painted it for a finished look. He had a knack for it.

### **Direct Current for Best Results**

Another electronic innovation was changing the output from the ZW transformers from AC to DC through regulated power supplies. I couldn’t regulate Alternating Current for driving a lot of engines, especially those with dual motors. In some cases, I ran 10 dual-motor engines, so the amperage draw was high.

Most Lionel trains will run on DC because they have universal motors inside; some are DC only. That’s why most of the tracks on the layout carry DC only. The trade-off is no Railsounds™ capability on levels one and two. With DC power constantly applied to the tracks, Railsounds would be “on” all the time. Level three, the topmost section and the last one built, has Railsounds capability because I installed a

large capacity, 30-pound AC transformer for that level. Although the trains don’t perform as well as those running on DC power on the lower two levels, I have Railsounds in that area for the 10 or 11 trains equipped with it.

### **Keeping Trains in Sync at Speed**

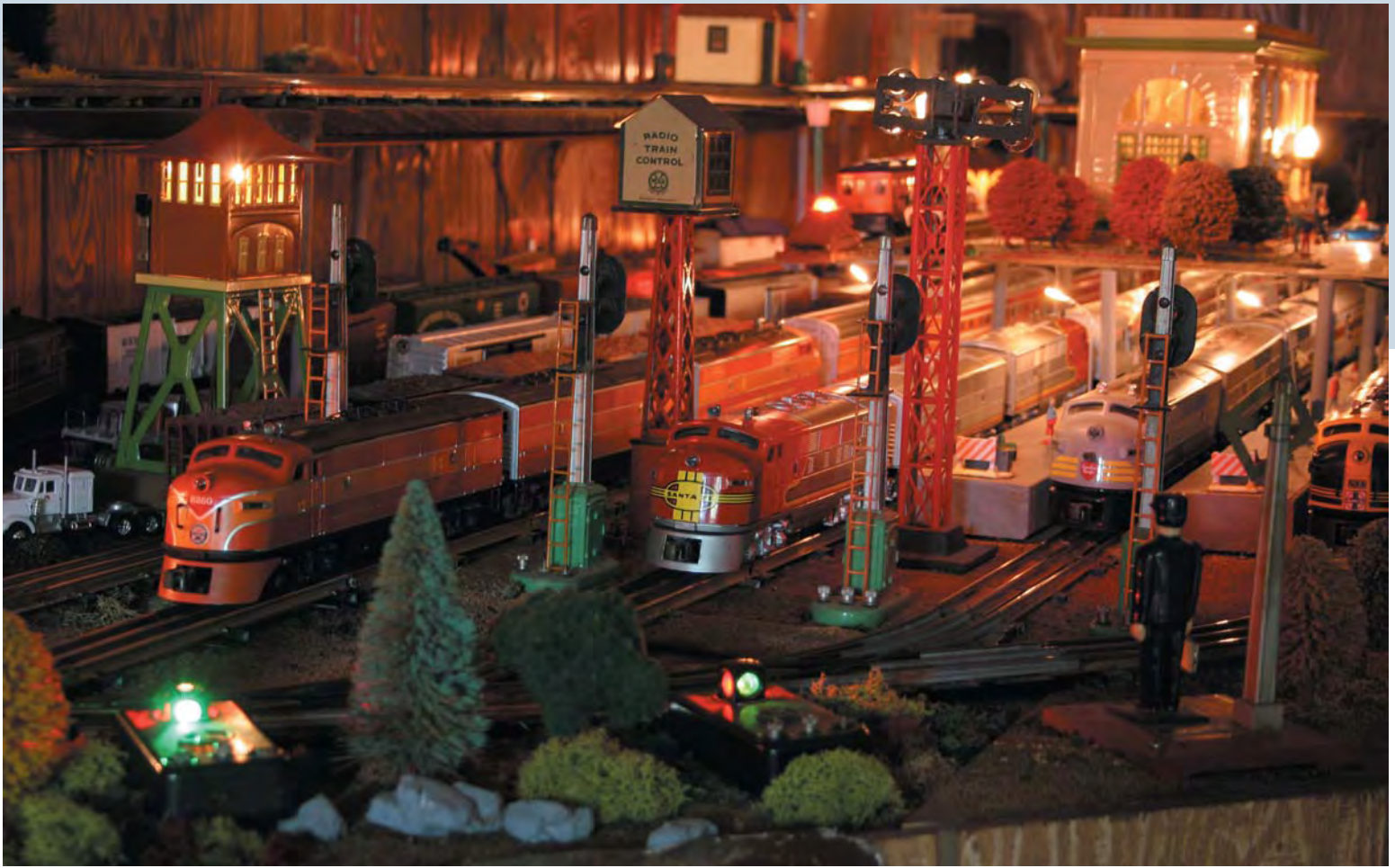
It’s difficult to get all the trains on one level to run at the same speed, but it’s necessary to keep them in relative position to each other through the blocks. Some engines, no matter what I do, run faster than others. Slower trains may need cleaning to improve performance. I made a spur track through the back wall into the shop, and I can run a train in there for routine maintenance.

Lionel’s TMCC™ system is useful technology, but it’s not practical for spacing and speed control of the trains on my layout. It’s a manually operated system, and I want the trains to do their own “thinking” for starting and stopping along the routes.

I also wanted the switches to automatically change the direction of routes so that trains approaching the entry to a switch would alternate directions with the first train going straight ahead, and the next train taking the curved path. This was complicated, and the problem drove me nuts. I couldn’t energize a relay to make that happen in a reliable manner, and I had nothing but derailment problems.

I came up with the idea of using a magnet on trains at the lower level and in certain other areas of the layout. I mounted a sensor at trackside, so that the magnet would





energize the sensor as it passed by. It's similar to the units in a home security system that sense motion when a door or window is opened. On the layout, the sensor activates a transistor; the transistor activates a sequence relay, which throws a switch in the opposite direction for the next train.

Through the pictures, some may notice that every freight train — but not passenger trains — has seven cars; that is, they're all the same length. The reason for this is, when I created the blocks I had to make sure the trains had sufficient space to stop as another train passed in front of it through a crossing or switch. That's why I don't run locomotives with flywheels — their slow-down time and stopping distance is longer, so accidents would be inevitable.

