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The Lion Roars



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1999 Convention • August 10th - 15th • Ft. Worth, Texas
 Dr. Glenn Kroh, Host • 2618 Cockrell Avenue
 Ft. Worth, Texas 76109 • (817) 926-6757

THE COVER: The '98 LCCA Convention in Philadelphia

Contacting the LCCA Business Office:

The only way to contact the Business Office is in writing to address below. They will take care of: applications for membership, replace membership cards, reinstatements, change of address, phone number changes, death notice, commemorative orders, convention registration and club mementos.

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People To Contact:

- President* - Always available and as a last resort.
- Vice President* - Schedule a meet.
- Immediate Past President* - Complaint against another member.
- Secretary* - Any administrative action not handled by LCCA Business Office and Certificates of Membership and Appreciation.
- Treasurer* - Club finances only.
- Librarian* - Back issues of *The Lion Roars*.

The President's Report

by Harry H. Overtoom

RM 1185

Train Meets

As I am writing this column contemplating the fact that the temperature in Lexington changed from a daytime high of the mid-90s to today's mid-70s; I know Fall is not quite in the air, but it is coming. With Fall, train meets for us buffs are not far behind. In fact the Fall Train Meet in Lexington is scheduled for its normal Thanksgiving weekend. The meet has been going on for a long time; at first hosted by Larry Black, then by yours truly for at least 15 years. It has developed into a mature show that seems to attract many buyers and sellers.

The point of this is that it takes a few years to develop a show. So if you have an inclination to host show in your area, contact Don Carlson, our Vice-President, and let him give you the necessary information to get started. It's Fall! Why don't you have a meet in your area? It will give you much satisfaction and fun, as well as help promote the club.

Amtrack Convention Cars

Some good news – the long-awaited Philadelphia Convention Car that was delayed by unforeseen production problems was scheduled to be out September 30, 1998. I have seen the pre-production sample. It is a good looking piece.

Interchange Track

Our flagship publications, *the Lion Roars* and the *Interchange Track*, carry our banner to our members for their enjoyment and use. In going through the latest issue of the *Interchange Track*, I became aware that the magazine and the number of ads are getting larger with each issue. Not only is each manufacturer's section getting bigger, the miscellaneous section has items that are very unusual. The *Interchange Track* has become the standard for many collectors. It is the real world — up to date and always current. I suggest you keep it handy for your use when buying or selling.

The *Interchange Track* Editor, Bill Button, continues to do a great job. Handling all the ads and getting them printed with minimal complaints is an enormous task. Next time you send in an ad to Bill, give him a pat on the back for great job well done. For me, I personally want to thank Bill.

Termination Notice

At each York Show, the Presidents of the four major collecting organizations get together to discuss problems and how to resolve them. One of the areas we have coordinated is the notification of the other clubs when someone has been dropped from the rolls. TCA notified me, and I quote directly, that "John R. Epperson, 814 Cherrywood Lane, Yukon, OK 73099, doing business as HOEngineer@WorldNet.ATT.NET & JR Trains on the Internet's e-Bay auction has posted for sale a copy of the latest TCA Directory. He was dropped for non-payment of dues."

The LCCA, like the TCA, absolutely forbids the sale of, transfer or publication of our membership list. We work very hard to protect the security and privacy of our members. We would, under the situation, take similar action.

Fort Worth Convention

I want to remind everyone that our next convention in Fort Worth, Texas, will be held later than normal. The dates are August 10 - 15, 1999. Dr. Glenn Kroh and his committee are working hard to put Cow Town on display for our members. Pencil in these dates on your calendar. It will be a great convention! It is one of a few towns that has revitalized its downtown area. You can walk from the convention hotel to all downtown points and enjoy a leisurely stroll without any concerns. See you there!

While talking about conventions, I would be interested in your opinion about where we should look to have a future convention. Where would you like to see a convention held? Drop me a note or call 606/268-1942 or e-mail me at LOvertoom@aol.com.



President Overtoom explains membership benefits to new member-to-be Carson Richter, son of Mr. & Mrs. Ed Richter.

The Adventures of Railroad Mike

The Haunted Switch Tower

by Mario Evangelista

RM 19687

The leaves flew through the air and reflected the multi-shades of autumn in the October sun. “GRRrrrrr, T-Rex attacks!” Arthur yelled as he pounced on Mike’s back and forced them both down into the pile that Mike was kicking into the air.

“Oh yea, Godzilla eats T-Rex!” came Mike’s battle cry with his dragon’s lair scattered across the park. Arthur pushed himself free and while jumping up he tucked his arms into his chest to simulate talons and with long steps he circled his friend. Mike sat up, wiped the leaves from his face, pressed his lips together, and then charged.

“I want T-Rex burger,” cried Mike as he grabbed his friend and both boys again vanished into the pile. Arthur managed to shake free of his attacker and started to run for another pile with Mike close behind. Reaching his friend, he grabbed him around the waist. Both boys tumbled into the four-foot high mound of leaves. Sitting up, they laughed and tried to bury each other with handfuls of autumn color. Then they became aware of something foul.

“Hold on. What’s that smell?” asked Mike. They sat there for a short time sniffing the air. Then at the same time they jumped up and yelled, “Gross dog-do!”

Mike had a generous smear of it on his left knee and Arthur had more of the same on his right forearm. “What a mess,” Mike said. “How are we going to get cleaned up before going home?”

Mike tried to remove it with a handful of leaves and remembered that his mother told him not to ruin his new school clothes. Arthur said, “My mom told me that if I got into any dirt, no Halloween party tomorrow night.”

“This isn’t going to work,” exclaimed Mike. “We’ve got to find someplace to clean up. Could we go over to your house?”

“No way, then my mom will know we were playing in our good clothes,” Arthur said.

They picked up their backpacks stuffed with schoolbooks and assorted railroad magazines and started to walk home. “If it was summertime, the fire hydrant would probably be open and we could clean up there,” reflected Arthur. “If it were summer, we’d be in your pool with no mess to clean up,” Mike answered.

Arthur reminded Mike of the mud hole they made out of his mother’s flower garden and how they both got covered in it from head to toe. “Yeh, your mom went ballistic when we cleaned up in the pool and clogged the filter,” Mike recalled.

“I had to do dishes until Christmas,” moaned Arthur.

“Well, I was right there with you when we had to help your father clean out the pool. Do you think your dad was serious about getting the new in-ground model?” asked Mike.

“I hope not,” said Arthur, “I already promised the kids at school

a pool party next summer. Do you think they will forget about it?”

Mike looked at Arthur and smiled. “I didn’t.”

On the way home the boys stopped off at the Sixty-second Street bridge to watch the trains pass. They would not let a little odor stop them from their daily routine of counting the cars on the 3:45 freight or the 4:10 Amtrak going south to D.C. After the second train passed, Mike pointed to the old switch tower and said, “Ha, I just remembered. There’s a water spigot on the side of that tower over there.”

“How do you know?” asked Arthur.

“Some of the guys from school play ball in the open field next to the tower, and they get water from that spigot.”

“I don’t know,” protested Arthur. “We’ve been told that in no way, shape, or form are we ever to go near the train tracks.”

“We can’t get anywhere near the tracks,” replied Mike. “They have a ten-foot-high fence that runs from one end of the field to the other.”

Arthur wanted to say no, but after looking at the mess on his sleeve he had to agree. “OK, but let’s make it quick.”

They walked back a half-block and then north to the far end of High Street where the old switch tower stood at the bottom of a hill. The backs of the houses looked out over the tracks. The small yards with cyclone fences were set back three feet from a retaining wall standing eight feet above a sloping hill that completed the 30-foot descent to the tracks below. The fence ran from where the wall stopped to the far end of the field and passed the tower on the side facing the four-track main line.

The switch tower was a two-story structure with brick trim on the first story and wood siding above. The roof shingles were falling off and shards of slate were scattered around its base. All the windows were broken and the door on the south side of the tower was half-open; the stile was splintered where the lock was forced open and in pieces on the floor.

They were standing at the top of a hill that sloped down about 45 feet to the level field below. The hill was overgrown with weeds and Acacia trees grew everywhere.

“It looks kind of scary and lonely,” mumbled Arthur. “How do we get down there?”

“Come on, I’ll show ya,” Mike said as he led Arthur to the side of the last house on the street. Just off to its left, going down the hill toward the tower was a staircase built into the hill out of what appeared to be rail ties. It was in a terrible state of disrepair and the wood was rotted through in several places. It was now more of a planter for the Acacias that found their home in some of the step treads, but it still provided a reasonably safe way down the hill.

Following the sloped staircase, they descended the path to the bottom, followed it along the fence, and approached the small pond created by rain run-off. In a few feet, it came to an end at the brick stoop that paved the way to four steps and the broken door of the switch tower.

“It looks scary,” repeated Arthur.

“Come on,” said Mike. “Be careful about these old steps. Some

of the logs have rotted away.”

When the boys reached the tower, Arthur noticed that from the bottom you could not see the houses above. This gave the place even more of a sense of isolation than from the top of the hill where people’s houses could be seen and children playing could be heard.

“The spigot is over there,” Mike said as he pointed to a puddle at the far corner of the tower. The boys ran over and started to clean themselves up with their handkerchiefs.

“We’d better hurry,” said Mike, “it’s getting late.”

When they felt the mess was removed from their clothes, they tossed the dirty handkerchiefs in an old tar bucket that had some trash in it and turned their attention to more interesting things. They walked around the switch tower and compared it to their memory of the Atlas model tower Arthur had built.

“I sure would like to go inside to see what the control room is like,” said Arthur. “I wonder why the railroad let it get so run down?”

“I don’t know,” replied Mike. “I guess everything is done by computers nowadays and no one cares about it.”

They stood for a few minutes on the side facing the tracks in the warm setting sun and wondered what the rundown abandoned factory on the other side of the tracks was for. It had an old dilapidated wooden fence that was more down than standing, a monument to the old days when Mike’s grandpop built trolley cars there.

What they really marveled at was the inch-thick black pipes that ran on stands about a foot off the ground and turned alongside the track in either direction. There were six pipes, and each one ran to a turnout. A couple of them ran for a quarter-mile and went under the Fifty-ninth Street bridge and out of sight.

“I wonder what the pipes are for?” asked Mike.

“My father took some coat hanger wire and made model pipes that look just like this,” replied Arthur. “They run from my Atlas tower to some of the switches. He told me that was how the tower man could control the turnout direction when they needed to have a train change tracks. The switchman would pull the ‘Armstrong Bar’ connected to the switches by those pipes.”

“Wow,” said Mike as he walked over to the basement window into which the pipes disappeared. “I never gave a thought how they connected the tower to the switches.” The pipes went into the window and through a steel plate that covered the opening. There was a three-inch round cutout for each pipe. Mike got down on his knees to look into an empty hole.

“Boy, it’s dark in there. I can’t see a thing. I wish I had a flashlight.”

“Let me see,” said Arthur as he put his backpack down and pressed his face to a hole next. As their eyes adjusted to the darkness, the boys thought they could make out some movement on the pipes deep inside the basement.

“What’s that?” asked Arthur.

“A rabbit,” replied Mike, “these fields are full of them.”

“Do rabbits have long tails?” asked Arthur.

As their eyes focused on the movement, their attention was

drawn to what appeared to be a man standing on the steps leading up to the first floor of the building. He had white hair and eyebrows. The scarf around his neck was once red but its color had faded out to almost white. He wore heavy boots that were also white. Sticking out of the right-hand pocket of his overalls was a handle to what appeared to be a knife.

Mike’s shaking hand reached up and found his friend’s. “Let’s get out of here,” he whispered but neither one could turn away. The figure did not move. It just stared back at them. Finally after what felt like forever, the man’s right arm slowly came up and pointed at them. He started to open his mouth as if to scream but his voice was drowned out by the din of a passing commuter train streaking from behind.

Mike reached the top of the stairs out of breath and although shaking in fright he turned and called for his friend. “Arthur, where are you!” He was right behind me, he thought. Mike’s mind was running at light speed. He called again, “Arthur, Arthur where are you!”

“I’m over here,” was the breathless reply from behind. Mike turned and saw his friend. With great relief he asked, “How did you get in front of me?”

“I ran straight up the hill and through the weeds,” replied Arthur, brushing debris from his hair and clothes.

“Did you see what I saw?” asked Mike.

“Did you see me run like you?” came one of Arthur’s sarcastic replies. They walked over to the top of the stairs to be certain that no one followed them. There was no movement anywhere.

“You boys better stay out of that place,” said a stern voice from behind them. “I won’t tolerate any of your Mischief Night nonsense.” They both spun around on their toes and faced an old man standing on the porch of the house next to the steps. He had a cane in his left hand and a baseball bat in the other.

“We were only looking,” said Arthur in defense of their being someplace they knew they should not be.

“Little kids who stay down there close to dark sometimes don’t come back. Sometimes we send the police down there to get them. Do I have to call the police on you?” The old man’s eyes never blinked. He just stared at them; not really at them but right through them.

“OK sir,” said Mike, but the boys turned and looked at the door of the switch tower one more time. There was no one around, but a dim green light shone through the open door of the tower. Moving very slowly, it turned just inside the door and started up the steps to the second floor.

“What’s that!” yelled both boys as they pointed to the tower.

“Nothing that little children need to concern themselves with,” replied the man in a voice that sounded as if there was definitely something to be afraid of. “Someone should call the police,” he said as he went in and closed his door.

The boys turned for one more look, but there was no light. They looked at each other and Mike said, “Let’s go home. It’s really getting late.”

Then Arthur said in a very soft voice, "Look, Mike." There in the second floor window of the switch tower was the white man staring back at them. The boys turned and ran and did not stop running until they got to the end of High Street. When they turned onto Sixty-second Street they slowed down to a brisk walk and said very little. They arrived at Arthur's house in less than half the time it normally takes.

Mike said, "I'll call you after dinner."

"I don't know why I let you get me into these things," said Arthur.

"I only wanted to get our clothes cleaned up," replied Mike. "At least you won't have to explain getting dog poop on your jacket."

"No, I almost got eaten by a ghost and locked up by that old man." Arthur turned and said, "Talk to you later" as he walked up the steps to his front door. Mike stood there for a few seconds thinking about what had happened when he heard Arthur's mother's voice coming from inside. "What's that horrible smell? Were you playing in that filthy park with your good clothes? Get upstairs and wait until your father gets home!"

On that note Mike started home thinking, "Maybe I should stop at the flower stand at Sixty-third Street and rub some petals onto my pants."

After dinner Mike went to his room to do his homework. His mother made him stay there for the rest of the night because of the green and red stains on his pants that stunk like "flowery poop."

He was working on his American history report when the phone rang. He could hear his mother pick it up downstairs. "Oh hello Arthur. Did you ruin your clothes today also?" His mom was silent for a minute and then continued, "Well, it serves you right. Your parents work hard to provide you nice things to wear." Then more quietly, Mike's mother called up to him, "Michael, it's Arthur. He says it's important!"

Mike went into his parent's room and picked up the phone. "Hi Art. What's up?"

"I left it there," came the panicky voice.

"Left what?" asked Mike.

"My backpack. It has all my books in it, not to mention my new Lionel catalog," said Arthur.

"Where did you leave it?"

"At the switch tower by the window where we saw the white man! What am I going to do?"

Mike thought for a moment and then said, "Don't worry. No one ever goes down there at this time of year. The weeds are higher than your bag so it won't be seen. We can go back and get it tomorrow after school."

"Aren't you afraid of the ghost?" asked Arthur.

"We could just run up and get your pack and then get out of there."

"Well, OK." Arthur saw no other solution but to agree.

