

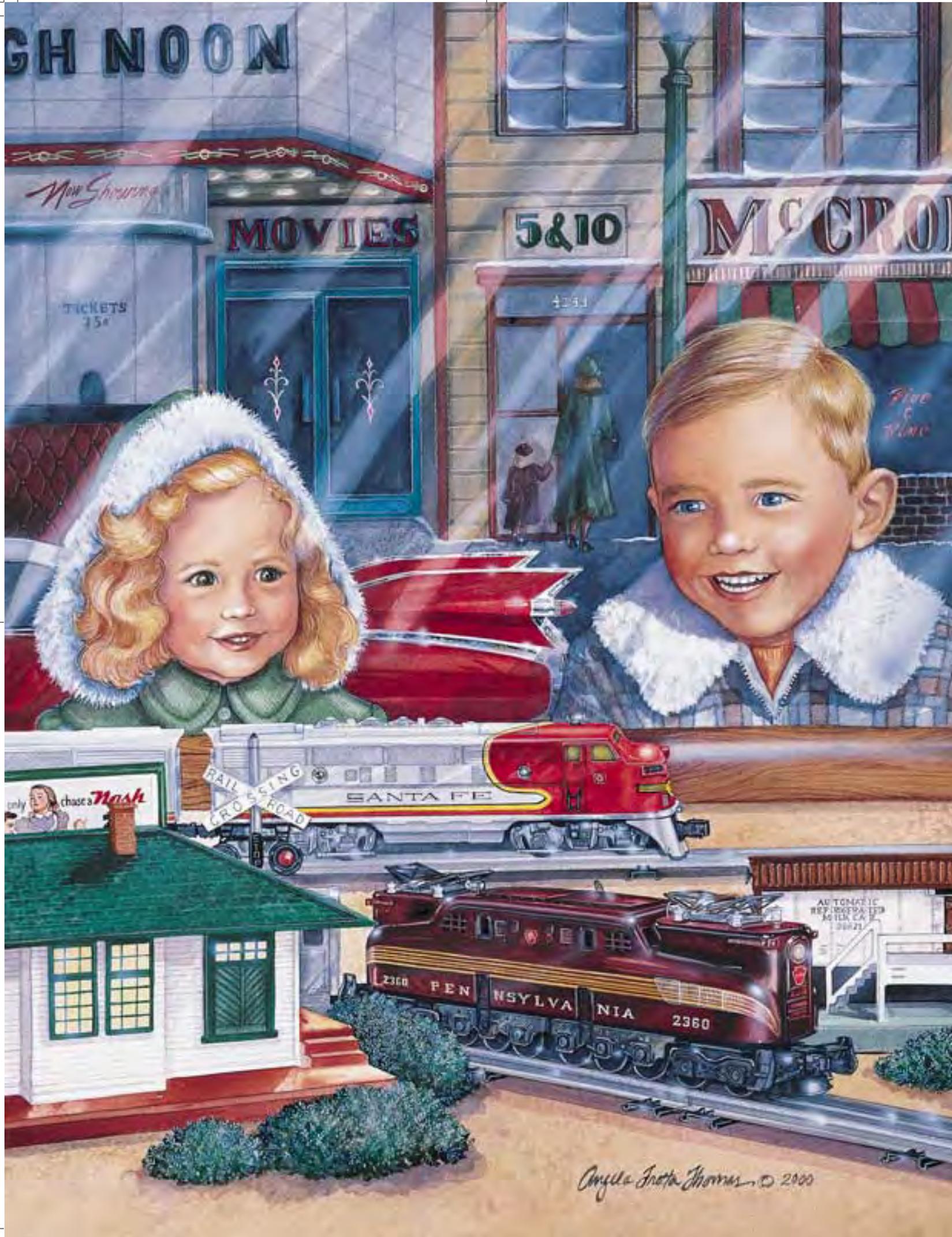
*The* Volume 30, No. 3 December, 2000

# LION ROARS

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*Angela Griffin Thomas © 2000*





*Angela Ineta Thomas © 2000*





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**ON THE COVER:**  
**Extending a LCCA – TLR tradition, Angela Trotta Thomas offered three panels of distinctive artwork for our holiday covers**

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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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*Editor, TLR* - "Make good" copy of *The Lion Roars*.





# The President's Report

by Al Otten HCM 429

Now that the Dearborn Convention is behind us, things have begun to return to some sort of normalcy.

## Year 2000 Convention Cars

Our shipper has received and sent the MaxiStack Convention cars, so all members should have received their cars by November 20th. If you have not received your car(s) by the time you receive this issue of *The Lion Roars*, please contact Immediate Past President, Harry Overtoom at 859-268-1942.

## 100th Decade SD-40 Engine and Caboose:

The LCCA Third Decade Engine and Caboose, as I reported in the October issue of *The Lion Roars*, was scheduled by the factory for delivery to the shipper on or about mid-November. The latest word from the factory is a departure date of December 1. As soon as they arrive, the units are to be shipped to you promptly. They are beautiful!

## Year 2000 Stocking Stuffer

The LCCA Airport Terminal Building decorated in Lionel colors will be shipped to the members during the week of December 4th. They look great and will provide a unique item for your collection and/or layout. The terminal will complete the "aerodrome trilogy" which consists of airplanes, hanger and terminal.

## The Lion Roars

Mike Mottler, Editor of the club's magazine since the August, 1998 edition, recently received increased responsibilities at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock, Arkansas. This executive position placed more demands on his time, and in turn it became necessary for him to make adjustments. He will soon turn over the reins of *The Lion Roars* to a new Editor. To assure a smooth transition, he will continue to serve and assist the incoming Editor.

I am pleased to announce that Bill Schmeelk will succeed Mike. Bill, in addition to being a LCCA Board Member and a Past President, is also the most prolific writer for *The Lion Roars* with 109 consecutive episodes of "Lionel News & Views" and other articles to his credit. Bill and Mike will work together on the magazine through the end of June, 2001; at which time Mike will officially step down. He intends to be an occasional contributor to

the magazine and to assist with production and logistics as needed. I hope you will join me in thanking Mike and the editorial team for excellence in preparing and publishing the magazine for a three-year stint and in welcoming Bill on board.

## Year 2001 and 2002 Convention Sites

I previously reported that our year 2001 Convention will be held in Lexington, Kentucky, and will be hosted by Immediate Past President, Harry Overtoom. Lexington is the home of thoroughbred horses, and Harry has many interesting tours planned. The convention dates and all other convention details will be published in the February, 2001 issue of *The Lion Roars*.

The year 2002 Convention is being planned for Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and will be hosted by Lou Caponi. We are again trying to plan another very interesting train ride and a very unique banquet. We will keep you up to date on our progress.

By the time you receive this issue of *The Lion Roars*, Thanksgiving will have come and gone. I hope you all had an opportunity to be with your loved ones and that you had a wonderful day.

In closing, let me wish you and your family a wonderful Christmas! Hopefully there will be many Lionel trains and accessories under your tree. I also wish you all a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year. And to echo Dick Maddox, President of Lionel, "Let's make trains — not war."

# Train Meets

Gary Lape, Sr. will hold the fourth annual LCCA train meet in Clinton, Tennessee, on Saturday and Sunday, March 24-25, 2001. The location is the Tennessee Army National Guard Armory located at 185 Yarnell Industrial Parkway, in Clinton. Registration and setup is Friday, March 23rd from 2 to 6 p.m. and Saturday morning 7:30 to 10 a.m. LCCA trading is from 10 to 11 a.m. Saturday with public trading Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tables are \$8 each. Admission charge for guests is \$3; for families, \$5; LCCA members admitted free. Operating layouts and food concessions will be available. Hosts are Gary Lape, Sr. at 865-457-8357 or by fax at 865-463-9702; Joe Glass, 865-457-3617 (e-mail <JRG027@aol.com>); and Michael D. Smith, 865-483-9608, (e-mail <MIKEDSMITH@prodigy.net.>)



## Elfin Tips for Santa's Helpers

From a secret observation post near Aurora Borealis, an up north elfin correspondent for *TLR* has passed along this tip for all Santa's Helpers. Be on the lookout for the "President Washington Mail Drop Set" by Learning Curve, a Lionel licensee, at a toy store near you. It's well suited for play by 5-8 year olds.

This set contains what a youngster needs to set up a "rug layout" with track, elevated trestle, the mail station, and more. The AA battery-operated locomotive has a working headlight, and the

action of the mailbags dropping into the gondola mail car is a lot of fun — for only \$50. The young Master of the Mail in your house will enjoy hours of interactive play with this high quality Learning Curve toy. This train set can be regarded as a precursor to Lionel three-rail trains a few more years down the line.



## Little Lionel Earns "TTT"

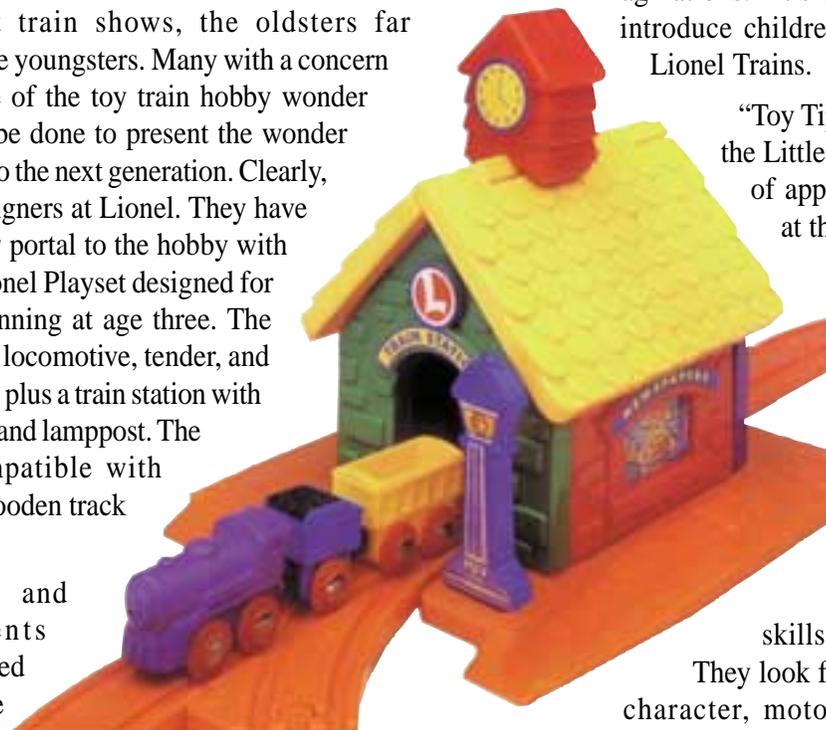
At most train shows, the oldsters far outnumber the youngsters. Many with a concern for the future of the toy train hobby wonder what should be done to present the wonder of the hobby to the next generation. Clearly, so do the designers at Lionel. They have opened a new portal to the hobby with The Little Lionel Playset designed for children beginning at age three. The set includes a locomotive, tender, and passenger car, plus a train station with a clock tower and lamppost. The train is compatible with most other wooden track systems.

Parents and grand-parents will be pleased with Little Lionel easy-to-build construction that enable children to improve their manual skills and improve their confidence as they explore and expand their

imaginations. It's a fun and educational way to introduce children to the fascinating world of Lionel Trains.

"Toy Tips Trusted" (TTT) has awarded the Little Lionel Playset with their mark of approval. The train set was tested at the Toy Research Institute in the College of Education at the University of Missouri. The "TTT" mark indicates that this Playset stimulates an educational and entertaining play experience for the appropriate age child represented for the toy. The rating mark is a combination of enjoyment and development skills, as observed by researchers.

They look for toys that promote children's character, motor skills, social interaction, intellectual development and self-esteem building, and high fun value. Little Lionel scored well in each of these areas, receiving a 4 out of 5 overall rating.



# The Tinplate Cannonball

by Ken Morgan

RM 12231

Following up on my last installment of The Tinplate Cannonball, I thought I'd offer some comments on my workbench for your consideration. Maybe I can save you some grief.

First, you must have a transformer. I use an old one, currently a Type S, but anything similar will do — anything from about 75 watts on up, with a reversing button and a whistle control. These things used to be found at train meets under the tables for \$10-\$20. Apparently, inflation has set in, but it sure beats assigning a ZW to the workbench. I have wired the power outputs to alligator clips because it makes testing much easier. See **photo 1**.

I can clip them to tracks, a lock-on, or, more often, to the pick-up and frame of a loco.

For getting into tighter spaces, I attach probes to them. T-shaped modeler's pins make great probes; the heads allow the alligator clips to hold them firmly.

The alligator clips also make it easy to reverse the polarity (i.e., reverse the hot and ground leads) to the track/loco to test bell and whistle activation on some of the newer equipment.

Second, have lots of parts. Some are more necessary than others, but one of my rules is — never throw anything away. I collect lots of worn and/or broken parts. Every once in a while, one of them will actually come in handy. Probably not often enough to justify all the junk, but what the heck, I'm not out of room yet! More critical, I stock many standard parts: light bulbs ranging from 6 to 14 to 18 volts, both bayonet and screw base, clear plus red and green, motor brushes of various sizes, trim parts for

prewar and postwar trains (e.g., journal boxes, couplers, brass railing, brake wheels, etc.). I stash away screws, nuts, washers, springs. Anything I use, I stock up on at shows. Over the years, I have accumulated quite a selection, and it helps to avoid frustration when I pick up a used piece that needs a bulb, a dummy pantograph, or whatever. Better to have it here than to have to wait for the next train meet, or mail away and wait for the part and pay for shipping — which can double the price of a single small part.