### Automated Passenger Service

The large train station is on level two; it's served by four tracks for arriving and departing trains. When a passenger train enters the station area, the block signals change color, the switches automatically change, and the arriving train comes to a stop on the correct track at the right place. Then another train automatically departs, follows the right course through a network of switches, and



*One of the trackside magnetic sensors*

enters the main line. This action is controlled by an old Seeburg juke box stepper relay. The cycle will repeat itself endlessly on all four tracks.

If I had it all to do over again, I'd make one modification — I wouldn't stop a train on a curve. Because there's so much power in the track, when a train starts up with a jolt, the cars have a tendency to topple over on a curve.

### The Right Stuff

My goal is to bring the joy of this great hobby to as many children as possible.

My four young grandchildren — who come to the house constantly to play with and run the trains for hours — inspired an idea for an automated, kid-friendly zone within my large layout.

When the grandchildren saw all the control buttons in front of them, of course they want to try them all — on and off and on and off — which started and stopped trains over and over and over. The next thing I know, there'd be an accident caused by their curiosity about "What does this button do, grandpa?"

Recently I built an area on the layout where the grandchildren — and all children three years and older — can operate and control trains, bridges, and accessories





simultaneously without fear of a collision. After I made this change, the trains, regardless of how fast they go, would not derail. I wired the bascule bridge for up-and-down action, and I also made sure that this bridge, when raised, would automatically stop an oncoming train so that it wouldn't plunge through the bridge opening to the floor below. It's a subtle feature, and they're still the engineer in charge.

### From a Hobby to a Business Venture

I'm obsessed with automation for train layouts. There are many layouts that have terrific scenery but rather simple track plans. I discovered that no one else has achieved what I have done with this one-of-a-kind layout. Yet I can't believe that I'm the only person in the world who understands how to apply relay circuit logic to the train hobby.

Now that I'm retired, I have the time and the energy for a train-related business venture — custom-building automated toy train layouts for clients young and old. Along with my son, I've already installed some layouts in the Chicago area for clients. These are relatively simple projects with two or three trains running on the same track with automated control. I also want to pre-package automation technology in kit form so that train operators can install pre-wired electronics at a crossing and command one train to stop for another, then resume course.

I received a call from a mom with a nine-year-old autistic child. Her son knew everything about me because he had practically memorized the *Great Train Layouts in*

*America* book by Tom McComas, which includes my layout. I gave the boy a copy of the video about my layout. His mom commissioned an automated train layout for him. When we installed it at his house, he constantly repeated, "What is your favorite train?" When I said, "I don't really remember," he came right back with the answer from the book: "You said it was the Southern Pacific Daylight." Customers are always right!

### The Future of the Hobby

I once worried about the "die-off factor" in the train hobby, and I've heard or overheard guys in my generation fret, "We're all going die off pretty soon and there won't be anyone interested in the hobby." Meanwhile, I've noticed that today's train dealers may sell 50 or 60 train sets at Christmas time. What is causing the current surge of interest in toy trains? I believe it obviously has something to do with *Thomas* and *The Polar Express*. I think the prophets of doom are completely wrong. The train hobby is even more terrific now than it was "way back when." 🚂

*Photographs by Kurt Schmielau*

*Note #1: Special thanks to the grandchildren: Noah (6), Brayden (4), Ethan (3), and Rylin (2)*

*Note #2: Questions about or interested in an automated layout? Stan Roy can be reached by e-mail at: [stanthetrainman@aol.com](mailto:stanthetrainman@aol.com). His new web site is: [www.stanthetrainman.com](http://www.stanthetrainman.com)*



# Train Clubs in America – A Continuing Series

## Youth in Model Railroading

by **Larry Price and Steve Dresser as told to Mike H Mottler RM 12394**

### A Convention Highlight

In a perfect case of good timing, LCCA 2006 Convention-goers will see what kids can do in the model train hobby with parental support and some sideline coaching. The result of the layout-building activity and craftsmanship will be on display and in operation during the Convention.

If you're thinking, "Kids can't do much on their own," drop by their large O-gauge modular layout and a smaller, O27-size, hands-on "Fun Time Layout" at the Convention host hotel. The kids will "talk shop" to onlookers, explain the idea for their module, and point out special features. You'll sense their pride of ownership, too.

### Not to Worry

Among thoughtful hobbyists, one can see the hand-wringing and overhear the fretting about the future of the train hobby. In train-maker executive offices, perhaps the level of anxiety is higher still. Yet the power of a simple idea — when magnified to a larger plan — can be invigorating to the hobby we love. YMR may well be such an idea. It's all about and for kids, yet parents are required to attend the monthly meetings and serve as helpers as needed.

Youth in Model Railroading (YMR) started in 1994 when Larry Price and his son, Kameron, wanted to get involved in some hobby together. They decided on model trains because Larry didn't have trains when he was a boy.

Dad and son got into the model train hobby together and attended an adult-level model train club in the area. Kameron went along to the sessions, but Larry noticed that his son was soon bored. For an 11-year-old,

the level of activities was too high to attain or enjoy.

Kameron also belonged to the Boy Scouts, and he and his dad worked on the railroading merit badge with six to eight other kids. He really enjoyed it, and the group wanted to continue with it. They set up a work space in the garage and met once a month. They soon decided to establish a club, and they called it Youth in Model Railroading. A local church offered space for the activity in 1996 and became one of the sponsors.

### A Club in Search of a Program

In the fall of that year, the club attended a Great American Train Show, displayed and operated a couple of small portable train layouts, and promoted the idea of a club. In January of '97, 13 boys showed up for a club meeting. No one had any idea what they were supposed to do because it was something totally new for all. Someone offered the idea, "We could build a modular layout and take it to train shows." That sounded like a lot of fun to the group, and that's what they did.

A friend who worked at a local building supply company knew about a pile of leftover plywood sheets. The company donated some lumber to the club, and the group put specs together for master patterns. They cut the plywood to size and made kits. In February, kids were building modular units, and in March the club went to their first train show. They set up two loops of track with six straight sections, three on each side of the loop, and half-circles at both ends so that a train would go and turn and return. Just two tracks, no scenery. But they had trains running, and the kids obviously loved it.