Mike read the homework questions to Arthur and stayed on the line with his friend until he had all his work completed for the next day.

At school the next day the boys could hardly think about anything except going back to the tower and facing the ghostly white man. During lunch they sat quietly; not talking or reading their train magazines. Charlie, a friend who often ate lunch with them, came over and sat down. After a few quiet minutes Charlie said, "What's wrong, did your parents sell your trains?" He started to laugh but stopped when they did not respond.

"Is it something I did?" asked Charlie.

"No," said Mike, "it's not you. It's ..."

He then turned and looked at Arthur and asked, "Should I tell him?"

"I don't know," replied Arthur.

He then turned back to Charlie and asked, "Can you keep a secret?"

"You know I can! What is it?" Arthur and Mike looked at each other, shrugged their shoulders, and told Charlie the whole story taking turns and making sure not to leave out anything. It made them feel better to talk about it as if the ghostly man was only a bad dream.

When they were done, Charlie just sat looking at them. After a few moments he threw his head back and started to laugh. "Boy, you guys are too much! A white ghostly man with a knife. What a story. How do you think of these things?" Laughing, he picked up his tray and walked over to place it with the dirty dishes. Turning back to look at the boys he started to laugh even harder and said loud enough so others could hear, "Watch out or the bogey man will get you!" They could hear Charlie's laughter going down the hall until it stopped.

The boys sat there looking at each other until Mike said, "Do you think he believed us?"

Arthur shook his head and said, "We better get to class."

When school let out they hurried over to the tower. They both wanted to be over at Mike's house before it got dark because that is where they planned to change into their costumes for the big Halloween party at the Community Center that night. Going by way of Grand Avenue, they avoided passing in front of the old man's house. They did not want him to see them and call the police. Quietly approaching the hill, the boys hurried down it. When they reached the bottom of the rail-tie stairs, Mike said, "Let's get in and get out!"

Arthur grabbed Mike's arm and asked, "At times like this, when you say things like that, do you hear the Mission Impossible theme music in your head?" Mike looked at Art as if he did not understand, but Arthur knew he did and laughed to himself. Walking around to the back of the switch tower where Arthur dropped his backpack the day before, they looked through the weeds and under the switch control pipes.

"It's not here. It's not here. It's not here!"

"OK, OK. Shut up. Let's think. It has to be here somewhere," Mike said as he tried to calm down his friend. "Are you sure you didn't drop it going up that hill? Let's follow your steps."

"I don't remember my steps," Arthur complained, "I was too scared and I'm scared now. I want to get out of here. I can get new books. We can tell my mom and dad, and they'll take it out of my allowance but at least we'll be alive."

“Oh OK, you’re probably right,” Mike said reluctantly.

“Great,” said Arthur, “let’s just get out of here!”

On their way back to the steps the boys walked past the front door and Mike noticed something deep in the hall. There in the dim light he saw Arthur’s backpack.

“Look!” he said, pointing.

“How did it get in there?” asked Arthur.

“Who knows,” Mike said shrugging his shoulders, “but there it is!”

They entered the tower by pushing the door all the way open. It creaked with an echo that bounced off the ancient walls. The rotting floorboards sang an eerie tune as they retreated from the boy’s weight. Fearful they would end up in the basement with the ghost, each boy walked on opposite sides of the hall. Finally, they reached the target, and Arthur picked up his backpack. Checking it, he said, “Everything is here. Let’s go!”

Just as they were ready to step back outside into the fading sunlight they heard a car pull up.

“Where did that come from?” asked Arthur.

“There’s a road around the hill,” whispered Mike. “That’s how the ball teams get in here in the summertime.”

They heard the car doors close and a man’s voice, “Go inside and I’ll hand this stuff to you through the basement window. Get the things on this list for that pawnshop.”

Peeking around the corner, they saw two mean-looking men. They were skinny with straggly, dirty hair. One wore a black leather motorcycle jacket but it didn’t look like anything from the neighborhood. It was well worn and had a skull and crossbones on the upper right sleeve. The other wore a red hooded sweatshirt with no markings, but it was filthy.

“Do they work for the railroad?” Arthur whispered.

“I’ve never seen railroad men that looked like those two,” answered Mike.

“Maybe if we just walk away they won’t notice us or say anything,” Arthur suggested.

They took one more step out the door and then they heard the one with the leather jacket say, “This is a good haul. Lucky we found this place for hiding our stuff.”

“Yeh, right under ‘5-Os’ nose,” snickered the other.

Mike turned to Arthur and said, “Quick, go up the steps.” The boys turned and ran up the steps of the switch tower to the second floor room where the Armstrong Bars were mounted. Behind the row of ten bars was a blackboard mounted on the wall. It had four painted lines on it: red, yellow, green and blue – one for each of the mainline tracks. The switches were painted white with lights on them that once indicated the position of each switch to the switchman.

“It looks like my father’s control panel,” whispered Arthur.

“I know,” said Mike. “This must have been something when the tower was in use.” Their little tour was cut short by the sound of footsteps climbing the stairs.

“Quick, in here,” whispered Arthur as he pulled his friend back behind a door that led to a bathroom. It was small; barely large enough for the two of them but it had a window that looked down on the car parked below. The footsteps reached the control room and crossed to the bathroom door. They could hear him on the other side of the bathroom wall. “He’s going behind the control board,” whispered Arthur.

“Shhh,” said Mike, holding his finger to his lips. After about five minutes the boys could hear the sound of someone coming out from behind the control board and walking back down the steps. They both let out a sigh of relief. “Look,” said Mike, as he pointed to the car below. The leathered man was tossing what appeared to be Lionel train boxes into the back seat of the car. The men also put in VCRs and other items. The one in leather told the red shirted man that the things were for someone named “4Bs.”

“I think they’re thieves,” Arthur whispered.

“No kidding, Sherlock,” Mike said as he rolled his eyes. “Bongo Bands Bargain Basement is probably where they are fencing the stuff.” They then heard footsteps coming back to the control room. They listened as hard as they could but neither one could tell if the steps went back downstairs.

After about ten minutes they heard the leathered man downstairs yell up the steps, “Make sure you finish up tonight! We have a pick-up tomorrow.”

The boys remained very quiet for what felt like an hour but actually was only five minutes. “Let’s get going,” coaxed Arthur. “Our parents are going to kill us if we don’t get home soon.” Mike gave him a look that said he agreed, and he slowly opened the door and stepped out into the control room.

The autumn sun was starting to set below the roof of the old factory on the other side of the tracks - not a place to be caught in after dark. Cautiously tip-toeing halfway down the line of Armstrong Bars they heard something behind them. Both froze in mid-step unable to turn around. Before they could think of what to do, a powerful hand grabbed each by the collar and lifted them off the floor. Fearfully looking up into the face of their captor, they saw they were in the clutches of the dreaded ghostly white man. Their dual screams filled the night as our heroes wildly kicked their legs in a hopeless attempt to escape.

“Is Michael over at your house?” his mother said into the phone in a worried voice. “They were supposed to come here to get ready for the Halloween party at the Community Center. Please call us as soon as you hear from them,” she said and hung up with a concerned look. Turning to her husband she said, “That was Arthur’s mother. They asked if you would drive around the park. Maybe they went there to play.”

Mike’s dad had his coat on and was on his way out the door when he turned back to say, “Better call the police.”

“Take the cell phone with you,” she called back. She called the police and gave a description of the pair and told the desk officer that the boys didn’t arrive at home from school. The desk sergeant told her that he would contact the officers in the sector and that this is very common so not to worry.

She hung up the phone and then walked into her son’s room.

Looking at the two railroad engineer outfits lying on the bed, she started to think about all the horrible stories on the news. She sat down beside the cloths, lowered her face in her hands, and started to pray softly.

The sky was almost dark when Arthur's father arrived at the school building. Only a few cars were in the parking lot and the gymnastic team was leaving their practice session. He walked into the building and noticed the gym instructor. He approached her and explained his reason for being there. Miss Henderson apologized and said the boys were in a younger grade, and she had very little contact with them. "Hold on. I just remembered that Mr. Johnson is a fourth-grade teacher, and I just saw him in his classroom. Talk to him," she said. He thanked her and then hurried off to find Mr. Johnson.

When Arthur's dad reached the room, he quickly explained the situation to Mr. Johnson. "The boys left school rather quickly today. They usually spend a half-hour reading their train magazines."

"I know," replied Arthur's dad. He told Mr. Johnson about their habit of train watching at the 62nd Street Bridge. Then the teacher remembered that he gave their friend Charlie a detention slip earlier in the day because he was making an unnecessary commotion in the hall. Charlie said that the two boys told him a Halloween story about a white ghost that lived in an old railroad tower.

"Because of Charlie's tone with the story, I dismissed it as nonsense. Do you know of such a place?" he asked.

"No, I don't," replied Arthur's dad in a quavering voice that reflected his fear and frustration.

Mr. Johnson said that he was sure the boys were all right, and kids at that age sometimes do crazy things like this and then show up as if nothing happened.

He thanked Mr. Johnson and then walked down the hallway to his car. As he passed the gym, Miss Henderson noticed the concern in his face and asked if Mr. Johnson was able to help. He smiled and told her the story about Charlie and the railroad tower.

"I know where there's a tower like that," she said. We bring the little league team there for baseball practice. She asked Mr. Johnson for Charlie's home number. She called the house, talked to Charlie, and then said, "That's the place. We tried to get the railroad to board it up but they said it now belongs to the city, so it's not their problem."

"Tell me how to get there," said Arthur's dad. "Showing you would be faster. She placed a call to 911 and gave the dispatcher a rundown of the situation. The dispatcher said that she had received calls from the mothers of the boys every 15 minutes and she would notify the police cars in the sector.

Arthur's dad called Mike's father and told him about the tower. As he hung up, the gym teacher came out of her office with two large flashlights. Mr. Johnson joined them with another flashlight and a first aid kit in hand. They left the school and headed for the tower.

"Look what I caught," the big man said with a snarl and tossed the boys into the corner under the bay window.

"Who, Who, Who are you?" Mike forced the words out.

"Shut up and don't move!" barked the man. "You're the same two punks that were here last night. You should have listened when

I told you to get out of here and not to come back."

"We, we, we thought you were a ghost," Arthur offered as a timid reply.

The big man looked at them for a moment and then laughed. "I'm worse than any ghost you ever saw," he growled. "Now shut up and stay put." Obviously, the man was not a ghost at all. His clothes were not white any longer. The boys thought that maybe they only imagined he was white, when the truth became clear. The floor was covered with plaster dust and accented with small piles of broken plaster. Near one was a hammer with a black handle and next another was an old railroad kerosene lamp with a light green glass. From their position they could see where the plaster had come from.

Behind them, the Armstrong Bars, and the control panel was a narrow walkway. The big man had made a hidden opening that went into the hollow section of wall above the stairway. It was full of stuff – boxes of trains, VCRs, TVs, and other merchandise. "So you runts found our little hiding place. Too bad. Now I have to fix that," taunted the big man as he threw a piece of plaster in their direction.

At that moment the other two men ascended the steps. When they reached the top step and saw the boys they screamed at the big man and said things Mike and Arthur did not understand. When they stopped arguing the big man turned and said, "Let me take care of them."

"OK, but make it quick," said the man in leather and he walked out of the room followed by the man in the dirty red jacket. The big man picked up the hammer and approached them slowly.

"T-Rex and Godzilla," whispered Mike.

"What?" Arthur looked puzzled for a moment and then said, "Right!" Together the boys scooped up a double handful of plaster dust and threw it in the big man's face, momentarily blinding him in a white cloud.

Mike pushed Arthur down the stairs and out the door yelling, "Run, run, run!" They reached the front stoop and cleared the four steps in one leap. The other two men were just getting into their car when they saw Mike and Arthur.

They started to chase them, but quickly jumped back in the front seat and sped away when they saw flashing red and blue lights approaching. The police car blocked their path. The officers threw open the car doors on either side of the car and used them as shields. With their revolvers aimed and ready, the officers shouted orders to them to get out of the car, get on the ground face down and put their hands behind their heads. A second police car continued on to the old switch tower.

The officer in the driver's seat directed the spotlight on the front door of the switch tower, and the other officer raced into the building with her flashlight and gun drawn. Her partner drew his gun and then followed his partner into the front door. Pressing his back against the inside wall next to the door, he held his revolver in both hands, straight out. Waiting a few seconds for his eyes to adjust to the dark he yelled out, "Pat where are you?"

"I'm up here Joe. They were here but are gone."

"I'll check the basement," he called back. He found the basement stairway at the end of the hall. After a few minutes they met outside, and Joe said he found a lode of toy train stuff down there.

"They were using the place as a warehouse."

"Yeh, I know," replied Officer Pat. "We thought the collection burglarized the other night on Oakwood Avenue was miles away. This has got to be it, and the electronic equipment is probably from the truck hijacked last Thursday night. I'm calling for back up."

As Pat walked to the car, Joe saw three sets of white footprints leading to the old stairway in the side of the hill. Two were small prints, but one track belonged to a man. "Pat, tell them we have an 812 in progress." She saw the prints and made the call, then ran after her partner.

When Mike and Arthur got to the top of the steps they turned and saw the big man coming after them with the hammer. He was at the bottom of the hill but rapidly approaching by taking two treads at a time. They had to slow him down somehow. There was a 50-gallon drum near the top of the steps. It was a warming stove for the young mechanics as they worked on their cars. The heater was still smoldering, and the boys pushed it with sticks to the steps. It tumbled down the wooden stairs end over end, throwing its fiery contents into a sparkling pinwheel display. The big man jumped out of the way but lost his balance and rolled back down the hill and into the pond.

The boys heard the splash, but their tactic infuriated the big man. He jumped up, held the hammer above his head, and screamed at the moon, "I'll kill you!" Limping a bit, he marched up the steps. He could take only one step at a time, and every time his weight came down on his injured left leg the boys could hear him moan through his teeth, "Kill them, kill them, kill them!"

Fear flooded their senses. It was dark and there was no one on the street. They could hear a party going on at the other end of High Street but they could never outrun the limping giant, and he was almost to the top of the hill. His evil chant, "Kill them, kill them!" rang out like a death toll.

The boys darted to the old man's front door and pounded on the glass to raise his attention. "Please, please let us in," they cried. "Oh God, let us in." The door creaked and opened as if on its own and the two boys pushed forward and fell to the floor. They scrambled deeper into the room and desperately tried to hide.

"I told you not to go down there," said a voice from the far corner of the room. It was the old man. He was very calm, and his tone of voice seemed incongruent to the situation - an imminent attack by a vicious monster. The shadow of the big man penetrated the window overlooking the porch.

"There he is!" cried Arthur.

"Be quiet!" demanded Mike.

The menacing form filled the entire doorway. With the hammer in his hand, he took slow, heavy steps toward them. "Kill them, kill them!" he chanted through clenched teeth. When he saw the pair huddled on the floor he laughed as his eyes grew wide. "Kill them, kill them!" came his guttural laugh.

"Oh God, what are we going to do?" Mike sobbed, clinging in terror to his friend. The man was about ten feet from them, and he raised the hammer over his head ready to charge. Their screams were a siren, but then ended abruptly. With a loud clunk - like a large stone hitting a hollow tree trunk - the ugly man stood there stunned for a second.

Then the old man stepped forward and in a very calm voice said, "Home run." With a little push of his bat, the homeowner tipped the enemy over face down to the floor with wet clothes splashing as he hit the floor. The water mixed with the thick layer of dust on the floor and formed a mud puddle around the now-still form.

Arthur couldn't resist saying, "Don't you ever clean this place up?"

Mike shoved him and said, "Who cares. He just saved our lives."

