

NEWS RELEASE #1 (Revised 6-01-11)

For Release at your Discretion

FM: Lionel® Collectors Club of America
RE: LCCA Convention in Dallas/Grapevine, TX
Event Location: Hyatt Regency DFW (at the Airport)
Dates of the Event: July 25-30, 2011
Club Website: www.lionelcollectors.org (refer to NEWS & INFO icon on the main page for news releases and hi-res photos)

NOTE TO EDITORS AND REPORTERS

The public is invited to designated events within the convention schedule as shown below with **yellow highlighting**. Visitors may join the club at the host hotel, register for the convention, and participate immediately in all club-sponsored activities.

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Train Hobbyists Consider Texas a Great Destination

(Dallas/Grapevine, TX) Tourists to the Lone Star State offer many reasons for coming to Texas, but members of the Lionel Collectors Club of America (LCCA) will visit the Dallas area for fun with actual and model trains.

Club members and their families will travel here to enjoy their week-long convention and celebrate with other train aficionados what they consider the world's greatest hobby. The event will be held at the Hyatt Regency DFW at the airport during July 25-30, 2011.

A spirit of youthful adventure energizes mature collectors who still love to play with Lionel trains. Many hobbyists fondly recall the memories with Lionel and other trains and some still own their prized toys from the 1940s and '50s when they were kids. Although dominated by men and boys, some women and girls also participate in the hobby. In the last 1950s, Lionel produced a "Girl's Train" especially for them.

The Lionel brand is a well-established American business icon. Founded in 1900, by Joshua Lionel Cowen, the company continued to make trains during the Great Depression and World War II and to the present day. Because of the reservation of metals for the war effort in the 1940s, Lionel made a "paper train" for youngsters and applied its manufacturing expertise to military-related products for use during wartime.

Today's models by Lionel include classic steam behemoths and early diesel trains of yesteryear, and many have contemporary high-tech features: digital sound effects, wireless control, and amazing details. Today's Lionel line includes contemporary diesel and electric model trains, even enviro-friendly, fuel-efficient models such as the GenSet diesel locomotive and the high-speed Acela in daily Amtrak service in the NE corridor.

A Fabulous Attraction

Two major model train attractions will be open to the public without charge Wednesday morning through Saturday afternoon of convention week in the atrium of the host hotel. This fully scenicked layout sponsored by Lionel LLC is as big as a four-stall garage. With mountains, bridges, tunnels, an elevated line, and a subway, this "Gee Whiz!" layout was custom built for Lionel by T W Design of Dallas, Texas. Attendants will show children how to blow the whistles or horns of the trains in action.

The Train Show

Convention-goers and the train-loving public in the area will be welcome at the Train Show on Saturday, July 30, in the host hotel. The Trading Hall will contain about 150 tables filled with model trains, parts, and hobby accessories for sale, including hard-to-find items. Many hobbyists bring their "Want List" to the Trading Hall with the hope of finding an item they've been searching for, perhaps for years. Kids under age 18 will be admitted to the Train Show free if accompanied by an adult paying \$5 admission.

Destination Dallas

The LCCA selected Dallas for the club's 41th anniversary event because it's a region with a great railroad heritage and vintage railroads still in operation as tourist rail excursions. The convention schedule includes trips aboard the Texas State Railroad at Rusk, TX, and the Grapevine Vintage Railroad at Grapevine, TX. The convention schedule also includes tours of area attractions, railroad-related sites, and social and business meetings. Some club members will travel to and from the convention via Amtrak passenger trains, an especially appropriate mode of transportation for this train-related event.

Have Fun, Get Smart

The convention will include 12 new features – informational clinics and seminars about the hobby. Skilled presenters will demonstrate how to build a layout, make realistic trees, sculpt scenery, use the radio-controlled technology to advantage, and other helpful hobby-related topics. LCCA will also offer a free preparatory course to local Boy Scouts who want to earn the BSA Railroad Merit Badge.

A Tribute to Texas

LCCA designs and Lionel produces a limited-edition convention car as a memento of each annual event. It's traditionally based on the railroad legacy of the host city. This year, the convention car is a MKT-Frisco Texas Special refrigerated express milk car painted in the striking red and white décor of that railroad. Lionel trains and other Texas-related railroad commemorative products will be available for purchase by members and the public during the event in the LCCA Store within the hotel.

From Real Trains to Toy Trains

Club members enjoy the excitement, elegance, and power of real trains as well as the smaller-in-scale, O-gauge electric model trains made by Lionel LLC and other manufacturers.

Modern technology built into today's model trains enables a highly realistic railroading experience on home train layouts. The trains spew synthetic smoke from their stacks, provide CD quality onboard sound effects derived from digital recordings of actual trains, and mimic the crew talk between an engineer and a dispatcher. The piercing, squealing sound of steel wheels on steel rails is heard when a hobbyist applies the brakes to a train. On model passenger trains, the voice of a conductor calls out station stops and the classic "All Aboard!" invitation to board the train.

LCCA members approach the train hobby along different paths. Some specialize in collecting and operating trains known as "fallen flags;" i.e., railroads that once served a region but were closed, went bankrupt, or merged with a dominant railroad. Others seek to re-acquire trains they once owned as a boy but were discarded. Some create a fantasy railroad with an invented name as a personal empire. At train shows, auctions, and online sites, they seek trains to make their hobby dreams come true.

Others purchase a train because of its unique history, colorful paint scheme, or interesting locale. Perhaps the dramatic "warbonnet" décor of the 1940s and '50s Santa Fe diesel passenger trains is the most striking example of this aspect of the hobby. That venerable design presented a dramatic splash of southwestern colors – red, silver, and yellow – with American Indian motifs.

Contemporary major railroads in America capture the imagination of some hobbyists who create a home layout with a regional railroad in mind – like BNSF, Union Pacific, or CSX. But for others, a lingering love of steam locomotives remains strong. Lionel LLC manufactures models of entry-level steam locomotives as starter sets for youngsters – many of whom have never seen a steam locomotive in action. The company also makes highly detailed, museum-quality leviathans that once performed the "heavy lifting" on American railroad routes.

Toy Train Heaven

During convention week, LCCAers will meet old friends and probably make some new ones during the activities. One senior club member said, "This will be like going to toy train heaven without having to die to get there."

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LCCA Standard Descriptor

The Lionel Collectors Club of America (LCCA) was founded in the Midwest in 1970 by a group of hobbyists to promote awareness and enjoyment of Lionel toy trains. Today, the LCCA is a not-for-profit, international hobby-based organization with about 7,500 members who are toy train collectors and operators. Members favor Lionel trains, and the club collaborates with Lionel LLC to produce limited-edition collectible cars, train sets, and unique products exclusively for members.