### Modular Layouts Everywhere

From that modest beginning, the YMR club has grown to 61 members in the Denver metro area. Members

### Dad and Sons and YMR

*When Robert Roy's two sons, Matthew (9) and Daniel (12), turned eight years old, the YMR club attracted them like Magnetraktion™ to tubular rail. They started going to the meetings, then joined the club. Robert had trains since he was a toddler. "I'm glad the 'toy train gene' was expressed through the DNA chain to my boys," he said.*

*Matthew has been a club member for about two years and has built an N-gauge modular section; it now resides at the clubhouse. In his first year with YMR, Matthew received a gift certificate from the club valid at Caboose Hobbies in downtown Denver in recognition for his earning the most club points that year. Quite an achievement for an eight-year-old boy!*

*Daniel has been a member of the club for about four years and is very active. Although dad helped Daniel build a modular section, the project was his son's idea, his design, his modular. "He did what he wanted with it," Rob said.*

*Daniel described his modular as "an end road that comes into a parking lot with a small pond. Beside that is a private airport which I originally intended for big planes, but big planes were too big. So it has private planes, like the Cessna. And then I put in a small dirt road across the tracks with a lot of grass. There's a flat area with some abandoned buildings by that road. The airport has a terminal building and hangers and planes; also cars on the road and three people, plus one dog."*

*Daniel has learned how to wire the track properly, how to balance the tracks for symmetry, and how to dress-up a module so that it looks right. There's art and creativity involved, and he enjoys that part of the train hobby. He is now in the Apprenticeship Program, and he's learning to do soldering and understanding more about electricity.*

*Rob explained that many parents come to the meeting not knowing anything about trains. He tells them, "You don't have to know. You'll learn it during the meetings along with your boy or girl. Best of all, you'll hear your kid say, 'I made this!'"*



## Kids and Trains in Action

The club presents mini train shows at local libraries. “We also go to the Children’s Hospital. We have the fire station, the gas station, the Lionel haunted house, the cattle corral, and the windmill. We’ve had several kids cry because their moms are trying to leave, but the kid doesn’t want to go,” Larry said.

Steve described the “pulling power” of the hobby with a story about the club’s annual sale in a local shopping mall. “Several years ago, a little boy showed up and kept his mom there basically all day. They started with the Fun Time Layout and ended up at the O-gauge layout. The kid was then about five years old.

Eventually, one of our older O-gauge members invited him to run the trains. Clearly, it was a real treat for him,” Steve said.

In the following year, the boy, Julian, and his mom dropped by the same mall. He and his mom were very enthusiastic. That youngster was impatiently waiting to be old enough (eight years old) to join the club and participate in activities.

Kids get involved with trains and the club through YMR appearances at area train shows and the Denver Scout Show. YMR distributes an informational flyer to passers-by,

have built a modular HO layout with 19 straight sections plus four corners. It’s about 45x30 feet. Then they constructed an N-scale modular layout that has since evolved into a second-generation plan.

Steve Dresser recalled, “We started the O-gauge layout in the fall of 2001. We first put it together and ran it at the All About Kids Expo in February 2002.

The O-gauge was the third modular layout, and the kids in the club learned a lot from the previous adventures with HO and N modular layouts.”

This kid-built O-gauge modular layout will be on display and in operation during the upcoming LCCA 2006 Convention in Denver. The photos accompanying this article are a “sneak peek” at some of its features.

### Fun Time Layout

The club’s O27 Fun Time layout is a 4x8-foot, low tabletop with some extensions added on. “We take it to train shows for little kids to use. We encourage the kids to push the buttons and operate it. A lot of kids come up to it, and when we invite them to play with the trains, they seem to recall cautionary words from dad or mom and say, ‘No, I’m not allowed to touch the trains.’ Most parents are surprised — but pleased — that their child is allowed to press the buttons and enjoy the trains.”

Larry added, “We also have kids involved with Lego trains. To set up all five club layouts, we need a third of a football field.”





and some react to advertising at Caboose Hobbies in downtown Denver. Steve added, “YMR is different from adult model railroad clubs that include kids in that the majority of our club parents were not interested in trains when they were children. The interest from kids pulls parents into the club and the hobby along with them.”

### Starting at Eight

Entry to the club is set at eight years old or older for a reason. Larry explained, “Even at eight, a two-and-a-half hour club activity meeting is a stretch; the attention span of youngsters is marginal. Dads and sons work on a project together; we require that one of their parents be there with them. We don’t want to become a babysitting service.”

Kids aged 13 to 16 can come to club meetings by themselves with written permission. Once kids turn 16, many are driving; so they can get to meetings by themselves.

During a recent monthly meeting, the kids in Tier One (beginners) built car kits donated to the club by Red Caboose®. Later on, they will enter the Apprenticeship Program and receive individual attention from adults that have model railroading skills. After that, the kids will be promoted to Tier Two, with training sessions led by Steve. “Those youngsters are now working on an N-scale layout donated to the club last fall,” he said. “When we finish it, we will donate it to Denver Children’s Hospital.”

The YMR age span goes from eight to 18. There are now a few kids nearing 18 and asking, “When we turn 18, will we be kicked out?” Good question, and Larry’s answer is, “Because you’ve been with us for years, we consider you Life Members. Come by when you can. If you want to help out, we can use your experience.”

Steve and his son, Alex, have been around the club since January, 1999. “I’ve seen how much it’s grown. Larry and I have lunch together just about every day, and I frequently comment to him that he created a monster. It’s awesome to see how many kids are involved, and it’s not



just boys. There are several girls in the club. In some cases, mothers — rather than dads — bring them to club meetings; grandparents also.”

### Still Growing – Going National

There’s now an active division of YMR in Lowell, Massachusetts. It started in September, 2005. That group started building modulares, and it has 12 straights and four corners. They went to their first train show the first Saturday of April, and that young club now has 23 kids. Larry and Steve have received inquiries about YMR from parents in other cities around the country.

Larry pointed out, “We want to make sure that a new division follows what we’ve put in place. It’s important that the kids be allowed to build and not be criticized about details, as, ‘Oh no, you shouldn’t place that tree there’ or ‘Be sure to put a ribbon on that.’ We want to let them do what they want to do.”