They thought the old man would remind them of not doing what they were told, but then realized that the old man was gone. The baseball bat was leaning against the door jam, but there was no sign of him.

As the big man moaned, Officer Pat came in the front door with her gun drawn. They heard the back door kicked in, and officer Joe came into the room from the kitchen. Pat rolled the big guy over, pulled his hands behind him, and put the cuffs on him. At that moment three more police cars pulled up in front of the house, one with their mothers inside.

The police Captain came out of another and talked into the radio as four other uniforms followed him into the house. "Get him out of here now," he ordered, and three men picked up the big muddy man and escorted him off.

As the boys came out of the house onto the porch, their fathers and the two teachers came running up the steps. But when they saw their mothers, they both ran into their open arms. The mothers held them close and cried with relief tempered by joy.

The boys told their story to the Captain who said, "This all ties in, but where is the old man?" The boys said, "Honest officer, that's what happened."

"What did he look like?" asked the Captain.

"He was an old man with gray hair, and he was wearing a gray sweater."

"Excuse me, Captain Fisher," Mike's father said, "they've had a pretty rough time. Could we finish this tomorrow?"

Suddenly Arthur blurted out, "That's him!" and he pointed to a picture on the wall.

"Who?" asked the Captain.

"The old man in the picture with the baseball team," replied Arthur. "That's him." Captain Fisher removed the picture and told the parents they could go back home.

Jim Johnson turned and said to Helen Henderson, "Just another day in the life of a school teacher. Are you up for a cup of coffee?"

She laughed and added, "Sure. I think we should talk to the children on Monday about not entering empty buildings."

The next day was a Saturday, and Mike called Arthur with important information. "Hi Art, how are things with your dad?"

"Everything was OK until I got up this morning," said Arthur. "My dad says I can't go out for a month and I have to write a thousand word essay on the importance of going to my parents when in trouble."

"That's nothing," replied Mike. "I have to stay in for two months

(Continued on page 32)

The Convention – A Photo Essay

For all LCCAers who couldn't attend the 1998 convention in historic Philadelphia, this multi-page photo essay is a showing of what you missed. For those who were able to attend, it's a remembrance of several days of total immersion in the train experience.

Through the eyes/lens of photographers Ed Richter and Don Carlson and the pen of Don, re-visit the tour to Northlandz, re-take the Horseshoe Curve trip, re-explore the Museum at the Altoona Shops, re-walk the historic sites of Philadelphia, re-experience the music of the Mummer's Parade band, re-consider the deals in the trading hall, re-discover the Franklin Mint, re-enjoy the modular layouts, and re-savor the pretzels.

The neg-strips along the bottom of these pages re-capture the ambiance of the Horseshoe Curve train excursion — a 17-hour day trip that all considered delightful; albeit a test of endurance.

LCCA gratefully acknowledges the work of event chairman Lou Caponi, his family, and the committee for preparing and presenting a memorable convention for enjoyment by the rest of us.

Our guest speaker — temporarily re-incarnated Ben Franklin — reminded us during the Saturday night banquet that practical wisdom is often a pathway to insight into life. “A train saved is a train earned,” and “Early to bed, early to rise, makes a train operator active and wise,” and “Fish and HO scale trains smell in three days,” he might have said. With apologies to Poor Richard, read on.



Exploring Pennsylvania outside the Box (of the Hotel)

by Don Carlson RM 6766

Horseshoe Curve Rail Excursion

Starting at 6:00 a.m. with a motorcoach ride to the local 30th Street Station, the Amtrack tour was an outstanding adventure for railfans! About 400

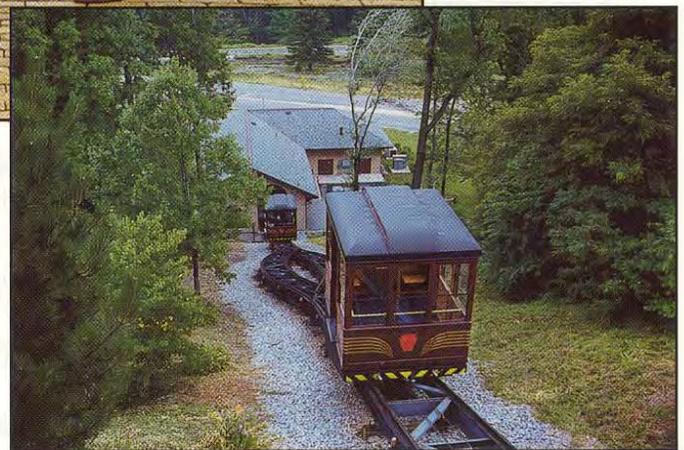


construction and operation first hand while the other half visited the renowned Altoona Shops where the Pennsylvania Railroad headquartered their equipment for construction and maintenance. Later in the day the two groups switched places so all members could see everything.

The tourists returned to the hotel after midnight, so it turned out to be a two-day event!

conventioners traveled nearly 500 miles round trip by rail aboard a train with a new Genesis engine on point with eight Amfleet coaches in tow. The tour included trips to and over the historic Horseshoe Curve along with a stop to visit the all-new Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum.

Initially, half the people went to the curve, where they viewed trains going around it and learned about its





History by the Square Foot

This three-hour tour by motorcoach visited many of America's most historic sites related to the birthplace of our nation: the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall, Carpenter's and/or Congress Halls, and the Franklin Museum. They also had a chance to visit Christ Church, the Betsy Ross House, and Ben Franklin's gravesite.

Houses of History

The city of Philadelphia is the locale of many famous houses. LCCA conventioners visited two of the most famous ones in the northwest

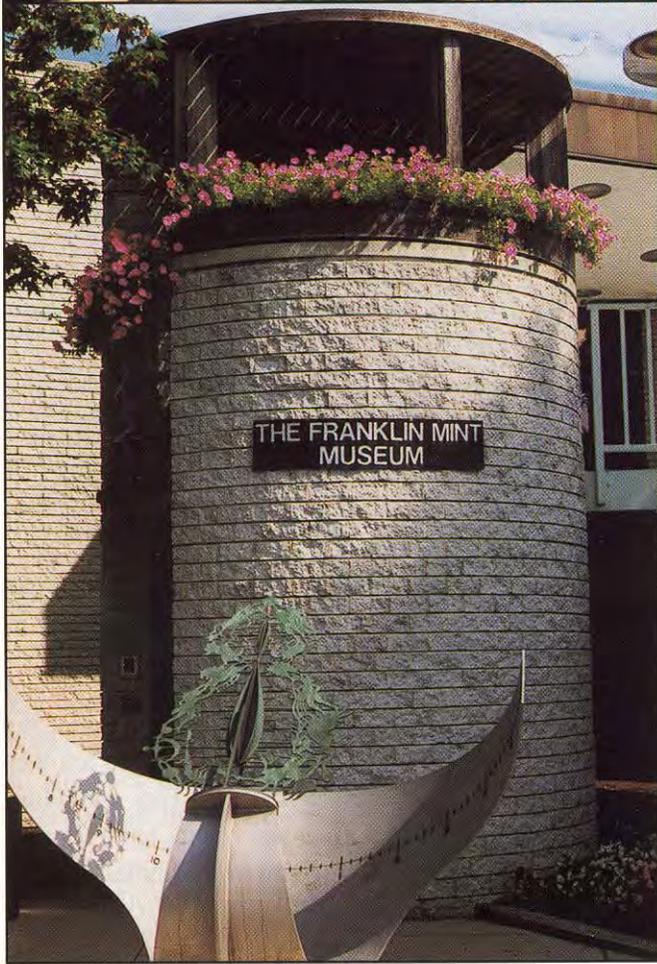


corner of the city in an area known as Germantown. Several of the Colonial mansions in this district were built during the time of our country's beginnings. "Cliveden," was where George Washington summered in 1773 and 1774. Bullet holes still mar the outer walls of this home where the Battle of Germantown raged in 1777. Tour visitors saw an elegant collection of Chippendale and Federal furnishings and period costumes. The tour continued on to another



unique house - "Strawberry Mansion." This sprawling colonial home was filled with marvelous antiques and period decor including an attic room with colonial era toys.





The Franklin Mint and Longwood Gardens

Two full motorcoaches of LCCA members and their families went on this tour that started with a visit to the Franklin Mint. Many attendees purchased items still available from the Mint's vast array of collectibles and enjoyed the current display of Harley Davidson motorcycles (both full and model sized).

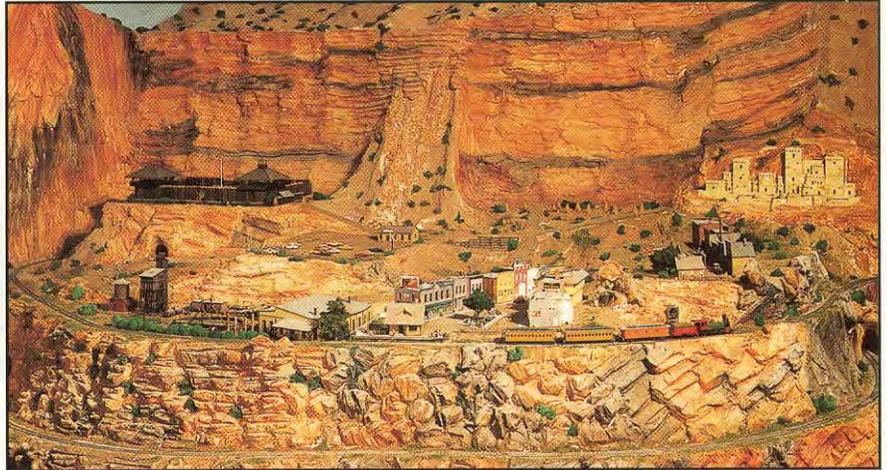
Then the motorcade went to Longwood Gardens with its 1,050 acres of floral displays — some inside and others outside. Visitors walked around the grounds with spectacular waterfalls and fountains, 14,000 kinds of plants, an indoor sculptured French garden, and discovered idea gardens for the home gardener.



Northlandz Miniature Train World

Many convention attendees enjoyed this full-day tour. It began with a 90-minute motorcoach ride with train videos running on the on-board TV monitors! Arriving at Northlandz in Flemington, New Jersey, the LCCAers marveled at the marvelous model train site described in the Guinness Book of Records as the largest concentration of miniature trains in the world. The Great American Railway generated both awe and envy - what a layout! This spectacular display, the result of 25 years of work by Bruce Williams Zaccagnino, presented 125 different model trains. Over 10,000 freight and passenger cars operate on 325 scale miles of track. Weaving in and out of 35-foot-high sculpted mountains and traversing over 300 handmade bridges (one is 40 feet long!) and passing by more than 44,000 hand-crafted buildings, this train world is a dream come true for model railroaders. Bruce estimated that one could build

more than 40 large houses with the wood used in the display. Most of it is HO scale, but a portion of it featured Lionel equipment. The Northlandz complex also contains



La Peep Dollhouse, the Doll Museum, the American Music Hall, and the Raritan River Railway - a 1/3 scale steam railway operating in the woodlands on the grounds.

Photos courtesy of Northlandz



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Fairmount Park

Some conventioners drove through America's largest in-the-city park, where the 17th century aristocrats - many of whom helped found our country — spent their summers. Tour visitors enjoyed seeing one of their mansions, furnished and maintained just as it was when the guest list included many of our famous forefathers. The rooms contained bedwarmers, needlepoint stands, and authentic furnishings. The porch overlooked a splendid view of the park, and the house itself held special treasures, including an antique toy exhibit. The tour guide told stories that transported the group back in time to meet the fascinating people who shaped our past. En route back to the hotel, the drive down the Benjamin Franklin Parkway was like a living showcase of art and architecture.



Convention host Lou Caponi (at right) and new LCCA member, Dr. Richard Pappa, savor the excitement within the trading Hall – and a Philly-style pretzel. Dr. Pappa provided the tasty snacks *gratis* to all who cruised the hall and shopped for trains.

Trading Hall

As if questing for treasure, the shoppers and “lookers” in the trading hall sought a special item for their collection. The hall was open on Saturday and Sunday, and many found what they were looking for – a unique train piece or good company and fellowship.



The Banquet

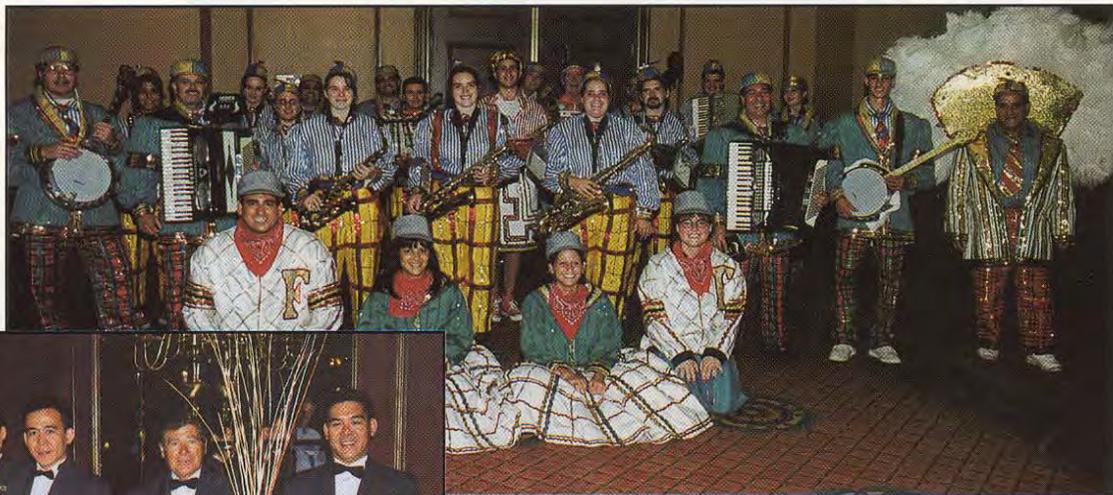
The Saturday night banquet at the LCCA convention in the Adams Mark Inn was a delightful hybrid mixture of good food, enlivened history, upbeat music, and cordial fun. Host Lou Caponi, his family, and the committee



orchestrated a first class event, and they invited “Poor Richard” to describe for us “the way it really was” in the 1770s. The Greater Overbrook String Band performed and danced in the traditional New Year’s Day Mummer’s Parade style – derived from the Greek tradition.

Reflecting back on this event weeks afterward, Lou said, “Yeh, it was a lot of work, but I’d do it again because the people in this club are so wonderful. It’s a great family-friendly organization. I’m still receiving thank you letters about it.”

Lou received two memorable thank you letters – from a father and son who enjoyed the horseshoe curve rail trip together.



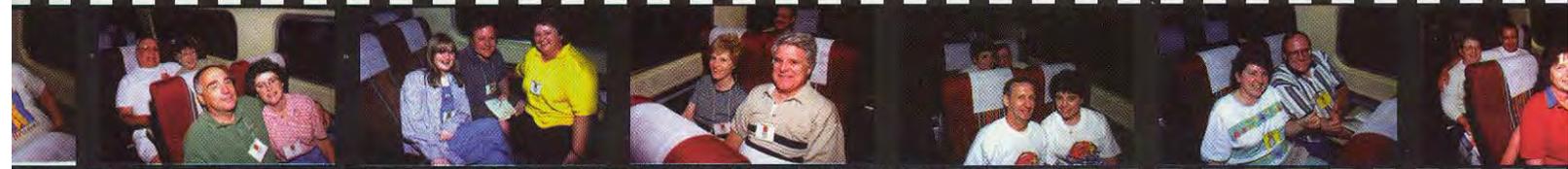
Norman P. Gentieu (dad) wrote, “you are to be commended for having the imagination and gumption to make an inspired idea a memorable reality. You not only kept the program moving at a good pace but also kept the LCCA gang satisfied. No small achievement.