If you do this, you'll need some sort of system for organizing your parts supply. Carl Shaw at Madison Hardware (the original store in New York City) used what looked like an old library card catalog cabinet to stock parts. I could never figure out what system he used, but he always chose the correct drawer. By the way, during my visit to the new Madison Hardware while attending the joint LCCA/LOTS 2000 Convention, I was pleased to see that this cabinet was preserved and is still in use there. My thanks to Bill Button for the special viewing. And if you want to see what it looks like, check Don Carlson's article on Madison Hardware in the June edition of *TLR*.



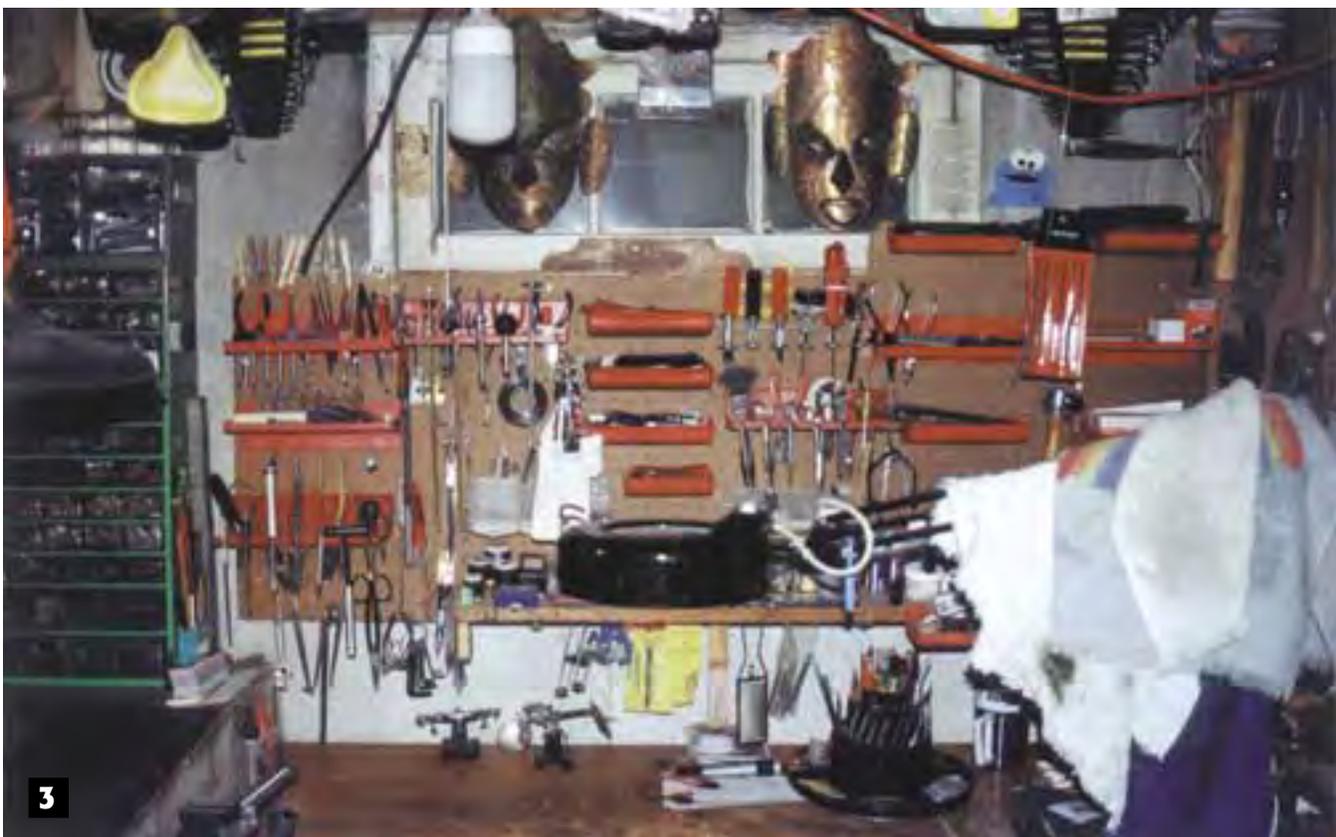


But I digress, as usual. I don't have as many parts as Carl had on hand, so I use the small parts bin shelf units available in nearly any hardware department. **Photo 2** shows what I mean. I also use these for some non-train items, but the contents of those units are more diverse, so I have labeled the drawers. Someday, I'll have to get around to organizing the train parts more effectively, but they're close enough now. They really save time and help me take a quick inventory before heading off to a meet. I can rapidly determine which bins are running low, and then stock up.

Another useful item is a test track. Long ago, I screwed a few lengths of O-gauge track to a board (along with both HO and N flex track, currently unused, but once upon a time necessary). The O-gauge track has a lock-on, plus a control track (uncoupler/unloader) and its controller. This once sat on the workbench, but it tended to get buried; and it took up workspace. So I fitted a couple of eyelets and hung it from the basement rafters over the work area. As an aside, I have lots of other stuff hung from the rafters, as well as various pegboards. It's a great use of otherwise unused space; sort of like selling air rights over low-rise buildings in Manhattan. Establish your own system; it will make finding what you need a lot easier. Hobbies are supposed to ease tension, not cause stress.

Back to the test track. I have since added a second board with about five feet of track. The last track section extends slightly beyond the end of the board so it can mate with the track on the original board. This results in a nearly nine-foot long test track that can be very useful for quick running tests. Not to mention critical when working with some of the newer scale-sized equipment from Lionel and the other trainmakers — yeah, I buy from them too. Nine feet is sort of the minimum now.

**Photo 3** shows my primary work area. Pegboards with commonly needed tools make life much easier. I have found that a good selection of pliers, wire cutters, screwdrivers, files, and clamps is always needed. I have also found that you get what you pay for, so buy quality tools. They will pay for themselves over the long run, as you will not need to replace them; besides, they'll work better. Other items in the picture include "third hands" for holding small parts for soldering and alligator clip leads for making temporary test connections. The circular optical lamp on the adjustable arm is also critical, especially with the built-in magnifier as my eyes age. The rags and towels draped over the arm are used in cleaning and polishing trains. The yellow thing hanging over the bins on the left is a dust mask. It's good for lots of clean-up work, but for heavier duty, I also have a good breathing filter.





Under the bench are things like soldering guns and drills, including a variable speed Dremel tool (an absolute necessity) and another cause for further purchases. The accessories that go with it include various drill bits, wire brushes, grinding attachments, cutting disks, saws, polishing gear, etc. Another important item: in the red bin just below Cookie Monster are a couple of pairs of safety glasses. NEVER USE ANY POWER TOOL WITHOUT THEM. You only get one set of eyes.

Decorations are optional. Cookie Monster dates back to the years when my sons were younger. The two metal masks go back even further. If any of you remember my tale of riding trains around the country with my grandmother back when I was an impressionable youth (and, boy, did those trains make an impression on me!), they are souvenirs of a brief visit to Tijuana. A few other items I have found helpful are a variety of modeler's vises, both bench-mounted and hand-held. One of the bench vises is shown at the bottom left of **photo 3**. I have found that different sizes are needed, and optional soft jaws are very helpful to avoid marring surfaces. One of my hand vises is just below the set of rifflers (a rough, shaped file) hanging below Cookie Monster. Look closely at the photo and I'm sure you'll find lots of other neat stuff that I have found necessary to buy over the years. Questions are always welcome, so feel free to contact me.

Something else you can add is any of several commercially available repair manuals. I have a photocopy of an old copy of the Lionel dealers' repair manual. It is very helpful, but not very user-friendly. Consequently, I bought a copy of *Greenberg's Repair and*

*Operating Manual for Lionel Trains*, which is based on the old manual, but better organized; not to mention easier to read since my copy of the original obviously was copied multiple times before getting to me. This book covers most of the postwar Lionel products and includes wiring diagrams and parts blow-ups for most of that production, plus part numbers — which makes ordering from parts supplier lists much easier. It also simplifies buying parts at meets.

There is a similar version for Fundimensions trains. I also have *Greenberg's Repair and Operating Manual — Prewar Lionel Trains*. This book is much more general than the postwar book, but it contains a lot of very useful information. Some of the principles discussed cover trains in general, not just prewar, so I recommend it highly. Most manufacturers now offer equipment diagrams, sometimes specific to single units or types, sometimes in book form. Check with them. Lionel's customer service department will supply specific diagrams if you call and request them. Just be aware that not everything is available. One thing I have learned is the more knowledgeable you are about the trains, the more helpful customer service reps can be.

As a final thought, if you haven't tried it — go ahead, open up a loco. Try something simple first, like a postwar FA, and see what's in there. I think it will really increase your appreciation of these toys and may give you a whole new way to enjoy them. The money you save by doing your own maintenance can be used for buying more trains!

*Photographss by Ken Morgan*

## Toy Trunk Railroad

by Erik Sansom





# Chief Dispatcher

by **Bob Amling**

**RM 9116**

October 25, 2000, and it's still balmy in New York. We have a subway series in progress, and I find it hard to believe that Christmas is just two months away. The York event was last week, and it's already a blur in my mind. Did you see Lionel's newest offering on display there — a 1:48 scale Challenger with super detail! It is offered in a coal version (black) and an oil-fired version (grey with smoke lifters). This is one pretty engine!

## Animation at York

As I walked around the York fairgrounds, I noticed more and more tables featuring animated scenes. One vendor offered super-detailed amusement park rides. If you have the space and the dollars, these rides would make an eye-catching scene on your layout. A logical addition to such a scene would be a Lionel trolley line for passenger services to/from the park. In addition, an in-park railroad could be erected using the Bachmann On3 set.

Other animated scenes included a man pushing a wheelbarrow, a man on a bulldozer pushing some earth aside, a lady hanging clothes, a man painting a house, and many others. Most of these items were mounted on a small block of wood, which would require cutting a small hole in your layout. Once the hole is cut, support rails must be added to hold up the new section. These could be a few scraps of 1x2 secured underneath the existing table with half the thickness showing in the hole. Then the new section could be dropped into the cavity. Ensure that the rails will not interfere with the mechanism of the scene.

Even the simplest animations were priced at \$100. With some imagination, scrap material, and some basic mechanical engineering, you can create your own scenes.

A discarded VCR is a great source of useful materials. Take it apart and look for the motors, cams, micro-switches, gears, belts, shafts, levers, etc. Sometimes pulleys are hard to come by. They can be purchased at a hobby shop that carries model planes. The airplane modelers use the pulleys for flight control. Old record turntables are a good source of motors, belts, and switches. When retrieving motors, be sure to note their operating voltage and RPM. A motor that turns too fast will need a set of reduction gears or pulleys to slow its output. Pulleys and cams can also be made out of wood.

A simple application is the park seesaw. The seesaw is on the table top with the seat raised about one inch off

the table. To accomplish this, the seat is connected to a slow moving pulley. The diameter of the pulley should be smaller than the maximum travel of the seat. This is important. If the diameter of the wheel is larger than the length of travel of the seat (in this case, less than one inch), the seat will be mangled by the over-travel. The stiff wire is connected to the seat and soldered, while the other end is bent into an eyelet or around a grommet. I have saved the bearing-like ends from my son's worn guitar strings for this application. A shaft can be secured to the outer edge of the pulley. Slip the eyelet over the shaft. Place some seated children on the seesaw, apply the power, and enjoy the fun.

If you are interested in this type of scenery animation, please drop me a line and suggest a scene that could be animated. For a more detailed description, refer to *Animated Scale Models Handbook* by Adolph Frank, ARCO Publishing.

Other ready-made animation includes Lionel's hobby shop with three layouts and the McDonald's drive-through restaurant by MTH. Lionel is also offering a hobo camp with a glowing, smoking fire.

## Christmas Layouts

Last December, your Chief Dispatcher addressed the periodic maintenance needed before you run your Christmas trains. Take another look as you set them up this year. To help get you in the mood, I am including a scene from last year's outdoor layout. The crew on little No. 2 is working hard to keep the line open. Operation was suspended following the 20th derailment due to iced



*Over the woods and through the snow to the Amling house.*

rails. Now that I've got myself psyched up, it's time to start assembling the Christmas layout!

As always, I look forward to hearing from you, write or call! My phone and street address are in the directory, and my e-mail address is <pennsyfan@earthlink.net>.

