

Volume 31, No. 6 June, 2002

The **Lion Roars**



PUBLISHED BY THE LIONEL® COLLECTORS CLUB OF AMERICA • BIMONTHLY FEBRUARY, APRIL, JUNE, AUGUST, OCTOBER, DECEMBER



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**What's wrong with this picture?
Find the answer in this month's
Lionel News & Views**

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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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The Lion Roars (USPS 0011-994) and (ISSN No. 1079-0993) is published bi-monthly by the Lionel® Collectors Club of America, 1622 Fourth St., Peru, IL 61354-3527. Subscription rate of \$15.00 per year is paid through membership dues. Periodical postage paid at Peru, IL 61354-9998 and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *The Lion Roars*, 1622 Fourth St. Peru, IL 61354-3527. The LCCA is an Illinois not-for-profit corporation. Lionel® is a registered trademark and is used with the permission of Lionel L.L.C. Copies of Lionel® copyrighted materials have been used in this publication with the permission of Lionel L.L.C.

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President Elect - Schedule a meet.

Immediate Past President - Complaint against another member.

Secretary - Any administrative action not handled by LCCA Business Office.

Treasurer - Club finances only.

Librarian - Back issues of *The Lion Roars*.

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

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The President's Report

by John Fisher

RM 6541

Thoughts while shaving.... like perhaps many of you, I find myself looking forward to our annual convention for a number of reasons, but at the top of the list is seeing good friends once again and gaining new ones. While certainly not unique, our hobby of collecting and operating toy trains from all eras has brought us in contact with others who share our fun, joy and sense of discovery and that has resulted in friendships we would not otherwise have had. As that famous Martha would say, that is a good thing.

We are simply and ultimately only the custodians of our trains for a period of time and then someone else will own and care for them. Our friendships on the other hand may well endure for a lifetime and it occurs to me that this is the real payoff on our investment. One of my personal objectives for Pittsburgh 2002 will be to meet more of you and thereby increase my "investment return." Just think about it — our numbers are now over 1100 people coming to Pittsburgh — what an opportunity for all of us to make new friends. See you there!

Thoughts while mowing the lawn... one of the brightest people I've ever known was an early mentor and role model. I was full of questions and had few answers but was always willing to learn. Tom once said to me that the most important question you could ask was "What do you think?" This came back to me once again as I was thinking about our membership base and the kinds of things we might consider to strengthen that. Our members are the lifeblood of LCCA and they (you!)

are the sole reason we do what we do to guide and build this club. We would like to know what you think, and hopefully hear your thoughts and suggestions as to how we might best retain existing members and gain new ones.

New members are critical to all organizations but not nearly as important as existing members who have already made the decision to become involved. How to incent our loyal base of current members and also encourage them to help us recruit new members — that is the opportunity in front of us. You know by now that one of my top priorities for this term is to continually increase your membership value in LCCA. We want your decision to renew to be a slam-dunk and that you will spread the word to others that the best value is clearly LCCA. With your help we can do just that. Please share your thoughts, ideas, and suggestions with me (or any member of your board) as to how we might best achieve this. Do we provide a renewal premium? Do we provide escalating rewards for current members who recruit new members? What additional improvements should we consider for our website (with kudos to our new member volunteer Website Editor Craig Tribuzi)? All of these things are being considered along with some very special (and exclusive) offers for truly unique and highly collectible items from our favorite toy train company.

These are exciting times with many membership enhancing projects underway on several fronts. You will be learning more of these plans later this year. We want and need your input to provide the creative "idea power" for these initiatives. To encourage that, your club will provide some very nice gifts for the top three suggestions for membership retention and/or recruitment. Nothing terribly sophisticated about this little contest — your board will determine the winners and they will be announced later this year. We look forward to hearing to you. What do you think? 

There's a LCCA membership form located on the inside front page of the ghost cover.

Help support your club and pass it on to a fellow Lionel collector.

You'll make a friend for life.

A Few Words from the Editor

by **Bill Schmeelk**

RM 6643

What's new on the web? We're pleased to report that from the list of qualified applicants, the LCCA has chosen Craig Tribuzi to assist with the club's website, succeeding Larry Black. Craig works as a systems engineer for a major defense contractor and brings web experience gained from outside interests. Look for the LCCA website to grow under his tenure. Plans are currently being made to have access to the club's website online at our upcoming convention in Pittsburgh. Craig will be there and is planning a live demonstration of the website for all who attend. You'll also learn how to use the many features and future capabilities.

Did you know the easiest way to submit a change of address is on the website? Has your area code or other address information changed? Just connect to **www.lionelcollectors.org** and click on the Members Only section. Your member number will get you in. Access to this area will soon be password protected. Through a new Members Only login screen, members will request and receive their passwords through E-Mail.

Is Your E-Mail Address on Record?

Have you checked that your email address is on record

with the LCCA business office? Checking your record is easy at the site. All you have to do is click on the Members Only section and then on the change of address section. If any updates are required, please make them and submit the form with a click of your mouse.

Craig Tribuzi and Larry Black have been doing yeoman service on the club's behalf and we are sure fortunate to have their services. We need your input as well. If you'd like to contact the new web editor with any ideas, comments or suggestions, his email address is craig.diane@verizon.net. Be sure to check out Craig's Internet Know-how Column in this issue on page 29.

Have You Updated Your Anti-Virus Software

Those of us who use computers on a daily basis are well aware of the possibilities of computer viruses. I was recently the victim of such a virus. Although I have always used anti-virus software, I had not been diligent in updating the virus definitions. The result was a loss of most of the information on my hard drive. Among that information was material received via email from club members. If you have submitted materials for publication before May of this year via email, please send it again and accept my apologies for the inconvenience. And finally, don't forget to update you anti-virus definitions regularly.

Thanks for your continued support – it's what makes The Lion Roars the fine magazine that it is. 

New Area Code? New Zip Code? Do We Have Your Email Address?

You can do this online at www.lionelcollectors.org,
click on members only and enter your changes.
If not internet connected send updated info by fax
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P.O. Box 479, LaSalle, IL 61301-0479
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The Tinsplate Cannonball

by Ken Morgan

RM 12231

Lionel's Stations, Second Section

Last issue I asked a question of the baby boomers out there. That was to set up the current question. If you're a Lionel boomer, what time is it in Lionel City? As usual, the answer will follow.

As I wrote in the previous section of The Tinsplate Cannonball, if you run Lionel trains, you are almost sure to need a station. Lionel clearly understood this. They also understood that there are many price points to be met. And, much like the prototype railroads, bigger communities or layouts, need bigger stations and smaller ones need smaller stations. So let's see how Lionel addressed this need.

Last issue, the first of what I called Lionel's six basic station families was covered. The 121 Lionel City family are big stations. Next down in size is the 125 Lionelville family. Like the 121, there are several members, but none with the ornate exterior lamps. So the 125 family has just three members. The first two of these, the 125 and the 126, appeared in 1923. The difference between them being that the 126 had an interior light. I am not sure when O gauge sales started to eclipse standard gauge, but three years after Lionel introduced the large 121 stations, there was clearly a need for a smaller station sized for the expanding O gauge line.

1923 is an interesting date in Lionel's history. That year marked the first steps in the introduction of the more colorful

trains and trim that is referred to as the classic period. It started in standard gauge with the introduction of the 380 and 402. They were the first items with brass number plates and doors, and heralded the more widespread use of the brighter colors soon to come. The 380 was also the first loco modeled after an electric prototype other than the NYC S type. The 380 was based on the Milwaukee Road Bipolar.

In 1924, Lionel catalogued the last of the early standard gauge S types and introduced the O gauge 253, based on a New Haven box cab. The line would never be the same. By 1927, the 152 was the last early O gauge S type still in the catalog. Returning to the stations, the 125 clearly shows Lionel's thinking. The 121's were obviously painted to look like brick and stone. The 125's are colorful, and add brass trim over the doors.

Photos 1 through 3 show this clearly. There is my Cook's Man standing by a 126 to give scale, and it's much nearer to O. In a bit of a treat for the LCCA members, your author is pleased to offer several pictures, instead of the usual one, so you can see more of the building. It's just one of the benefits of joining the best club around.

But I digress, so off the soapbox and back to the stations. **Photo 1** shows the front. It says "LIONELVILLE" on a brass plate over a window that I would characterize as the ticket agent's window. That little round section at the bottom is where the passengers paid their

fares and picked up their tickets. This was long before ticket vending machines, the bane of the LIRR unions and casual riders who try to figure them out or don't have a small enough bill. Anyhow, **photos 2 and 3** show the two ends, one with a brass BAGGAGE sign, the other with EXPRESS. I have looked at several examples, and do not find consistency in the locations of the signs. That is, I have seen either sign on either the right



or left end. This may be accounted for by the fact that the signs were applied by hand.

The rear, which is not pictured, does not have either a sign or the ticket agent's window. It has the same non-opening doors and frames as the front, and two small six-paned windows matching those on the ends. They are placed high, with their tops parallel to the top of the doorframes, as on the ends. Much like in the 121 family, the unlit 125 didn't last long and was last catalogued in 1925. But the 126 ran through 1936, and then was replaced in 1937 with the 136, the final version of the 125 family. The 136 ran until the end of pre-war production in 1942. The 136 is a 126 with the train stop mechanism, which Lionel called *automatic train control*. To save time, I'll refer to it as ATC.

These stations were available in many color combinations, but I particularly like the version shown in the photo. The basic color is crackle red. I think the effect is rather different, and reminiscent of stucco. Other colors include mustard, cream, yellow, and lithographed brick. Trim and base colors also vary.

The next size down from the 125 was the 127 Lioneltown station. I guess *town* denotes something smaller than *ville*, since this is clearly a less impressive structure. There were only two members of this station type. Also introduced in 1923, the 127 had a single interior light. I assume the sales and price differential of unlit stations did not justify that option in this size. Unlit stations disappeared in the other sizes within a few years. I guess the roaring 20's consumer agreed with me! The 127 ran until 1936 when it too was replaced in 1937 by the ATC version, the 137. Do you notice a pattern here? Lionel was nothing if not consistent. With a new feature, all three mid to large size stations changed to add it, and their numbers changed in the same fashion: delete the middle 2 and insert a 3. That's without having the advantage of a word processor, too! **Photos 4 through 6** show the 127 and 137. They are symmetrical front and back, left and right. Note the three wiring lugs on one end of the 137. That is to connect the ATC mechanism that is also shown in the open top view in **photo 6**. The lamp hangs just below it. Also, note that the 127 is partly repainted. The yellow stack should be brick lithography. Since I don't do this real well, it's yellow. There are some other color combinations with yellow chimneys. 13 different color combinations are known for the Lioneltown stations. So if you're into variations, have a ball!



Next up is the 112 Lionel City or small Grand Central family. I'll describe the 114 or large Grand Central with it. No pictures for now of the large version. It's not represented on the BCC&PL. As discussed last issue, these stations are labeled *Lionel City* as are the first stations, the 121 series. These are clearly more ornate, and look like a metropolitan station or terminal. The simulated stone block pattern represents big city fancy architecture. They also show a definite family resemblance to the NYC's Grand Central Terminal at 42nd St. and Park Avenue in New York City. At least the Lionel designers didn't have to travel far for a prototype!



Photos 7 through 9 show the 115 small Grand Central station. **Photo 8** provides the answer to my trivia question. The time in Lionel City is 10:07. And I'll guarantee you that it is exactly correct anywhere in the world twice a day. If you're not sure, think about it. My Cook's Man is there, and as can be seen, it's not too bad for O gauge size.

Remember, this should be an impressive building. Like the Lioneltown stations, the Grand Centrals are symmetrical front to back and left to right, except that the exterior light fixtures are only on the front of those versions that have them. The clocks are in synch, front and back. And if the Lionel City traveler was worried about catching a train, wouldn't it be reassuring that the Lionel Lines could keep their time pieces in synch!