### Sponsors Are Enablers

YMR has recruited several sponsors to four levels of sponsorship: Steel Spike sponsors at \$500 per year, Bronze Spike sponsors at \$1,000 per year, and Gold Spike sponsors at \$2,500 per year. Platinum Spike sponsorship is \$5,000 per year — for now, an open category but entry-ready. My sense of it is, with the enthusiasm of Larry, Steve, the kids, and parents in YMR, they’ll soon attract attention from Platinum Spikers.

Larry said in closing, “I hear the talk about the average age of a model railroader today as 58, maybe 62. Whatever it is, in 20 or 30 years from now, if we don’t get kids involved in the train hobby, where will it be? We’ve got to do something for kids and keep them interested.” Steve chimed in, “The YMR program is a template for a positive path to the future of the hobby.” 🚂

*Photographs by Larry Price*

*For more information, visit: [www.YMR-online.org](http://www.YMR-online.org)*



# Mighty Mite

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PRICE**



*Note: Layout features not included*

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This special purchase from Lionel by LCCA for our members is a significant savings compared to the MSRP. Proof of delivery by signature is required, so the mailing address must be a residence. Quantities are limited, so don't miss out on this specially priced item!

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Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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My check made payable to "LCCA" for the full amount is enclosed with "M&StL" written on the memo line.

Bill my credit card account for the full amount.

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*Note: This order form may be photocopied.*



# Lionel News & Views

by **Bill Schmeelk**  
RM 6643

## FasTrack Crossing

The new FasTrack™ system by Lionel® has brought with it some very clever design features and — as we have seen in our recent discussion of the new Operating Track section — some “mystery” features designed for future technology. Such is also the case with Lionel’s new 6-12052 FasTrack Grade Crossing with Flashers. This new accessory features the easiest set-up in toy train history for a train activated, two signal crossing featuring both lights and sounds.

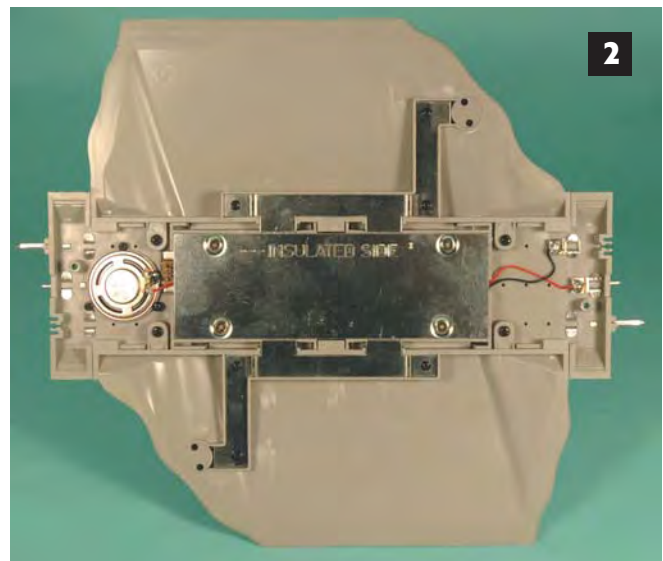
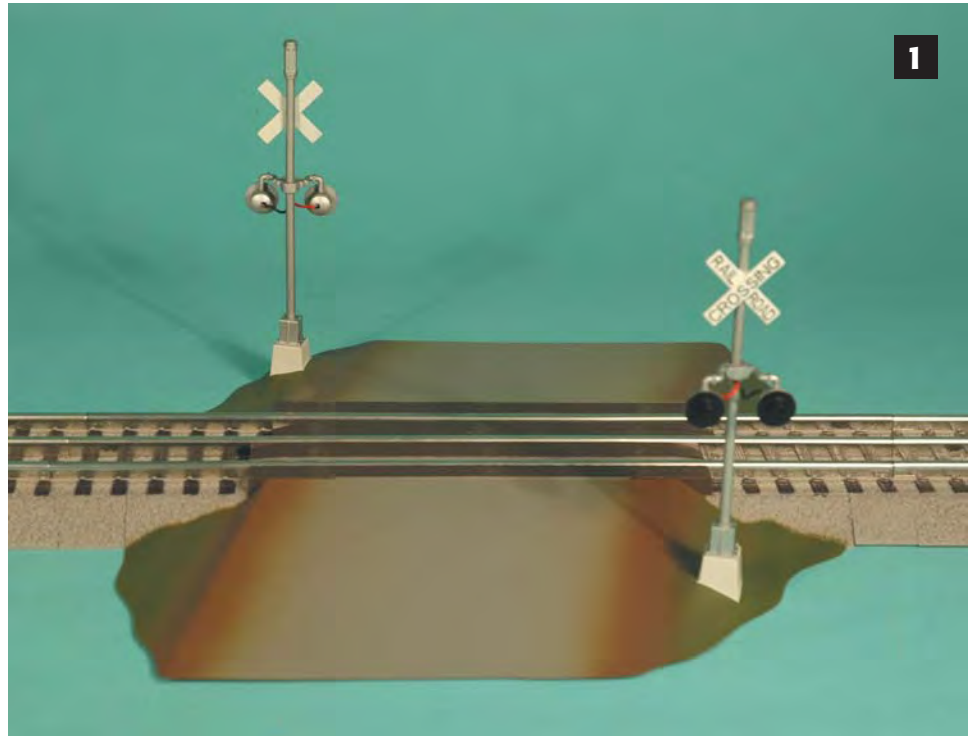
Lights and sounds are not new to Lionel. In the postwar era Lionel featured the No. 155 Ringing Signal which featured an operating bell. This accessory had a vibrator motor in its large base that mechanically struck a bell. As with Lionel’s other crossing signals, activation was generally through the use of a contactor which operated as the weight of the train passed over it.

As we discussed last issue, operation was also possible and more efficient through an insulated rail section.