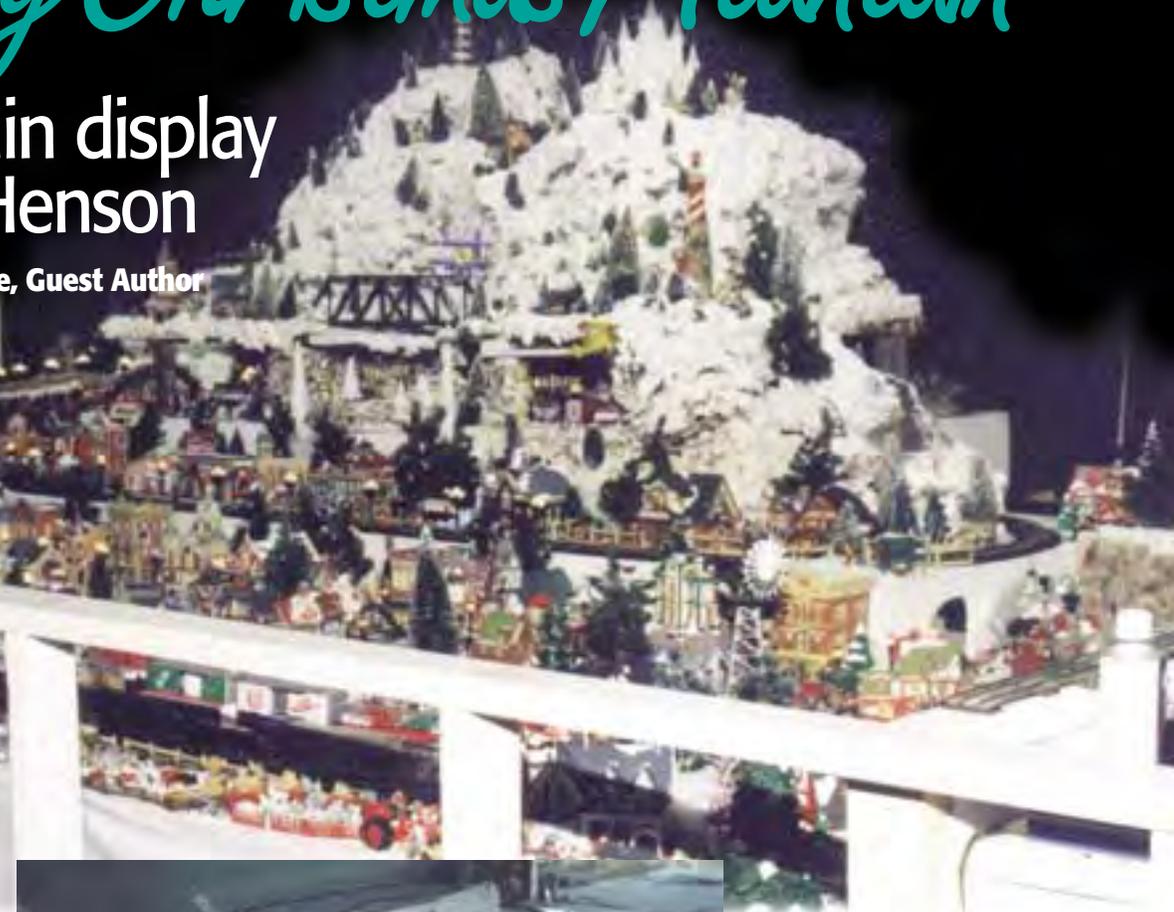




# Building Christmas Mountain

## The toy train display of Nolon Henson

by Dianna F. Dandridge, Guest Author



Around the bend, through the tunnel, and past the windmill, wheels chug along pulling freight cars, box cars and passenger coaches. Black smoke billows from the coal blackened stacks and a powerful single headlight illuminates the track ahead. Villages remain unchanged as trains travel through the countryside.

Villagers take their place, watching as the all-time favorite hobby brings past eras to life. Model trains make their rounds for the pleasure of the onlookers, who



*The mountain rests upon these unadorned platforms with loops of track; a simple plan at this early stage.*



*The geography of the mountain takes shape when all the layers are in place.*

seldom consider the amount of the work necessary to make even a small set-up come together.

“We have people coming from Texas, New Mexico and from as far as California to see our trains every year at the Hereford Senior citizens Center Festival of Trees. They comment on the winter villages, the snow, the changes from last year, but they have no idea how much work goes into this,” said Nolon Henson, a collector and exhibitor for many years.





*All lite up and ready to roll!*

For 10 years the Henson family has designed and set up the massive train display for visitors, who often come by on a daily basis and can always find a new attraction to catch their eye.

Since the early steam powered engines lumbered along, fanciers and engineer-wanna-be's have been enamored with the tiny replicas which draw children and adults. With fascination each generation watches as the trains maneuver through the vistas and valleys. Some collectors, like Henson, work to bring the years of the classic locomotive to life for thousands of viewers, who need a visual aid to make their imagination come to life.

Crowds of visitors view the Henson train display each year. More than 4000 children from the local schools along with an estimated 3000 adults come from as far as California to attend the Festival of Trees which runs from mid-November through the end of January.

For Henson and his daughters, Jan Dickerson, a specialist in Christmas wonderlands, and Luan Stout, the designer of the mountain terrain, the work begins months in advance of the actual holiday season. The foundation of the display is, of course, the replicas of famous trains. Tracks permanently attached to building boards must be

prepared. Boards must be scraped clean of left-over glue and wax. Landscape areas must be painted, and tracks must be checked for shorts.

By mid-October Henson, his wife, Bobby, the Dickersons (Tom and Jan) and the Stouts (James and Luan) are well into the plans for the upcoming holiday season. New snow mountains have been planned and are under construction. Older mountains sport glossy new paint, and boxes and cartons wait the day of unpacking.

Early November catches the family scurrying from the storage area to the trailer which will haul the trains, villages and extra pieces to the planned destination. Accompanying cartons of trains, ceramic houses,



*A walkway was made especially for the kids to look down on the display. The boards were placed on 2 cinder blocks high — 24 total to support the board.*

figurines and fixtures is the ever present supply of hot glue guns, paper towels and spray paint.

In the next week to 10 days all the family members will put in more than 250 hours setting-up and detailing the Christmas fantasy-land. "Every detail must be considered, or something just looks wrong. We start looking for new pieces all through the year, even as we are finishing with this year's display," Henson said.





*My favorite — trains traveling, airplanes flying and cars turning at the Ford Motor Company. Top left is Santa's lookout tower.*



*Bottom left is an animated nativity. The skaters watch the Lionel balloon from below.*

peaked mountains, the minute collector's pieces need the addition of scaled down landscapes to bring them to life.

Automobile dealerships hawking classic fifties model vehicles nestle eave to eave with drive in eateries. Horses graze placidly in trackside pasture, not caring when the next train is due and children enjoy the wonders of skating on a frozen pond.

Flying airplanes, hot air balloons, two clanging trolleys, six captivating trains, more than 200 ceramic houses and thousands of figures, trees and various accessories enthrall hundreds of visitors each day of the display.

True, it's all make believe, and soon it will be packed away and saved for another day. But while the trains and the villages are on display, children's eyes sparkle at the sight of each attraction, and the old-timers looking on may travel back to a point in time when life was simpler and a train's whistle signaled a new adventure.

Because of the fascination of model trains by collectors and those who just enjoy visiting a fantasy land, the allure of detailed mini-trains and their trackside villages will never fade. As long as a child can dream of

"Each village we set up will take thousands of pieces," Dickerson said. "We try to keep each village in a particular era of time. Our rural villages are quaint and charming. Cities portray the hustle and bustle of active towns waiting for the yuletide trains. Skiers slip down the mountainside; meanwhile, Santa's crystal ice palace and lighthouse towers over it all."

Model train authorities know it takes more than just laying down the track and watching the miniature engines go round and round. Just as the real locomotives traversed the country from misty oceans to sun-drenched deserts and over the wide prairies to the majestic snow-



*Windmills turn, trains run as farm life goes on. Even the waterfall (right) gurgles as trains roll by.*





stoking the fire and pulling a whistle and for as long as octogenarians remember days gone by, there will be someone with the means of bringing those dreams to life.

Just as the Henson's display changes each year, so does the art of the set-up. It never grows old and there is always something for everyone.

The Christmas 2000 season will be the eleventh and final year of the Henson train display at the Hereford Senior Citizens Center.



*The train stops for a quick meal at McDonald's or maybe a stroll to Ryman's Auditorium (middle back). The cinema is front right.*

*Photographs provided by Dianna F. Dandridge*



*Season's greetings to all from the residents of Christmas Mountain during the final season. Family members feel it is time to move to newer audiences.*





# The Mane Line

by Dennis Leon Clad

RM 10430

If you're like me, the Lionel corporate colors, blue and orange, course through your veins. So I don't need to tell you what a great year 2000 has been. So let's close this remarkable Lionel period with one of my favorite Lionel collectibles. From the many questions I received at our Dearborn Convention, it seems to be one of your favorite categories too — Lionel ready-to-run promotional sets.

Whirlpool did everything right to please Lionel collectors although none of us can be first-round purchasers. This wonderful set is the one to own for 2000. Only 500 sets with the Lionel SKU number 6-21999 were made, and each car in this consist — from the coal tender to the caboose — proudly carries the Whirlpool logo.

The pride of Whirlpool's Findlay, Ohio, plant is headed up by Lionel's warhorse, a 4-4-2 die-cast steamer. Not only can this veteran fill the air with puffing smoke from its stack and light the track ahead from its boiler front, it can pull a string of premium Lionel rolling stock. Truly, a sight to behold! The Whirlpool Special boasts a 9700 series freight handler that's quite capable of moving imaginary loads of Whirlpool products from factory to

market. TOFC fans, take note — the next freight mover in this stunning train features a premium trailer on flat car that is a very distinctive item. This train load of imagined Whirlpool appliances has a red SP-type Lionel caboose.

This whimsical Lionel train set is the brainchild of Harry Brumbaugh, a 16-year veteran of the Findlay Division. The order to produce the 500 train sets was given to Lionel in December, 1999. The trains were shipped to the Ohio plant in August, 2000. The sale of the train sets to employees and retirees of the Findlay Ohio division lasted only a few short weeks, and the sets were completely sold out. None of the sets were offered for sale to the public. Given such a worldwide recognized brand name as

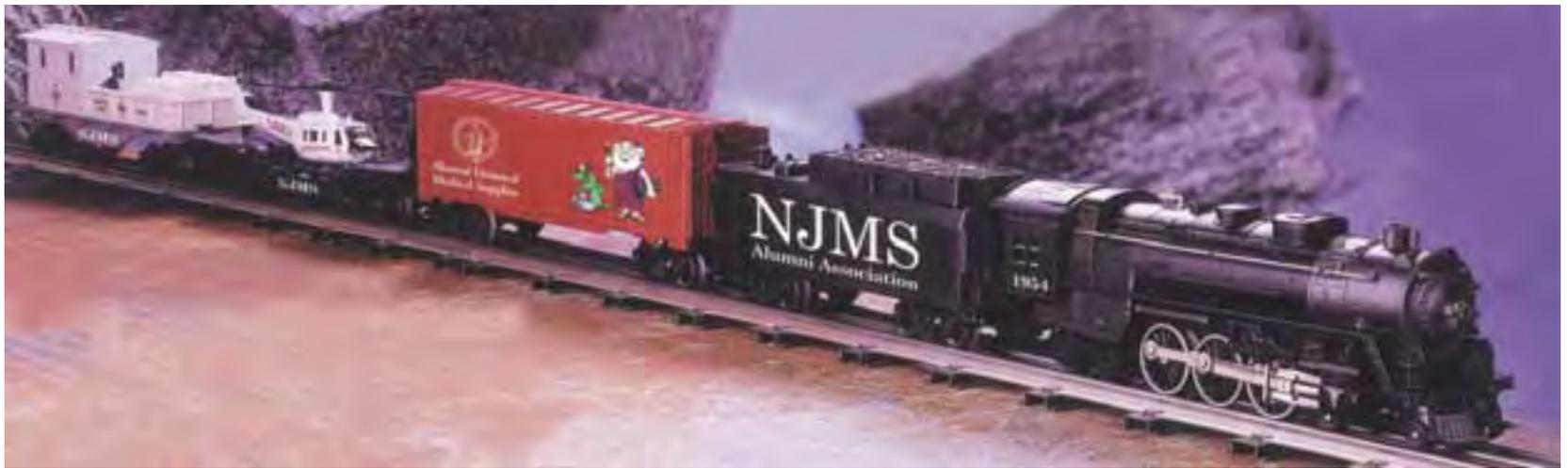
Whirlpool and the low number of sets produced — not to mention the fact that Whirlpool manufactures products in 13 countries — I would not be surprised to see the Whirlpool Special Train Set reach a high collector value.



*Sandy Franks, Director of Human Resources, (left) and Harry Brumbaugh, Assembler, show a Whirlpool train. Brumbaugh, first suggested that Whirlpool order customized Lionel trains.*

The first set we will look at comes as a happy surprise because, like the appliances they make, the Whirlpool Special Train Set exceeds the standard of excellence for a promotional Lionel train set. This collector couldn't be happier. Perhaps instinctively, with their first Lionel train





Right now you may be thinking, “That’s a great set, Dennis, but tell me about a set that I have a chance to own.” Well, hold on tight to your LCCA/TLR passenger ticket because I have just the promotional set for you. Best of all, at the time of this writing only 225 sets (of 500 to be made) have been sold. Clear the tracks ahead for a high priority train steaming toward Lionelville and into Lionel history.

This “All aboard!” call is especially appropriate for doctors and nurses and other healthcare providers. Number 6-21796, The New Jersey Medical School Rapid Surgical Response Train, is leaving the station now, and physicians may be needed to repair the broken hearts of collectors that fail to add this unique train set to their roster. This collectible toy train set is being made exclusively for the New Jersey Medical School (NJMS) Alumni Association as a fundraiser for this world-renowned training facility founded in 1954.