A former editor of TLR, Don remains a frequent writer/photographer for the magazine he shaped for many years. He is an executive in the auto industry and lives and works in the Detroit area.



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Riding Modularly on Three Rails at Philadelphia

The Raritan Valley High Railers Layout

by Gene Boehm

RVHR Coordinator

On behalf of the Raritan Valley High Railers, I want to thank the LCCA convention leadership and attending members for their warm welcome and appreciation of our effort to create a large modular O gauge three-rail train



layout at the Philadelphia convention. We had a great time too.

In late 1988 and early 1989 a “BOG” – bunch of guys (actually four) – led by Steve Horvath and following a common interest, got together to run trains. The point was to be able to create a train layout based on a common standard that could vary in size depending on the space available and the number of participating members. The standard developed by Al Bailey of the California Tinplate Trackers was adopted and modified to include a three-track mainline. This allowed for operating more trains and involving more people in running them.

The mainline trackage standard was established at 3 3/4" from the outside of the module to the centerline of track 1 (the outside track) and 4 1/4" between the centers of track 2 (middle) and track 3 (inside). The basic module size became 30" wide by 48" long. The remaining module space was left up to the imagination of each individual who could develop yard sidings, industrial/commercial areas, passenger stations, intermodal facilities, farmlands, circus layouts, scenic areas and so on. The fundamental points were: make your own module, follow your imagination, and create a railroad mini-empire.

To become a club member, one had to construct a module. The BOGs philosophy and common desire was to create a realistic railroad environment and run long, semi-scale trains with single or multi-headed engines. Almost every member started off with the “garden variety” trains stored in his basement for a few decades. However, each quickly graduated to modern semi-scale equipment available at the time.

In 1994 the club experienced a case of growing pains; too many members and not enough running time. The club did not then own a facility, nor does it now; so the members operated trains only at train meets/shows, conventions, and/or special events – like PBA Christmas parties – four to six times a year. This became a



problem and nearly defeated the intent of the club, so Steve spun off and formed the Independent High Railers Central Jersey Division. Thanks to Steve's desire to grow the concept, it has since snow-balled into:

Mid-West Division Independent High Railers under Frank Sanchez,

South Shore High Railers in the Boston area under Paul Bernier,

D.C. Area Independent High Railers under Frank Qualls,

Delaware Valley High Rail Division in the Philadelphia area under Neil Yerger, and

Pittsburgh Area Independent High Railers under Tom Shepler.

All these club modules will fit together and form a mega-layout. As proof, in 1995 at a train convention held in New Brunswick, New Jersey, five different clubs created a huge modular layout with more than eight scale miles of trackage.

The feat was replicated in 1997 at a train convention in Steam Town, Scranton, Pennsylvania. Two large layouts were created there; one in the Lackawanna Station Hotel, the other in the roundhouse at Steam Town.

STANDARD. This enabled all of us to enjoy watching and – for some of us – operating double or triple-headed 4-8-4 Mountains with a pusher pulling 60-70 car long coal drags or multi-headed modern diesels pulling short or long consists of quad hoppers, stack-pacs or mixed freights to their consigned destinations.



At present, Steve is now planning what he believes will be the biggest-ever, combined layout modular for the year 2000 LCCA/LOTS joint convention in Michigan. It'll be a colossal achievement and a wonderful metaphor for cooperation and collaboration.

Along with another member of my group, I am in the process of starting a similar high-rail group at a local church. I strongly feel the need to introduce this hobby to the next generation. One major point in our Purpose Statement is to give thanks to God for all great gifts, including trains. We want to bring fathers (primarily) and their sons or daughters together and sponsor active participation in the hobby away from the tube, videos, multi-media PC games, and other passive entertainments. We intend to encourage



These big layouts with minimum diameter 072 curves and high quality turnouts were possible because the participating clubs adopted and applied a COMMON

learning and building things of value together and to stimulate imagination and creativity!



Show-n-Tell Seminar

Lionel® Demonstrates New Odyssey™ Motor

by Bill Schmeelk

RM 6643

At the recent LCCA Convention, Lionel® brought along a working F-3 diesel powered by a single Odyssey™ motor. **Photo 1** shows this clear-body-shell loco and the motor inside it. Lionel demonstrated just how slowly it would crawl around the track and how smoothly the motor operates at that speed. They also allowed us to “hold back” the loco and feel the power



of the new motor. Lionel's demonstration was impressive. This motor will be featured in some releases this year. One of the interesting properties of this motor is that two of them can be stacked upon each other for additional power. The top-of-the-line Union Pacific Veranda Gas Turbine loco will feature four - count 'em, four - of these motors. Each of the powered trucks will have a stack of two Odyssey motors. I'm eager to get some product with this new motor and report to you on just how well it works.

6464 Boxcars and more from the Seminar

The Lionel seminar gave our members a chance to ask questions of the Lionel representatives. Later on, Lionel's Bob Ryder asked me to correct a comment he made during the seminar. He was asked whether the 6464 postwar series of boxcar sets would continue. His answer then was NO, but Mr. Ryder has corrected that statement; this series WILL be completed. In response to a question about where the new die-cast cars would be manufactured, he previously said “in China.” Rather, they will be made in North America. The die-casting will be done in Canada with the deco and final assembly will be done in the U.S. One of the five

different names offered in the new tank car is shown below as **photo 2**.

Lionel demonstrated the unique sounds that will be generated by the Pratt's Hollow Phantom locomotive. This intriguing engine may be a “sleeper.” The Classics II catalog contains an artist's rendering of the four-piece set of passenger cars designed for this locomotive. Prototypes for these ultra-sleek cars don't exist yet.

The Celebration CW

Lionel also displayed the prototype for the new ZW transformer. The first series of the new ZW will be designated *Celebration ZW*, and a special identification plate will be applied for this run only. The new ZW is a control unit for the two 135-watt Powerhouses will be supplied with the transformer. In mid-1999, new and more powerful 190-watt Powerhouses will be available. These can be added to the new ZW at any time. Whether you use one or four Powerhouses, their output is available to all four variable controls. You can add or subtract Powerhouses as you please.

This new ZW is the first in a whole new family of Lionel ZW transformers. Although initially announced for shipment in September, it is expected to be in stores by Christmas. I'm anxious to get one and provide a full review. I was sorry to hear Lionel say that although they continue to look into a new track system, “there are no immediate plans to bring one into production.”



A regular contributor to TLR, Bill is LCCA's direct link to the activities and new products of Lionel® LLC. He serves LCCA as an elected Director.



All photos by Bill Schmeelk

The Mane Line

Travels in Lionville

by Dennis Leon Clad

RM 10430

For Bonnie and Minda

Being born with a famous name may open a few doors for the epithet recipient who chooses the same career path as their namesake, but seldom - if ever - is it any guarantee of success. More times than not, that title becomes a measuring stick that grows heavier with each try and failure. Being a bright young wolf, Chester knew the weight of his given name would be a worthy contender to even his strong shoulders. But just like his namesake, Chester "Howlin'" Wolf, the love of The Blues and the desire to be a blues musician could hardly be contained in little Chester's muscular frame.

Being born with the proverbial silver spoon would have cushioned his falls on the dimly lit cobblestone street of musical stardom, but that very same spoon would never contain the character-building ingredients needed to truly play and write The Blues. Chester knew that no amount of fame or fortune was worth its salt unless earned the hard way, on his own; no doubt a lesson learned as a pup from his caring Mom, who - despite being a single parent - never lacked for "Chester time."

Equipped with a foundation consisting of talent, education, and will, Chester began his rough-and-tumble journey to success in the music business. Although his chosen path proved to be longer and harder than he was prepared for, Chester never once entertained the thought of giving up; even under pressure from lady wolves, many of whom were quite wealthy and beautiful and eager to ask for his paw in marriage. Chester's stick-to-it-ness would eventually prove to be equal to his talent in a way he never would have known except for a top-billing gig on a poorly illuminated marquee of a 1930s-style blues club. That night, Chester had no way of knowing that two audience members would make him a career offer too good to turn down.

For most of us mere mortals, being a Rock icon and composing genius would be more than we could handle. When combined with his charity work, the guiding spirit of the Lionel Corporation, Mr. Neil Young, has an endless supply of enthusiasm and generosity. In fact, it would be those two qualities that placed this former member of Motown's group, The Myna Birds, and his business manager, Elliot Roberts, at Chester's club appearance that night. Always on the lookout and ready to extend a helping hand to creative young folks, it didn't take Neil and Elliot long to see that Chester's warm and outgoing personality made him the perfect mascot for their new company, Vapor Records. In addition to Chester's charm, his years of experience as a writer and performer in the music trade would be an added bonus for his new employer.

But it wasn't until Vapor records was ready to celebrate their first anniversary in December, 1996, that Chester's natural ability as a Lionel Toy Train designer, come to be realized. If I were a part owner of Lionel® my urge to create distinctive rolling stock would be completely out of control. As one of the owners of our beloved Lionel,



self-control is another one of Mr. Young's sterling qualities. However, the first birthday of his infant record company was too special an occasion not to celebrate with a unique Lionel car. Chester was more than willing to test his artistic limits and eagerly took on the assignment of crafting the first ever, not-for-general-public-release Vapor Records 6464 boxcar (see **photo 1**).

Although Chester never gave me any insight into his creative process, I can only speculate that the colors used (later to become the official company colors) and the car's eerie but ever so seductive graphics reflect Chester's struggles in the music trade. It would be just a few days before Christmas, 1996, when the shipment of two hundred

and fifty inaugural Vapor Records boxcars with the SKU number 6-29606 arrived and delighted all at company headquarters in Santa Monica. At the time, the SKU (Stock Keeping Unit) 296 number series was designated for the Lionel custom line of rolling stock.



3

One of the reasons Lionel LLC is able to maintain a high level of quality control is the hands-on approach by company President, Gary Moreau. The first-rate factory professionals at Lionel are very accustomed to President Moreau making daily visits to the assembly line. In fact, it just might have been on one of the plant sojourns when he first spied Chester's boxcar. Having a true artist's eye and always wanting to please his customers, he knew that Chester's design would be a must-have for every boxcar collector. So he requested permission from Vapor Records, and eight weeks later - in 1997 - approximately 1100 Vapor Records 6-29218 boxcars made their journey through Lionel's production facility. **Photo 2** shows the premiere Vapor Records 6464 rolling stock box on the left; on the right is the first Vapor Records public sale car box.



2

Christmas was always made special for Chester, thanks to his Mom. This fun holiday was second only to Chester's birthday, a date that his mother celebrated in Mardi Gras fashion. For Vapor's second birthday celebration, a not-for-public-release boxcar decorated in a Christmas theme would be most appropriate for a record company whose birthday is in December. Only two

hundred of 6-29229 (see **photo 3**) would be made and delivered in time for Christmas, 1997.

I was happy to learn that Chester, too, is a fan of the MPC era 9700 series boxcars, and he chose that style for his first Christmas freight car. A totally unexpected surprise from Chester for 1997 is one swell Vapor Records Christmas card. Designed as a 6464 boxcar, this card is not only a must-have for Lionel paper and memorabilia collectors, but just might become the hardest to get for the "must-have-all-Vapor-Records-collectibles" collectors.

What exciting Lionel treasure will Vapor Records produce for their third birthday? I opted to wait with my fellow LCCA members for this additional Christmas treat. I can tell you this — you too can expect a howlin' good time collecting Chester's Lionel toys.

Author's Note: A big "Thank You!" to three brethren. First, Magician Extraordinaire Bill Schmeelk, at the Wellington Enterprises magic factory in Garnerville, N.Y., for the photos used in this article. Second, to Modern Era Master Memorabilia Collector, Dennis Gergel, for his topic suggestion. And finally, to Motown Trivia Authority, Bill Button.

Happy Tracks!

A Virginia farmer by day and Lionel collectibles hunter on evenings and week-ends, Dennis seeks out unusual items likely to be of special interest to "niche" collectors.

Lionel News and Views

Lionel's New Classic II Catalog

by Bill Schmeelk

RM 6643

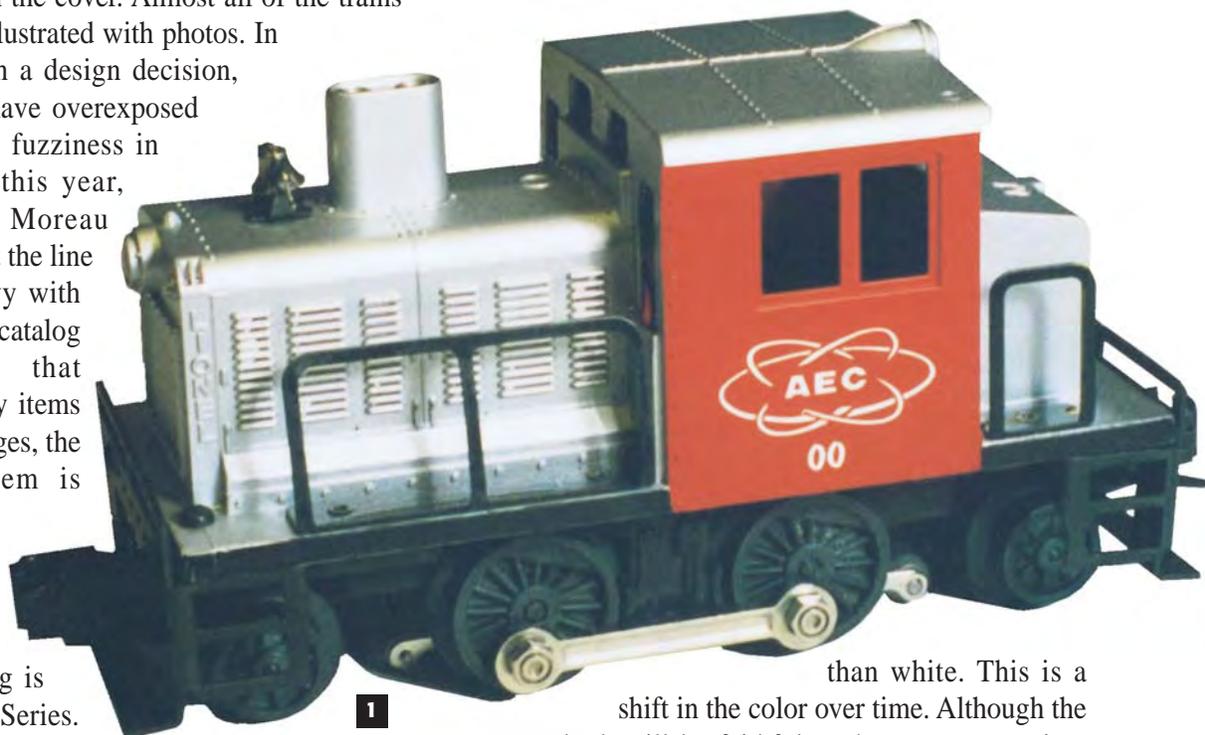
In late July, Lionel® released a new catalog — *Lionel Classic Trains Volume II* — or simply *Classic II* as Lionel refers to it. Again, Lionel has changed the design and layout of the catalog. Except for the section names on the edge of each page, all of the descriptions can be read without turning the catalog. Many will be happy that there is no child in peril on the cover. Almost all of the trains and accessories are illustrated with photos. In what must have been a design decision, most of the photos have overexposed highlights and some fuzziness in them. At Toy Fair this year, President Gary Moreau mentioned that he felt the line was a little top heavy with expensive items. This catalog clearly addresses that concern. Of the many items in the catalog's 63 pages, the most expensive item is \$699.95 and there are only two items at that price.