Let's get back to the numbers. The 112 and 113 were both introduced in 1931. Both have interior lights and the 113 adds the exterior ones. They ran through 1935 and 1934 respectively. The replacements were the 115, which was a 113 with the ATC, appearing in 1935, and the 117, which was a 112 with ATC, first catalogued in 1936. I have no idea why Lionel didn't replace both simultaneously. But note that the Grand Centrals were the top of the line stations. They were the only ones to add the train stop, or ATC function before 1937. The 3 smaller station

types 134, 136, and 137 were introduced in 1937. **Photo 9** shows the ATC control clearly, which is what makes this a 115. I'll have more on this mechanism in a future issue of The Tinplate Cannonball.

To finish off the Grand Central stations, the largest versions were numbered 114 and 116. They are the same as the 112 or smaller versions, except that they added another panel to the length. Look at **photo 7**, showing the whole 115. If you copied the vertical and oval windows and the pilaster, and added one of these panels on each end, you'd have a large Grand Central. The pilaster by the way, is the thing that looks like a column, but is embedded in the wall as opposed to free-standing. Architecture lessons are yours for free here.

Since they were the pinnacles of Lionel Lines architecture, only the version with external lights and its successor, the ATC station, were offered. So the 114 (1931-1934) was a bigger 113, and the 116 (1935-1942) was the ATC equipped edifice. All three of the ATC Grand Central stations ran through the end of production in 1942.

Befitting their large and impressive character, these stations were not produced in a wide range of bright colors, as were the smaller stations. Instead, the imitation stonework, which is the predominant color, was ivory, sand, or beige, providing a reasonable facsimile of dressed stone. Bases came in Mojave, red, or terra cotta. Trim was in greens and reds, often with maroon doors. Lights and clocks were either silver or gold.

I thought it might be interesting to look at a bit of Lionel's pricing strategy as demonstrated by the stations and their variants. Clearly, the value of a dollar was much different back then, but the price points for the different sizes, the value added for lights, and the occasional drop in price attracted my attention.

The following table shows catalogued prices from those catalogs or repros I happen to have, so it is not all-inclusive. Also, at least through 1926, Lionel had a dual price structure. Those listed are for locations east of the Mississippi. Western prices tended to be one to two dollars more. By 1928, this distinction no longer existed. In 1920 and 1936, my copies do not list prices. 1937 through 1942 had no pricing or availability changes. The stations are listed by family, as I assigned them.

	1923/24	1926	1928	1930	1933	1937-42
121	\$5.00	\$5.00				
122	\$6.75	\$6.75	\$6.25	\$6.50		
123	\$8.50 (^{'23 only})					
124	\$9.00	\$9.00	\$9.00	\$9.50	\$5.00	
134						\$7.75
125	\$4.25					
126	\$5.00	\$4.50	\$4.50	\$4.75	\$4.00	
136						\$5.75
127	\$2.10	\$2.95	\$2.95	\$3.10	\$2.50	
137						\$3.75
112					\$5.75	
113					\$8.00	
115						\$8.75
117						\$7.50
114					\$12.50	
116						\$12.75

Do you think that Lionel was just clearing old inventory in 1933, getting ready for the ATC? Or was it the continuing depression? I'd guess the latter, since the 124,126, and 127 continued through 1936. I'll have to look for the missing years in between and see if I can get the year the prices actually fell.

That's it except for the 1012 family of lithographed stations. Stay tuned for that in the next installment of The Tinplate Cannonball. 

Photographs by Ken Morgan

Upcoming LCCA Train Meets

Wheeling, West Virginia September 14, 2002

Start your fall off right with a great train show in Wheeling!

Plan now to join host Allan Miller on Saturday, September 14th, at the Kruger Street Toy & Train Museum, 144 Kruger Street, Wheeling, WV. To reach the museum take I-70 to Exit 5 at Elm Grove/Triadelphia, left at the exit and left again at the traffic light onto Kruger Street.

Registration and setup from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. with LCCA members-only trading from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. Public trading runs from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

LCCA members and families are admitted free. Guests are \$4, with children under 12 admitted free. Tables are \$10 each, with a limit of five per member. There's lots of free parking, handicapped accessible, and concessions onsite.

For additional information, contact Allan at (304) 242-8133 or toll free at 1-877-242-8133; or e-mail: Allan@ToyAndTrain.com.

East Haven, Connecticut Sat. & Sun., Nov. 30 thru Dec. 22 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Jim Boylan will be presenting the 0-72 and 0 gage operating Lionel train layout in a 103 year old real operating trolley car at the Shore line Trolley Museum, 17 River St., near the Green, East Haven, Conn. While regular museum admission will be charged, the experience includes heated trolley car rides, hot chocolate, cookies, and a visit with Santa, who will have a gift for each child. A limited number of passes are available by advance arrangement, for members who would like to bring trains to run on the unusual layout, or help run Jim's trains. Public transportation is near-by.

Call Jim Boylan (122 Monroe Ave.; Penndel, PA 19047-4058) at (215) SKyline 7-7444 for more information and directions. I will call you back if you leave your number on my answering machine. The museum phone is (203) 467-6927, but they won't be able to answer questions about passes. 

Standard Only

by Terry Johnson

RM 19489

I have found in my travels to train shows that many people collect Standard gauge but seldom do they have layouts. If they have layouts, they are often smaller than Standard gauge requires. Building a good sized Standard gauge layout has become a challenge for me. I have been interested in trains for about eight years and have developed a love for Standard gauge trains. I've found it difficult to gather a large collection and perhaps the best way is to buy someone else's collection. It seems that few excellent items are for sale at shows. The internet is changing the availability of items quite a bit, but the prices often seem to get out of hand.

In 1995 I got especially lucky and was able to purchase a collection from a wonderful friend in Arizona who had passed on. Ray Korte had built a beautiful 40 foot by 40 foot room in which to create a Standard gauge layout. The layout also



featured O gauge running inside the Standard gauge layout. The room also offered plenty of space on the walls for shelving to display trains not on the layout.

After purchasing the layout, I moved the trains to my office building and set up a layout in a room on the eighth floor. The layout measured 25 feet by 50 feet. Actually building a layout is the best way to learn and although it worked well, I did make some mistakes that would need to be corrected on my final layout. So, having learned from this layout, I decided to move the trains to a warehouse of 5000 square feet, in which I had established my real estate office. There was also room there for some antique cars I own.



Having learned from the first layout, this one was designed with an isle between the layout and the wall shelves so that there was easy access to the trains on those shelves. It would no longer be necessary to climb onto the layout to reach them. I also increased the isles used by visitors from two feet to four feet or more, allowing room for people





to pass each other easily. Finally, I designed the layout so that the trains could be reversed in their direction several different ways to allow more operating variations, making for more interesting operation.

The new layout was now back to its original 40 foot by 40 foot size, but was totally different than it had been in Arizona. Naturally I could not stop with just one collection so I have continued to purchase Standard gauge items when I find them in excellent condition. Some of the highlights of my railroad include three Hellgate bridges, six roundhouse sections, forty floodlights, thirty high tension towers, twelve stations, seventeen freight sheds and the 920 plot. Some of the unusual trains include the Boucher blue comet, the Ives white train and the prosperity special, all three presidential specials from American Flyer plus the Mayflower, Lionel's

blue comet with nickel trim, a 400E with cream windowed state cars, all four No. 9 sets and the Macy No. 8 set. There are about 75 Standard gauge trains either on the shelves or on sidings ready to operate.

Today, it is easy to modernize with electronics, but I felt that antique operation would be artificial if I went that route. As a result, all of the transformers, switch pulls and sidings are 1930's vintage. I used Lionel V and Z transformers along with No. 439 panel boards. The only leap into modern apparatus was with the track and five switches. This helped to speed up assembly.

When it came to table construction I had tried something that I had not previously heard of for train layouts. My innovation was to build the table using steel studs and wooden 2 x 4 legs. The surface is 3/4 inch plywood covered with 1/2 inch sound board with a green and black carpet to top it off. By using steel for the table, I was able to ground the connections anywhere and run only one wire to the power sources. Try it sometime if you want to speed up the wiring process.

The layout is available to view by appointment if you are ever in Denver. 🚂



Photographs by Terry Johnson

WANTED

Train articles with photos of a layout in progress from beginning to end; although we all know a layout is never "finished."

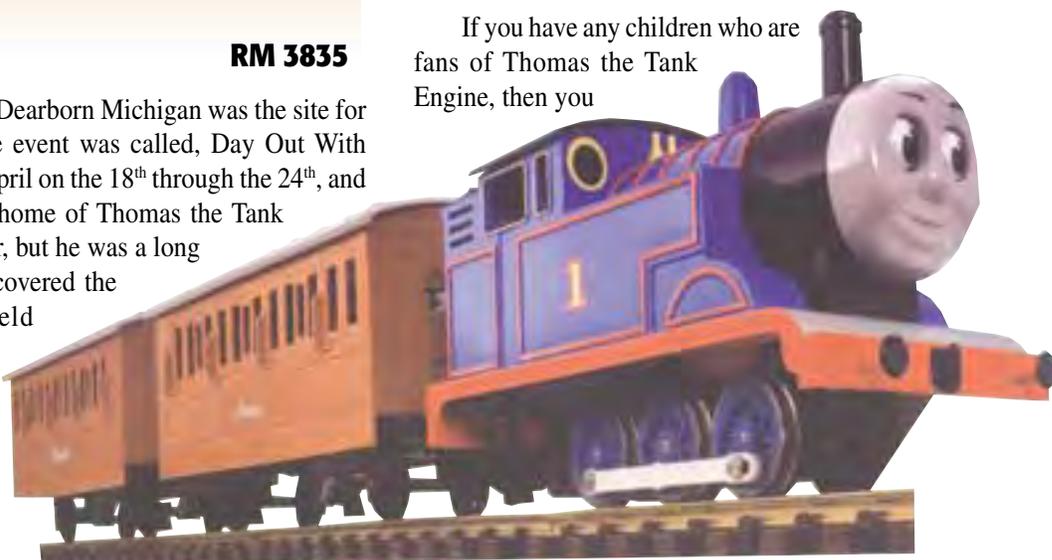
Bill Schmeelk, Editor, TLR
bill@wellingtonent.com

A Day Out With Thomas

by Bill Button

RM 3835

Greenfield Village in Dearborn Michigan was the site for a special celebration. The event was called, Day Out With Thomas and was held in April on the 18th through the 24th, and on the 27th and 28th. The home of Thomas the Tank Engine is the Isle of Sodor, but he was a long way from there as he discovered the magical place, Greenfield Village and the sell-out crowds of kids both little and big. One of the highlights for the youngsters was being a special passenger on a full sized Thomas the



Friends characters at specially designed play tables. Other activities for the children included face painting and temporary tattoos. There were of course plenty of Thomas videos for the kids to watch.

If you have any children who are fans of Thomas the Tank Engine, then you



1



3



2

Tank Engine with six passenger cars.

All trips required a special ticket with the time your excursion was to depart. While waiting for departure, passengers could enjoy the music of Rob Bourassa. They could also stop by the hobo

camp for some songs and storytelling.

Other attractions included a special section in the workshop building where kids could make and color their own pictures. There was also a section where they could enjoy creating a train layout with wooden tracks and Thomas &

probably know who Thomas' boss is – Sir Topham Hatt, the superintendent of the railroad. He was also there to personally meet the kids and pose for photos that the kids will probably cherish for a long time.

Finally, one of the highlights of the day was a special layout from the folks at Lionel running the Large Scale Thomas the Tank Engine set. The layout also featured many of Lionel's accessories which children

could operate by pressing buttons located around the layout. The children were thrilled to see Thomas pulling Annie and Clarabel around the track. Sir James, the red engine was also on hand chasing after Thomas.