The idea of producing a train set packed full of 1950s kid excitement belongs to Joseph V. DiTrollo, M.D. Lionel Corporation historians should recognize that name because Dr. DiTrollo’s dad was Lionel’s Division Director from 1933 to 1968. The first piece of equipment in this train’s powerful consist will get your collector temperature over 98.6 degrees — a die-cast 4-6-4 steam locomotive. This baby Hudson is an immune system booster and a powerful prescription for radiant health as Dr. Joe’s train.

If you exhibit symptoms of Lionel 9700 series boxcar withdrawal, a new member of that series is a cure on rails. This red boxcar carries donated medical supplies to alumni and is a collection maker for no other reason than it colorfully displays the school’s mascot and his student. Should a rail disaster befall your railroad pike, the injured can be airlifted in minutes to Lionelville General Hospital with the flatcar-mounted NJMS helicopter. To ensure that the train is maintained properly and operates at peak performance, an on-board team of skilled nurses and paramedics could ride in the first aid response caboose. Painted to match the response helicopter, this caboose is the perfect end to a train whose imagined destination is Lionel collector history. To place your order for this wonderful Lionel set and fund a worthy cause, call 800-477-7040 or 973-972-6864. For only \$259.90 and a little Lionel luck, this unique train set could be yours.

### Lionel Licensee Alert

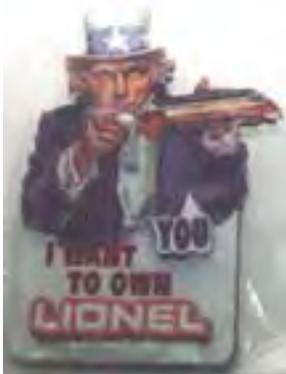
From all the track reports I’ve received, the centennial Lionel Hawaiian shirts have become a runaway success. These very limited shirts are in extremely short supply from all outlets, and some dealers have even given up trying to get more shirts from the maker. At this point, I would be happy to have a shirt in any size to add to my collection. The best way to add one of these attractive shirts to your collection is to call the Knolls Pharmacy at 310-454-6000. I have asked the kind folks at Knolls to



continue giving us a LCCA discount on their Lionel shirts, and they have agreed. Thanks so much!



*Get ready to add another must-own t-shirt to your collection.*



*This Uncle Sam 3-D magnet is crafted with style and class.*



*The Uncle Sam mug is a real standout in any Lionel mug collection.*

were placed. Thus these pieces are almost impossible to find. Please don't attribute the lack of dealer interest in these items to poor quality because that's the farthest thing from the truth. After many requests over a two-year period to search their warehouse, Ace Products conducted a treasure hunt for any existing Lionel Uncle Sam products.

If you have been trying to put together a collection of the elusive Lionel Uncle Sam pieces by Ace Products, I don't need to tell you what a uphill climb that task can be. Before I give you the exciting news about a recently discovered treasure trove of these highly sought after Lionel collectibles, let me share a little history and some photos of the find with you. In 1998, the Lionel Uncle Sam pieces were offered directly to Lionel dealers from Ace Products in a catalog titled "Lionel Express Apparel & Accessories." Only five items were offered and cataloged with Ace SKU numbers: 20024-061 Uncle Sam T-shirt, 50019-071 Uncle Sam playing cards, 50014-276 Uncle Sam bar sign, 60016-036 Uncle Sam 3-D magnet, and 60015-275 Uncle Sam coffee mug.

It seems that the Uncle Sam collection was not a big hit with Lionel train shops, and very few orders



*Lionel RailRoader Club and LOTS playing card sets are incomplete without this swell Uncle Sam deck.*

The announcement of the Lionel 100th anniversary medallion is very exciting news. These bronze medallions are three inches in diameter and weigh eight ounces. Each



*The perfect place to display your 100th Anniversary Medallion is along side the 1982 J.L. Cowen Hudson.*

one comes in a custom presentation box that includes a display stand and a numbered certificate of authenticity. According to Lionel's Communications Manager, Julie Laird, "The medallion is a distinct commemorative to our founder and the company. Its design and detail are indicative of the standard of quality our company has created for 100 years." To place an order for one of the 10,000 medallions to be made, call 877-837-5544. This Lionel souvenir will only set you back \$39.95, a small price to pay for a high quality piece.

### Calling All Lionel Specialty Car Collectors

e-Bay, the online auction house, is offering for sale at their e-Bay Store a Lionel 9700 series boxcar. This colorful freight mover will add some fun to your rolling stock roster. Each of the 500 boxcars made comes with a certificate of authenticity. To get your very own Lionel e-Bay toy, visit their web site at <[www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com)>.



Add both fun and rarity to your collection with the e-Bay boxcar, 36305.

While you're online, don't forget to visit the Lionel web site at <www.lionel.com> and click on the online exclusive thingamajig for a super four-car offer. At this writing, the 6-SKU numbers for three of the cars were not available. The Centennial Celebration Clear Tank Car for \$49.95 comes with a bag of colorful confetti, streamers and miniature Lionel logo decorations. This car is a must-



Set. The Atlantis Traveling Aquarium Car will not only add color to your roster but may also get you to wondering if Edgar Casey's predictions about this mysterious continent may be true. This special toy is packed with layout fun and costs only \$59.95. The Lionel Archaeological Expedition Gondola for \$49.95 will bring track miles of smiles to the youngsters who visit your layout. No Christmas train is complete without the Mrs. Claus Chasing Santa Mistletoe Express Gondola. \$59.95 is a small price to pay for an action car that will delight the little ones at Christmas.

Finally, I could not close out 2000 without checking in to see what new surprises David Shay, the Lionel Petroleum Collectibles Tycoon, has on the drawing board. In a previous article about his BP Oil Company three-dome Lionel tanker, I mentioned a very special display of this sellout toy that Dave planned to create as gifts to BP Oil company officers. Get ready for a first look at Dave's masterpiece. The base that holds the tanker is fresh from the Martin Guitar factory; it's made of South



American mahogany. Only 60 gift displays were made and mounted on each one is an inscribed



brass plaque. Be sure to call Dave for the availability of all his past Lionel toys. With a little Lionel luck, one just might be yours. He can be reached at 610-381-4312 or by fax at 610-588-3765.

I and Happy, The Lionel Lion, wish you a Merry Christmas! May you wake up on that special morning and find many orange and blue boxes under your tree.

Happy Tracks!

have add-on to the oh-so-hard-to-find Centennial Starter



# A Bright Idea

by **Bob Kelty**

**RM 17495**

Lionel trains are a wonder of motion and sound and light. The glow of trains and accessories on a layout are surpassed only by the glow in young visitors' eyes as they marvel at the spectacle of the toy trains in front of them. For the eyes of my bifocaled visitors, it became clear to me that I would need additional layout lighting for good viewing. For both these reasons lighting has become an important part of the train room in our house.

Early on in the construction of the layout, I realized that the existing four 60-watt lamps in our family room would be insufficient, not only for the trains but also for the children's homework and other activities as well. I chose track lighting because these were inexpensive and easily fitted to our finished ceiling using existing electrical boxes. I chose not to use florescent lighting as their wavelength distorts the colors of the trains. At the time I did not have any display shelves on the walls or any plans to install them, but after 15 years this has changed. I placed additional track lights in front of the shelves (**see photos 1 and 2**).

Be sure that your house wiring is sufficient to power whatever you plan to install and obtain the proper permits if needed or have a professional electrician do the job. Pay close attention to the wattage limits of each track light fixture and do not exceed total wattage ratings for dimmer switches if installed. One disadvantage of track lighting is it can produce a large amount of heat, but in a basement in Nebraska that often is a welcome fringe benefit.

Our train room began developing "character" from lighting when I purchased some railroad switch stand lanterns at an auction. These had already been modified with standard home electric lamp interiors, but the wiring had frayed. These were easily rewired using new extension

cords cut to length. Later I purchased similar lamps that I custom-fit to rail tie plates for floor stands. I also have two L&N switchman lanterns purchased at a train show in Omaha and installed at the fireplace, but they are not lit. These round out a cozy fireplace in the family room turned train room (**see photo 3**). Two large brass shop lamps from the Havelock Burlington Shops fill the room with all the train lanterns it can hold.

When I originally added these lights in the train room, I used switched outlet power strips to turn them on and off. Now I use remote controlled lighting modules, most of which were purchased from Radio Shack. I have two mini-desktop controllers (61-2677) that operate eight different modules each. These have switches for modules that support dimming as well as a switch to turn everything on or off. I also purchased an Active X-10 lighting kit from CDW Computer Center that came with a handheld remote and computer interface. Radio Shack also makes a programmable control center with timer (61-2470) that looks like a bedside alarm clock. These controls are spread about the room, and the remote is generally found under the sofa cushion.



*Track lighting for display shelves*

# Light It Up

Setting the individual modules is simple. There are groups lettered A through P with 1 through 16 addresses in each group, so you can have as many as 256 different controlled functions (not just lights). I like to think of these modules as “listeners” to the controllers. For example, C-3 is what

I use to light all the switch-stand lanterns in the basement. Two of these lanterns are on either side of the fireplace, and one is in the far corner of the room. Each has its own receiver module plugged into a nearby outlet. When the C-3 switch is activated or dimmed on a switch control, all of these lanterns respond as if wired together.



*Fireside lanterns.*

You can set up an array of modules for whatever you need to control. In our train room, wall switch modules (61-2683) control the overhead track lights. These allow for manual operation of the lamps at the switchplates as well as with computer or

remote controls. A 25-year-old, black-and-white Admiral TV set is used for display of Lionel’s Railscope, and it is controlled with a two-wire appliance module (61-2681). Lamp dimmer modules (61-2682) control the Christmas light strings. Did I mention the train room is also a family room? Dimming the lights is also cool for movies.

One year we decided to light up nearly everything in our house for Christmas with strings of Christmas lights along the Railrax train shelves in the basement. To do this, I found some plastic clips at the hardware store. I have yet to find any more of them, so don’t ask for details about the clips.

That was enough work to do that I didn’t undo it; I left them up. Though these have a manual speed adjustment for flashing, the speed also varies with intensity, so turning a dimmer up or down changes the flash rate. I usually run these slow and dim for the sake of my own sanity. That’s enough to get a “Wow!” out of visiting parents and children. There is also a set of



*illuminates the collection.*



*The layout and displays can be bathed in a nighttime glow.*

dimmer-controlled tree trimming lights around the edge of the train table on the underside of the guardrails to serve as walkway guides when the train room is dark. Special-effects eyeglasses from a trip to the Disney-MGM studios make it appear that each light is a tiny angel, adding to the Christmas spirit.

A flashing traffic light (from Radio Shack, their newer version is part number 42-3053) illuminates the floor in back of the layout where it is a little tighter getting around. All these add a luminary effect when the overhead spots are turned down or off for simulated nighttime Lionel layout action (see photo 4).

Of course, the layout itself has brightly lit trains and accessories. My personal favorites are the red and green bulbs of the O22 switches and controllers. I keep the two windows stuffed with three-inch-thick, high-density black foam so that the effect is the same any time of day.

When I was a child my brothers and I had motion lamps with trains and ships on them for use as nightlights. I do not know what happened to these lamps, but after a long search I purchased an identical lamp from a collector shop. This is

the type of lamp seen in the movie, *The Preachers Wife*, with a good close-up opening one of the scenes in the child's room. One side on the lamp features the General and the other the John Bull steam locomotives. These motion lamps have an interior cylinder with vanes cut in the top. Heat from the bulb rotates this inside cylinder causing the train pictures to appear to move past houses and scenery

with steam pouring from the smokestack. I purchased a second lamp (I turn one to the General and the other to the John Bull) and a framed variation of the General motion lamp, plus a modern "activity" lamp with trains similar to the Econolite Corporation 1950s originals. The new ones are "good runners" and inexpensive (I paid less than \$40) and easily found on the web or in catalogs. The originals are quite a bit more expensive (see photo 5).

Probably the most unique "lamp" is the lighted full-



*Motion lamps with locomotives.*





*"Let there be light!" seems to be the operative principle in the train room.*

sized railroad crossing mounted on the wall. I actually have only the crossbuck, and I use standard 12-volt automobile backup lamps mounted behind the black shrouded red lens pieces. The large filament bulbs give a realistic increasing glow as they take time to warm when they flash on and off. I built a flashing circuit using a 555 timer and some solid-state relays for this, and found it useful for the Lionel layout signals as well. This is powered from a separate transformer so that the street lights, houses and other lamps on the layout do not appear to dim with the flashing of the crossing lights (see photo 6).

Choices of lamps for our train room were not made casually. My family and friends know that I would like to add a stained glass Tiffany lamp with a streamlined steam engine (it now hangs in the local Applebees Restaurant) directly over the center of the layout; there is a blank cover plate waiting!

I also still regret not buying a pair of steam engine marker lights at an auction some years ago, as these items do not appear for sale often. But the special lamps acquired over the years make for a well-lit and interesting train room (see photo 7).

I almost forgot ... there is the prerequisite Thomas the Tank nightlight when everything else is turned off.



*Bob framed by Burlington brass shop lamps.*

*Photographs by Bob Kelty and his daughter, Vickie Kelty*





# The Vision and His

## Part I: The Blischok Layout

by Mike H. Mottler

RM 12394

It's hard but joyous work — thinking up ideas and pressing them to the limit of one's imagination; even pushing them to edge of what's possible. To Thom Blischok, it's the joy of exercising his creative powers to the max. To those on his toy train team, it's the most challenging task they have ever attempted. To visitors and guests, the wonderful result is an outstanding three-rail layout. To this writer, it's a fascinating story about a unique process for developing a toy train concept and bringing it into being. His home layout is one of the best of its kind I've ever seen.