My favorite section of the catalog is postwar Celebration Series. This series contains reissues of desirable items from the postwar era. **Photo 1** on this page shows the return of the Atomic Energy Commission switcher. I was thrilled to see it offered in such a deluxe form. The original AEC switcher is the most difficult postwar motorized unit to acquire regardless of condition. Finding a like-new or mint one is close to impossible. Although the new catalog shows the 1960 catalog cover, this AEC switcher first appeared in the 1959 catalog. The AEC item appeared in only two catalogs — the shortest lifespan of all of Lionel's motorized units.

This new model will feature a strong motor and the design enhancements first seen on the motorized unit from the Service Station Special a couple of years ago. The

motor has been re-engineered to give this switcher the power it needs to pull a string of cars. As you may know, the motorized units produced in the postwar era were not very powerful. Although advertised as able to pull a string of cars, they really didn't have sufficient power for the job.

If this unit looks a bit strange, it's because of the silver and red decoration. The original was white and red. Lionel's Bob Ryder has assured me that the production model will be faithful to the colors of the postwar version. The unit shown in this photo has "00" as the cab number; typical for a Lionel prototype. The one in the catalog is numbered 57, its original postwar number. Most original examples of this switcher appear to be a cream color rather



than white. This is a shift in the color over time. Although the look will be faithful to the postwar version, the new model will feature many modern improvements. In addition to the heavier-duty motor, the switcher will have command control, coil couplers and directional lighting. This little locomotive is a real winner, and my guess is that it will become one of this catalog's best sellers.

Lionel has also announced a change to the description of the Rock Island Alco shown on page 60 of the catalog. Although the description lists it with a stamped steel frame, it will actually be supplied with a die-cast frame, just like the original postwar version.

New items will be added to this postwar Celebration Series over the next few years. I'm sure many of you have favorite items from the postwar era that you'd like Lionel

to include in this series. I invite you to drop me a note. I'll publish your wants and share them with Lionel. To start the ball rolling, here are two items I'd like to see. First, how about a Jersey Central FM in the rare postwar color scheme with all the latest features; that would be a "must-have." In the accessory department, I'd like to see the Control Tower brought out in the green postwar colors. It's very difficult to find an original postwar version of this accessory in good shape.

Photo 3 is the correct car that will accompany the new remake of the Culvert Loader due out this year. You may recall that a previous catalog had a photo of a barrel unloading car with the accessory. This NYC car is a near-perfect match for the original.

Photo 4 is one of the new cars offered. I believe it is the first time Lionel has placed our lion friend on a piece of rolling stock and printed the official name: Lenny the Lion. Do you know when the happy lion first appeared? Do you know what his name was before it was changed to Lenny? I'll present the answers in the next issue of *TLR*.



Before going to press, I spoke again with Bob Ryder at Lionel, and he reported that the company is pleased with the response to this new catalog. If there's something in there that you can't live without, better order it soon. Mr. Ryder also mentioned the unique Railsounds that will be featured in the first loco of the Lionel Custom Series. This is the "hot rod" GP-9 shown in the 1998 Classics I catalog. The sounds will be unique in that you can rev the engine rapidly in a hot rod style. The sounds will mimic what you might expect from a train engineer who "souped up" a diesel loco.

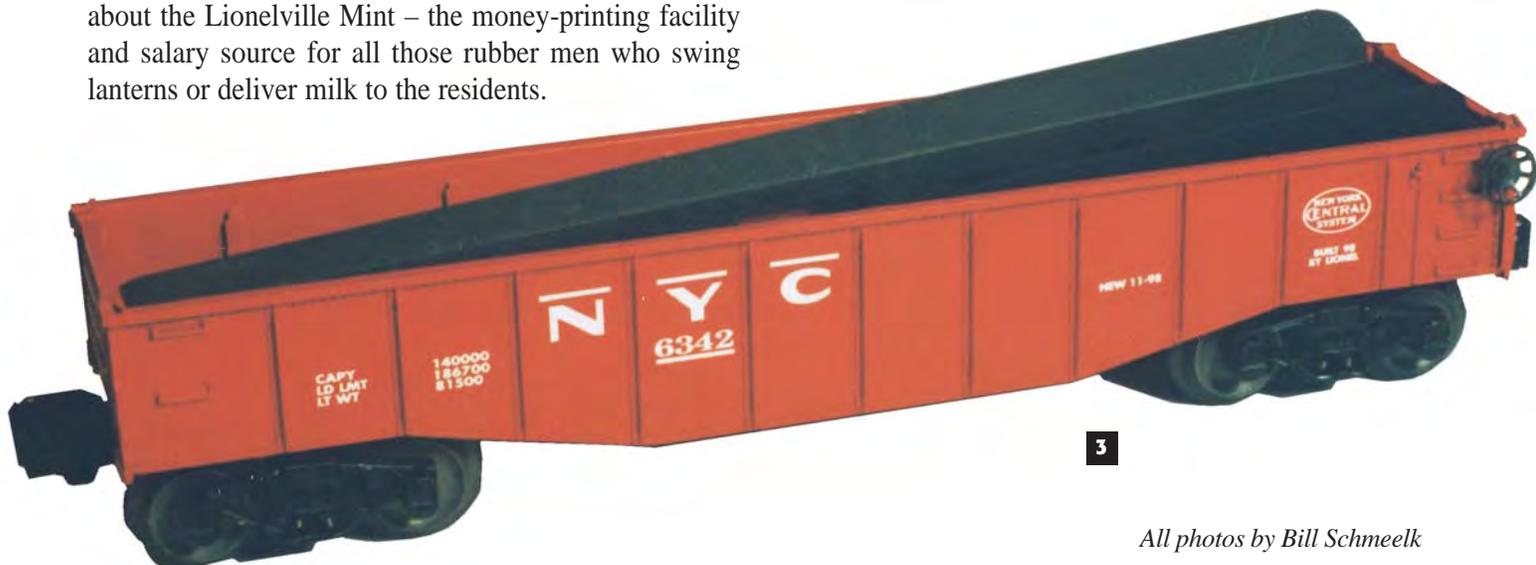
After a few years, Lionel is again adding to the series of Mint cars as shown in **photo 2**. We thought they had run out of city names for the real mint cars, but we forgot about the Lionville Mint – the money-printing facility and salary source for all those rubber men who swing lanterns or deliver milk to the residents.

Lionel Product Updates

A Lionel Lines six-wheel crane car was added to the Classic II line too late for publication in the catalog. Car number 6-19837 will be painted gray with Lionel Lines markings. The operating boom will also be gray, while the pivoting body will be red and have Bucyrus Erie markings. The car will feature die-cast trucks.

Here's an interesting note on the flatcar with the 1998 redesigned VW Beetle on board (see **photo 5**). This VW will be produced in Lionel orange and will not be available in that color from any other source. Lionel has also promised that they will not run this color again.

The 6-29007 Heritage New York Central Pullman heavyweight cars will not be produced with window striping and will therefore match up well with the previously produced Commodore Vanderbilt Pullmans.



All photos by Bill Schmeelk



4

Lionel and Meccano Connection

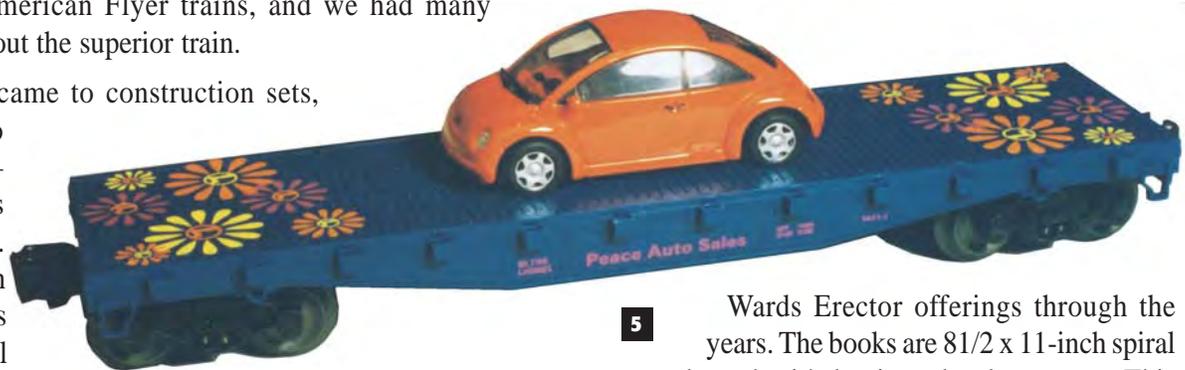
In the late fifties at about the same time I received my first Lionel train set, I was also interested in another toy of that era – Erector sets. These were produced by Lionel’s competitor, A.C. Gilbert. As a kid I had a great deal of respect for both companies. Of course, I was convinced, much to a friend’s chagrin, that Lionel made the best trains. He owned American Flyer trains, and we had many arguments about the superior train.

When it came to construction sets, there was no argument – Erector was the king. Although Erector sets are still manufactured, they are Erector in name only. They have in my opinion moved a step backward by following along the lines of Meccano, rather than the improvements added by Gilbert.

Glenn Patsch recently sent along a new book by Marshall McKusick titled *Wards Catalog Erector 1913-1985*. The final chapter of the book has an article written by James F. Mietlicki. Although Meccano preceded Erector, it was Erector that first supplied an electric motor with their sets. The first Erector sets were produced in 1913. Meccano first showed an electric motor in 1915. Although Meccano sets were made in England, the motor was supplied in 110 volts. Mr. Mietlicki makes a strong case that this motor was produced in the United States. He also feels certain that Lionel made it, in spite of the fact that it had Meccano patent stampings. The motor was identical to the Bild-a-LoCo motors produced by Lionel in the 1920s. Mr. Mietlicki also contends that Meccano of

America was controlled — if not owned outright — by Joshua Lionel Cowen! According to the article, this was sold to Gilbert in 1929, about the same time as Lionel acquired Ives. This is something I have never heard before. Has anyone got any additional information about this?

The article goes on to explain in detail the history of the Fair Trade laws in the United States and how they affected toy sales. I found it very interesting. Marshall McKusick has published two other books on late Erector. These books appear to be published on a small scale, yet they are well produced and written in a scholarly manner. I found each of them to be very interesting. The comments on Lionel are mentioned only in this latest volume which talks about



5

Wards Erector offerings through the years. The books are 8 1/2 x 11-inch spiral bound with laminated color covers. This latest volume sells for \$28.00 postpaid and has 120 pages. They can be purchased from the publisher at the following address: Ashton House Press, 820 Park Road, Iowa City, IA 52246-2427, (319) 338-6746.

A prolific contributor to TLR, Bill is LCCA’s direct link to the activities and new products of Lionel LLC. He serves LCCA as an elected Director.



Off the Track

by Ed Richter

RM 13075

The 1998 LCCA Convention is now history. What a great time we all had in Philly! I spent some time on Saturday in the trading hall and photographed some unique trains. I want to thank all the members who were kind enough to allow me to photograph their rare examples and to share the images with the club.



Herman Lotstein (RM 13091) showed his #29 passenger car in **photo 1**. This car

was produced in pairs and was part of the #6 set, circa 1919. These cars are of special interest because of the red ends, bottoms, and windows, with rare perforated steps.



Len Sabattala (RM 23105) brought three items. The AT&SF caboose from the “Father and Son Set” is shown in **photo 2**, and **photo 3** is a Mickey Mouse Spartone Phonograph made by Lionel.



The gray #763E Hudson shown in **photo 4** is from Doug DuBay (RM 2266); note the six wheel tender.

The #6257 caboose in **photo 5** was issued in 1963. Check out the metal smokestack; this one is hard to find. LCCA thanks Anatol Vasiliev (RM 11431).

Vernon Johnson (RM 20245) showed his



be gray.

The last few gems come from Bob Higgins (RM 9816). **Photo 7** is the #3242R Ives Wanamaker Railway Lines Engine.



Photo 8 is a #9203 Union Pacific boxcar missing its logos but with a red door — instead of yellow.

After the convention, Ken Morgan shared **photo 9** with the club. It’s the #913 Landscaped Plot by Lionel in the 1940-42 timeframe.



If you have any questions or comments, please drop me a line or send e-mail to: erichter@magicnet.net.

The official photographer for LCCA is a citizen of the city nearest the Magic Kingdom. Ed is also the photographer for the Office of the Mayor of the city of Orlando, Florida.



Lookin' down the Track

My Favorite Ad

by Ron Stern

RM 537

There was a series in *TLR* a while back entitled "My Favorite Piece." Now in a 'round about way you could say that this particular column is about that same theme with a twist; I would title it, "My Favorite Ad."

Back in the early days of my collecting – February, 1973 – I had just received a copy of Frank Ladd's *Illustrated Lionel Checklist, 1929-1971*. I was beginning to understand the numeric system used in Lionel's catalogs. That very same month a classified ad appeared in *Model Railroading* under the "For Sale – Tinplate" heading on page 90. It was an innocent-looking ad, if ever I saw one.

"Lionel trains for the connoisseur of finer pieces. Now in stock: very good to like new in original cartons, Southern A-B-A, Illinois Central A-B, New Haven A-B, Jersey Central (yes, the big beauty with two motors & original). Please limit two quotes per self-stamped addressed letter. No list on these items. Please call or write: Peter D. Bianco, 1811 E. 29th St., Brooklyn, NY 11229 (212) 375-3101."

As if drawn to it by a magnet, I focused on the Jersey Central. After all, it was the railroad of my home state, and its mainline track was over the hill from my childhood home.

It wasn't difficult for me to make up my mind to obtain this engine regardless of cost. I kept going back to the page in Ladd's book and to the entry for a "2341 orange/blue Jersey Central FM." I recognized the gray-roofed Lackawanna on the opposite page because my school-mate, Art Hitch, had one. I did not know anything then about Lionel's production runs nor the scarcity of some of their products. At that time, I thought they made a lot of everything. **WRONG!**

I must have made an offer of \$450, and it was accepted by Pete. I have no paper "trace" of this offer, but I do have the original invoice from him with the American Express stubs – in sequence – for the amount tendered. I placed a lot of faith and trust in someone I did not know for this purchase. Eventually, I learned that it is one of the hardest postwar pieces to find in fine condition. My trust was not misplaced.

I did not actually see this locomotive until more than eight months later. Understand that at the time, I did not know what the FM was. Or a "Trainmaster" either, for that matter. All I knew or really cared about was that it was a Jersey Central. That above all else is what mattered most to me. I did not actually see this locomotive until more than eight months later.

I would not have a Lionel catalogue to "dog ear" until '58. That worn-out publication is still a treasured part of the catalogues I have. I could picture in my mind the 2331 Virginian from the '58 catalogue, but a Jersey Central from '56 – I had no clue. In fact, if it wasn't for Frank

Ladd's book, I wouldn't have known what I was actually purchasing from Pete Bianco. The ad stated it was a Jersey Central; but no number, no color scheme.

Although I did not worry about this purchase over the ensuing months, I did ponder it from time to time. There was reason to wonder about it, for I was separated from it

by the Atlantic Ocean while at a place called Merrell Barracks, Nuernberg, Germany.

This locomotive has special meaning to me. Not so much for the particular item that it is, but more for the circumstances by which it was obtained – especially that classified ad!

Keep trackin'!

A retired military officer now living in Florida, Ron is a world traveler and interpreter of the train experience to this and the next generation.



"...I focused on the Jersey Central. After all, it was the railroad of my home state, and its mainline track was over the hill from my childhood home."