Sir Topham Hatt may be Thomas' boss, but there were several there from Lionel to oversee the operation of the Lionel trains and to answer any questions from the visitors. **Photo 1** shows John Brady, Lionel's vice president of Marketing, operating the train layout. In **photo 2** we see Mike Braga handling some questions from some interested parents. In **photo 3** we see Lionel's Chuck Horan with the full size Thomas the Tank Engine.

The Day Out with Thomas event is a traveling one and will be touring the country. There are well over a dozen locations coming up. You can check to see whether he'll be in your area by visiting Thomas' website at www.thomasthetankengine.com. 

Photographs by Bill Button

The Mane Line

by Dennis Leon Clad

RM 10430

Editor's note: Our contributing editor Dennis Clad is a wonderfully enthusiastic Lionel collector and he is a valued member of our Lion Roars team. The opinions, recommendations and commercial endorsements contained in the Mane Line are those of the writer and do not constitute an endorsement or approval of those items by LCCA, its officers or directors. This information is provided to our members in order to educate, inform and yes, entertain. Any decision to make any purchase based on this information should only be done after careful consideration and with full knowledge of market conditions.

To my surprise The Ink Well's Bill and Mary Ann have added another really sharp 1/43 scale Lionel licensed vehicle to their product line. The truck is a 1950 Divco and is decorated in Lionel blue, cream and orange for The Lionelville Farms. Portrayed on the side of this very attractive toy is our club mascot "Happy" The Lionel Lion. The three things we look for in a Lionel product, quality, class and value for our hobby dollar



are all represented in this handsome toy truck. Each toy comes with a display case and three Lionelville Farms milk crates. Both the truck and its accessories are nicely packaged in a very attractive box. To my astonishment the low price for this skillfully crafted Lionel toy is only \$12.95 plus \$3.95 shipping. Because just 4,500 Lionel Divco trucks were produced and given the fact that these whimsical trucks are selling like hot cakes, you better give The Ink Well a call at 1-800-946-5935 or you can write The Ink Well at P.O.Box 3053 York, PA 17402. I look for the Lionelville Farms delivery truck to climb in collector value if for no other reason then it's a clever idea for a Lionel truck. Let's all hope that the Lionelville Farm's 1950 Divco truck is the start of a continuing series from The Ink Well!

As long as I'm on the subject of licensed Lionel vehicles, the wonderful series of Lionelville toy cars and trucks by the Eastwood firm were almost impossible to find at recent meets. The few Eastwood pieces I did see were cannon balling their way to destination "Priced Out of Reach" for most collectors and operators that wish to acquire this very desirable series of Lionel vehicles.

Once again, I have to report that those wonderful trains and sets of the MPC and LTI eras that are still new in clean crisp boxes have been difficult to find this spring at train meets. I think the reason for this storage of quality MPC and LTI trains for sale is becoming quite clear. The Lionel collector community is waking up to these facts about MPC and LTI Lionel. The trains of Lionel that we call MPC and LTI, offer the simplicity of Lionel postwar trains when it comes to maintenance and ease of operation. Plus, MPC and LTI trains come with the added bonus of so much variety in shapes and sizes, great colors and super looking graphics that are lacking in Lionel's postwar era.

Wellspring Lionel has been the industry leader when it comes to high tech electronics and out of this world

sound systems for toy trains. But for this devotee of both the MPC and LTI eras the click-clack sound that a set of Lionel trucks makes on

a circle of Lionel three rail track is sweet music to my ears. From what I was able to judge from recent meets, it would seem that the MPC and

LTI trains that remind one of postwar Lionel are the trains that rank first class seating on the Lionel Lovers Want List Express. The MPC and LTI engines that have received their passenger ticket for station "Highly Desirable" are Lionel F-3s, SD-40s and all engines equipped with a Pullmor motor.

Sadly there is not enough coal to fuel the locomotive of demand for those great uncataloged sets of the LTI and Wellspring eras. For collectors of these celebrated sets who dream that a fueling stop at a local train meet will yield an abundance of coal will soon discover the fact that they will leave the train station with an empty tender. Now as promised in the April issue let's look at some genuine uncataloged Lionel.

Calling all Genuine Uncataloged Lionel Collectors!

The teaming up of two American giants, The Snap-On Tool Company and Lionel L.L.C., was marketing genius. Thanks to this creative venture we collectors of genuine uncataloged Lionel now have not only a second Snap-On set to add to our valuable collections but also a high-end accessory and a top of the line lighted freight car.

keep the threads of your oil pan drain plug clean so you won't leak out more money than you should to claim title to this Lionel high performance set.

Packaged separately from the Snap-On Racing set but accompanying the set in the master carton is a 6-14138 Snap-On Racing automatic billboard. Not since Lionel's classy LTI era have we been treated to one of these layout delights. If I were able to own just one piece in the Lionel and Snap-On



Let's begin with a look at 6-31922, the Snap-On Racing Set. Just one look at the consist of this colorful set and its easy to see that the design team at Lionel was firing on all cylinders. Heading up our racing freight train is an engine that has captured the checkered flag in the race to hold the heart of every Lionel fan, the RS-3. Our Snap-On RS-3 has received a classic Lionel paint job that would bring a tear to the eye of automotive genius George Barris and everyone else at his North Hollywood custom auto design shop.

Be sure your points and plugs are properly gapped when you set your headlamps on the Snap-On Racing TOFC. The only thing that's as sharp as this Lionel trailer on a flat car (TOFC) is the cat's eye tail lights of a 1959 Chevy Impala. To make this head gasket blowing TOFC ever more collectable is a Lionel tractor.



Modern era Lionel boxcar collectors have your alignment checked so you can steer straight for the boxcar collector finish line as our set comes with a 9700 series freight protector. This red and white painted merchandise mover is decked out with Snap-On racing logos.

A gray and black Lionel SP type caboose puts a fitting end to a winner of a set. A trusted and confidential source has told me that Lionel made the same number of The Snap-On Racing set as they did The Snap-On Anniversary set. That would mean 3,400 Snap-On Racing sets were produced. So fellow collectors, don't throw a rod revving up your engine of desire for this quality set and over pay. Just be patient and



series of uncataloged toys it would be this smart billboard!

The last packaged separately piece accompanying the set is the 6-26778 Snap-On lighted flag boxcar. This car is of the same design as the flag car that Lionel offered on their web site except this car says Snap-On and has a different SKU number. For shipment to Snap-On dealers, Lionel packaged two sets, two billboards and two flag cars in a master carton. The label on the master carton reads PO# 091414 Item/Part No. 603192200 Snap-On RS3 Set.



Lionel Licensee Alert

The inventive folks at Taylor Made Trucks know what the Lionel collector wants and how to satisfy our desire for a quality Lionel collectable. So without further ado I proudly introduce to you the seventh truck in their Lionel series, the flat bed tractor-trailer carrying a special car with a die-cast helicopter, all done up in Lionel orange and blue. Wow, what a gorgeous toy! If you're like me and want a Lionel collectable that's loaded with 1950s play value then this Lionel licensed rig by Taylor Made Trucks is for you, too. Let me begin by pointing out just a few of the highlights on this beautifully appointed flat bed tractor-trailer. First, just feast your eyes on the breathtaking Lionel colors that adorn our handsome rig. Then be sure you have a pair of sunglasses on as you cast a roving eye over the highly seductive chrome sunvisor, air intakes, wheels, west coast mirrors, fuel tanks, air horn, exhaust stacks and the trailer's bed plus bulkhead, hey, I could go on and on. Like its six brothers before it, our helicopter rig comes

with operating lights and sounds. Included with your truck is a special 0/027 helicopter car with the Lionel Lines road name. Now sit yourself down for this as this special 2002 car comes with LED landing lights. The lights are track powered and you can control the lights thanks to a cleverly placed on and off switch on the car's undercarriage. Also included with the car are metal wheels and operating knuckle couplers. The helicopter is die-cast, decorated in Lionel colors and features the familiar Lionel "L" trademark. As if that weren't enough, it comes with turbine sounds and a light. Now for the best part, the price for this Taylor Made masterpiece is only \$ 49.95.

How the folks at Taylor Made Trucks can give the Lionel admirer so much quality, class and value for our dollar I'll never know. The shipping for one to three rigs is only \$7.95 plus taxes do apply. If you're like me and would love to buy additional helicopters in the Lionel orange on blue or blue on orange paint scheme to go with our wonderful LCCA airport, you can order them too. Just call 1-800-685-0335 or fax Taylor Made Trucks at 1-201-816-1166.

Hope to see you in Pittsburgh!

If you, too, will be attending our LCCA Annual Convention this summer in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania please come by *The Lion Roars* table and say hello. I would enjoy meeting each and every one of you. Our club fathers have a wonderful time planned for us so if you're new to LCCA or just undecided about attending the season's most gala event please try to attend, as it won't be the same without you. Safe motoring and always Happy Tracks! 🚚



Countdown to Pittsburgh

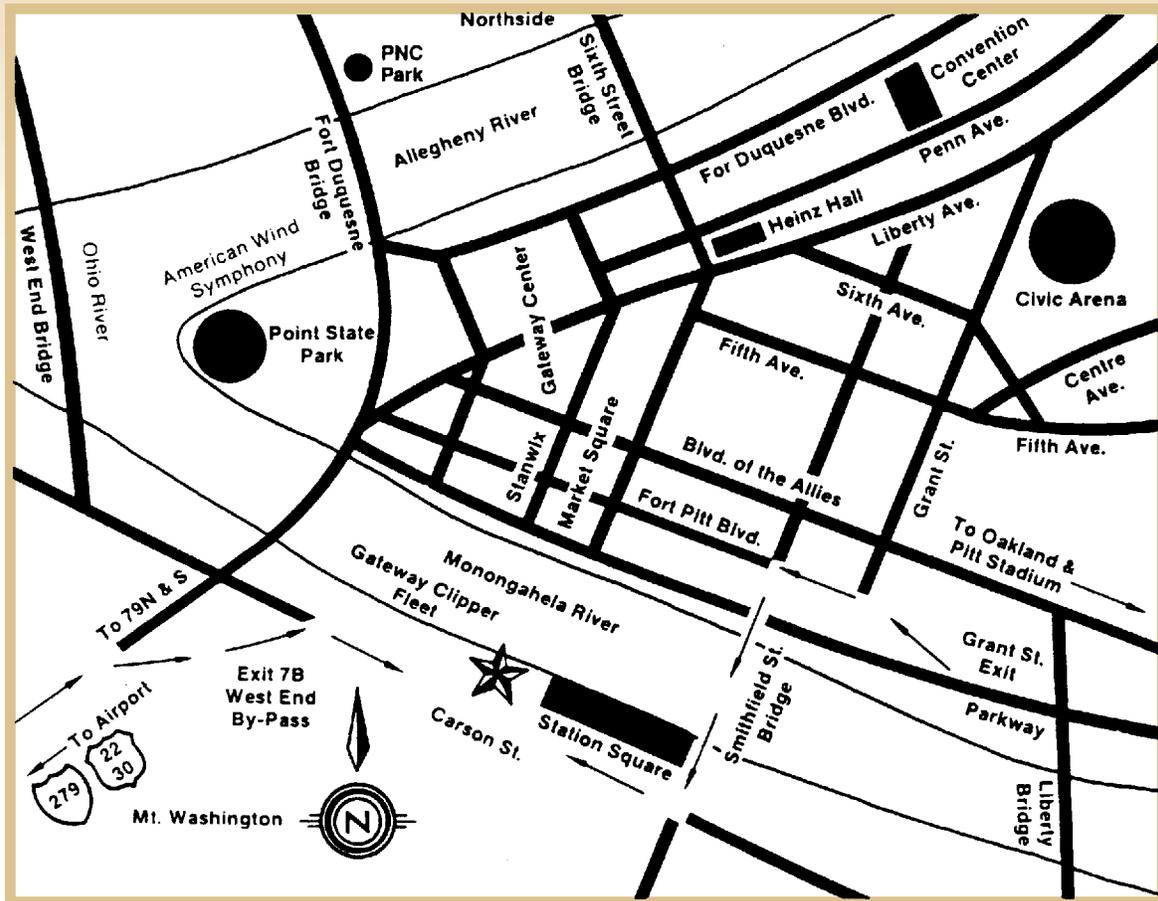


Set at the confluence of three great American rivers, Pittsburgh is the city of the Steelers and much more. One of the country's great destination cities, it holds many train-related activities in the city and the region. The tour programs of the upcoming 32nd LCCA Annual Convention will include an Amtrak excursion on July 23 to the famous Horseshoe Curve of the Pennsylvania Railroad, the Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site, and the Railroad Museum at Altoona as an all-day adventure.