Thom is a consultant to Fortune 500 companies. Like an "evangelist," he deftly presents the opportunities and challenges inherent in high technology as applied to manufacturing and explains its impact in human terms to decision-makers, enablers, managers, and even to customers.

When he's not busy coaching business executives,

tweaking the human equation in the workplace, and applying technology in support of high quality and productivity, he is — like the rest of us — engaged with toy trains; mostly Lionel products of the prewar, postwar, and modern eras.

He is the Chief Dreamer and Lead Architect of a "train room" that is a showcase for his extensive collection and impressive layout filled with standard gauge and O-gauge toy trains. He can run up to 40 trains simultaneously with power from 20 ZWs and several other transformers. To Thom, the process of building it — a remarkable team effort, not a solo venture





# Visioneer His Team



*Thom and his family — his daughter Alisha and wife Sharla.*

— was more important than the outcome, albeit quite amazing. Although quite proud of the result, he remained modest about his own role in the achievement. He described the venture to me using we/our pronouns — not I/me pronouns — and gathered for me the team

players so they could participate in an extended interview session for this article and the next.

Let's begin at the beginning. Sharla, now Thom's wife, sort-of-inadvertently started it all about 15 years ago. Friend and LCCA President-elect John Fisher nurtured it, and later Thom pushed it to the limit in concert

with a select team of experts. She tells her part of the story with love but also with a tinge of uncertainty borne of 20/20 hindsight.

## **In the Beginning, There Was Sharla**

"Thom always loved trains, I knew that," she said. "We met John Fisher, and during our visits, John and Thom would look at the trains, and be ooh-ing and aah-ing over them. I breathed a sigh of relief when we came home and he hadn't bought any. We moved to California, and I was shopping for a Christmas present for my father in a clown shop and right next door was a toy train store. I walked in and said, 'My husband really likes trains. We don't have a layout, but I'd like to get him a Christmas present. What would you recommend?'"

Store owner Randy Giroux asked me a lot of questions, and we figured out it was O-gauge. I bought a Blue Comet train set in December, 1985. That was the beginning, so I am responsible.





He really enjoyed it. Then it became a Father's Day, birthday, Christmas routine. This went on for years, and then he started buying trains on his own. I was up in the crawl space of the attic inventorying all the trains when I realized I had married a train addict.

Then we moved to another state, and at that point he was traveling a lot; he was busy. Meanwhile, the boxes kept coming and coming to the house. One day the doorbell rang, and I opened the door and greeted the UPS deliveryman. I saw a stack of boxes from floor to ceiling outside my front door. I couldn't even walk out my front door. He asked, "What are these boxes for?" He seemed a bit annoyed actually, and I was not happy. At that point our garage was stacked from floor to ceiling and from wall to wall with boxes of toy trains. Probably a lot of wives that can relate to that! I called a storage facility and rented a space, then talked to a moving company. They came over and picked up all the boxes. I discovered that for five years we had accumulated about 10,200 pounds of trains. I finally reached my limit. So we decided it was time to build a train room. I didn't realize it was going to become a train building.



As for the trains, I'm probably more of the caretaker than the curator. I enjoy seeing him enjoy it. He can get totally lost in Trainworld down there; it's the one time when he's truly in his element. I like the operating accessories.

Some of our friends will look at the layout and say, 'Oh, this must require high maintenance.' Most women just say, 'This is unbelievable!' and they want to bring their husband back right away. At most home parties no matter how elegant or formal, people gather in the kitchen. That no longer happens here, they gather in the train building because that's where people want to be initially, then we move to other parts of the house.

There were times along the way that I cursed myself for buying that first train set. For example, there was a time I came home at Christmas and found my dining room

table gone and in its place were tracks and trains. It was a pink train; he bought it for our daughter. That was a questionable period."

Despite her candor, Mrs. Blischok recognizes that Thom's love of the hobby extends and enriches their life experience. She is a collector also — of dolls and clocks — and she understands the underlying desire to enjoy unique things and share special moments. Lucky Thom.



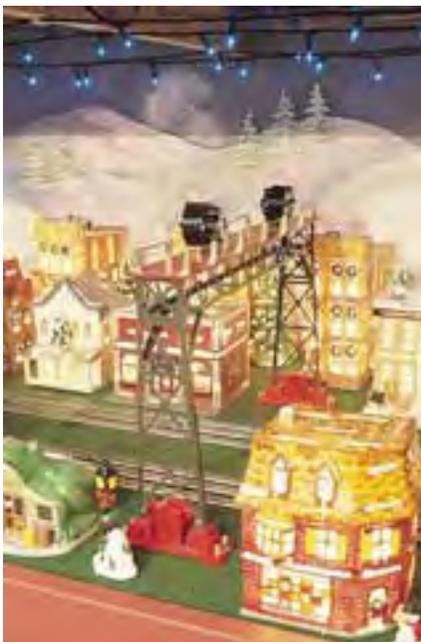


## Builder of the Dream - The Contractor

The decision to build a room for his trains and her dolls was born of practical necessity, but the idea rapidly outgrew the boundaries of a mere room and become a separate two-story building behind the house. It's now full of toy trains; no dolls. Thom and Sharla planned to do some house remodeling, and the train building became an extension of those plans. Joining the team next was building contractor, Gene Blackburn, the owner of Pride Development & Construction Incorporated.

“When the company did the first remodeling on their home, Thom kept talking about a train room. I knew that he had been collecting trains for some time, but I had no clue what I was getting into.

After we started working with the concept, we decided that we needed more space. That meant that we needed two levels: upstairs (ground level) for train displays and downstairs (basement) for a large train layout. We designed the building to fit the space available — angling it on the lot to get the maximum square footage. There is also a workshop along one side with an outside stairwell to it. This thing started out as half the project it ultimately became.



We designed the project with a clear span downstairs — no supporting columns in the way. He gave me a sketch of the train platforms he wanted downstairs. We used 4x4s center drilled for wires to go through and 2x4s in the support framing for the plywood and Homasote

top layers. He wanted it strong enough to hold his weight in event that he had to walk on it and re-rail a derailed train at the back edge of the layout — that is, industrial strength.



We constructed the display room upstairs first, then we approached the downstairs space for the layout. The requirements for electricity were significant. We put in a 400-amp service at that time to be able to handle the load. We cantilevered the ceiling so that a train could run around the top of the room. When he first showed me the layout sketches, I'm thinking, 'You gotta explain this to me, I need some interpretation.' But in working together we helped make the dream come true. The lumber package was equal to an 1800-square-foot house.

Because the vision for the room expanded as Thom saw everything coming together, we made sure we had enough space in the center of the room for people to stand. The rest of the space is for the trains.

The only access to the layout room was down the center spiral stairwell, so all of our material had to be delivered prior to the actual installation of that stairwell. We did have one little headache. We built the train platforms according to the plan, then Thom came home and said, 'That's 3-1/2 inches too high.' So it needed to be changed. So we spent a weekend reversing everything and moving everything down to the height he wanted. We put everything together with screws, not nails, to make a change if necessary. Initially, there were just two levels, then we added the third level underneath the platform for the standard gauge trains. The plan was perpetually evolving. It still is; this layout isn't 'finished.' Now I realize that's normal in the hobby.





## The Layout Designer – Drafter of the Dream

Another valued member of the team, Randy Giroux — a train store owner and an expert in layout design — helped transform ideas into reality. Thom’s “stretch the concept to its limit” philosophy was manifest at the “drawing stage” and challenged Randy to think outside the box.

“Originally the layout was going to be in one of the garages. Because of space constraints it was going to be only about three feet wide. We went through several design phases on that plan, but it just didn’t work. We couldn’t incorporate the

operating ability that Thom wanted, nor install the operating accessories in it.

Next thing Thom tells me, ‘We’re going to build a train room — which is what you see today. We decided on a perimeter-type layout with an entrance at the center, as opposed to a central layout with walk-around

Initially we thought that a 150-amp service could accommodate what’s going on in here. We ran plenty of power to it, and we have an empty area where more can be pulled through in the event that he needs more. There are sleeves to a couple of locations for controls. At the bottom of the circular stairway is a little built-in desk for the main control station. It just wasn’t big enough, so AC power and controls went to another spot. The lighting evolved through a lot of meetings with the electrician to determine the intensity of the light and the controls.

Thom requires people on the team to invent the wheel, so to speak. In virtually every aspect of construction we’ve done for him, he comes up with another idea of something he wants done. He challenges us as builders and my subs, and they’re not used to doing that. We very much enjoyed working with the Blischoks on the train building and the other projects that we have done for them, and we anticipate working for them for years to come. Thom would like to put a third story on this building, but the city won’t permit it. There were certain codes and restrictions concerning setbacks. We’re exactly 10 feet off the property line in this corner. We’re exactly, to the inch, on the requirement from the back of the lot, so we have the maximum space possible in this location. The maximum height allowed is 15 feet from the lowest point, so that’s why this end of the building is buried in the rock and the roof at other end is exactly 15 feet from the ground. Thom makes life interesting, there’s no doubt about it!”



capabilities. So you descend into the center of it, and you are surrounded by the layout. There’s plenty of room to converse and move around the center viewing/operating space of the layout. Thom kept saying was that he wanted to run lots of trains. So as you look at the layout today, there isn’t an underutilized square foot on it.

Thom wanted a theme. We discussed whether it was going to be a high-rail layout with scenery or a traditional template layout. The final result was a hybrid; a little bit of both. He wanted to incorporate different scenes into





the layout: a military area, an oil field, an old western town, a Plasticville town, a circus/carnival area, a spaceport, and an airport. The four corners of the layout became mini-layouts of their own with operating accessories crammed in to give it depth and to highlight the train in each area. The Plasticville town has a trolley line in it. As originally envisioned, it was going to be just a couple of loops, but by using relays we were able to get a multiple trolley system in there.



The sidings, the freight yards, and the passenger yards were originally envisioned to be a combination of both. The freight yards are now on one side and the passenger sidings are on the other side with a depot built above it. The original concept called for a shuttle service running

isolated loops, so you start just them and let them go. Command control was added later on in the process, and that opened up new possibilities for operating trains, for moving them from one track to another, and for getting them from level to the other.



The concept and the layout have a kind of eternal life built into it — through creative change by evolution. At one point, my thought was to install a double helix from the basement up to the ground floor. I sat down at my computer one night and started doodling a little bit. One problem I came up with is, in order to create a double helix with up and down trackage, one would need at least eight or nine transformers for regulating it. The other problem is, we'd have to cut a large hole in the floor.

around the outside wall. That was extended to come around the front of the passenger platform, and allow for more operation. There are two shuttle lines on the east side and on the west side. One services the oil field and the other one has two trains running with relay control for spacing. It gives the illusion that there is a great deal more track there. From an operations standpoint, it is truly an operator's layout.

I designed the layout with the original version of RR Track software. The program was truly excellent for someone who has basic drafting and computer knowledge. What was unique about the planning is that what we actually put into the drawing is pretty much built on the layout. Probably the biggest change was the crossover at the north end of the layout coming out of the freight yards — a necessary accommodation to space limitations.

The layout had to be relatively user-friendly in order to operate so many trains. Several of the trains run on



This layout is definitely the best one that I've designed. In terms of size and function. It incorporates everything I've put into every other layout I've ever built. I would say, given all the layouts I've seen in my career, it's one of the





top 10 layouts in the country. The construction process took place over about a two-year time span. It's the layout that I would love to have if I had the resources.

A lot of club members might say, 'Oh my gosh, here's another huge layout, something that nobody else can afford.' However, if you look at the layout in relation to its sections, there are things in the layout that could be incorporated into any layout in the country — the trolley system or the island layouts that make a theme. It has parts, but the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

The layout was designed to be not just one man's layout, but also a layout for many; something that works for anybody. It comprises so many little things that make one grand scene. It all flows together so well."



## Wires, Relays, and Sparks - the Wiring Expert

Another member of the team was Terry Gibbs, master of the electrical works. For many layout builders, wiring is a challenge; especially when relay-driven block control systems come into play.

"I came into this project when access to the basement was through a large hole in the floor with a ladder going down. Thom showed me what he was doing, and based on my experience I pointed out some of the problems he would have and suggested ways to solve them up front. A month later I came back when the platform was built, and I started putting the tracks together. By putting the electronics and the relays in there, I felt it would add more excitement to the layout without causing more problems.

For this layout there's actually an "as-built" book that shows everything. Everything is color-coded and numbered. If Thom wanted to add a highway flasher, that

would go to a red wire and to the insulated outside rail, which would be orange. To add a street light, attach it to either the gray or white wire and to the green wire for the ground. The operating accessories are all within two feet of the front of the layout, so there's only one wire for those, right in front. The switches are running on about 17 volts. There are 112 switches on the layout, and they're broken into blocks of about 20-25 switches per block going to one ZW.

What I do is like 1940s-era mechanical relays, because it's simpler for me to understand. For the most part, there's nothing on the layout that couldn't have been done 50 years ago. Granted, today we're using much better relays and higher quality stuff. Thom's layout will run 40 trains at once, all automatically, three of them going around in circles on the main level, trains in the sub-areas, trains going back and forth into different areas, constant stopping and starting. When all the trains are on the track and everything is set at the right speed, it's very impressive. The layout is set up so it could be computer driven some day. We could easily do that.