*Editor’s Note: Unfortunately, the reference cited above contained an editorial error when rendered in the magazine. That text should have read: “On a normal section of traditional tubular track, the two outer rails are electrically connected through the metal ties, while the center rail is insulated from the ties through the use of an insulating paper installed between the center rail and the metal ties.” TLR regrets the error.*

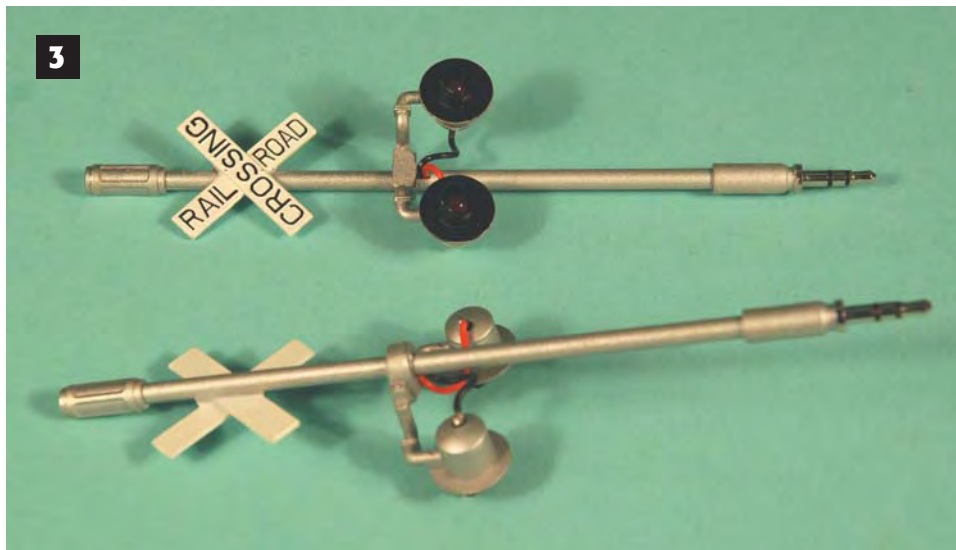
In this latest offering in its FasTrack line, Lionel has dumped the weight activation and designed the accessory specifically for insulated rail operation. Not only that, they’ve made its installation completely pain free. You simply snap the track sections in place and installation is complete. There are no wires to hook up and no contactor. Also unique is the fact that you receive two flashing signals — one for each side of the track — which is quite prototypical and gives motorists on each side an equal opportunity for a safe trip to their destination.

**Photo 1** shows the installed accessory. The two crossing signals are scale sized as opposed to the postwar giant signals. No wire is supplied with the accessory as none is needed. You are supplied with two Isolated Half-straight sections of FasTrack. As we discussed last issue, an Isolated Rail section has a small break in one outside rail. Isolated Rail sections are used instead of the insulating pins for O or O27 track. Installing the Grade Crossing is literally a snap. All you do is snap one Isolated Rail section on each end of the crossing and add the assembly to your layout. The Isolated Rail sections must be connected so that the cut rails



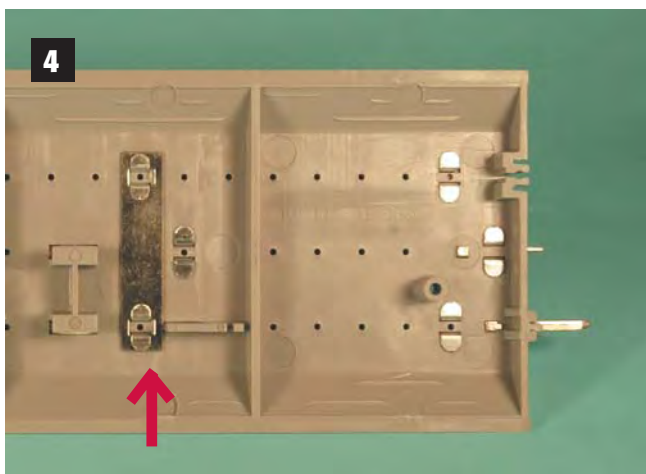
are both connected to the same rail on the crossing. The bottom of the accessory, shown in **photo 2**, indicates the correct side on which to place the cut rails.





When you first open the box, the two crossing signals need to be assembled to the Grade Crossing. First, two small plastic bases are snapped in place and then the signals snap into place. **Photo 3** shows the front and back of the signals. The signals are die-cast metal and connect to the grade with a banana-type jack. You simply press it into the base, and it snaps into place. Once in place, you can turn them in whatever direction is appropriate.

When added to your layout, this accessory takes its power from the track. In operation, as soon as a car or locomotive passes over the cut rail of an Isolated Rail section, the signals begin operation. In addition to seeing the blinking LEDs, you also hear the bell ringing. In this new version the bell sound is accomplished electronically. Operation continues for as long as there is a car between the two breaks of the Isolated Rail sections.

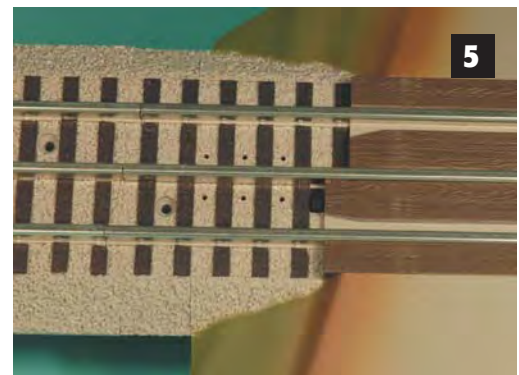


For more realistic operation, you might want to add more track sections between the two Isolated Rail sections. This would result in the signal starting operation while the train was further away. This is an easy adjustment to make; you can add as many sections BETWEEN the two Isolated Rail sections as you wish. HOWEVER, the additional sections must be Insulated Rail sections — those in which the two outside (ground) rails are NOT electrically

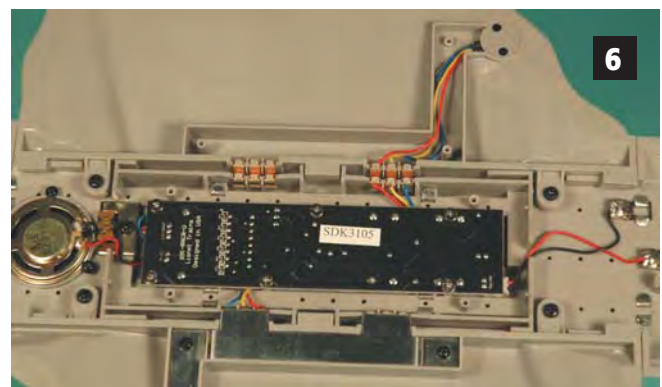
connected to each other. Lionel calls these 6-12027 Accessory Activator Extender sections. They retail for the same price as regular straight sections of FasTrack. But you can easily make your own from regular sections of track; just remove the metal plate underneath the track as shown in **photo 4**. Simply bend up the metal tabs securing the plate, remove it, and fold the rail tabs back in place. With that plate removed, you now have an Insulated Rail section. This method would also allow you to make an Insulated Rail section from a curved track as well.