The Tinplate Cannonball

O Gauge; the Beginning

by Ken Morgan

RM 12231

With this column, I'll start at the beginning. Logical. Must be a little of Mr. Spock in me. What is O gauge and when did it start? While I'm asking the questions, here's a trivia quiz: does 777-1111 mean anything to you?

For historical accuracy, O gauge might better be called 0 (zero) gauge. How so, you might ask? Well, when O (or 0) first came along, it was the N gauge (or better yet, the Z gauge) of its day. There were already several gauges of toy trains on the market, and all were designated by numbers. In descending order of size, they were named 4, 3, 2, and 1 gauges. So when a smaller-yet gauge came along, it logically followed that it would be 0 (zero). Some time later, it was changed to "O," although for a while some manufacturers used both terms interchangeably. This new designation was probably made necessary because – unless the hobby adopted negative numbers – the next smaller size gauge would have been very difficult to name!

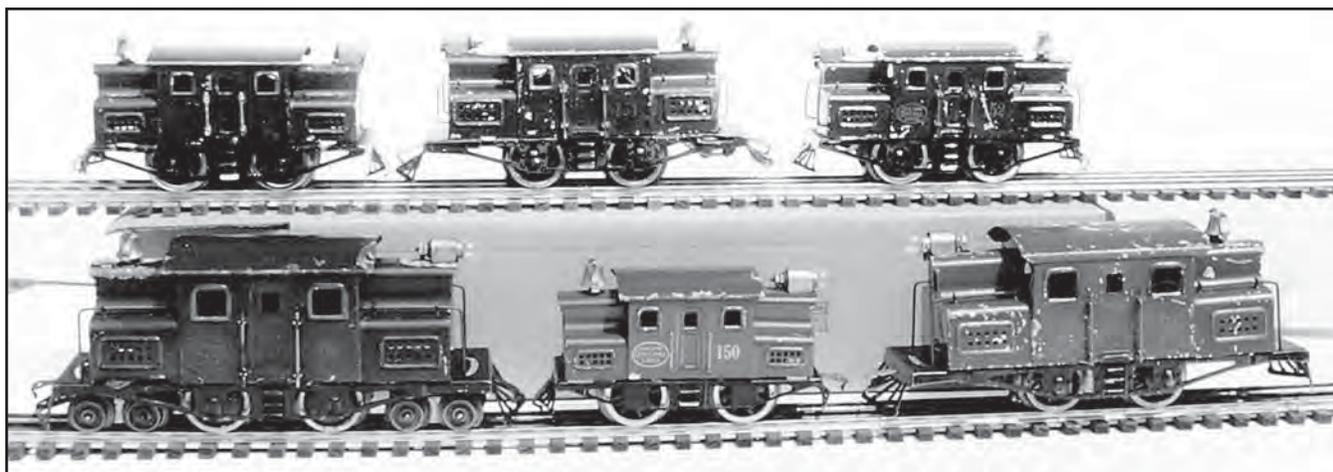
In any case, I'll use O from here on out. You can just file the information about 0 (zero) as train trivia. The original series of numbered gauges made a nice system, except that the various companies didn't coordinate their versions of each gauge. For example, "Brand X's" 2 gauge did not necessarily run on the same 2 gauge track made by "Brand Y" in 2 gauge. Also, the couplers were generally incompatible. This was especially true of the European makers both before and just after the turn of the century. And you thought the compatibility problems with Command Control were frustrating!

On both sides of the Atlantic, train makers like Märklin, Bing, Bub, and Ives mixed and matched lots of equipment, including some made under contract for each other. They continually pushed the state of the art and manufactured smaller-gauge trains to open up a larger market. The same phenomenon is evident today. Smaller gauges permit more trains in less space, and – except for Z gauge – smaller generally means less expensive.

Sometime in the late 1800s, several toy train makers introduced O gauge. Most of the equipment was powered by a clockwork-type motor. Of you wanted something to run for a longer period of time than a wind-up spring mechanism could provide, in Europe the most common alternatives were trains powered by live steam – usually fired by an alcohol burner. What would today's toy safety advocates say about that!

To be on the cutting edge of train development, particularly in America where there was less live steam, and remain on the side of safety, train companies offered electric, battery-powered trains. The batteries were open beakers of acid with metal plates immersed in the solution and hook-up wires connected the terminals to the tracks. Local electric utility companies didn't offer universal service as yet. Nevertheless, you could buy electric trains in O gauge from several manufacturers before the year 1900. In other words, before Joshua Lionel Cohen became J. L. Cowan and before he produced Lionel® O gauge electric trains.

Lionel itself came along in 1900. At first, he built 2-7/8 inch gauge trains; then a few years later, a slightly smaller size – but I'll come back to that. They didn't catalog O gauge trains until 1915. There has been some speculation that production may have begun as early as 1913, but that is based on old memories that may not be a reliable guide to history.



If nothing else, JLC was a superb marketer. Somehow, I think if he had something new, he would have placed it in the catalog as soon as possible. A two-year delay doesn't seem like a choice he'd make. So, let's consider 1915 as the year of the birth of our favorite trains – at least in regard to general availability to the public.

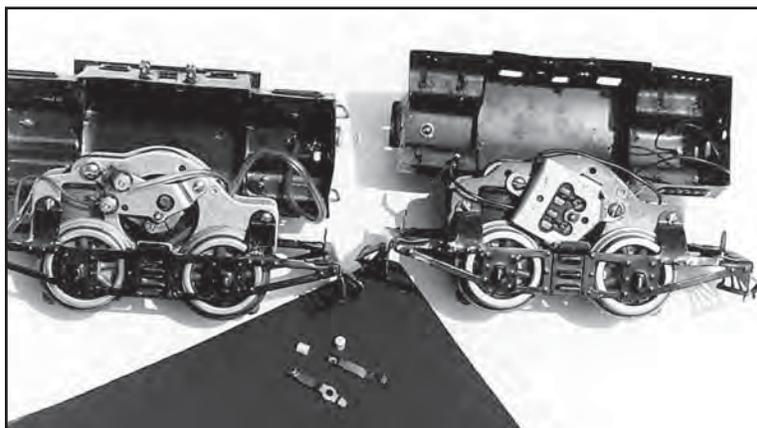
I want to return briefly to my earlier comments about the lack of commonality between the various manufacturers, those smaller trains, and JLC's marketing ability. He named his new (second) size of trains as Standard Gauge, but they weren't "standard" at all because they didn't fit any of the then-existing numbered gauges. He positioned himself in the American marketplace as the leader of the pack with this term - like the PRR did when it referred to itself as "the standard railroad of the world." A bit later, Lionel itself adopted this claim for its entire line! To some extent, he used the term O gauge similarly. His major competitors, Ives and American Flyer, referred to their trains as "wide gauge" or "for 2 1/4 inch track" or "narrow gauge" or "0 gauge" (zero, not O). All were unwilling to conform to Lionel's advertising. Yet, unlike the old numbered gauges, their trains were compatible with Lionel's O gauge track.

JLC made several leapfrog steps on the market early in his career and thereby established a path to success that would continue throughout his years as head of Lionel Trains. In fact, with his O gauge trains, he established another first: all of his initial offerings in O gauge were electrically powered. In addition, all were model trains; i.e., the prototype was an electric locomotive - more properly referred to as a "motor." Ives got that right; check the plates on their electrics.

Considering where Lionel was based – in downtown Manhattan – there were two logical prototypes to follow: the PRR and the NYC. The PRR was not yet committed to electrics. It had a lower profile in New York City because at that time Penn Station wasn't finished, and the tunnel under the Hudson River (which required electric power) wasn't completed until 1910. The NYC was clearly *numero uno* in New York City, and they addressed a local

concern. The city passed an ordinance requiring electric power for the trains to Grand Central Terminal to help rid the city of smoke from steam engines. Air pollution is not just a contemporary concern! So the NYC&HRRR (New York Central & Hudson River Railroad) was electrified from Grand Central to Croton in Westchester County north of the city. The power units for the trains were big black Type S motors. Originally 1-D-1s (pilot truck with a single axle, four powered axles on a common frame, and a trailing single axle), they were later converted to 2-D-2s to improve tracking. Hold that thought, I'll come back to it.

Lionel had already used this prototype for standard gauge production. Their early production, such as the number 1911, the 42 (which is the engine on the box covers for early train sets), and the later classic period 318, 402, and 408, are all based on the S motor. By the way, those tiny little pantographs on top were correct for the prototype.



All photos by Ken Morgan

The NYC used an outside third rail, not a catenary system. Only within the tunnel near the terminal end, where there was a vast switching complex to route trains to the correct track, did they need an overhead power supply for bridging the gaps across the turnouts. So NYC moved the third rail from the bottom to the top – literally. The third rail ran along the roof of the tunnel, and the small pantograph was all that was needed.

The variability in catenary height above the railhead necessitated the big flexible pantographs for high speed running on outside main lines, but that was not a factor underground at slow speeds when approaching station platforms. Perhaps Grandpa Williams can go into more detail about this sometime. To avoid stealing his thunder, I'll return to O gauge.

When he's "working" on his own time as a pre-war collector/operator, Ken is in his element. At other times, he's a field representative for AT&T at Bell Labs for Lucent Technologies.



Standard Gauge

Early Lionel Freight Trains

by Grandpa Nelson G. Williams

RM 14062

“When I use a word,” Humpty-Dumpty said, “It means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less,” wrote Lewis Carroll in *Alice in Wonderland*.

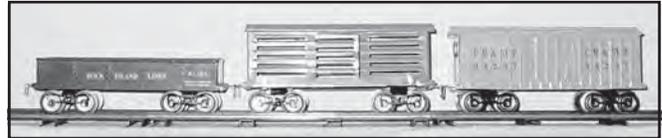
Since Lionel® originated 2 1/8 inch standard gauge trains, we may divide their production into these eras: 1) the Pre-classic or Early Period, 1906-25; 2) the Classic Era, 1926-42; 3) Post-war Era with reproductions of Lionel Classics and other classic wide gauge trains, 1997-99; and 4) the Modern Era wide gauge trains designed and built by other manufacturers, 1965 to the present.

Fifty years after World War II, hardly anyone asks “post which war?” Lionel built the same trains before and after World War I, and its competitors did not enter the standard gauge market until 1920. Thus pre-war means the tinplate trains built before 1942, and post-war means metal and plastic trains built after 1945. O gauge trains are subdivided after 1969, when the original Lionel Corporation went into receivership a couple years after it acquired American Flyer. This was an echo of 1929, when Lionel and Flyer divided the assets of Ives between them.

In the early period, J. Lionel Cowen offered a variety of standard gauge rolling stock, including trolley cars that Lionel did not make after 1925. Any reader who collects those early trolleys or passenger trains is welcome to share his pictures and information about them in this column. Please call me at (352) 344-9753 as I do not have those items myself.

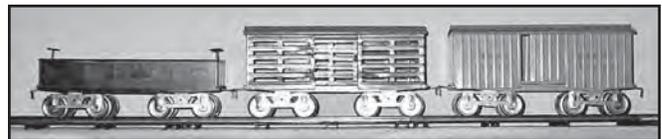
The early Lionel freight trains established the pattern

followed by the better-known classics. They came in two sizes, the smaller 100 series (like the classic 500s) and the larger 10 series (like the 200s). However, the longest early cars are shorter than any classics. The cars of each type have the same last two digits and usually the same colors, but some cars were not in every series.



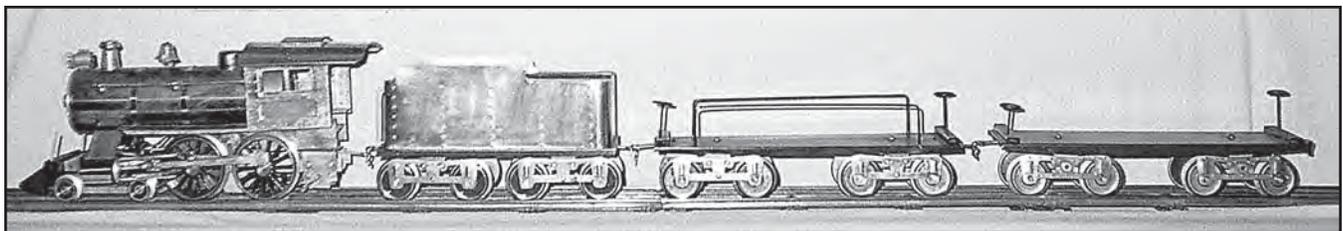
There was no 111 flatcar, but there were two variations of the 11s – one with side rails and a yellow coat under the black frame; the other without rails and painted maroon. The first 112 gondola was black with red trim and only 6 1/2 inches long (1910-11); later ones are gray or maroon and 9 1/2 inches like the other 100 series cars. The 12s came in black or green, and are 11 1/2 inches long. Both the 113 and 13 cattle cars were plain green.

The 114 and 14 boxcars were orange, and lettered CM&StP #99237. Some fifty special 14s were rubber stamped for the Harmony Creamery of Pittsburgh, who

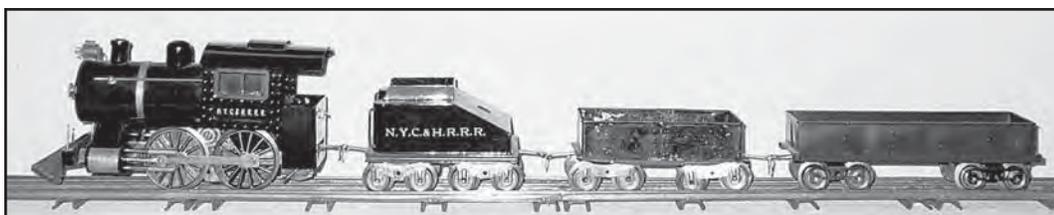


put two milk cans inside each car as a promotion in 1920. Lou Redman, “Mr. TCA,” actually found the prototype of this boxcar. Perhaps because the milk cans could not be seen inside the Lionel boxcar, the next year Harmony Creamery bought about 200 special flat cars from Ives for the same purpose.

A 15 maroon Pennsylvania Railroad tank car was mounted on an I-beam, but no 115 was ever produced for



James Cohen's reproductions of the No. 7 locomotive, tender, early flat car with railings, and Lionel No.11 flat car.



Lionel 100 series No. 51 locomotive and sloped-back tender, short gondola (built 1910-11) and longer gondola that pre-dates 1925.

sale. A pair of 115 wooden models was found in the Lionel archives decades later. They have since disappeared into a private collection. It would be easy enough to scratch build your own.

The 116 hopper car may have been meant to be an ore car like those in earlier mine trains by Carlyle and Finch, rather than a coal hopper like the 516. The 16 ballast car is not a hopper at all, but a side dump car mounted on an I-beam. It resembles the 21B in the Lionel Classic work train of 1929, more than a 216 coal hopper.

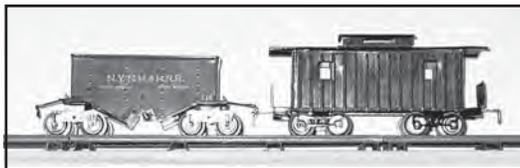
The 117 and 17 cabooses are almost identical except for size, with reddish brown bodies and cupolas and black roofs.

There are rubber stamped NYNH & HRR 4351 in both sizes. Some of the first 17s had small awnings soldered above the windows, either on the body or on the cupola, but not both. Although Lionel soon gave up this labor-intensive detail, Ives continued to hand solder little strips of metal to make its coke and livestock car bodies.

For motive power, Lionel built both steam and electric outline locomotives in the early period. I prefer the steam locomotives myself, and use my 1910 No.51 with the 100 series freight cars. It is the same as the No. 5 0-4-0 switch engine with a coal bunker, but also has a coal tender. My sloped-back tender has two trucks, while the first No. 5 special tender had only one truck.