I spent from August of 1998 to June of 2000 working on Thom's layout, but I took April, May, June, July and August off in that period. So it was about 18 months working anywhere from 30 to 50 — sometimes 60 — hours a week.

Some hobbyists might say things like, 'I could never do this,' or 'I could never build a collection like that.' I think they forget that Thom didn't build it in one day. He started and bought one item and kept it. We started and just did it. I think anybody can do this stuff. That's all the fun. Let's remember that these are toys. As long as I remember that I'm privileged to be able to play with toys for a living, I'm having fun."

## And Now, a Word from the Visioneer

Thom is a team-builder, a godfather, a coach, and a team leader. To many in the train hobby, his role in creating his layout through a team approach may seem a bit surprising. He is not possessive about "my layout;" rather, he regards it as "our layout." To me, the most delightful part of this project was discovering the degree of engagement of the players with Thom. He exercises a gentle, nurturing kind of direction. He asks each team member to solve problems, invest their expertise in the process, and share the achievement of the final product.





“The idea for this layout began, frankly, when I was a kid, probably more in my dreams than anywhere else,” Thom said. “I got my first train, a 2056, and I still have it. I have my first two trains, a 2056 and a New York Central set of F3s. I’ll never forget the first layout that Santa Claus set up for me, at my grandmother’s house in 1953. Ever since then, I’ve always wanted to have a train layout. When I was growing up, we always had a train layout in our house. In fact, I had a room for a train layout, but as I grew older, the train hobby waned substantially.

There are two people in this hobby that I have tremendous respect for. The finest guy that I’ve ever met in O-gauge collecting is John Fisher. We’ve been life-long friends. I admire his knowledge of postwar Lionel trains, and his collection is outstanding. Every time I went to his house, I was awed by the pristine quality of the things in his collection. The other gentleman that has influenced me most of all has been Cole Gibbs, Terry’s dad. Cole is just brilliant on prewar trains. Over the past 10 years I’ve gotten to know him quite well and he has really influenced me toward collection prewar pieces. What I like about prewar is the bright, shiny vivid colors.



Sharla and I talk a lot about train collecting. After she bought me the Blue Comet train set, we collected trains for many years but never displayed them. About three years ago, we decided to build this train building. The upper floor was designed to be a doll museum for her and the lower floor was planned as a train room for me. Needless to say, her dolls never made it in here, and she’s been a great supporter of this hobby.

I quickly recognized that we needed a great bunch of people to do this work with us. We needed people who were capable of custom-building it in a unique way. There is so much visual imagery on the layout. We have tried to go back to the original vision, which was: ‘Imagine waking up on Christmas morning and Santa Claus brought you every toy train you could ever want.’ That’s what this layout is designed to reflect. The building and the two rooms re-create our childhood. It’s a very safe, comforting place. Also, it’s a shrine to memories of my childhood with trains. The artwork of Angela Trotta Thomas resonates in me because she captures those memories with

nostalgic warmth and the awe we had as kids about toy trains.

The next innovation for this layout will be installed by December of this year. It will be Lionel Vision, pioneered by Neil Young, as seen on the Horde layout in travels around the country. We’ll put in about eight engines with onboard video cameras in them so that people can watch a bank of TV monitors and see the engines running along the tracks. We’re also working hard now at developing the airplane system that would run planes around the ceiling of the room on a track. The propellers would turn, so we would get more movement above the layout, more excitement and interest. We’re going to fully automate the circus so that everything will be running. We’re also going to put a couple levels of monorails throughout the layout to add another dimension of toy train operation.

One complaint I have with many layouts is poor lighting. With the vibrant colors, the displays, and the room itself, we needed a great lighting system. We spent an inordinate amount of time finding the right fixtures and controls. The entire building is lit with halogen lights on adjustable dimmers, so we can control

the glow and intensity. We can create any kind of ambiance we want. There’s probably more lighting per square foot here than you would see anywhere except for a movie studio. We wanted guests to see. We wanted bright lights. We wanted white lights. We wanted to show off colors. We wanted to demonstrate the details and show the minute details of the trains.”

### 100 Trains for the Anniversary

As *TLR* went to press, Thom and a team of TCA Desert Division members in the Phoenix area were planning the 100th anniversary celebration of Lionel toy trains. Three chairmen were gathering about 35 trains each from the prewar, postwar, and modern eras to run on a mega-layout. With 100 trains running simultaneously, the club intends to set a Guinness Record on Friday, November 24th, at 11:30 a.m. Then, they’ll break the record with 101 trains, 102 trains, and so on. Lionel is a co-participant in the event.

**Coming up in the February, 2001 edition of *TLR*: Part Two - The Blischok Collection.**





# Lionel News and Views

by Bill Schmeelk

RM 6643

## Another Milestone in Lionel History

Just as Lionel celebrated their 100th birthday on September 6th and began their second century of train manufacturing, a new series of locomotives was announced. The first in this series is the Union Pacific Challenger offered in both freight and passenger versions. Lionel is betting that this new series of locomotives is “destined to be considered the ultimate achievement in model railroading.” The new series is appropriately titled the Joshua Lionel Cowen Series. The first offering in this series will have shipped by the time you read this. We had a chance to see the new Challengers displayed and operated at the York train meet in October. Speaking with Lionel President, Richard Maddox, and Lionel engineer, Bob Grubba, I sensed an exuberance that I suspect Joshua Cowen himself may have displayed when he introduced the scale Hudson in 1937.

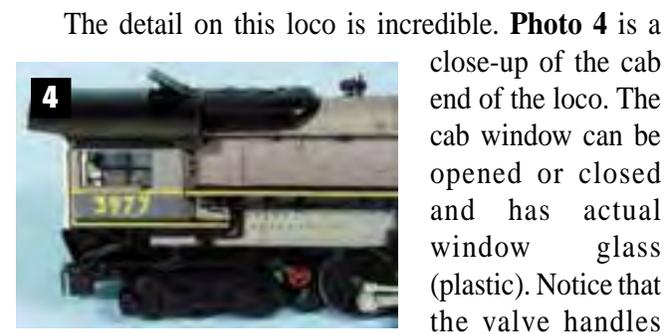
The 1937 catalog proudly boasted that the scale Hudson was “America’s First Authentic Scale Model Hudson,” and that it was the “Scale Model of the Century.” The new Challengers can also boast of some firsts in die-cast locomotives. Will this loco be the scale model of Lionel’s second century? Well, it’s hard to guess what new technologies another 100 years will garner, but it is safe to say that these new locos offer some very unique features and that they represent the very top of the line in O-gauge model train technology. The two versions of the Challenger offered in this series are not simply two

different paint jobs. The black and silver freight loco, prototypically numbered 3985, comes with a coal tender. The “Greyhound” version prototypically numbered 3977 comes with an oil tender and is also equipped with smoke deflectors. After the York meet, I was allowed to borrow the #3977 Union Pacific Challenger “Greyhound” model. This article is the result.

Let’s take a closer look. Photographing the loco and tender together required me to use a wide-angle lens on my Nikon. This is the first time that was necessary since



I did a story on the Lionel Lift Bridge. **Photo 1** is the result. From the first look you can see that this loco surpasses any other loco we’ve called top-of-the-line in the past. **Photo 2** shows a top view of the loco. **Photo 3** is a view of the underside of the loco.



The detail on this loco is incredible. **Photo 4** is a close-up of the cab end of the loco. The cab window can be opened or closed and has actual window glass (plastic). Notice that the valve handles





throughout the loco are painted red. The roof hatch can be opened or closed. You might also notice that there are cab curtains at the rear. **Photo 5** is a view of the cab from the opposite side. The boiler is die-cast and many of the die-cast details are attached separately to the boiler. This method allowed for a more prototypical boiler casting.



**Photo 6** shows a view inside the cab. There is both a fireman and an engineer at the controls. Here you can also see the cab curtains. Look carefully at the photo and notice that there is a hinged cab deck with a diamond plate design. **Photo 7** shows the cab deck in place between the loco and tender.



Lionel's wireless tether technology eliminates all wire connections between the loco and tender. The graphics are



exceptional. **In Photo 7**, notice the small brass plate on the tender and the small lettering under the loco number. **Photos 8 and 9** show a closer look. I could only read the words on the tender plate through the lens of the camera:

Union Pacific Equipment Trust. Series C  
The Pennsylvania Company for Insurances on Lives and Granting Annuities.

The information under the cab number is quite small but very clear. There's even hydro test information on the tanks on the side of the loco. The test is dated 6-12-43.



The "Greyhound" version is equipped with die-cast smoke deflectors. The freight coal-burning version does not have the smoke deflectors and features a silver boiler front section.



A Challenger is designated 4-6-6-4 and has two articulated sets of six drivers. **Photo 10** shows the rear set of drivers. You can also see some of the rivet detail. **Photo 11** is a close-up showing the extreme detail just above the rear driver set. **Photo 12** shows the front set of drivers and the front pilot wheels.

**Photo 13** shows the fine detail on the front of the boiler. Both sets of number boards — those on the boiler top and those surrounding the headlight — are illuminated. There is a scale coupler that can swing into position; it's stored in the pilot. Great attention was paid to small details. Even the inside of the bell, which is painted red, is prototypical. **Photo 14** shows some of the detail inside the boiler. Notice the small magnet that is used to secure the boiler front in its closed position.





**Photo 15** is a top view of the smokestacks and shows the realistic detail included inside the smokestack. Both



stacks smoke and use fan driven smoke units. One very unique detail for a die-cast engine is the walkways.

**Photo 16** is a close-up of the walkway; as you can see, there are scale-sized holes in them. A scale-size hole comes out to being only 20/

1000ths of an inch in diameter on the model. In the past it has been almost impossible to achieve this detail on a die-cast part. Lionel developed the method to do this and they are awaiting the issue of a patent on the unique process.



We can see a shot of the oil tender in **photo 17**. The freight version of the Challenger comes with a coal tender. The coal on the tender is real and Lionel has developed a new technique to have more scale-sized pieces of coal and a new process of applying it so that small pieces do



not come loose and damage the paint finish in transit. Both tenders have three die-cast hatches that open.

**Photo 18** shows the detail at the front end of the tender.

**Photo 19** shows the rear view with an operating back-up light and illuminated marker lights. Notice on the right side, we have



removed the marker light fixture exposing the small red lamp that illuminates the markers. **Photo 20** shows the underside of the tender.

As you might expect, the new Challengers are Command equipped and the sound system includes all of the latest features including



CrewTalk, TowerCom, DynaChuff, Multi-Whistle, and articulated RailSounds. You will actually hear the two separate chuffs for the two sets of articulated drivers. At times they will be prototypically out of sync with each other. A nine-volt battery powers the RailSounds when there is no power for a true shut down sequence. Removing four screws from the underside allows the die-cast tender shell to be removed giving you access to the battery cable. The wires running from the circuit board to the tender shell have a plug that can be disconnected for ease in working on the tender. One wire set must also be removed from the rear headlight. The wire has a socket on it and is easily pulled free of the bulb. **Photo 21** shows



the interior of the tender. The tender coupler can be remotely controlled using the CAB-1 Remote.

That's as far as I went with disassembly. I would have enjoyed disassembling the loco, but did not want to attempt it on a borrowed loco without help from Bob Grubba, and time just didn't allow that. We'll tell you that a large Pittman motor powers the Challengers and all twelve drivers are powered. The center drivers are sprung, providing good traction along with four wheels that are fitted with traction tires.





## On the Track

We anxiously placed the loco and tender on the track for a test run. These Challengers are equipped with the Odyssey System and we were anxious to see it work firsthand. These locos require a minimum of O-72 radius track. When an articulated loco rounds a curve, there is



the distinctive look of the boiler playing “catch-up” with the front of the loco. **Photo 22** shows the loco on a curved section. This model mimics that look quite well, and it was interesting to see how all the steam pipes are rigged to allow this action to occur. It is certainly a loco you’ll spend time watching carefully as it rounds your layout. We ran the loco in Command mode to get the most from the sound system. The first thing that impressed me when power was applied was the lighting. There are four work lights under the boiler and a cab light as well. The green marker lights on the boiler front illuminate, as do the red ones on the rear of the tender. It really is a stunning sight. Next we listened to the sounds. These are especially impressive. The deep whistle added to the majesty of this large loco. I found the whistle could be operated in short or long bursts. The sound is especially thrilling as the loco proceeds slowly. You can distinctly hear the two sets of drivers working. Each has its own separate chuffing sounds. As the loco speeds up and the chugging goes faster and faster, the difference between the two is less discernable. Testing the Odyssey System, I was able to operate the loco quite well at slow speed. There’s none of the jerking that you often get when running a Pullmor motor at very slow speed. The engine crawled evenly and consistently. If you enjoy watching videos of these large articulated locos, you’ll be ecstatic watching this very accurate model round your layout. There are so many

small details — the loco just begs to be watched carefully as it operates. As the loco runs there is a variable oil burner glow. The freight version with coal tender features a flickering firebox in addition to the variable ash pan glow.