**Photo 5** shows a close-up of the crossing and a small switch near the center rail. This switch can be used to turn off the bell sounds.

Notice also in **photo 5** the small holes in the track ballast. The speaker is located just under these holes.



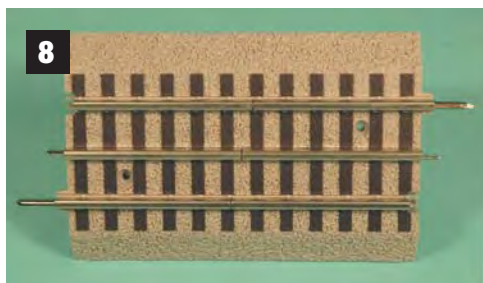
There is really no reason to disassemble this accessory. There's nothing inside that needs to be replaced or maintained. Of course there's always idle curiosity to satisfy, so let's open it up. Four small Phillips head screws allow the bottom center plate to be removed. Just under that plate is a piece of black insulating paper. **Photo 6** shows the circuit board inside. I also removed one of the metal plates covering the wires leading to the signal. It's interesting that the unit is designed so that the grade sections with the signal wires can be removed from the unit. Connections from the track part to



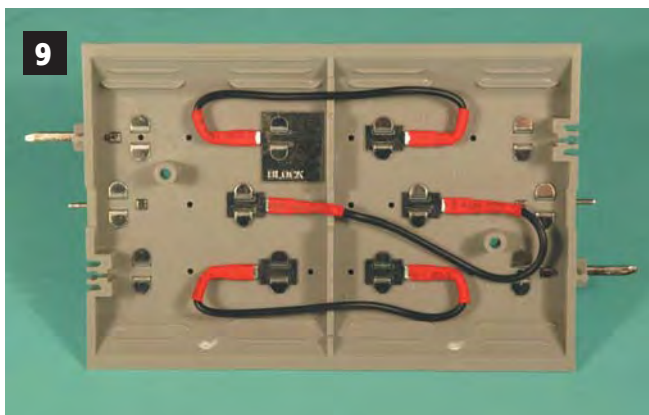


the signal are made with three phosphor bronze spring clips. **Photo 7** shows how the grade section can be disassembled from the track section.

At the beginning of this article I mentioned “mystery” features that are perhaps designed for some future use. Notice in **photo 7** there is an extra set of contacts. I wonder what they could be for. Perhaps Lionel is planning a version of this accessory that would also incorporate moving gates — just a guess. The more I see of Lionel’s new FasTrack, the more excited I get. It seems obvious that there are more new features awaiting us.



If you like this accessory but don’t want to tear up an existing O-gauge layout, you can add this



accessory to traditional Lionel tubular track by using two FasTrack O-Gauge Transition sections just outside of the Isolated Rail sections.

### More on Isolated Sections

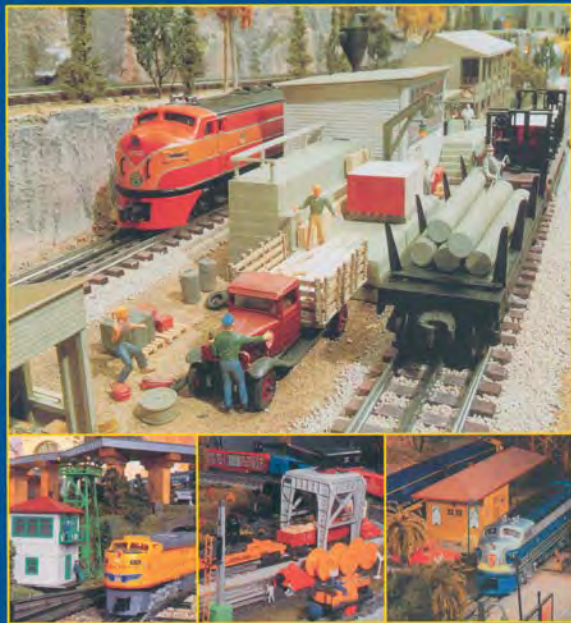
As we mentioned, the FasTrack Isolated Rail section has a break in an outside rail and replaces the need for fiber or nylon pins. What would you do however, if you had a situation where you might want to have a break in a different rail — perhaps the center rail as in a block section? You could make your own cut rail, but Lionel has provided an easier answer. **Photo 8** shows the 6-12060 Block Section. If you look carefully at the photo, you’ll see that this special half-straight section has a break in each of the three rails. **Photo 9** shows the underside. As pictured, this section of track would act like an ordinary section of track. Each of the three wires makes a connection across the break in the rail. Any or all of these wires can be easily removed or replaced. So if you had a wiring situation in which you wanted a break in the center rail, you would merely remove the center wire from underneath this section of track. In the same way you can isolate any or all of the rails as needed. If your layout required the use of insulated blocks, this section of track would accommodate that need.

### Two New Books

Operating tinsplate, high rail, or toy trains (whatever you want to call them to distinguish them from 1:48 scale model railroading), has in my opinion many advantages. We all know that three-rail track makes wiring a layout easier, but there are other aspects of toy train operation that add to its appeal. For me, one of the most important pluses is the operating accessories that have been offered through the years. In fact, back in 1979, an offer in *Model Railroading* revived my childhood interest in Lionel trains. The offer was for a Lionel Culvert Loader and Unloader in mint condition. I made that purchase and was on my way down



## LIONEL® ACCESSORIES at Work on Toy Train Layouts



Edited by Neil Besougloff

the road to Lionel collecting and then operating. Lionel's accessories always had appeal. On toy train layouts it's perfectly acceptable to have Lionelville employees of all different sizes and scales, carrying out all kinds of jobs. Operating accessories are something you just don't see that often on O-scale layouts. Yet these accessories provide great enjoyment for spectators viewing a layout. In fact they often get more comments than the trains themselves.