On July 25 we'll spend a full day at the fabulous Carnegie Science Center with a huge (2400 square feet) O-gauge train layout sponsored by our favorite namesake toy train company. This layout shows some of the best landscaping you'll ever see — with areas depicting the four seasons, a working river, and a large steel mill.

And we'll enjoy the traditional features of the Convention — a welcoming party, the Lionel seminar, a sumptuous banquet (this time aboard a riverboat), and Trading Hall activities.

Directions to Station Square



FROM THE WEST (PITTSBURGH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT):

Exit the airport on I-279 towards PITTSBURGH. Take exit 5C “West End” to Route 51 North. At the first light, make a right into the West End Circle. At the following light, turn right onto East Carson Street. At the third light, Commerce Drive, make a left into the Station Square.

FROM THE NORTH:

Take I-79 South to I-279 South. Follow the signs for the Airport/ Fort Pitt Bridge. On the bridge get into the far right-hand lane and exit at Exit 5C- West End/ Station Square. At the first light make a right into STATION SQUARE.

FROM THE SOUTH:

Take 51 North towards Pittsburgh. Turn right into the Liberty Tunnels- Stay in the right lane! At the end of the tunnel make an immediate right at the light - **DO NOT GO OVER THE BRIDGE!** At the next light make a left onto Arlington Avenue. At the light at the bottom of the hill merge left onto Carson Street. Follow the Carson Street to the STATION SQUARE sign - turn right for parking.

FROM THE EAST (TURNPIKE)

Exit turnpike at the Pittsburgh Interchange - #6 Monroeville. Follow the signs for Pittsburgh 1-376 West. Follow 1-376 for approximately 15 miles to the Grant Street exit. (You will be in the left lane.) At the first light make a turn onto Fort Pitt Boulevard (Fort Pitt Commons Building will be on your right as you turn). Stay in the left lane on Fort Pitt Boulevard and turn left at the light onto the Smithfield Street Bridge. Cross the Smithfield Street Bridge and make a right at the end of the bridge onto Carson Street. At the next light make a right into STATION SQUARE.

Drive Safely!

Form may be photocopied

Lionel® Collectors Club of America 32nd ANNUAL CONVENTION - REGISTRATION FORM

**Pre-Registration Fee of \$39 must be received on or before June 1, 2002.
If received after June 1st or at the door, the Registration Fee will be \$54.
No refunds after July 15, 2002 — Please print or type.**

Name: _____ LCCA#: _____
(First) (Middle Initial) (Last)

Badge Name: _____ e-mail Address: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____ Are you a dealer? Yes No

Spouse's name (if attending*): _____

* = If spouse is a Regular Member and wants the Convention registration gift, a separate, full registration fee must be paid.

Children's names **and** ages (if attending): _____

Member Pre-Registration (includes non-member spouse & children; by 6-1-02) _____ @ \$39 = \$ _____
(After 6-1-02) _____ @ \$54 = \$ _____

Tables — Each with one chair _____ @ \$25 = \$ _____

If you want your table next to a specific member, Please send your form and the other member's form (with separate checks/money orders) in the same envelope.

Member's name: _____ LCCA#: _____

Electrical Hook-up — per registrant _____ @ \$30 = \$ _____

Get Acquainted Party _____ @ \$14 (Adults) _____ @ \$20 (Adults) _____ @ \$8 (Children) = \$ _____
(Sheraton Guests) (non-Sheraton Guests)

YOU MUST INDICATE A MEAL SELECTION BELOW

Riverboat Banquet — Make your entree choice (includes salad, vegetable, coffee/tea/milk & dessert)

Adult: _____ Filet Mignon -or- _____ Poached Salmon _____ @ \$59 = \$ _____

Children: A menu specially designed for our younger guests _____ @ \$39 = \$ _____

Tours Selections — Enter here the sub-total cost of the tour(s) selected on the work sheet: \$ _____

Check the tours by number and write-in the number of person(s) (e.g., Tour #1, 2 seats, etc.) below:

- Tour #1 _____
- Tour #2 _____
- Tour #3 _____
- Tour #4 _____
- Tour #5 _____
- Tour #6 _____
- Tour #7 _____

GRAND TOTAL \$ _____

Make check/money order (in U.S. funds) payable to: **2002 LCCA Convention.**

To charge it to your credit or debit card, fill out the information below.

CARD # _____ VISA MASTERCARD DISCOVER

TYPE OF CARD: CREDIT DEBIT

SIGNATURE _____ EXP. DATE _____

Send this form or a photocopy with check/money order or credit card info to:
2002 LCCA Convention
P.O. Box 479
LaSalle, IL 61301-0479

DO NOT send hotel reservations to the LCCA.
Use the separate form to make your reservations at the Sheraton Hotel at Station Square and mail your request directly to their address listed on the form.

Please provide this information:
Arrival Date: _____ **Departure Date:** _____

Sheraton Hotel at Station Square

Form may be photocopied

PLEASE NOTE

RESERVE ROOM(S) WITH A CREDIT CARD.
CONTACT SHERATON HOTEL BY PHONE, FAX, OR MAIL.
DO NOT SEND CURRENCY.

ORGANIZATION: LCCA

FUNCTION: 2002 Convention DATES July 22 to 28, 2002

ALL REQUESTS FOR THE ABOVE GROUP MUST BE RECEIVED BY July 1, 2002

Please reserve accommodations for:

Please print or type

NAME _____ COMPANY LCCA PRICE \$107

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

SHARING ROOM WITH _____ NO. OF PERSONS _____

SIGNATURE _____ PHONE NUMBER _____

MONTH	DAY	ARRIVAL TIME	MONTH	DAY

ARRIVAL DATE

DEPARTURE DATE

CHECK IN TIME: AFTER 3 P.M.

CHECK OUT TIME: NOON

ACCOMMODATIONS WILL NOT BE CONFIRMED WITHOUT YOUR CREDIT CARD NUMBER. YOU WILL BE CHARGED FOR THE FIRST NIGHT IF RESERVATIONS ARE NOT CANCELED 72 HOURS PRIOR TO ARRIVAL. TO MAKE RESERVATIONS, FILL OUT AND MAIL THIS CARD TO THE HOTEL OR CALL 800-255-7488.

CREDIT CARD # _____ AMEX DINER'S CLUB VISA MASTERCARD DISCOVER

EXP. DATE _____ SIGNATURE _____

PLEASE CHECK PREFERRED ACCOMMODATIONS OR CALL 1-800-233-1234 FOR RESERVATIONS.

PLEASE RESERVE _____ NO. OF: SINGLE TRIPLE LOCAL RATES ARE: \$107 FOR SINGLE, DOUBLE, TRIPLE OR QUAD,

SMOKING ROOM DOUBLE QUAD PLUS APPLICABLE TAXES.

NON-SMOKING ROOM

ROLL-AWAY CHARGE \$15.00; AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST. RATES ARE SUBJECT TO CURRENT TAXES. NO CHARGE FOR CHILDREN 17 AND UNDER OCCUPYING THE SAME ROOM AS PARENTS.

Fill out all necessary information and mail or fax directly to:

SHERATON HOTEL AT STATION SQUARE

Attn: Reservations Department, 7 Station Square Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Phone: 412-261-2000 or 800-255-7488 Fax: 412-261-2932

YEAR 2002 CONVENTION TIMETABLE
IMPORTANT NOTE: ALL TIMES EASTERN DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME

Monday July 22, 2002

Noon to 7:00 p.m. Registration Desk open for early registration

Tuesday July 23, 2002

6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Westsylvania Excursion on Amtrak, Tour #1
 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Registration Desk open

Wednesday July 24, 2002

7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Registration Desk open
 8:00 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. Sightseeing Tour of Pittsburgh (includes lunch), Tour #2
 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. LCCA Old/New Board of Directors Meetings
 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Trolley Museum & History Center (no lunch), Tour #3

Thursday, July 25, 2002

7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Registration Desk open
 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. LCCA Day at Carnegie Science Center Presented by Lionel (includes lunch). Tour #4
 6:00 p.m. to ???????? Get Acquainted Party — Sheraton Hotel

Friday, July 26, 2002

7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Registration Desk open
 8:00 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. Trolley Museum & History Center (includes lunch), Tour #5
 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Sightseeing Tour of Pittsburgh (no lunch), Tour #6
 10:00 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. Trading Hall available for unloading/set-up
 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. LCCA Annual Membership Business Meeting — Sheraton Hotel
 4:00 p.m. to ???????? Lionel Factory Seminar — Sheraton Hotel
 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Trading Hall **open to registered Convention attendees only***

Saturday, July 27, 2002

7:00 a.m. to Noon Registration Desk open
 7:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. Trading Hall Available for Unloading/Set-up
 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Kennywood Amusement Park (lunch on your own), tour #7
 9:00 a.m. to Noon Trading Hall **open to registered Convention attendees only**
 Noon to 5:00 p.m. Trading Hall **also open to the public and non-registered LCCA members**
 5:00 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. Tear-down in Trading Hall
 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Cocktail Reception — Cash Bar aboard the “Majestic”
 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Banquet at the “Majestic”
 (Convention officially closes after banquet)

Sunday, July 28, 2002

8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Tear-down in Trading Hall

* Non-registered LCCA members will be admitted free of charge after Noon Saturday by showing their current membership card.

See you at next year's Convention!

Lionel News & Views

by Bill Schmeelk

RM 6643

One of My Favorites

The year was 1958, the season was Christmas, and the special event was my first Lionel. I was eight years old at the time. Lionel was often featured in commercials on TV, showing the excitement of Lionel railroading. The commercials left a lasting impression and to this day, I collect as many of them as I can find. There is one commercial that I can remember vividly, but alas have never found a copy of. The commercial featured the new Lionel Rocket Launcher. I remember that what impressed me the most about it was the neat control panel from which you moved the gantry, watched the countdown, and activated the launch. This “remote control” panel was what made this something I placed at the top of my Christmas wish list the following year.

Alas, the \$19.95 price tag was simply too high and discounts at that time were not as common. The following year however, I was thrilled to find it under the Christmas tree. I was never sure what had changed to make it available, but I suspect that my resourceful parents found a discount store and got a better price. Whatever the reason, I now owned one. **Photo 1** is the original No. 175 Rocket Launcher that I received over forty years ago.

Even though I owned an original, I was still hoping that Lionel would reissue the 175 Rocket Launcher and last year it was announced that a new and improved version would be arriving soon. This new version is shown on the cover of this issue. Although I didn't notice it until after I sat down to write this up – there is an assembly mistake on the new model. Can you spot it? We'll give you the answer later in this article.