The loco is certainly a thing of beauty in both appearance and operation; unlike anything we’ve ever seen in a die-cast loco. As you might suspect, this degree of accuracy and detail comes at a price. The cost of the Challengers is \$1799.95. When Lionel offered the \$75.00 Hudson in kit form, the price of all the kits and whistle was \$64.50. Lionel touted this as “within the reach of every man and boy.” That’s a bit of stretch for 1939 dollars. With the Joshua Lionel Cowen Series, Lionel is making no such claim. They are simply

gambling that there is a market for a locomotive on which all the stops have been pulled. Knowing that these locos will be for a limited market, they have been allocated to dealers. There will also be available a very limited number of two-rail versions of the Greyhound Challenger. If reaction is good, and it certainly seems to be, Lionel plans to offer one locomotive style a year in this new series. What’s the next one? We don’t know, but let Lionel know what you’d like to see given this royal treatment. My thanks to Lionel’s Bob Ryder for allowing us to borrow the Challenger for this article.

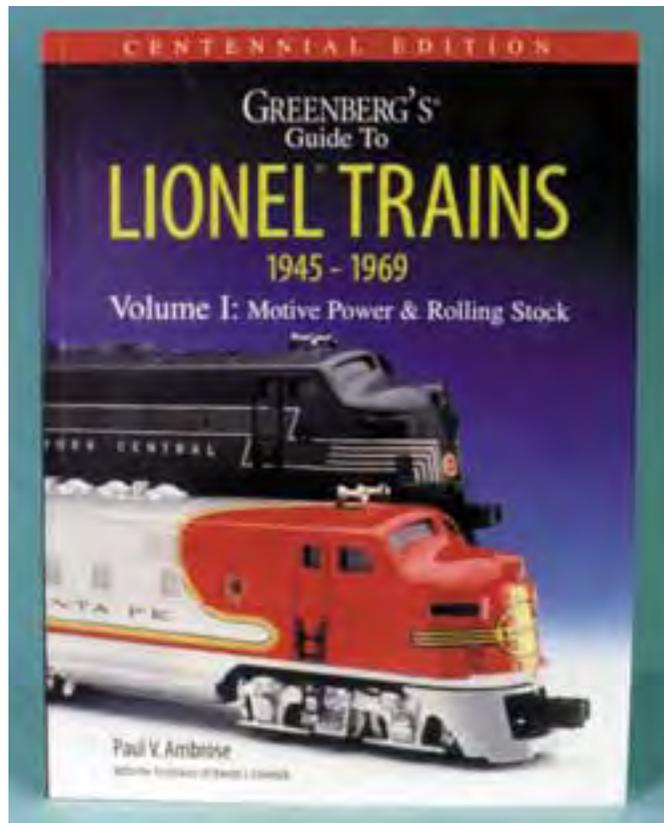
## Greenberg’s Centennial Edition

It’s hard to believe that the 10th edition of *Greenberg’s Guide to Lionel Trains 1945-1969* is being published. Paul Ambrose authors this centennial edition with assistance from Harold J. Lovelock. This latest edition again raises the bar and continues to be the best available guide to the many variations, both mechanical and graphical, of the trains we all desire so strongly. This is *Volume I: Motive Power and Rolling Stock*. The complete set will comprise seven volumes and cover the entire range of Lionel’s production. The publisher notes that all of the images have been newly scanned for greater accuracy and clearer detail. There are more than two dozen new photos. New to this edition are essays by Roger Carp at the beginning of each chapter. Although the book contains all new value





prices, this book is far more than a price guide. In addition to the lengthy descriptions given to each item listed, the book is filled with articles which document the manner in which these trains were produced and exactly what changes were made in production and when. There are many useful charts that document variations in style and design. It's hard to imagine any serious collector not wanting this book. I have several other interests including collecting of certain toys. There is simply no scholarly work of the caliber that we have been offered through the Greenberg guides. Just for laughs, I looked at the first Greenberg guide that I bought when I first got into the hobby around 1978. There is absolutely no comparison. The amount of useful material has increased by many, many fold, to say nothing of the vast improvements in layout and design. Of the 260 photos in the book, 200 are in color and of a size that makes them useful for comparisons. The book concludes with four appendices,



a glossary, and a useful index that allows you to look up any item by its number. If you are an active collector, this book will not gather much dust. Whether you are new to the hobby or have been in it all your life, you'll find lots of useful information in this book. The book is published in a large format, 8 1/2 x 11 inches, with 296 pages and costs \$44.95. A hardbound edition is also available for \$54.95. You can purchase the book from your local train shop or order direct from Kalmbach by calling 800-533-6644.

### That's It for Now

As we approach the holiday season, may I extend my best wishes for a healthy holiday season to all. Here's hoping your holiday is filled with happiness and orange boxes. See you next year!

Bill Schmeelk's address is in the *TLR* masthead. e-mail him at <bill@wellingtonent.com>

*Photographs by Bill Schmeelk*

## Turning Youthward

by **Bob Amling**

**RM 9116**

While attending the LCCA membership meeting during the Annual Convention in July, a member made us all painfully aware of the demographics of our hobby. He asked us to look around and notice the color of everyone's hair. What we saw was gray or skin! He then stressed the need for all of us to get youth involved. Like many meetings, after a few members voiced their agreement, someone brought up another issue and we moved on. That point stayed with me, and over the summer I wrote to President Al Otten and suggested a path forward.

Since that time a LCCA committee appointed by Al has been exploring this idea. In the next few months your club is going to ask you to get involved with youth in your community through the toy train hobby. We believe this program will be an enjoyable experience and hopefully will gather youngsters into the hobby. Local clubs with operating or modular layouts will be a great asset to this effort. Stay tuned for more news!



# It Took 100 Years to Write this Book

Well, not exactly. It took 100 years of Lionel history to unfold before this special anniversary edition by Ron Hollander could be written. It's a revised and updated edition of the definitive book, *All Aboard! The Story of Joshua Lionel Cowen and His Lionel Train Company*.

Published by Workman Publishing in hardcover at \$24.95, it's an ideal holiday gift for the

train nut in your family. Richard Kughn, founding President of Lionel Trains, Inc., wrote the dust jacket notes and said the book captures "the spirit of a company remarkable for its resilience and dedication to innovation — traits that continue to define it even today."

Originally published in 1981, this edition covers the entire history of Lionel trains and features an all-new chapter on the resurgence of Lionel trains and reemergence of the hobby from the 1980s to today. Richly illustrated with B&W photos, illustrations, and ads of each era — plus some full color sections — this book is both a "good read" and a "good look."

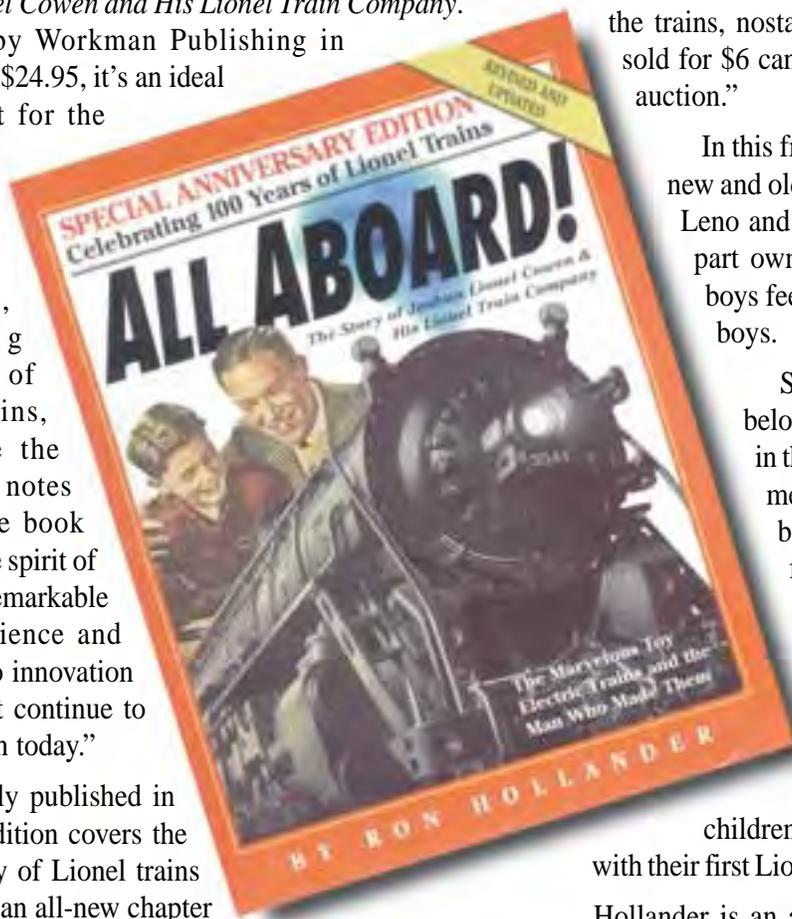
In the new chapter, "Back on the Main Line," Hollander writes, "Lionel trains have not only survived into the 21st century but have thrived as the hobby is enjoying an unprecedented revival. Reflecting the times, electric toy trains now feature digital sound. Remote

control allows dozens of engines to run on the same track. Advancement in manufacturing make in possible to produce trains with astounding detail and size; some are three feet long with double smokestacks and video cameras inside." He says, "While technology saved the trains, nostalgia still reigns: original sets that sold for \$6 can now fetch as much as \$30,000 at auction."

In this fresh chapter, Hollander details how new and old fans and collectors — such as Jay Leno and rock legend Neil Young, who is a part owner of Lionel — once again have boys feeling like men and men feeling like boys.

Since 1986 Joshua Lionel Cowen's beloved electric train company has been in the hands of Lionel train enthusiasts; men who had their first train sets as boys and who never stopped being fans. Hollander reports that the sales of electric trains surpass model boats, planes and cars. Baby boomers, who decades ago bought their first trains, are now the primary customers. JLC would be pleased to know that the children whose lives were forever changed with their first Lionel set, grew up — but never forgot.

Hollander is an authority on the history of Lionel Trains and a collector of antique trains with more than 1000 in his personal collection. He was the featured expert on the History Channel's hour-long special on Lionel. An academic journalist, his own reporting has appeared in the New York Times, Washington Post, Chicago Sun Times, Boston Globe, and many other newspapers. He has appeared with Oprah Winfrey, Tom Snyder, Jessica Savitch, and Bob Edwards of NPR. The first edition of *All Aboard!* has been excerpted in national train magazines and optioned as a movie.



# MY FIRST TRAIN SET

by David F. Gangwer

RM 6821

After reading the story “A Boy and His Train” in the December 1999, edition of *The Lion Roars*, I felt inspired to write about my own Lionel experience. At Christmas time, 1942, I received my first train set from my father. He ordered it from Chicago, Illinois, which at the time seemed quite a distance from our small town of La Porte, Indiana. I have the original receipt from Bennett Brothers, Inc. for a T1200 train set and a T1025 transformer — for \$11.95, including tax! My mother received a Kodak Brownie camera for Christmas, and she took a picture of me with my train running around our Christmas tree, shown above.



*That's me, captured on mom's Brownie camera.*

worked for a railroad, my enthusiasm for Lionel trains was not rekindled until 1975, when my engineer at that time told me about the LCCA.

That same year I found a complete Lionel train set (#1131) in a garage sale for \$15, and a hobby was born. As I began operating my layout, I vividly recalled my childhood and the smell of burning tinsel; it shorted out the circuit and brought the engine to a dead stop.

Over the years, I expanded my collection. After trying different layouts, my son (by this time my third child), came up with the idea of running my trains just under the ceiling on double tracks in my bar room. This

While most train sets may be lost or given away, many years after the death of my parents, I found the transformer stored in the attic of my childhood home. To my surprise, my old “American Flyer” transformer still worked, and it continues working today.

In 1961 after a stint in the Navy, I married and we had two children. I started working for the Chicago South Shore and South Bend Railroad as a dispatcher and Conductor. The South Shore is an interurban electric railroad that travels 90 miles between South Bend, Indiana, and Chicago, Illinois. Even though I now



*The basement bar has a rustic décor and lots of trains — high and low.*



# — CHRISTMAS, 1942



*At the throttle of a KW, David is ready to run!*



*Even in a quiet neighborhood, there's always a black and white on patrol.*

was accomplished by using Plexiglas with a door corner guard for the angle braces. Using mirrors on the backside and overhead, all can see four sides of the passing trains on two tracks.



*A figure-8 layout provides a hands-on toy train adventure for kids.*



*A four-minute milk stop backs up local traffic and makes some commuters unhappy.*

When each of my three sons turned 21, I gave each one a very good train set — toy trains I had collected over the years. One set included 13 boxcars of the states of the 13 American colonies.

Because of a burst in the water pipes in my train room, much of my additional layout was destroyed. Fortunately, with a Phillips screwdriver, Dove dish soap, and a little help from a hair dryer, I saved the rolling stock. Unfortunately, the track was destroyed.





Currently, I am working on a new layout, shown in these photographs. I've also set up a track for the grandkids and other small visitors to get some hands-on model train operating experience. Now that I'm a retired Conductor from the C.S.S.&S.B.R.R., I enjoy introducing youngsters to the train hobby.

*Photographs provided by David F. Gangwer*



*A cracked wheel requires calling in a track gang for an on-the-spot repair.*



*This freight yard was eventually destroyed by water from burst pipes.*



*Car shoppers are "just looking" at new and used autos.*





# Standard Gauge

by Grandpa Nelson G. Williams RM 14064

## Florida College Displays Earliest Lionel Trains

To honor Lionel's centennial year, I will display some of my prewar wide-gauge electric trains at the Webber Center from December 16 through January 7. The center is on the Ocala campus of Central Florida Community College, about three miles east of I-75 on SR 200. This Lionel display will be part of their annual exhibit of electric trains of many different sizes and makes.