A new book from Kalmbach Publishing, *Lionel Accessories at Work on Toy Train Layouts* edited by Neil Besougloff, is devoted to the action that draws so much attention to our layouts. The large format book is a collection of articles from the pages of *Classic Toy Trains* magazine. The book is divided into five chapters, covering everything from moving coal, hauling lumber, handling freight, and installing yards and engine-servicing facilities or their modern alternatives.

The articles discuss many of Lionel's accessories and a few of those produced by American Flyer®. Some simply discuss the use of a particular accessory while others show in great detail how to maintain them and keep them in proper working order. For those who actually operate their accessories, there's some very useful information here including repair tips, wiring diagrams and exploded parts diagrams. Three of the articles discuss layout planning with accessory operation in mind and include detailed layout plans. The book has 80 pages and more than 140 photos and diagrams. The price is \$17.95. The book is available from your local hobby shop or direct from Kalmbach at [www.kalmbachbooks.com](http://www.kalmbachbooks.com).

## Warman's Lionel Train

FIELD GUIDE  
1945-1969



David Doyle

Values and Identification

Krause Publications is offering *Warman's Lionel Train Field Guide 1945-1969* by David Doyle. It is billed as "the take-it-with-you collecting resource." The book has 510 glossy pages and measures only 4-1/4 by 5-1/4 inches by 1-1/4-inches thick. The book is sort of a pocket version of David Doyle's *The Standard Catalog of Lionel Trains 1945-1969*, which we reviewed in an earlier issue. This smaller version lacks the detail of the larger book, but it's loaded with well over 550 color photos. In addition to the trains themselves, there are photos of consumer catalogs, advance catalogs, boxes, sets, and HO product. The book appears to have been designed to sell in the public marketplace as well. There's even a seven-page appendix evidently aimed at the uninformed masses with tips for cleaning and preparing trains for use.

The book is divided into chapters and closes with a numerical index that makes it easy to locate a particular item. Along with the listings are values for two to three different conditions ranging from very good to like new. Some listings have only excellent and like new. All but the HO items also have a scarcity rating from 1 to 10. The book retails for \$12.99 and is available at your local hobby store or direct from Krause by calling 800-258-0929.

The year's annual LCCA Convention looks to be a very special one. If you're there, please look me up. I always enjoy meeting members in person. Let me know your own experiences with Lionel trains. 🚂

Photographs by Bill Schmeelk

# The Tinplate Cannonball

by Ken Morgan  
RM 12231

## Big Trains in the Basement

In the previous installment, I let the standard-gauge genie out of its bottle, so I thought I'd continue with big trains for a while before getting back to O-gauge trains.

As an aside, I find the current popularity of big trains — LGB, G gauge, Gauge One, etc. — rather interesting. For many years the trend of the toy/model train industry was to make trains smaller in order to provide more railroad in a given space and address the realities of the real estate market; i.e., private homes proliferated but became smaller and thus more affordable. Now it seems that we are seeing bigger trains as well as the return of bigger homes, at least in some developed areas. Sometimes a small home is razed and replaced with what we refer to locally as a “McMansion.” I hope these new residents will allocate space for big train rooms!

I find that as I age, the smaller the train, the more difficult it is for me to work on it. An O-gauge train is definitely easier to repair and re-rail than its diminutive Z-gauge cousin. And as I speak with my fellow collectors/operators, I'm not alone in noticing this. It appears that there may be an additional driver behind the increasing popularity of bigger trains; seniors' big hands have less nimble fingers. Enough random musing; now on to the trivia question.

Diesel locos have been a fact of railroad life long before WWII, although Lionel didn't introduce them until after the war. Do you know which railroad introduced the first production diesel designed for road service (not just yard switching), and when it went into service? Follow-up question: what did they call it? As usual, the answer is at the end of this article.

Back to standard gauge. I bought my first standard-gauge train many years ago, and it was supposed to be my “only” standard-gauge item. I felt a true collector of Lionel

trains had to have one oldie — but only one. If that logic sounds familiar, perhaps my reminiscences about that train and its successors will bring back memories to some of you over the next few installments of “The Tinplate Cannonball.”

Long ago I learned to carefully select the collectors and dealers from whom I buy trains. Some collectors' concept of condition is closer to mine; so is their impression of how much a train may be worth. Most are very willing to share information, which is one of the great benefits of membership in a major train club. In the commercial world, developing a good relationship with a dealer or two can help reduce your cost, and occasionally land that special piece you've been looking for. Service after the sale often includes lots of advice and maintenance tips, and these may be at least as important as the sale itself.

Years ago I knew such a dealer across the bridges in NJ (I live on Long Island). Despite the highway tolls and the distance, I considered the extra time and expense well worth the visit. An interesting character and a true friend, he kept coming up with well-priced “old stuff” and new items from Lionel often in short supply; for example, the sometimes limited-production runs in the 1970s. After a number of purchases in O gauge, I finally decided that I just had to have one standard-gauge train. So I drove over the bridges and spoke to Gary. I was thinking about “one of those round-ended things” based on The Milwaukee Road bi-polars; aka, a #10 or #380. The #381 was neat but way out of bounds of my budget then. Still is, in fact! Gary said he'd see what he could find.

Soon afterwards, he let me know he had a set that I might like, so I went back to NJ. He was right. I took home a gray #10E, with a pair of olive passenger cars, a good-sized oval of standard gauge track with a pair of manual switches, enough track for a siding, a #77 crossing gate, a #101 bridge, a #1045 gateman, and a couple of lock-ons. For \$85 plus tolls and gas, I considered it a good haul. I was then a citizen of the standard-gauge world. **Photo 1** shows the loco and two cars. The colors didn't match, but they looked good together. The #1045 was featured long ago in a previous installment of “The Tinplate Cannonball” (*TLR*, December 2001), but you can see it, the bridge, and the crossing gate in **photo 2**. The lock-on for standard-gauge track was new to me. It's a universal lock-on — see **photo 3**. Depending upon which way you throw the lever when connecting it to the