The larger Nos. 6 and 7 are 4-4-0s with a big box tender. My engine and tender are nickel-plated with brass trim, and only their wheels are painted red. A No. 6 or 7 looks great on the point with a string of 10 series freights, but because they are made of sheet metal they are not heavy enough to provide good tractive effort.

Like their prototypes, miniature steam locomotives are harder to design and build – and to



Lionel 10 series cars; tank car 15, ore car 16, and caboose 17, left, are larger than the 100 series cars; ore car 116, and caboose 117 just below. The 100 series cars did not include a tank car. These cars predate 1925.

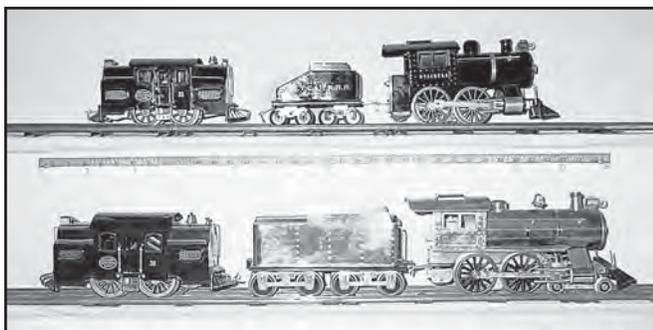
All photos by Grandpa Williams

maintain in good working order – than electric outline engines. My small No. 33 electric can barely pull a full consist of 100 series cars. The larger No. 39 will pull a string of 10s or classic cars very well, as it has a hook coupler riveted in one cowcatcher with a latch coupler at the other end. Early Lionel locomotives all have manual reverses. The Ives E-unit was not acquired until 1929.

If you have other early Lionel electric outline locomotives, I would be glad to share your pictures and comments with readers of this column. I also want to publish pictures and information about Lionel passenger sets before and after 1926.

The early Lionel locomotives and cars had hook couplers. When latch couplers were introduced with the classic cars, some box electrics had “transition couplers” that would work with either the older hooks or the new latches. The manufacturers of wide gauge trains used couplers that were incompatible with other brands. Only a few early American Flyer male couplers could mate with Lionel couplers. Otherwise, to run a mixed consist you had to exchange some couplers or simply tie them together with string or wire.

Given sectional track and a transformer to reduce house voltage, a boy might play with an early period Lionel electric outline locomotive and the small 100 series cars by himself. These were sturdy toys and cheap enough to replace if damaged beyond repair. The more expensive steam locomotives and larger 10 series cars would be safer on a shelf until Daddy could join the fun. In those days, Mom and sisters could only watch or beg a ride for dolls in a gondola or trolley car. It would be years until Lionel manufactured an electric stove for them and even longer before there was a pastel girl’s train in O gauge.



A former professor, journalist, and attorney, Nelson has collected standard gauge freight trains built by Lionel and others since 1910. He is a published authority on modern standard gauge tinplate built since 1965.



The Lion Roared!

Toy Trains at Auction, Part 2

by Buz and Norma Ray

Auctions are nothing new. Selling an item to the highest bidder is an effective method for liquidating assets, settling disputes and even cleaning out that mess in the garage or basement. Selling toy trains at auction has become a favorite marketplace for both buyers and sellers. TLR asked Buz and Norma Ray to share their insights about toy train auctions.

We've been involved in auctioning toy trains for several years. Through BDS Auctions, we hold, on the average, four major toy train auctions annually. In this article, we'll throw some light on questions like, "Why are auctions becoming so popular?" and "Should I sell my train collection at auction?"

We begin with a description of what is happening to the alternatives. Selling the first 10 to 15 percent of a collection is easy, and unfortunately some collectors have let this happen not knowing what the real gems of their collections are worth. Most collectors have a rough idea of what their collection is worth in total, but there are always ups and downs in getting to the final number. If the desirable items do not achieve their full dollar potential, then the value of the less-desirable items often plummets. This seems to happen regardless of whether a seller uses train meets, club publications or another method to move a collection.

Let's start with train shows. These are not an endangered species, but they are certainly not what they have been in the past. Train shows have become a place to advertise new products, sell hats, T-shirts, coffee cups, toys, books, magazines, and even Beanie Babies to attendees. It is becoming more difficult to find quality collectible trains at those events. Even at train meets sponsored by major organizations, the number of collectible trains offered for sale or trade is way down. With fewer quality items available, fewer serious collectors and operators attend the shows. Thus the percentage of buyers one can reach is very limited.

In addition, the amount of table space that a seller can conveniently control is limited. It is difficult for one

or two people to display trains on seven or eight tables, answer questions, and monitor the handling of items and boxes.

There are practical points to consider: how many shows can one visit, how many tables should one rent, how far afield should one travel, how much time may be required to sell it all? Please don't misunderstand me; train shows have their place, but the market has changed over the years.

Many of these same principles apply to selling through club publications and by classified advertising. This can be even more difficult because one is selling to unseen, unknown buyers. Although the key pieces of a collection probably will sell successfully even if the grading is not quite accurate, moving the other 85 percent can take a heavy toll on anyone's patience.

Selling an entire collection to a third party is another alternative. But remember, probably half or more (if not all) of the collection will be on the open market in a short length of time. Our suggestion is, if you have a total dollar figure in mind for your collection and you receive that amount from a third party, then do the deal. I would think the seller and the third party would be happy; in fact, one or both should be ecstatic! However, as in most other train deals, the final price will probably be negotiated.

Norma and I prefer to let several hundred active participants in a well-controlled auction environment determine the value.

There's another change in the marketplace that has affected all aspects of selling trains no matter what the selling method. The upgrading process for pre- and post-war trains is almost nonexistent. At some point in time, a transition took place. Nowadays, it seems that no one (or only a handful of collectors) acquires an item for the first time with the thought, "When I find a better example of this piece later on, I'll upgrade and sell this one off." In the past, this was a very common practice. Because many items were collected, traded or sold later — when a better piece became available — large volumes of trains in the "very good" to "excellent plus" range changed hands. Now almost everyone seems to want the same thing: the absolute very best example of the item they can find without consideration for upgrading later. Granted, some items are purchased to upgrade ones that are presently in

"...almost everyone seems to want the same thing: the absolute very best example of the item..."

a collection, but the newly purchased item has to be “the best I’ll ever find.”

The challenge to the seller is to locate buyers for every item regardless of condition. I believe there are customers for these items. Our job is to know where they are, get them organized, and assist them in any way we can, and assure they are pleased with their purchases. When done properly, the result is — everyone wins.

Now let’s talk about selling at auction. First, an auction must be well-advertised in advance using all the available methods of promotion, advertising and marketing. Our company and other train auction houses spend large dollars attracting buyers from all facets of the hobby. There are many sophisticated participants: operators, investors, collectors, accumulators and dealers. Each one knows exactly what they want and need. An item doesn’t necessarily have to be “mint in the original box;” rather, it has to be obtainable at a fair price and accurately described. We have seen many trains that are actually “very good plus” offered for sale at what we know are “like new” prices. Generally, these won’t sell on the table, and they won’t sell in publications.

At an auction, bidders usually set a dollar figure that they are willing to spend on a “lot.” As the bidding continues, there is some comfort in knowing that others have placed similar values on the items. This works as long as there is no reserve amount placed on the item and no “shill bidding” present. Ideally, the competitive process of buyer vs. buyer sets the value. At train shows and in publications, when a seller meets a buyer head-on there will be a difference of opinion about value.

We run our auctions differently than most other train auctions; we are not the auctioneers. We provide all the services that contribute to a successful sale. We may go to the seller, pack the trains and take them with us; or the seller might pack and ship the trains to us; or the seller might pack and deliver the trains to us directly.

Sometimes an auction is comprised of a single collection. At other times, consignments come in from several individuals. Auctions can be comprised of as few as 400 lots and last one day or as many as 1,100 lots and be spread out over a weekend. When all of the items in a scheduled auction are available, we determine the lots, describe the items, and – using accepted LCCA/TCA grading standards – grade as many lots as possible. As I assemble the lots, Norma makes entries into the computer. This information ultimately becomes the auction catalog. All sellers receive a personal copy of the entries.

Once the lots are cataloged, a flyer is prepared and mailed. We place ads in hobby-related publications as well as auction-related publications, and we maintain an interactive web page on the Internet. By accessing the web, buyers and sellers can view and download the current auction catalog as well as the previous catalogs and prices paid. The site includes a direct link to our e-mail address.

Lots are tagged, boxed and stored in a secure, insured BDS Auction facility until set-up time. BDS Auctions and its sales facility, The Golden Gavel, are located in Marshall, Michigan. BDS has been in the auction business since the turn of the century, so they’ve worked out a lot of the details. They provide coffee for participants all day.

Bidders attending the auction like to know when they are bidding against an absentee bidder. We have an individual seated at the front of the room facing the bid floor. He has all of the absentee bids. The bidders all know when he’s “in” and the auctioneer has an easier time keeping track.

We take care of the packing and shipping chore for successful absentee bidders. Those in attendance settle up with the auction house and take their purchases home with them. Sellers receive their proceeds in about 10 days. We compile the prices realized list and mail it to all bidders (attendees or absentee) regardless of successful bids and to all who bought a catalog. Prices realized are posted at the web site too.

In a future installment, we’ll discuss what sells well and what doesn’t.

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**Put this date on your calendar:
1999 LCCA Annual Convention
August 10-15, 1999
Fort Worth, Texas**

**Convention Chairman
Dr. Glenn Krob
2618 Cockrell Avenue
Fort Worth, TX 76109
(817) 926-6757**

and no trains for a month because I was the one who talked you into going back there. My father wasn't too mad about going to the switch tower to get cleaned up, but he said going back after seeing the big white man was just plain stupid."

"Yeh, I guess we should have told our parents," added Arthur. "I wonder what happened to the old man? My dad says it would be nice to thank him for saving our lives."

"That is what I wanted to talk to you about. My father and I went over to his house, and it was empty. One of the neighbors told us that no one has lived there for years. My dad thought the old man was a squatter, so we drove over to the 12th District Police Station and spoke to Captain Fisher. He told us that the old man in the picture was Pop Bartram. Then he told us Mr. Bartram died ten years ago, and the house has been empty ever since. The people in the neighborhood said he devoted the last twenty-five years of his life to sponsoring a little league baseball team that practiced in that field below his house. All his time and money went into it."

"He must have been a great guy," reflected Arthur.

"Yeh, that's what my dad said, but there's more. His son was a switchman in that tower; he was killed saving a boy's life. The kid got stuck in one of the switches. The team was Pop's way of remembering his son. One of his rules was they had to be out of there by dark and there always had to be an officer with the team because it was co-sponsored by the Police Athletic League."

"Does the Captain think we lied?" asked Arthur.

Mike was quiet for a few seconds and then said, "I don't think so because he was very nice to my dad and me. He said it was probably a transient that was living in the house. He ran off when the police showed up."

"Mike, I know he was the same man in the picture and so do you," reminded Arthur.

"I know that, but if we don't want more of the treatment that Charlie gave us we'd better stick with the hobo story." The boys never spoke of this to anyone again, but every Halloween eve after that night someone would leave a small bunch of flowers and a Mass Card in the rusty old mail box of that rundown switch tower.

Epilogue: Bongo Bands Bargain Basement is no longer in business. Mike read in the local newspaper that the police confiscated all his stock. Captain Fisher's picture was on the front page. The caption read, "Lost Boys Lead Police to Major Crime Bust."

As for the two sleazy thieves, they are presently serving time in prison. At least they are getting regular showers and clean clothes to wear. The big man was wanted by police for just about everything by just about everybody from almost everywhere. He was such a stinker that the word on the grapevine is that even the ACLU endorsed his execution. But the prosecutor settled for life in prison because of ethical considerations. The police posted undercover officers at the old switch tower for a few days. They waited for regular customers to show up and arrested them for purchasing stolen property.

The teachers – now Mr. and Mrs. Johnson – are doing fine and successfully launched a campaign to get the tower boarded up for safety's sake with help from Captain Fisher.

Charlie served his time in detention and is now a very close friend to Mike and Arthur. They still haven't told him the real story of The Haunted Switch Tower.

Philadelphian Mario is the father of four-year old Michael, who often falls asleep in his lap while listening to dad tell train-related stories about the make-believe character, Railroad Mike.



LCCA Meets

October 25, 1998 Wichita, Kansas, at the Sedgwick County Extension Center. Meet Co-Hosts are Bill Laughlin (316) 744-2527 and Ellis Brandy (316) 722-4342. Tables are \$8 each. Setup 7-8 a.m., LCCA trading 8-9 a.m., meet open to guests 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. LCCA members and their family free; guest admission \$3. The Extension Center (4-H Hall) is located at 7001 W. 21st Street North.

November 27-28, 1998 Lexington, Kentucky, at Continental Inn. Harry Overtom (606) 268-1942 is the Host of this two-day event that is also open to guests. Co-hosts are Winfrey Adkins (606) 873-3714, Larry Black (502) 695-4355 and Bill Crace (606) 299-2423. Tables are \$15 for LCCA members and \$22 for non-members. Contact Bill Crace for table reservations. Adult guests are \$3.50, and children under 12 admitted free with parents. Setup and "early bird" trading for LCCA members only is 6-9 p.m. on Friday, November 27th and 8-10 a.m. on Saturday, the 28th. Meet is open to guests from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on November 28th. There

will be several operating layouts, vendors, and 200 trading tables available. The Continental Inn is at US 60 and New Circle Road.

December 5, 1998 Naperville, Illinois, at Naperville Central H. S. Len Hopkins (708) 420-9066 and Larry Brongel (708) 354-8486 are co-hosting the 1998 Christmas Train Meet. Tables are \$10 each. LCCA members and family admitted free. Adult guests are \$5, with children under 10 admitted free if accompanied by an adult. Registration and setup 7:30-9 a.m. LCCA trading 9-10:30 a.m. Guest trading from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. There will be an operating layout and refreshments available. The high school is located at 440 W. Aurora Ave. Early table reservations strongly suggested.

August 10-15, 1999 29th annual LCCA Convention in Fort Worth, Texas. Start making your plans now to attend next year's LCCA Convention deep in the heart of Texas. Host Dr. Glenn Kroh (817) 926-6757 and his committee are putting together a great event in the Lone Star State. Look for additional information in future LCCA publications and in the convention brochure starting with the February, 1999 issue of *The Lion Roars*.

Chief Dispatcher

Time for a Check Up

by Bob Amling

RM 9116

The photo below is a picture of a PRR display at the Altoona Railroaders Memorial. I took this snapshot during the LCCA convention tour. I thought that it was a perfect lead-in for this column. I'll quote two passages from it; the small print of the photo may not be readable here.

“Keeping the system running meant keeping the equipment in good working order. There was never a good time for a breakdown.”

“Between runs, an engine was serviced – lubricated and filled with coal, water, and sand – and inspected. A steamer was available to work about 250 days out of a year. But scheduling time for checkups paid off in the long haul.”

By comparison, in O scale your locomotives need about 29 days of maintenance a year. Seriously though ...

Stop! Don't run those trains, unless you can answer three questions!

- 1) How many hours of run-time have passed since the last lube and oil of that engine?
- 2) What are the manufacturer's recommended intervals for oiling axles and running gear?
- 3) What are the manufacturer's recommended intervals for lubricating gears on the truck assembly and the motor gearbox?

You say you don't know? Don't be ashamed, you are not alone. If you want to preserve those engines, read on.