Joshua Lionel Cowen sold his first gondola car to a Manhattan storekeeper in 1901. It was an open wooden

gauge trains in 1915, and it is still a major producer of trains in that size.

On one wall of the Webber Center, reproductions of the first 2-7/8 inch trains built by J.L. Cowen in 1901-05 will be displayed with several Lionel trolley cars. On the next shelf will be a big standard gauge Lionel passenger set of 1929 that was reproduced for the Silver Anniversary of the Train Collectors Association, 1954-79. A dining car was added to that set later and named in honor of Louis Marx as I suggested to TCA (see photo 1).

Three different kinds of Lionel trains will be on the upper shelves. One is the freight train that my brothers and I received from our father as a Christmas gift in 1937. Next to it is a small red Lionel passenger set with a No. 8 electric locomotive. The manual reverse and oversize drive gear date it about 1927. On the top shelf are all four of the original cars of the huge 1929 Lionel work train and



Various Lionel trains in the first 2-7/8 inch gauge and the Classic 2-1/8 inch standard gauge are shown on the east wall. Top shelf: The big Lionel work train of 1928 — the largest No. 381 E electric locomotive — with the original 200 series gondola car, derrick car, dump car, and caboos. The floodlight car for night work was added in 1931. Second shelf: Grandpa Nelson's first Lionel freight train (a 1931 Christmas gift from his father) and a small passenger set with an early No. 8 locomotive. Third shelf: A large 1929 Lionel passenger set with the dual motor No. 408 E locomotive, reproduced for the Silver Anniversary of the Train Collectors Association in 1979. Bottom shelf: Reproductions of the very first Lionel train (1901-05) and the "Maryland Street R.R." trolley car in 2-7/8 gauge. The small No. 200 trolley car is a Pride Lines reproduction, and the large trolley car was kitbashed by "Red" Forney using parts from two Lionel standard gauge passenger cars.

box on four wheels, which ran on strips of metal set 2-1/8 inches apart on saw cuts in wooden ties. The idea was to display small dry goods for sale in the store window. When several customers asked to buy the gondola car itself, "Lionel" trains were born.

Lionel trains were manufactured in 2-1/8 inch "standard gauge" from 1906 until the eve of World War II in 1941. The company started to make 1-1/4 inch, O-

its 1931 floodlight car, behind a No. 381 E engine. It is a reproduction of the largest electric locomotive Lionel ever sold.

On the opposite wall are all of the Lionel 2-1/8 inch standard gauge freight trains, built from 1906 until 1941. The bottom shelf has a rare No. 51 steam locomotive, coal tender, and short gondola built in 1910 along with a full string of the small 100 series freight cars built before





All four sizes of Lionel tinplate freight trains for 2-1/8 inch standard gauge track are shown on the West wall. Top shelf: The biggest Lionel No. 400 E steam locomotive and its Vanderbilt oil tender, with the largest 200 series Classic freight cars, built 1926-41. Second shelf: A Lionel Classic No. 392 E locomotive and 12-wheel coal tender with all the 500 series freight cars of the Classic era. Third shelf: A No. 7 Lionel locomotive and tender reproduced by James J. Cohen, with an original set of the Early 10 series freight cars, built 1906-25. Bottom shelf: An original Lionel No. 51 locomotive, tender, and short gondola car built 1910-11 with a set of the small 100 series cars made before 1925.

1926. A No. 7 steam engine and tender pulls the larger 10 series freight cars (of the same Early era) on the next shelf (see photo 2).

Big Lionel freight trains of the Classic era (1926-41) are on the upper shelves. Hobbyists of my generation may remember these trains from boyhood. A No. 392 E locomotive with its 12-wheel coal tender heads a complete set of 500 series freight cars. The biggest Lionel steam engine of all (No. 400 E) and its Vanderbilt oil tender on the top shelf head the larger 200 series freight cars. They are so big that I left out a boxcar in order to fit the train on a 13-foot-long shelf.

*Editor's Note: Grandpa Nelson collects standard gauge freight trains of many makes and ages — a few are still being made today. He writes about them for national magazines published by the Lionel Collectors Club of America, the Toy Train Operating Society, and the Train Collectors Association. His trains have been displayed in public libraries and old railroad stations at Brooksville, Crystal River, High Springs, Inverness, McIntosh, and Tallahassee, Florida. His daughters and grandchildren share his enthusiasm for trains.*



Nelson Williams' grandchildren compare miniatures of three Lionel standard gauge locomotives to their big brothers. Left to right, Alex Chaky (age 13) studies the 1910 Lionel No. 51 switch engine and slope back tender. He has a duplicate 1970s set in O gauge, half that size. His sisters, Cheryl (11) and Robyn (16), smile about the Avon miniatures of Lionel's biggest engines, the No. 381 E electric and the No. 400 E steam locomotive. These Avon ceramics are almost HO gauge, half O and hardly a quarter of the size of the standard gauge originals.

Photographs by Grandpa Williams





# LCCA Board Meeting Minutes

June 27, 2000

The Board meeting of the Lionel Collectors Club of America was called to order by President Otten at 8:00 a.m. at the Hyatt Hotel in Dearborn, Michigan. Secretary Lou Caponi called the roll. In attendance were: President Al Otten, President Elect John Fisher, Immediate Past President Harry Overtoom, Secretary Lou Caponi, Treasurer Eric Fogg, Directors Larry Black, Don Carlson, Dienzil Dennis and Bill Schmeelk. Absent was Bill Button. Also in attendance was Mike Mottler, Editor of *The Lion Roars*.

A motion to dispense with the reading of the previous minutes was offered and approved.

Officer reports started with Immediate Past President Overtoom. Past President Overtoom delayed his report and said he would comment as the meeting proceeded. President Elect Fisher reported on his responsibility with helping to organize local meets. He is still working on streamlining the procedures involved so it's much easier for local meet hosts. Report accepted.

Treasurer Fogg reported that all the club bills have been paid and the convention revenues are still coming in. He went on to say that the annual review, which was done by an outside independent firm, proved to be an excellent report and the club is financially sound. Treasurer's report accepted.

Secretary Caponi reported as of July 1, 2000, the club has 10,670 Active Members, consisting of 8 Courtesy, 426 Family, 1 Honorary Charter, 1 Honorary Member, 71 foreign members and 10,136 Regular members. We have a total of 14,595 dropped or deceased members and the last membership number assigned was 25,265. Secretary Caponi also sent out 303 reminder letters since the last meeting. Report accepted.

President Otten announced he would give his report as we proceeded with the meeting. Director Black then gave his report on the New Millennium Committee. He is close to finalizing new procedures for the business office with regard to Convention registration, tours, etc. Director Black then informed the Board that he is still working on a new web site, which will enable new members to join online. Report accepted.

Lou Caponi, Chairman of the Product Development Committee, discussed several possibilities for the 2001 Lexington Convention Car. He will provide the Board with a possible sample at the next Board Meeting. Report accepted.

President Elect John Fisher, the Club's Convention Consultant, told the Board of the tentative dates for the 2001 Convention in Lexington, Kentucky: July 25th through 29th. John also collaborated on future sights such as Las Vegas and Pittsburgh. Report accepted.

President Otten gave a report on the status of the Year 2000 engine and caboose. The delivery dates on these items would be delayed somewhat because of Lionel's production schedule. President Otten said he would keep in touch with Lionel about the projected delivery date and would keep everyone informed. Report accepted.

Director Carlson and President Elect Fisher elaborated on the status of the 2000 Convention and stated that all was running quite smoothly. Director Carlson said that judging by the positive comments from both the LCCA and LOTS members, the convention should be quite a success. Report accepted.

Break at 9:25 a.m.

Reconvened at 9:45 a.m.

*The Lion Roars* Editor, Mike Mottler, gave his report on the magazine. He has served as Editor in part or in whole for the past 13 issues. He acknowledged the contributions of articles and photos from 83 individuals who have helped make the magazine an outstanding publication. Mr. Mottler briefly reviewed the many changes and improvements applied during his tenure to date and thanked the Board for authorizing use of a professional designer — Snyder Creative. Mike informed the Board that he must retire as Editor because of added responsibilities at work; the position would require more time. He said it was truly a honor for him to have been the Editor of a magazine for such a fine organization, and he pledged to work with the succeeding Editor to assure a smooth transition in 2001. The Board applauded Mr. Mottler for the fine job he has done over the past several years. Report accepted.

Immediate Past President Overtoom then reported there are no member complaints at this time. Report accepted.

Immediate Past President Overtoom reported on the status of 2001 Convention in Lexington, Kentucky. He said that most of the details have been worked out with





the hotel and the dates have been finalized. He also reported that he has a convention committee in place and they are already working on several programs that will surely make this convention an overwhelming success. Report accepted.

President Otten asked Secretary Caponi to report the election results to the Board members. They were as follows:

- Director for 1 year Bill Button
- Directors for 2 years Lou Caponi and Bill Schmeelk
- Secretary for 2 years Dienzel Dennis.

The Board congratulated these members on their election to these positions.

President Otten reported on the status of the 2000 Convention Cars. He said Lionel is somewhat behind in their production schedule and the cars should be available for shipment sometime in late Autumn. The 2000 Stocking Stuffer (the Plasticville Airport Terminal rendered in Lionel colors) should be available on time and sales were doing very well. Report accepted.

Lou Caponi, Chairman of the Product Development Committee, told the Board he was working with Lionel to produce our 2001 stocking stuffer. He told the Board he would have more information by the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Incoming Board Meeting

President Otten called the meeting to order at 11:15 a.m.

Secretary Dennis called roll. In attendance were: President Al Otten, Immediate Past President Harry Overtoom, President Elect John Fisher, Treasurer Eric Fogg, Secretary Dienzel Dennis, Directors Lou Caponi, Larry Black, Don Carlson, William Schmeelk. Absent was Director Bill Button.

President Otten made the following appointments: Club Attorney and Registered Agent, Mr. Mike Scheurich; Club Accountant, Mr. L. Racine, C.P.A.; and Club Business Office, Connecting Point, Inc.

President Otten informed the Board that once again there would be no need for a dues increase at this time. Mr. Otten informed the Board of its next meeting in York, Pennsylvania, on Saturday, October 21, at 3 p.m. The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Lou Caponi

## At Trackside

### LCCA Members in Action



*Look who dropped in to Collector's Choice Trains Store to talk about trains — Lionel LLC President Richard Maddox. He and Chuck*

*Horan, head of the Lionel Visitors Center, visited the store in April at Overland Park, Kansas, met customers from age eight to 78, and demonstrated Lionel products for a crowd of toy train fans. Earlier in the year, store owner, Norman Hussey, received a surprise visit by Lionel stockholder and idea man (and rock star) Neil Young and music companions Stephen Stills and Graham Nash.*

*Photograph by Roy Inman*



*July 1 was the time and Chattanooga, Tennessee, was the place for a LCCA-sponsored train meet co-hosted by Bill Stitt (RM 259), Ron Herman (RM 1761), and George Baltz*

*(RM 14094). 112 LCCA members and 37 guests attended the event and scoured the 69 tables for gotta-have train stuff. Closing the final deal of the day, Andy Andrews (RM 12184) dug for cash as Raymond Siler (RM 18796) awaited the payment and George Garrott (RM 5939) looked on.*



*LCCAers Bob Stalcup (RM 1767) at left and Herman Pierson (RM 4893) enjoyed the train meet. The club "show and tell" display in the background was a point of interest to guests.*

*Photographs 2 and 3 by Bill Stitt*





# Train Talk

by **Richard Maddox** **President, Lionel LLC**



*Richard Maddox*

A little over a year ago, Lionel Research and Development and Engineering departments set out to develop a line of fine scale products. The product line was intended to commemorate the life-long achievements of our founder, Joshua

Lionel Cowen. It was decided to create a product in the image of the famous 1937 scale Hudson, the most notable of the Lionel icons. They wanted a locomotive that would be so exciting, with so much detail and cutting-edge electronics, that it would clearly set a new standard for the future.

Lionel was proud to introduce the first of the “Joshua Lionel Cowen Series” at York, Pennsylvania, on October 19, 2000. Since then, the reviews and acceptance has been

quite overwhelming. The first product chosen was the ever popular Challenger locomotive, in Union Pacific livery and sporting both the black coal fired version, and the Greyhound version with yellow striping and oil tender.

The black version fittingly has separately applied coal, a flickering firebox and glowing ash pan that increases in intensity as the locomotive picks up speed. The handsome Greyhound version is complete with oil bunker and smoke lifters. Looking down into the smokestacks, one sees details in abundance. Open the smoke box cover, and you’ll discover exciting hidden detail no one would expect.

Other fine details include a hinged deck plate and cab floor with safety tread, see-through walkways, lighted number boards and marker lights and operating work lights under the boilers. The separately applied piping, valves, sliding cab windows (with glass), opening roof and tender hatches, and many other details too numerous to mention make this incredible model, the first of a series, a fitting tribute to the creator of the world’s most recognized name in model railroading.

I am so proud of the Challenger locomotives and this new product line. I had to make sure you all knew about it and how the product line came to fruition. We plan to release a “Joshua Lionel Cowen Series” locomotive every six to 18 months. There’s a long list of highly desirable locomotives yet to be built. But based on the feedback at the York gathering, that list isn’t going to be long enough to satisfy the demand.



*Lionel’s Challenger  
Photograph courtesy of Lionel LLC*