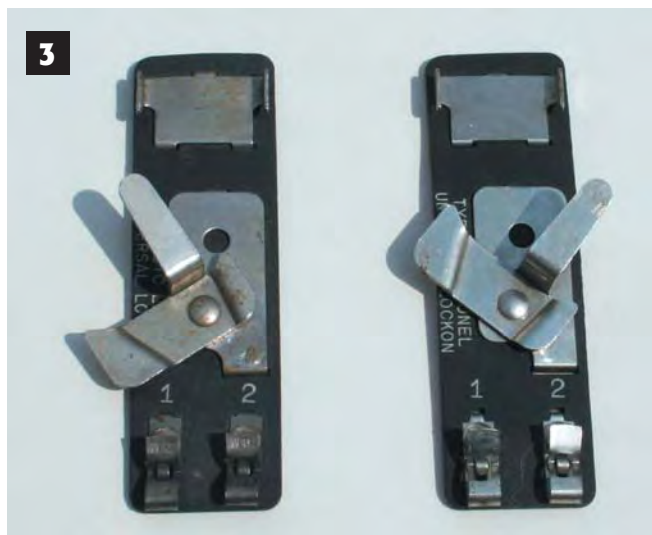




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track, it fits either O or standard gauge. Clever people, those Lionel engineers.

At the time I obtained this set — obviously long ago, as you can surmise from the price — I worked in mid-town Manhattan. There were a number of train shops there, notably on East 45th Street, in addition to the Lionel dealership and “Eastern Shrine” formerly located on East 23rd Street. I visited and purchased trains from all of them. After Carmen Webster sold the Model Railroad Equipment Corporation where I made most of my mid-town purchases, I became more familiar with the other two shops in the immediate neighborhood. Shortly after installing my standard-gauge treasure in the basement, I found a similar gray #10E in one of those shops; same color and essentially the same condition, give or take a minor scratch or two. I knew it would be more expensive than my first purchase, but I wanted to see just how much more. My conversation



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with the Shop Owner went like this ...

KM: “How much is that #10E in the display case?”

SO: “It’s expensive.”

KM: “Yeah, but how much?”

SO: “Too expensive for you.”

KM: “I know. Everything in here is too expensive for me. But tell me anyway.”

SO: “Way too expensive.”

KM: “Yeah, but how much is way too expensive?”

SO: “\$200.”

I agreed that he was right about “way too expensive.”



I went home smiling like Lewis Carroll's Cheshire Cat. I savored the price I previously paid for an entire standard-gauge railroad, and that experience reinforced my feelings about positive relationships with good dealers. By the way, that loco was still there in the same shop well over 20 years later. I never again asked how much it would cost. That brings up the thought, "What is it worth if it is never sold?" But that's his problem, not mine.

Since that standard-gauge bug first bit me, I have returned to NJ for standard-gauge trains and for their cousins, the O-gauge trains. Just like Lay's® potato chips, I can't have just one. So my next standard-gauge purchase was for a few freight cars, since everybody except Congress knows that railroad passenger revenue is not sufficient to cover costs. Pardon my politics, but I'm an AMTRAK true believer.

Well, those freight cars led to some interesting discoveries about how Lionel thought about trains, freights in particular, and why they made more freight cars; initially, a total of eight. Lionel apparently thought that the number eight was great for freight. More on that some other time.

**Photo 4** shows the answer to the trivia question. It's the Long Island Railroad #401 — the world's first production road switcher, as well as the first to book revenue on a long distance run; that is, if can accept the notion of "long distance" run on Long Island. She entered service in February, 1926, and according to several sources was apparently not well respected. Formally referred to as an



Photo provided courtesy of LIRR Archives

"oil-electric," she and her early diesel sisters were referred to as "stinkpots" — as if related in some way to Rodney Dangerfield.

If you'd like more information on this loco and some other very early diesels, go to [home.att.net/~Berliner-Ultrasonics/boxcabs1.html](http://home.att.net/~Berliner-Ultrasonics/boxcabs1.html). Although not much for appearance, they changed the railroad landscape and, eventually, the Lionel catalogs — after styling and colors were introduced.

See you in Denver! 🚂

Photographs by Ken Morgan

## A Nifty Club Collectible

Regular LCCA Convention-goers know and love the Convention Collector Cards presented as the "Stars of the Show" of each Get Acquainted Party held during the Conventions of the past four years. If you were unable to attend our last four annual Conventions, you may now acquire the complete set. There is an extremely limited number of each set remaining (Series One being the rarest), and this will be your last opportunity to obtain all four sets in NEW condition with the original envelopes. As a bonus, one uncut sheet from the series (our choice) will be included with this offer.

Each set contains 12 colorful cards showing Lionel® products from yesteryear. When assembled in correct order, the back side of all the cards in a set reveals a vintage Lionel scene from the 1940s and 50s. These will be offered on a strict first come, first served basis. Your funds will be returned if the supply is exhausted.

To order a packet containing all four sets of Convention Collector Cards and a rare uncut sheet of one of them, send \$75 per packet to:

Convention Collector Cards  
c/o John Fisher  
1730 James Road  
St. Paul, MN 51118.

Make your check or money order payable to "LCCA," with "Collector Cards" written on the memo line. Sorry, credit card orders cannot be used for this particular purchase.




2005 set uncut



# A Lionel Puzzlement

by Gene H. Russell, Ed.D.  
RM 24608

In the mid 1950s, the Association of American Railroads published a small 3 1/2" by 6 1/8" booklet titled QUIZ Jr. Inside were 100 railroad questions and answers for young people. The "Question & Answer" format is a familiar one. Therefore, see if you can create the correct Questions to match with the Answers that are provided. Enjoy. 

## The Answers

- 1. 4 feet, 8 1/2 inches.**
- 2. By the wheel arrangement.**
- 3. Cars with side walls made of slats.**
- 4. Home of the train crew while they are on the road.**
- 5. Moves cars about in yards or terminals.**
- 6. The "living room" of the train.**
- 7. A specially built and equipped car for handling mail.**
- 8. The strip of land upon which the railroad is built.**
- 9. Groups or sets of tracks, connected by switches.**
- 10. The train dispatcher.**
- 11. Car inspectors, sometimes referred to in railroad language as "car knockers."**
- 12. Signals with movable blades or arms.**
- 13. Richard Trevithick, in England in 1804.**
- 14. The Lucin Cut-off across the Great Salt Lake in Utah.**
- 15. Andrew Jackson.**

Questions to these answers are published in *TLR* somewhere.



RADIO  
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