You may run your trains often or hardly ever; it doesn't matter. Both situations require attention. If you are an operator and rack up hour after hour on your equipment, you had better hit the lube rack. If your trains are stored most of the time, the grease and oil will dry up in a year or

so. A young man who was running trains on the RVHR modular layout at the LCCA convention learned this in a hurry. He was attempting to run a consist of a Williams GG-1 on point with a set of 60-foot streamliners in tow. The train kept parting. When one of the senior members helped him put the train back together, he pushed the cars toward the engine. He immediately noticed the drag on the cars. Picking up one of the cars, he inspected the wheel set then had a short discussion with the young man. Soon after, the well-lubricated train was rolling along trouble free.

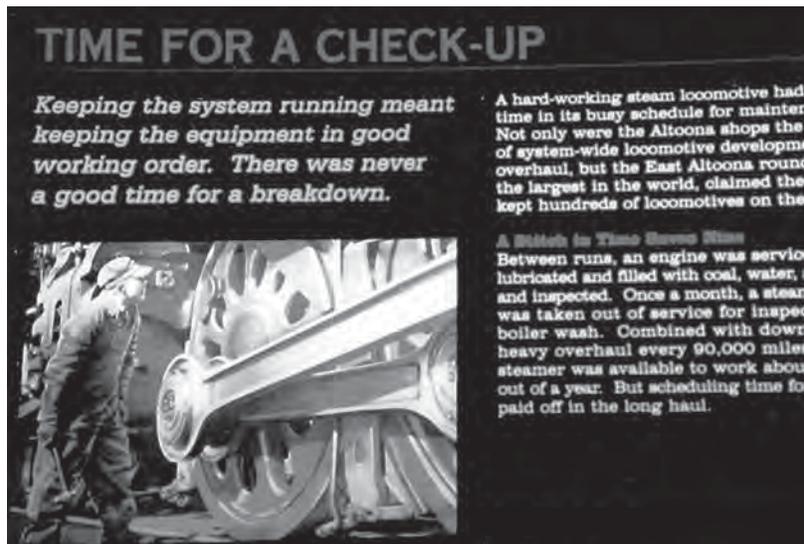
I originally was going to use Lionel® LLC and MTH® product inserts for my information, but while I was at the LCCA convention I decided to go directly to the source

— Bob Ryder of Lionel.

He suggested that I contact Mike Bragda, the Service Manager at Lionel. He was very helpful. Mike recommended the interval for lubrication should be after 20 hours of use or several months of storage. To properly care for your Lionel engines, stock up on some Lionel oil and

lubricant. It is important to use the manufacturer's recommended oil and lube. You may find another product that you think is superior or more reasonable, but are you sure that it won't attack the non-metallic gears or the finish of your car or engine? Mike cautioned, “Only a few drops are needed.” Over-lubricating will result in excess oil or grease getting all over the body of your train, as well as dripping onto the track. Using the insert packed with your engine, identify the oil (O) and lube (L) points. A drop or two of oil is all that is needed on each (O) point. These range from axle bearings to pickup roller bearings. Steam engines have more (O) points on the linkage. Lubricate the exposed gears with Lionel lubricant.

I also requested lubrication information at the MTH display, and I was directed to Mr. Adelman at MTH, the Service Manager, I believe. I received an e-mail response from Chris Smithson, PR and Advertising Director at MTH. Chris explained that MTH engines are not pre-lubed because they don't want the lube and oil to get all over the box during shipping. He did state that the sealed gear



boxes are greased. In Chris' words, "A few minutes spent lubricating external gears, rollers, and rods are all that is necessary for smooth, quiet operation." I'm sure that he meant to include wheel and/or axle bearings. On the proper interval for lubrication, Chris said, "Intervals depend on operating conditions and type of oil used."

Jeff Cohen, PR Manager at K-Line offered the following information. Engines should be checked for the proper amount of lubricant after 6 to 8 hours of running time or a month of storage. Jeff stressed that these are guidelines and should be used as such. Jeff's remarks are well taken. If the runtime on an engine is at the point of needing a lube, but upon inspection the lube is adequate, then leave it alone. This goes back to Mike Bragda's point: don't over-lube! Conversely, if an engine that has been running only for a few hours since the last lube is squeaking like a rusty gate, get it on the lube rack fast!

So, how do we keep track of runtimes, etc.? In the example below, the 611 has logged 9 hours and should be good for another 9 or so before requiring a lube job. The 773 on the other hand has been in the box or on the shelf for approximately 8 months, and should be lubed before a run.

The maintenance log is a way to keep track of the performance of each item in your collection. Give these forms a try, and please let me know how they work for you.

If you would like an 8x10 copy of the forms on a separate sheet, send a #10 SASE to: LCCA Maintenance Forms, c/o Bob Amling, 2023 Coyle Street, Brooklyn, NY 11229-4013.

Some thoughts on modular railroading – former *TLR* editor, Jim Kellow, started an initiative to promote this activity at LCCA meets and conventions. He and I have secured permission to use the *Tinplate Trackers Manual* as a source for articles, and we eventually want the author of that manual to write a column in *TLR*. I presented an under-construction module for display at the convention in Philly and attached a questionnaire to it, but got nary a response. In looking over an earlier membership list of the Tinplate Trackers I found a good percentage of matches to the LCCA membership. Is there sufficient interest out there to pursue LCCA Modular Standards? Let me know by e-mail <hirail02@aol.com> or snail mail. I'm in the *Roster*. Keep them lubed and rollin'!

Brooklynite Bob is a "frequent flyer" in cyberspace on train-related listserv sites. He's developing a pattern for three-rail modules as a basis for a really huge layout by participants.



Enging / Car Runtime Log				
Engine or Car #	MFR	Hours Run	Date Stored	Notes
611	Lionel	### /###		
773	Lionel		12/15/97	

Form continued on inside back cover.

LCCA Board Meeting Minutes

March 14, 1998

Philadelphia, PA

The Philadelphia, PA Spring meeting of the LCCA Board of Directors was held at the Adams Mark Motel in Philadelphia, the site of the 1998 LCCA National Convention, on Saturday, March 14, 1998. The meeting was called to order at 8:08 a.m. by President Overtoom. Dienzel Dennis, LCCA Secretary, called the roll with the following in attendance: President Overtoom; Vice President Button; Secretary Dennis; Assistant Secretary Schwartz; Treasurer Fogg; Immediate Past President Otten; and Directors Caponi, Carlson, DuBay and Schmeelk. Director Seddon was absent and his proxy vote was given to Mr. Fisher. Also in attendance were guests Jim Kellow, John Ellingson, Susan Ellingson, Jim Popp, Mario Evangelista and Steve Stanley.

A motion by Schmeelk with a second by DuBay was passed to dispense with the reading of the last meeting's minutes and accept as published in *The Lion Roars*.

Reports

Vice President Button reported that we have hosted ten regional meets this year with six more scheduled. We have three more in the making for the Fall. Losses have been cut considerably by working closely with the Meet Host. Report accepted.

Treasurer Eric Fogg reported on the financial status of the club. We are in good financial condition with all bills paid to date. Motion to accept passed.

Dienzel Dennis next gave the Secretary's report. He reported on our membership status. The last number assigned, as of 3/13/98 was #24349. We have 11,923 active members (48.9%) after 28 years. Individual members and changes were detailed in this report. Secretary Dennis has mailed out 53 mailings, consisting of 1,602 *Rosters* to new members. Six of these mailings have occurred since our last meeting in October with 74 *Rosters* mailed out. We still have 1,600 *Rosters* in inventory. We will look at printing a new *Roster* during our July board meeting. Motion to accept the Secretary's report by Mr. Otten with a second by Mr. Carlson. Motion passed.

Assistant Secretary Al Schwartz gave his report. He has mailed out 605 letters to members who did not renew.

These mailings were made on February 8, and we have not received the results of these mailings. Report accepted.

Conventions

Mr. Caponi and Mr. Popp reported on the upcoming LCCA National Convention in Philadelphia. Everything is looking good, including hotel arrangements, trading floor procedures, banquet set up, tours, transportation, and especially the Amtrak ride to Horseshoe Curve. There will be no smoking or alcohol allowed on the Amtrak Train. Report accepted.

We ordered 3,000 convention cars and all but 341 were sold as of last week. They are all probably gone by now.

A special Ben Franklin Reefer will be available for people to buy who register and attend the convention. They will be mailed when they are assembled, sometime after the convention. There will be 300 at the convention with 100 used for table prizes at the banquet and 200 sold to the first 200 arrivals.

Mr. Fisher reported that he and the committee are pleased with the progress of the 1999 LCCA National Convention in Fort Worth, Texas. The committee is doing a good job and staying on top of things.

Mr. Otten next reported on the year 2000 LCCA National Convention in Dearborn, Michigan. It will be held in conjunction with LOTS. Combined meetings are being held with discussions about tours, financial arrangements and convention cars. After much discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Schmeelk to have Mr. Caponi check with Lionel® on an 0-6-0 steam switcher and Mr. Otten check with Lionel on an SD40 or similar diesel with Command Control and two-color decoration. They will report back as soon as possible. The deadline is near for a decision on our Third Decade engine. Mr. DuBay seconded; motion passed.

After a brief break, Don Carlson gave a report on the spreadsheet he mailed out. He was then given a standing ovation for five years of excellent service as *The Lion Roars* editor. He introduced Jim Kellow, our new editor. Mr. Kellow addressed some issues and asked some questions concerning his new undertaking. The editor's report was accepted as presented.

The Interchange Track editor, Bill Button, gave a comparison on types of mailings with 3-day drops and Friday drops. All members submitting ads were surveyed and results were tabulated. It was finally agreed to mail-drop the west coast copies on Thursday and the rest on Friday. The report was accepted.

The total lottery archives sales were 24 in February and 14 so far in March by the lottery process. Schwartz's report accepted.

Mr. Otten reported the total and quick sale of 2400 airplanes consisting of 1200 of each color (blue and orange). We were shorted 140 orange planes and this shortfall is being corrected. They will be mailed as soon as possible.

Mr. Otten reported on our investment policies. We could get higher income but with a higher risk. The board agreed that we should only invest in government-secured, low-risk funds. We want to be careful with the members' money.

Mr. Otten and Mr. Overtoom presented the proposed LCCA Constitution changes, mainly concerning the positions of President-elect replacing the Vice-president and eliminating the position of Assistant Secretary. Mr. Otten moved that the proposal be accepted as presented and placed on the next ballot. Mr. Schmeelk seconded and the motion passed.

Mr. Schmeelk distributed a paper submitted by Bill Stitt representing the Product Development Committee. This was accepted and will be studied.

Mr. Otten reported that this year's LCCA Stocking Stuffers have been ordered; consisting of 2,000 sets of four cars in a collectable box. Presentation accepted.

Glenn Patsch has been updating the LCCA web site and he is open for any suggestions from the Board.

Our club insurance policies have all been updated and we are currently checking on the one minor area that we need to cover.

Mr. Dennis next reported that we have 1,600 LCCA *Rosters* on hand and asked about the status of our next printing. We discussed anew method of printing that could save the club a lot of money. A decision may be made during the July meeting.

New Business

Mr. Schmeelk has ordered 25,000 new membership cards. Everything seems to be going smoothly according to the Dues Committee.

Susan Ellingson reported on her suggestions for the registration process for the upcoming conventions. She is currently working with the LCCA Convention Committee at Philadelphia, the Host Hotel, and the LCCA Business Office in methods of streamlining this process, as well as to have better accounting. The goal is to standardize the process from one year to the next. This is a follow-up or continuation of the outstanding job she did as Registration Chairman at last year's convention.

We are looking for additional volunteers to help with the registration desk, as well as other services during the 1998 LCCA National Convention at Philadelphia. A sign-up sheet was circulated so officers, directors and wives could sign up.

The Interchange Track program is working well.

Our club checking account will be transferred from Merrill Lynch in Auburn Hills, Michigan, to Merrill Lynch in Des Moines, Iowa. This will be more convenient to our current Treasurer who resides in Des Moines.

Mr. Carlson suggested we try to create a poster to be sent to each Meet Host for advertisement purposes. These will be used at the discretion of the local Meet Host. Mr. Carlson will work with our club photographer, Ed Richter, on this project. Approval granted.

Mr. Otten again asked the Board's thoughts concerning a membership campaign related to the year 2000 LCCA National Convention. After much discussion and many suggestions, Mr. Schmeelk made a motion to allow Mr. Otten to research and report back to the board the possible benefits of a direct mail campaign. After a second by Mr. Fisher, the motion passed.

The next scheduled board meeting will convene at 8:00 a.m. on July 23, 1998, at the Adams Mark Hotel in Philadelphia during the LCCA National Convention.

A tour of the convention facilities will follow immediately after the close of this meeting for all officers and directors.

Adjournment: 1:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dienzel Dennis, LCCA Secretary

Mainline to Chesterfield

by Gary Moreau

As I prepare this article, we have just finished taking orders on our most recent catalog and we are extremely pleased with the results. Many items sold well beyond our planned production. On behalf of all of the employees of Lionel®, thanks to all of those responsible.

I've learned a lot since arriving in Chesterfield two and a half years ago. We've tried some new ideas that have worked very well. And we've tried some that I wish we hadn't. But Lionel has never been afraid to pioneer and I don't think we should ever stop testing the water. In baseball, the difference between being a Hall of Famer and not is only one hit in ten. We're not dealing with national security. We're talking fun. I'd rather thrill people some of the time than bore them all of the time.

Lionel is all about fun and imagination. We all get too much reality as it is. We want our products to stimulate your mind, to take your stressed soul to wherever it is that you are the most relaxed. That's why we're focusing our efforts on products that are original and unique. If you want knockoffs, you can buy them from the other guy. There's a big difference between new and original. We have 100 years of experience in blazing new trails. We've earned our leadership.

Take our new Odyssey™ motor, for example. Who else but Lionel would design and build a new motor from scratch for the sole purpose of powering model locomotives? Well, we're glad we did. We've got final prototypes running on our test tracks and we are having a ball!

We knew this motor would have power and torque. We designed it to crawl smoothly. But even we didn't expect it to be as good as it is. We've pulled a long consist of cars – smoothly – at less than 2 mph scale speed. Try that with an off-the-shelf can motor.

And there's more. Our engineers gave the Odyssey an electronic brain. If the locomotive encounters a bump in the track while crawling at such a slow speed, it compensates the power input until it can get over the hump – and then it goes back to the previous level. In other words, it holds a constant speed, not a constant power input. As your train encounters grades, turns, or any other speed-affecting obstacle on your layout, the Odyssey automatically adjusts without ever having to touch the throttle!

And, best of all, it's a true Lionel. We're making it right here in Chesterfield. And we intentionally designed it as an open-frame motor so that you could watch it operate - just like the Pullmor™ which all of us have found so fascinating over the years. Can you imagine if, as a kid, you had taken the cab off your train only to find a couple of metal cylinders? Something tells me it wouldn't have had the same charm.

Well, that's probably enough reminiscing. We've got trains to make. Actually, it doesn't seem like work. We have a lot of fun here in Chesterfield. We like what we do. Who wouldn't? We bring imagination to life. And that makes everyone smile!



For the past 2-1/2 years, Gary has served as the President of Lionel® LLC, a "dream job" as perceived by many LCCAers, probably. He is a regular contributor to TLR.

Chief Dispatcher (continued from page 34)

Engine / Car Maintenance Log	
Engine / Car #490	Description: C&O Semi-Scale Hudson
Lube Dates	
Light Maintenance: Replace motor brushes 7/13/98	
Factor / Service Service Station Maintenance: Magna Traction not working, replaced magets 2/28/98	
Problems: Pilot jumped switch #6 caused derailment, NTF 7/13/90	



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