The 175 Rocket Launcher first appeared in the 1958 catalog, prominently displayed in the front cover artwork. An illustration more accurate to the production model appeared on the inside cover of the catalog. The catalog description said, *A Lionel first! Pretend you're at an actual earth satellite launching.* The price in this first appearance was \$17.95. The



Launcher was shown with a No. 6175 flat car which carried the rocket to its launching. The car of course was not essential to the operation of the launcher and was not included with it, but sold separately for \$5.95. An additional rocket sold for \$1.00.

The rocket had a sponge foam tip for safety. The foam tip in almost all cases has deteriorated by now, even those that are found in new condition. The rocket was made from three pieces and the middle white piece was very thin and would easily crack. An original rocket in mint condition is tough to find. I clearly remember the shape my original was in after it went through many launches.



The Rocket Launcher returned in 1959 and the price was increased to \$19.95. The Rocket Launcher was also included in the very top-of-the-line set. The set featured several space age cars and was headed by the 746 Norfolk & Western streamlined loco. This Super “O” set sold for \$100.00. Wow – what a set. When I was a kid, that set would have been the ultimate. In 1960, the Rocket Launcher made its last appearance, having been offered for three years.

Photo 2 shows the special flatcar with an original rocket in one of the four variations. The 1958 catalog shows the car in red. In 1959, the car is shown in black, both in the main catalog section and also in the rear where small illustrations of many cars were shown on a single page. The small illustration of the Rocket Launcher itself, in the rear of the catalog, shows a red flat car next to it. The same is true in the 1960 catalog. The price remained at \$5.95. The black 6175 Flatcar with Rocket made its last appearance in the 1961 catalog. Though not listed for separate sale, it was included as part of the No. 1643 “O27 4-Car Sky-Scout Diesel Freight set which sold for \$29.95. So the car lasted one year beyond the launcher.

According to

Greenberg’s Guide to Lionel Trains 1945-1969, Volume I, by Paul Ambrose, the 6175 was made in both red and black. Each version was available using either the 6411-2 or the 6424-11 mold. That makes a total of four versions. The one in the photo used the 6424-11 mold. The car is relatively rare and according the Greenberg guide, all versions are of equal value.

The Rocket Launcher is significant in Lionel History for several reasons. It was the last time that Lionel designed an accessory using the familiar vibrator to move a thin string which rotated a geared pulley wheel, usually moving a crank arm to perform different motions. This notoriously loud buzzing motor had first appeared in 1956 in two accessories – the No. 342 Culvert Loader and the No. 464 Operating Lumber Mill. The catalog numbers of some of its parts seem to indicate that the Culvert Loader was the first accessory designed to use it. From 1956 to 1958, a total of seven accessories used this motor. The Rocket Launcher was the last one. If you count any more – please let us know. There were also two cars which used this motor, in 1957 No. 3444 Animated Gondola and in 1959, the No. 3435 Operating Aquarium Car. In 1962, postwar

Lionel designed its last motorized accessory and that used a battery operated DC motor – the No. 375 Motorized Turntable.

How Do They Compare?

Photo 3 shows the old and new rockets. As you can see, they look very similar. The

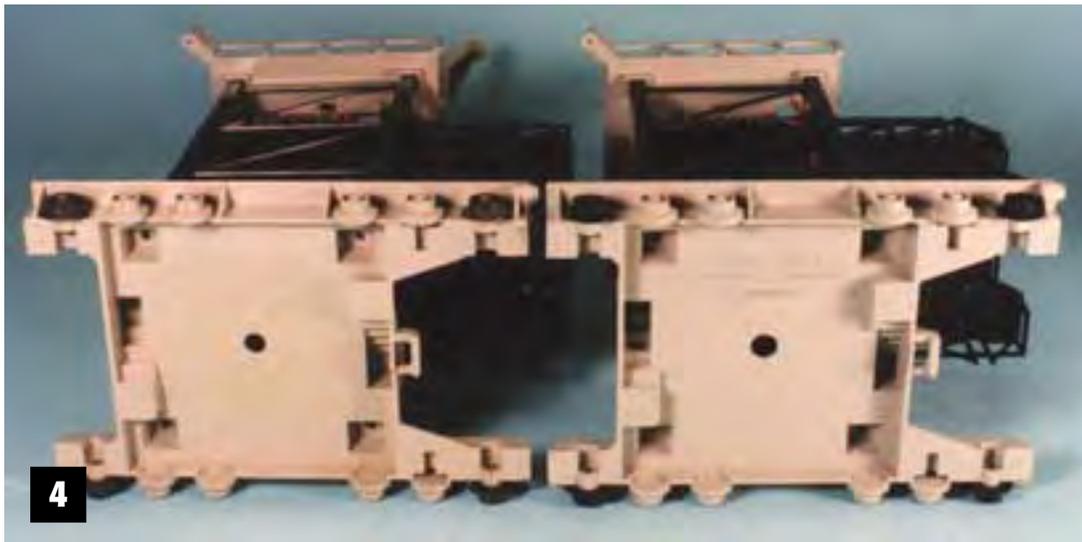
original is on the left. When new it had a square shaped piece of foam in its tip. I seem to remember that it was light yellow in color. The new version on the right has a much nicer formed tip that matches the top of the rocket in color. It too is soft, but not as soft as the piece of foam. I think it looks considerably better and will last longer as well. Both rockets have a steel band just below the soft tip. This band allows the magnet from the crane to

lift and move the rocket. The large top red section is the same on both rockets. The white center section is made of a more durable plastic on the new version. The bottom red sections of the rockets are almost identical. The original version has two small fins. The new one has thicker plastic and has three fins – an interesting change. The



new rocket is slightly heavier, but certainly more durably built – A wise trade-off in my opinion.

Postwar Lionel certainly tried to get the most out of their tool expense and to their credit was often quite successful in accomplishing this efficiency.



The gantry tower has many thin struts in its construction. If you are purchasing an original, check them out. One or more of these struts on the launch platform and the gantry tower may be broken or missing. There are two however which are designed to be missing. **Photo 5** shows the lower portion of the tower

I have always admired the way Lionel would use existing parts for new projects. The rocket launcher gantry tower and the orange ladders are made from parts first used on the No. 197 Rotating Radar Antenna, introduced the year before. The base of the tower is new as are the two station platforms attached to it. The Radar Antenna had a separate vertical antenna in addition to the main rotating one. This went into a holder at one corner of the top platform. The holder is still there on the gantry tower, but is not used. The long yellow boom of the crane at the top was first used in 1956 on the No. 3360 Burro Crane. The entire crane assembly was used in 1958 on the No. 6660 Boom Car that featured outriggers to support the car when the crane was in use. One year later in 1959, the car was cheapened, the outriggers removed and it was renamed the No. 6670 Derrick Car.

In 1961 parts from another accessory were combined with the crane assembly to produce the No. 462 Derrick Platform Set. This rare accessory is another that Lionel should consider reissuing.

The new gantry tower is almost identical to the original version. There are some slight differences. **Photo 4** shows a bottom view of both. On the left is the original. The lettering on the new version has been changed to reflect current company information. The new one also adds the Lionel "L". There is a hole in the base that is not used, but on the new version this hole is slightly larger. The gantry tower rides on its own track. The four outside wheels are functional and the rest of them are molded as part of the base. On the original version, the four outside wheels are steel and made in much the same way as all postwar car wheels. On the new version, the wheels are aluminum that has been anodized black. Anodizing is a process of controlled oxidation that locks a color to the metal. I believe these aluminum wheels have been machined rather than molded.

and you can see that a strut is missing along the bottom level. The same is true on the opposite side. These were designed that way so that the Lionelville employee could have access to the steps leading up to the top of the tower.



Before taking the photos for this article, I spent some time cleaning my original gantry tower. I carefully unsnapped the two station platforms and also the crane at the top. I then rinsed the tower and the platforms in warm water and mild detergent. They came out looking brand new. I carefully reassembled the tower and took my photos. As you can see, I photographed both launchers in the same position. When the photos came back, I began writing this article and suddenly noticed a difference in the two towers. On one of them, the two platforms were upside down. Surely I must have assembled them backwards on the original version after washing them. That meant I would have to re-shoot the one photo. How could I

have done that? A closer inspection however, revealed that I was not the one that made the mistake. It was the new version, the one I had not disassembled that was incorrect. Lionel assembled the new tower incorrectly. Well that got me off the hook for taking another photo. Now however, every time I look at it, the upside down platforms stand out like a sore thumb.

Easy to Solve – Right? Wrong!

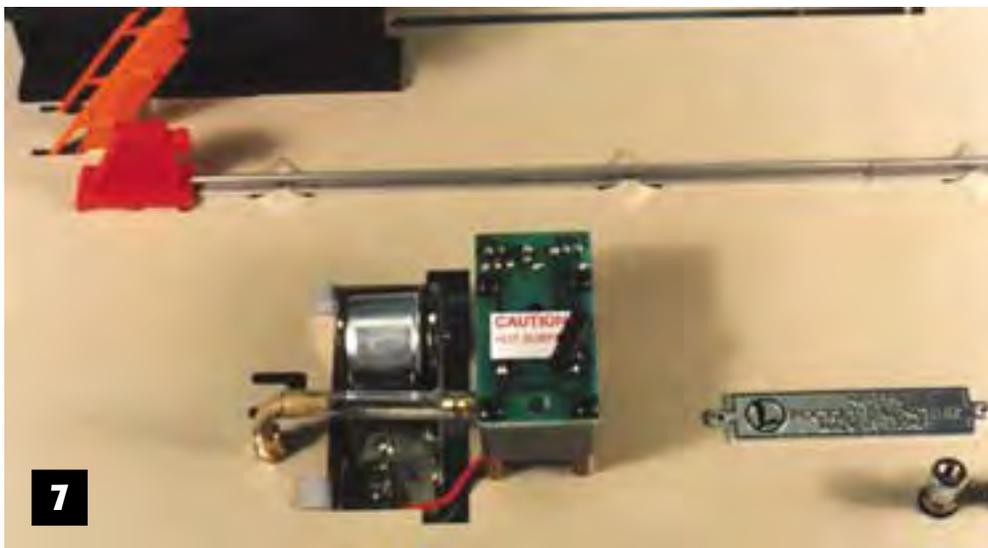
Okay, I'll just remove them and turn them around. These platforms were designed to easily snap into place and the new ones appeared exactly like the originals. BUT – as I tried to unsnap them, I found that two of the four snap tabs on each of the platforms of the new tower have been glued in place. I cannot remove them and correct the problem without risking damage. There is really no good reason to cement these in place. Should someone damage one of them, you would have to replace the entire tower rather than just the one part. I'm sure this why Lionel originally designed them to snap in place. To figure out if there was any reason to glue them, I tried installing the platforms upside down on my original postwar

tower. What I found was that they do not easily install upside down and two of the tower struts interfere with the tabs on the support platforms. So my guess is that glue was used because the platforms did not fit as well when installed upside down. Obviously, it was the wrong solution. The catalog photo, the box photo, and the instruction book photo all show the station platforms correctly installed. We spoke with Lionel about this and will report their findings next issue.

While we're talking about the advertising photos, all three of the above mentioned photos do picture an incorrectly installed piece. The blockhouse on the metal base is mounted backwards. It was however correctly installed on the production model. In fact, with the motor in place, you could not easily put it on backwards.

The blockhouse on both versions merely snaps in place. In **photos 6 and 7**, the blockhouse has been removed. **Photo 6** is the original version and shows the vibrator that operates the gantry tower movement. Although Lionel's 2002 Volume 2 catalog states that the new Rocket Launcher has a *can motor*

for gantry movement, something changed and Lionel chose on this model to use the vibrator. There is only one other accessory in which this motor is still used by Modern era Lionel. That is the No. 464 Operating Lumber Mill. **Photo 7** shows the new version and we see an addition. The small circuit board covers a smoke unit and pump. Notice in the photo that a small black plug has been removed from a hole in the circuit board. Into this hole you place several drops of smoke fluid and then replace the plug. The small pump delivers the smoke to the base of the launch platform. The instructions warn you not to run the launcher without smoke fluid. I would prefer a switch allowing you to turn off the heating element and pump for operation without smoke when desired.



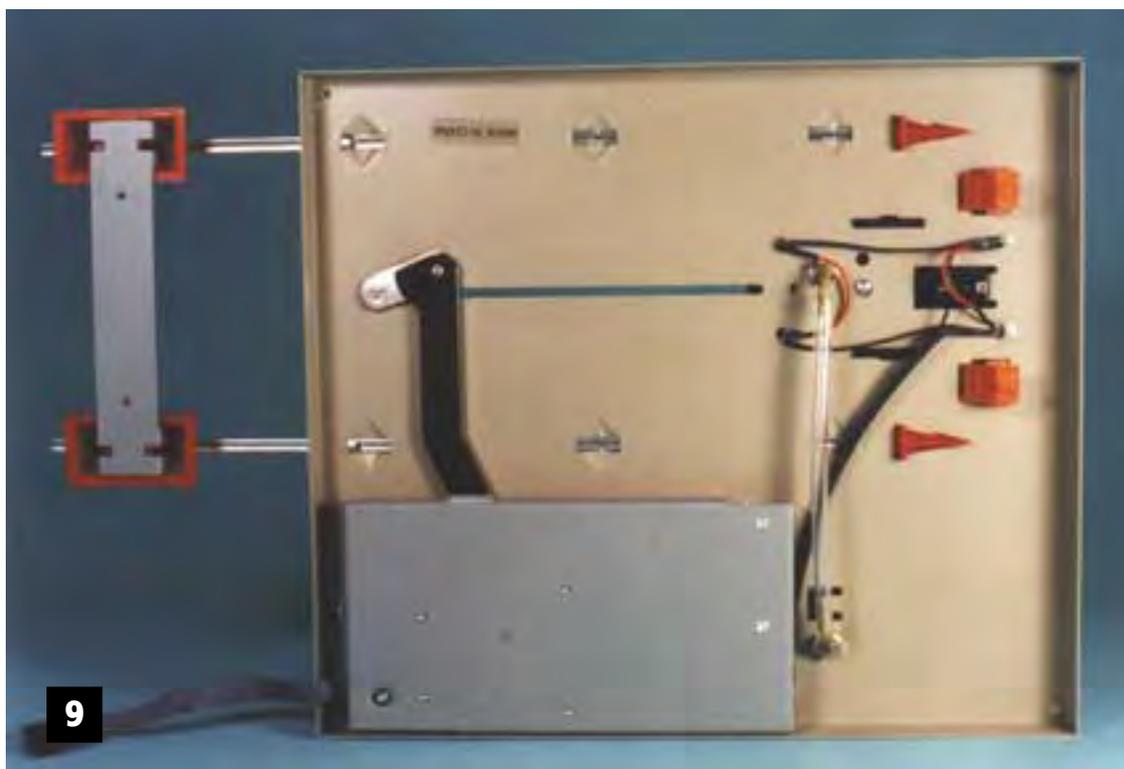
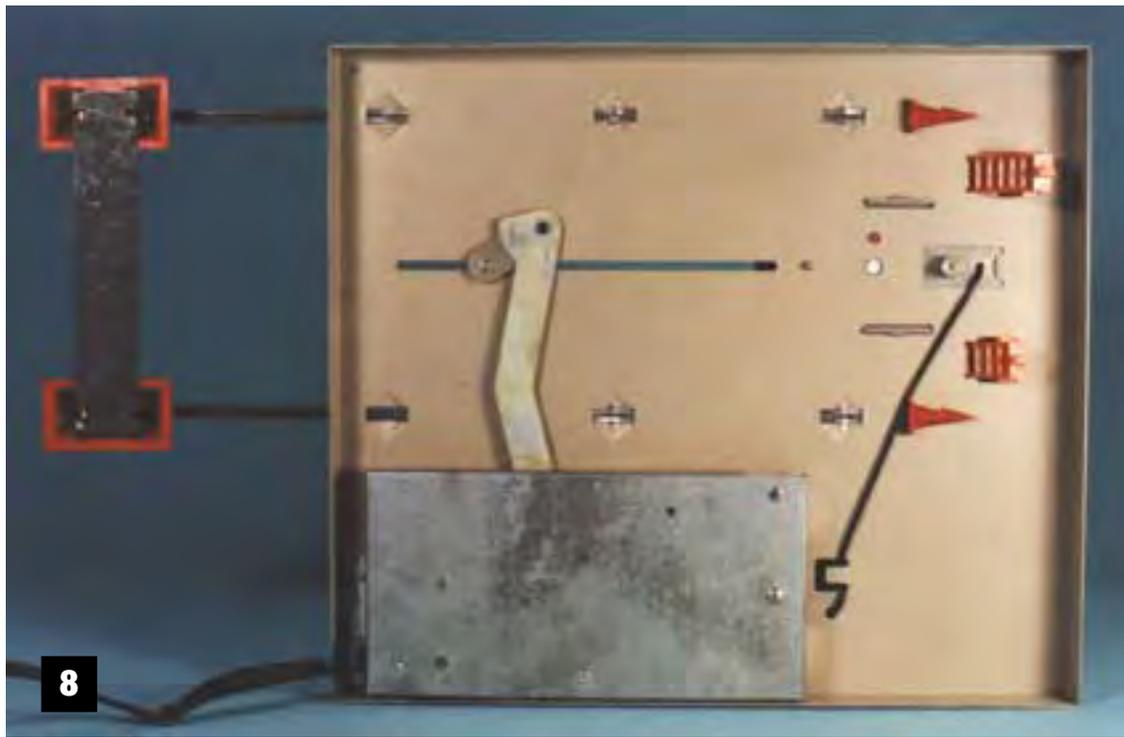
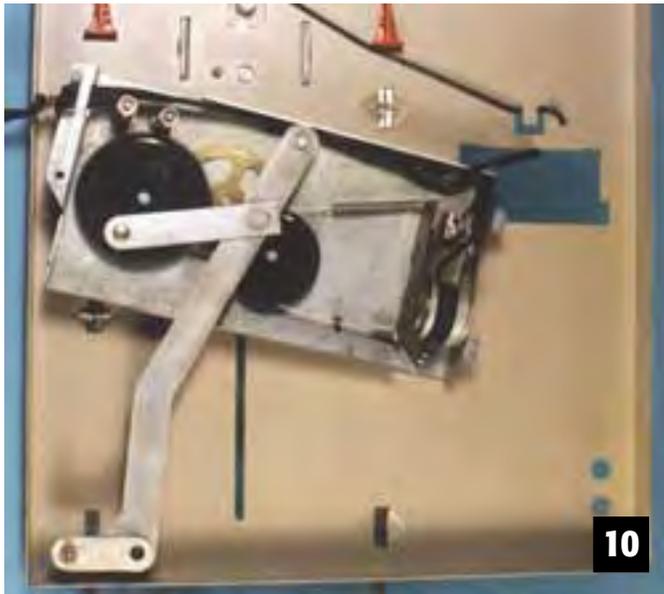


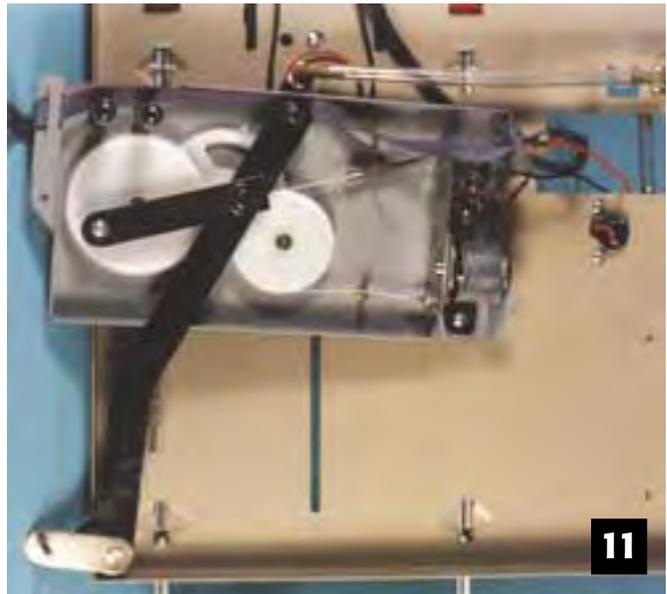
Photo 8 shows an underside view of the base on the original version and **photo 9** shows the new version. The main difference here is additional wiring and the tubing that carries the smoke from the blockhouse to the base of the launch platform. Another improvement is the finish on the metal arm that moves the gantry tower. On the new version, the arm is plated with a more durable and rust resistant finish.

Notice the track rails that extend beyond the base. On both versions, these are Super “O” rails. On the original, this

extended section was removable. The new version is shipped in a larger box and the extension, although still a separate piece, is secured in place and not removable. Also notice that the red supports at the end of the rails are positioned differently on the two models. On the original and also on all the advertising photos, the red supports are at the ends of the rail. On the new version, the supports have been moved about 1 inch in from the ends, leaving the rail ends hanging. I can’t think of any reason for Lionel to have done this.



10



11

Photo 10 shows the base of the original version with the mechanism exposed. **Photo 11** shows the same thing on the new version. One major difference here is the electrical connection. On the original, a four wire flat cord comes in at one end. This wire on my original has deteriorated and would have to be replaced before the accessory could be used. The new version uses an eight conductor flat cable. The cable has a socket at one end that allows the cable from the control panel to be plugged into it. Both versions have two terminal posts for connection to the transformer. The postwar version required 9 – 12 volts. For the new version 15 – 18 volts is recommended.

Photos 12 and 13 show the actual launching pad. The new version is molded in black instead of the original gray and red. The catalog, box and instruction photos all show it as

gray. Frankly, I prefer the original gray and am not sure why this change was made. The new version does add a little more action however. There are four red LED's that blink at the base of the launcher and smoke is also produced before the actual launch.

The neatest thing for a kid about to the Rocket Launcher is the remote control panel that operates it. **Photos 14 and 15** show the two panels. The original contained a mechanical countdown timer. First you had to set it by pulling the knob on the right all the way down. This would set the timer and turn on the red warning sign. Pressing the start button released the timer and the red indicator traveled around the dial from 9, backwards to 0. When the indicator was approximately at the 3, the warning light would turn off. A black button on the



12



13



14



15

upper left controlled the gantry tower. Holding the button down caused the tower to move. If you held the button down, the tower would continue to move back and forth along its rails. At the bottom left is the fire button. The timer had no connection to actually firing the rocket. You had to do that yourself by pressing the fire button. To the right of the timer, was a trajectory indicator that could be set at any level. This did nothing and was simply part of the play action. The decal next to the black indicator is often found in bad shape. The model in the photo is not the original that I received. This one was acquired many years later.

The new remote control panel has been updated significantly with new technology. The mechanical countdown timer has been replaced with an electronic digital number screen. This screen displays the word Lionel moving around the screen when it is powered up. The timer re-set is no longer needed and has been replaced with graphics. I think the appearance of the panel would have been improved if Lionel had used some printed graphics around the digital screen. The blank gray area just seems too large to have nothing on it. The trajectory selector has also been eliminated. The buttons on the new version are smaller than the originals. The function is also different. The gantry button works exactly as the original did. The start button starts the electronic countdown. The countdown starts at 9 and counts down to 1 and then says *Lift Off*. The fire button has been replaced with an Abort button. On this new version, the actual launching of the rocket is

electronically controlled. The timer will automatically launch the rocket when the countdown has completed. Once the countdown starts, the operation is automatic and can only be stopped by pressing the Abort button. When the abort button is pressed the countdown stops and the word Lionel reappears on the screen. The countdown can be started from the beginning again at any time by pressing the start button.



16



17

16 and 17 show the underside of the two control panels. There are no wire connections to be made on the new version. The eight-wire cable simply connects to the cable from the metal base of the launcher. Replacing the bulb on the original version was accomplished by removing the spring clip that was exposed on the underside. The new version features a flat bottom. Replacing the bulb requires eight screws to be removed. Four screws are removed allowing the bottom panel to lift off. Four more screws are removed allowing the circuit board on which the bulb socket is mounted to be removed. **Photo 18** shows the mechanical parts of the original version. **Photo 19** shows the interior of the new version and **photo 20** shows the interior of the original plastic panel housing.

The red illuminated warning sign on the new version is transparent red plastic. The original was translucent red plastic. The new version allows a view inside to the bulb. With the translucent version, the bulb was not visible.



18



19



20

So How Do They Work?

The postwar Rocket Launcher was a good worker and I can recall having no trouble with it as a kid. The postwar Lionel Service manual states that, *In spite of its size and the variety of functions performed, it is relatively simple and trouble free.* The vibrator motor in this accessory seems to make less noise than others and the gantry operation that it powers is smooth. I found this to be the case with both the original and the new version. The smoke pump on the new version adds a sound that was not present on the original. As soon as the start button is pressed, the smoke pump begins operating. I found that I had to go through the countdown process several times to prime the smoke pump. After that, it operated each time. The numbers on the countdown screen get larger as the countdown progresses. All operations performed as they should and this accessory should be as trouble free as the original. The new rocket is a definite improvement and I hope Lionel will make them available for separate purchase. The Rocket Launcher remains a favorite with me and will take a place on any layout I build.

I was surprised when the new Rocket Launcher appeared that the 6175 flatcar with rocket wasn't also offered. It is a rare postwar car and should be an easy car for Lionel to make. I hope we see it in a future catalog.

The Control Panel Lives On

Although the Rocket Launcher was cataloged for only three years, its unique control panel had a life of its own. One year after the last cataloged appearance of the 175 Rocket Launcher, the No. 413 Countdown Control Panel was offered. The original control panel had been altered to operate the new rocket launching cars. This control panel is shown in **photo 21** and was designed to operate using the standard remote control track. Two wires were used to make the connection and the instructions explained how to connect it to the 027, O, and Super "O" uncoupling sections. Pressing the fire button was the same as pressing the uncouple button. The panel was simply a little more imaginative. Although obviously made from the same tooling, modifications were made to the plastic housing. The gantry button hole was eliminated and the trajectory selector decal was replaced by having the information



21

on it molded into the plastic. This certainly would outlast the decal, but it would have looked better if it had been painted. The catalog illustration showed it in full color, but it was never produced that way. The illuminated warning sign was also eliminated and the Lionel name on top was no longer painted.



22

Photo 22 shows an underside view of the 413. Two of the wire connectors have been eliminated and the hole for the light clip is not punched out of the metal plate. **Photo 23** shows the interior workings and if you compare this with **Photo 18**, you can see the changes. **Photo 24** shows the underside of the



23

plastic housing. Compare this with **Photo 20** on page 26. The No. 413 Countdown Control Panel was cataloged for only one year, 1962. This was not the end of the line for the control panel however.

In 1962 Lionel, in a last ditch effort to play catch-up, began selling Scaletrix Auto Racing equipment. In its initial offering, Lionel was merely selling another company's product. In 1963, they added some items of their own. Among them was the No. 5155 Pacesetter Timer with Automatic Power Control. The catalog illustration is not accurate, but you can see the actual product in **photo 25**. The description stated that,

This accessory has the accuracy of a stop-watch. Set the dial, press the button and the race is on. When the dial has completed the timing cycle, cars automatically come to a halt. That may have been the plan, but in the actual product, the timer did nothing and you still had to slide the timer cut-out to stop

the current to the track and halt the cars. As you can see from the photo, significant changes were made.

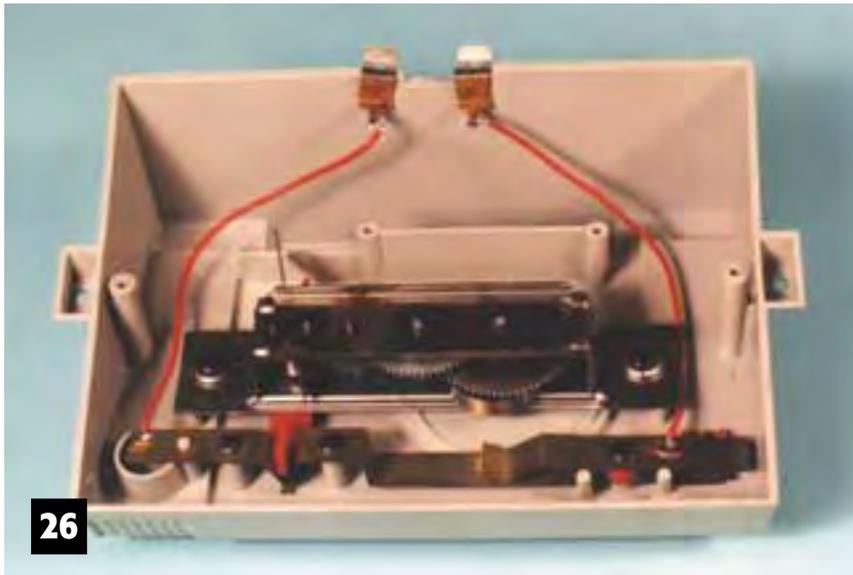


24



15

Photo 26 shows an interior view. The bottom of the timer had a cardboard cover which I removed for the photo. The wire clips were mounted on the outside of the plastic housing on the back. The timer on this one was designed to be much slower and took over a minute to go around. Although Lionel continued to offer model raceway items through the 1966 catalog, this variation of the Rocket Launcher control panel



was cataloged for only the one year. And so ends the postwar story of the unique control panel. Now in 2002, Lionel has proved that this interesting device still has a life in the modern technical era. We welcome its return.

In 1962, the launching platform from the No. 175 Rocket Launcher was trimmed of its side ladders and mounted on a flatcar. The No. 3413 Mercury Capsule Launching Car also updated the rocket. We were no longer just launching satellites, now we were sending men into space. This new rocket featured a Mercury capsule at the top that would parachute back to earth after the rocket was launched. These rockets are very hard to find today in good shape. This car was cataloged from 1962 through 1964 and would be a good candidate for Lionel's Postwar Celebration series.

Premium Editions

From Joe Kitterman's Period Toys comes some very unique artwork. As collectors, many of us can't afford all that we desire. Joe feels that our appreciation of fine toys should not be limited to books or display cases. His goal was to provide a way to take your love of toys out of the case or collectable publications and into the office, den, or anywhere you want to

share appreciation of toy trains. He accomplished this goal through his fine pictures. **Photo 27** shows one of his Premium Editions. Two framing options are available for each edition. Each premium edition is signed, numbered, double matted and framed in a 16-inch by 18-inch deluxe solid wood frame with a black finish. As you see in the photo, a reproduction part is also mounted in a shadow box at the bottom of the print. The premium editions are strictly limited to 250 and the price is \$149.95 plus shipping and handling.

The standard edition is the same quality as the premium edition but without the shadow box feature. The frame measures

16 inches by 13 inches and production is limited to 500. The standard edition sells for \$74.95 plus s&h. Our photo doesn't really do it justice. I suggest you visit www.periodtoys.com on the Internet to see the editions that are currently available or call Joe at 1-317-867-3767. The artwork reflects the same reverence for quality that Lionel collectors appreciate and Lionel officially licenses them. My personal favorite illustrates Joshua Cowen's first train, the 2-7/8 inch gauge Electric Express.

Bill Schmeelk
15 Birchwood Lane
Hillsdale, NJ 07642
(201) 358-1955

Photographs by Bill Schmeelk



Internet Know-how

by Craig Tribuzi, Web Editor

RM 10207

Why Can't I Get to That Site?

Has this ever happened to you? You try to get to your favorite site, such as the LCCA web site (www.lionelcollectors.org) or you try to go to one of the links from a search list. Then, you receive the dreaded "File not found" or "The page cannot be displayed" error message.

What's wrong? It could be a number of things. One possibility is that the webmaster has removed the Web page you are trying to access. Another possibility is that the Web site is temporarily unavailable due to a glitch in Internet traffic. Your Internet Service Provider (ISP) could be having problems or the site's server could be having technical difficulties. The third possibility is that there is an error in the link itself. Often, you can do something to correct the problem and find the information you are seeking. But first, you need to understand Internet addresses.

About Internet Addresses

Every Web page on the Internet has its own address, just as every house on your block has its own address. A Web address is called a Uniform Resource Locator (URL). A Web site's URL is actually a series of numbers. However, it is set up so that we can use alphanumeric characters instead of numbers when going to a Web site.

Since the intent of this article is to get members to our site, I'll use it as an example. The alphanumeric version of the LCCA site is

www.lionelcollectors.org. By typing that address into your browser's Address bar, then hitting the Enter key, you will go to the LCCA site, which needs to be visited regularly by our members to keep up with the dynamic changes going on. After putting the URL in the Address bar, do not hit the Search key on your browser. Hit the <Enter> key on your keyboard. Use the search button when you are looking for a URL.

What can you do if you get the dreaded error message? First make sure that there are no typos in the URL. For example, if you mistakenly type www.lionelcollector.org (missing the "s"), the site won't display.

Another tip, try adding "http://" in front of the domain name. In other words, type the complete URL, which is <http://www.lionelcollectors.org>. Depending upon how the site's server is set up, and on the browser you are using, some Web sites will

display without adding the "http://" in front and others will not. Some Web sites will display properly even if you omit the www and type only the site's name, for example "lionelcollectors.org." However, if you find that using the shorter version for a Web site produces an error message, try typing the longer version.

Do not type or paste any punctuation that a writer uses. In the example above, there is a period at the end of a URL because I have reached the end of a sentence. Do not type that period in your Address bar. Watch for quotes, period and other punctuation that does not belong in the URL.

Other Things to Try When You Get an Error Message

Check the extension at the end. Many Web sites end with a period followed by "com". Sites ending with dot-com (.com) are usually commercial sites. The extension following the dot is called the top-level domain. However, not all top-level domains are dot-coms. There is also .org (organization – which is our domain type since we are a tax free organization), .gov (government), .mil (military) .edu (education), .ca (Canada), .us (United States), and more. Because we are so familiar with the dot-com ending, it is tempting to use .com every time we type in a URL. However, you will get the error message when going to our site if you type www.lionelcollectors.com.

Follow the URL backward. Sometimes you are given a URL that points to a page that isn't there. You might still find the information you want at a different page on the Web site. For example, suppose I sent you this LCCA link and told you that it pointed to interesting stuff about the upcoming convention: "www.lionelcollectors.org/convention/annual_convention.htm." Clicking on that link produces an error message because I have made a mistake in the URL. With a little experimenting, however, you can still find the information. First, remove "annual_convention.htm" and try www.lionelcollectors.org/convention. Nope, you still get an error message. Good try, though. Next, try www.lionelcollectors.org. This produces the site's home page, where you will find a link to the convention information (for which the correct URL is: http://www.lionelcollectors.org/news/annual_convention.asp)

Change the filename. Each page on a Web site has an individual filename. For example, on the convention link above, the name of the file is "annual_convention.asp". Some webmasters prefer to end their files with the three-letter extensions of "htm", others use the four-letter extension of "html". So, suppose I sent you this URL: http://www.damswim.com/forms/dallas_aquatic__masters_practice1.html so you could find out

Continued on page 31

Board Meeting Minutes

by Dienael C. Dennis

RM 3713

March 9, 2002 LCCA Board Minutes Pittsburgh, PA

The Board Meeting was officially called to order by President Fisher at 8:04 a.m. Director Lou Caponi officially called roll in the absence of Secretary Dennis. In attendance were President John Fisher, President Elect Eric Fogg, Treasurer Richard Johnson, Directors Larry Black, Bill Button, Lou Caponi and Bill Schmeelk. Also in attendance were Constitution Committee Chairman Barry Findley and Registration co-chairs, Susan and John Ellingson. Absent were Director Harry Overtoom, Immediate Past President Al Otten and Secretary Denziel Dennis.

A motion was made and approved to dispense with the reading of the previous minutes since Secretary Dennis was unable to attend due to the passing of his Father.

President Elect Eric Fogg gave his report on the status of LCCA Local meets. He once again discussed recruiting additional meet Hosts and added that the local meets were going well and the results were favorable. He also discussed the possibility of an LCCA sponsored auction. Report accepted.

Treasurer Richard Johnson gave his report. He stated that all accounts were balanced and that the transition from outgoing Treasurer Eric Fogg had been completed and all books were in order. Report accepted.

Director Lou Caponi reported on the Pittsburgh Convention. He reported all key areas were going well. He stated that registrations were up and that all was running smoothly. He went on to say that there is no doubt this would prove to be one of our most exciting conventions to date. Report accepted.

Director Lou Caponi gave the 2002 Convention Car update in the absence of Past President Al Otten who was unable to attend. Mr. Caponi stated that the Convention Car sales had exceeded projections and from the feedback that both he and Past President Al Otten had received from some of our members the car has been well received. The cars will be shipped following this years' convention. Report accepted.

Director Larry Black reported on the LCCA web site. He indicated the web site has progressed very well and we will continue to make improvements and updates on a regular basis. He also said that the process of securing a club volunteer to

serve as our Web Editor was on schedule with several strong resumes received. The Board commended director Black for his fine work. Report accepted.

Break – 10 A.M

Reconvene – 10:15 A.M.

President John Fisher reported on the Nominating Committee and thanked Chair Bill Stitt for his outstanding efforts in securing a slate of strong, well-qualified candidates. President Fisher took this opportunity to thank Directors Black, Dennis, and Schmeelk for their long record of outstanding service to the club over many years. He expressed the board's appreciation for their individual decisions not to seek a nomination on this year's ballot. This action on their part has made it possible for the club to move closer to the goal of doing everything possible to bring new qualified candidates to the board. President Fisher indicated that Barry Findley would be presenting a report later that would strengthen this commitment. The board received the report and unanimously affirmed the candidates. The Board requested that President Fisher visit personally with each candidate to ensure they understand completely the duties and responsibilities for their respective board positions. The ballot will read as follows: (Position of Secretary) Dennis Clad and Johnny Ourso, (Director 1 year), Lou Caponi and Charles Sahm Jr. (Director 2 years), Barry Findley, Al Kolis, Jules Leventhal and Ed Richter. Report accepted.

Future convention sites were discussed next by both President Fisher and President Elect Fogg. Both worked vigorously at securing possible sites for the next two years, Las Vegas for 2003 and Milwaukee for 2004. A motion was made and approved to secure the Rio Hotel in Las Vegas and to further pursue and secure a property for 2004 in Milwaukee. Director Overtoom's efforts on the Convention Site Selection Committee were also acknowledged. President Fisher indicated that the committee would continue to identify premier properties in interesting locations that offered attractive values for our members. Report accepted.

Break for Lunch – 11:35 A.M.

Reconvene – 1:15 P.M.

Joining the Board at that time was Ms. Beverly Salvatore of Pittsburgh Panorama, Inc. This is the destination marketing company the Club has retained to handle the Convention tours. She went on to say all the tours have been finalized and that her company will do its very best to make certain the Convention attendees have nothing less than a wonderful experience while visiting Pittsburgh. The Board thanked Ms. Salvatore for coming and presenting her report.

Director Bill Button reported on the status of the Interchange Track. According to Mr. Button, the number of member ads continue to rise. He also reported on the recent printing errors and informed the board the printer had taken

full responsibility for the errors and apologizes for any inconvenience they may have caused. He also advised the board that additional procedures have been adopted to avoid future problems. Report accepted.

President Fisher spoke on behalf of Director Overtoom who was unable to attend because he was co-host for the LCCA Lexington train meet held that same weekend. President Fisher stated that sales of the archive items via the club's web site have been stronger than anticipated. Director Harry Overtoom had sent a list of available inventory, including archive items that could be considered for future offerings club's web site. President Fisher asked Directors Black and Caponi to review the inventory list and post a new variety of items from time to time and report to the Board at the next meeting. Report accepted.

Director Bill Schmeelk gave his report on the Lion Roars. He was happy to announce that the magazine will now contain an Editor's Page. Director Schmeelk did note that the early typographical errors made by the printer with regards to the Convention had been corrected. He reported that the errors had not affected the Convention registration forms. There was additional discussion regarding the possibility of eliminating the August issue of the Lion Roars. A motion was made and subsequently defeated to discontinue publication of the August Lion Roars. Report accepted.

Director Caponi, Chair of the Product Development Committee gave his report on the stocking stuffer. He said there were several possibilities at this time but nothing had been finalized. He did indicate that we are also being challenged in this area due to the lead times now required by various manufacturers. He then presented a report providing details for this year's On Site Convention Car, the fifth in a continuing series of very successful offerings. A motion accepting this year's selection was approved unanimously.

Break – 3:25 P.M.
Reconvene – 3:40 P.M.

Barry Findley, Chair of the Constitution & By Laws Committee, presented a proposal to amend the Constitution. The proposed Constitutional changes will be placed on the upcoming Election Ballot. A motion was made and unanimously approved.

Constitutional change #1 is to read: "Effective January 1 2003 three (3) Directors shall be elected to serve two-year terms. The three directors elected in 2003 will serve until 2005. (The effect of the change will be to eliminate the one-year director seat). Effective January 1, 2004, Directors shall be elected to serve two-year terms."

Constitutional change #2 is to read: "Effective January 1, 2003 a member who has served as an officer and/or Director for a continuous length of service of twelve years will not be eligible for nomination as Officer or Director until a two year break in service occurs."

(The effect of this change is that no Officer or Director will be able to serve more than twelve continuous years. In approving this amendment the Board felt this change would make it possible for new members to assume leadership positions.)

Constitutional change #3 is to read: "The club shall maintain in the archives a total of two of each commemorative issue." Previously the Club has kept five of everything. This change will still provide for adequate archival retention and help to keep storage costs in line. 🚗

Adjourned – 4:02 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Louis J Caponi

Continued from page 29

the practice times for my swim team workouts. This link will get you an error because I have accidentally typed "html" instead of "htm" at the end. Try removing the "l" from the end of the filename. This gives you a URL that will work.

Make a lucky guess. When you get an error message, try eyeballing the URL to see if you can find a possible mistake. Remember that webmasters are human and sometimes make coding errors. If you can see a possible error, try the URL with your correction. For example, I recently visited a university's Web site, looking for the department of economics. I found a link leading to this department, but clicking on it produced an error message. The link was something like www.biguniversity.edu/economic." Studying the link, I

wondered if the last word could be "economics" instead of "economic". I tried adding the last "s" and bingo, I was taken to the correct Web page.

If All Else Fails

Say that a page you visited last week isn't there this week. Go to the Google search engine (www.google.com - which by the way, is becoming one of my personnel favorite search engines and I'll explain search engines in another article if there's interest), type the URL in Google's search field, and then hit Google Search. The results will give you the link that you know isn't working, but it will also give you access to old Web pages that Google has stored. Click on a link called Cache, and if you are lucky, the page you want will be there. Nobody knows (well, at least I don't know) how long Google stores pages in cache, so you take your chances. 🚗

A Lionel Puzzlement

by Gene H. Russell, Ed.D.

RM 24608

Through the Decades

Chronology is not only the science of “computing time by regular intervals,” but is also the study and arrangement of events in their order of occurrence. In this Lionel Puzzlement, noteworthy events are listed but they are not in the correct sequence. As a Lionel chronologist, it is your task to organize the events in proper order and place the event number on the line provided for each decade. Good luck. 

Answers to last month's puzzle

1. Wabash Railroad
2. Western Pacific Railroad
3. Frisco (St. Louis - San Francisco Railway)
4. Santa Fe (Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway)
5. Rock Island (Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway)
6. Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad
7. Rutland Railroad
8. Central of Georgia Railway
9. Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway
10. Alaska Railroad

The Events

1. **Airex Company is purchased; locomotives first produce smoke**
2. **The “Electric Express” debuts and trolleys dominate production**
3. **General Mills produces Lionel Trains**
4. **Hellgate Bridge makes its first appearance and Lionel becomes America’s “electric train King**
5. **Helios, Lionel’s helium filled blimp is introduced**
6. **Lionel introduces their Linex stereo camera and the Lady Lionel**
7. **Mickey and Minnie Mouse handcar introduced along with a Lionel Range oven for girls**
8. **Multi-volt transformers with rheostats are introduced and**
9. **Lionel Trains are named one of the top ten toys of the century**
10. **RailSounds digital locomotive system debuts.**

The Decades

- A. 1900's _____
- B. 1910's _____
- C. 1920's _____
- D. 1930's _____
- E. 1940's _____
- G. 1950's _____
- H. 1960's _____
- I. 1970's _____
- J. 1980's _____
- K. 1990's _____

Answers will be published in the August issue

Train Talk

by **Bill Bracy**

CEO, Lionel LLC



Bill Bracy

As I write this, it's early June. As now a card-carrying member of LCCA, I'm officially part of the Club and looking forward to attending the upcoming National Convention the latter part of July in Pittsburgh. We have more than a half dozen members of the Lionel Team attending and are hosting some special sessions with all of you who are with us.

Last Friday evening Dick Maddox and I went to the local train shop to debut the long-awaited Veranda and the recently announced Union Pacific 4-12-2 to a SRO crowd. Even on the winning night of a deciding seventh-game semi-finals effort by the Detroit Red Wings in their bid for another Stanley Cup, the place was packed. One fan showed up late, announcing that the Wings were up 4-0, so he could now devote the rest of the evening to his other passion. Such are the conflicts when one has more than one dimension to his life.

Much enthusiasm and excitement for both trains was evident in the room. As the CAB-1 passed from one pair of hands to another, each engineer got familiar with the special codes built into the Veranda for operating the cab lights and

activating the two smoke units. As in the real train, smoke wafts from the rear diesel engine at start-up and at the lowest running speeds. Then, as the engine whine increases and the front diesel unit kicks in, at speed-step six, smoke pours forth from the front roof grill. An impressive sight—one that was repeated endlessly during the evening.

The Union Pacific 4-12-2 is a massive steam engine which enjoyed some thirty years of service, artificially extended perhaps by the years of World War II, which limited new engine introductions as resources were diverted to wartime production. Lionel has reproduced the 9000 in its final form, which was retired after 1,680,000 miles of logged service to its current museum location in southern California. As you watch the 12 drive wheels negotiate even an O-72 curve, you realize why, on its last trip, part of the crew had to walk alongside the rails through a few tight curves to make sure it didn't derail. Sound reaches new heights and dimensions with the 4-12-2. Both software modifications and a new macho speaker reproduce bass and treble with greater clarity and force. You need to hear this performance.

At ten o'clock we had to leave. An overseas conference call for the next hour required me to get back to the office. As we had our last slices of cake and pie, baked by the mother of one of the guys who was there, the gang begged us to leave the two production samples with them for the weekend so they could indulge further in the maiden voyages. Of course, we enjoyed leaving them behind, knowing how much entertainment they would provide both directly in their outstanding features, as well as indirectly as a catalyst for such enjoyable social interaction. One of those nights we'll always remember. 🚂

Photography by Bill Schmeelk



