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The Lion Roars



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Angela Troтта Thomas ©

Our 2007 Convention Host Hotel

Crowne Plaza Chicago O'Hare

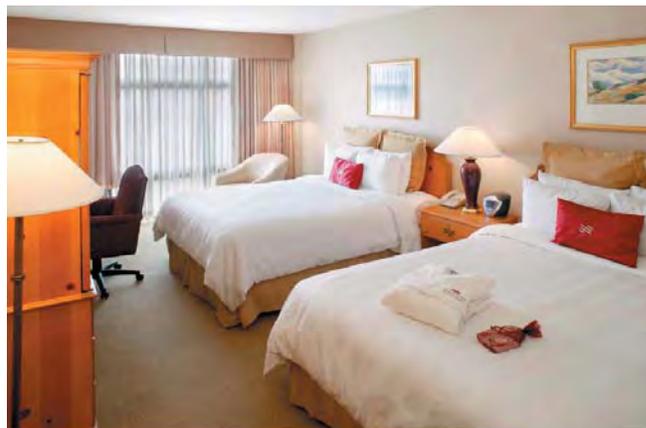
This recently renovated Crowne Plaza Chicago O'Hare is well suited as a location for our upcoming LCCA Annual Convention July 22-29, 2007. The meeting rooms, conference areas, and large banquet room are well suited to LCCA's special needs for a Trading Hall, a Banquet Hall, the LCCA Store, and other support services. The renovation included transformations of each of the 503 guest rooms.



The hotel provides complimentary daily transportation to and from nearby O'Hare International Airport 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; it's just 1-1/2 miles away.

The hotel dining options include:

- River Rock Deli featuring quick bites to eat from Krispy Kreme donuts and Gevalia Coffee in the morning to pizza and gourmet sandwiches in the afternoon and late evening.
- Rickenbacker's — offering billiards, live DJ, Golden Tee Golf, and a delicious dinner menu.



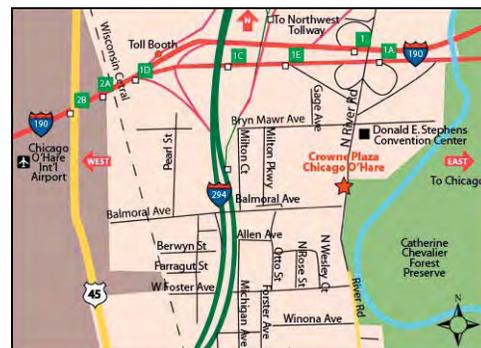
Hotel accommodations include:

- Sauna
- Indoor Pool
- Business Center
- Newly renovated Fitness Center featuring life fitness equipment and separate weight room
- Complete gift and sundry shop
- Sleep Advantage Program — featuring seven layers of comfort, eye mask, lavender pillow spray, sleep advice and complimentary sleep CD
- Wireless Internet access throughout the public areas and guestrooms (for a small fee).

John Fisher, LCCA Annual Convention Manager, said, "This hotel is highly attuned to the needs of organizations that produce and present special occasions like our convention, so our requirement for the Get Acquainted Party and the

Banquet will be 'no sweat' to them; yet they 'sweat the details' to make everything work smoothly."

When you make your reservation at the Crowne Plaza Chicago O'Hare hotel, you'll be at the center of convention activity and qualify for the low room rate extended to LCCA members: only \$102/night — which is unheard of in a major city like Chicago. On-site parking is FREE to registered guests. A hotel registration form is provided in this issue; see the inside front ghost cover. Remember, when you stay at the host hotel, you help your club earn considerations that offset convention expenses for all. 🚗



Photographs by Crowne Plaza Chicago O'Hare

See the Hotel Registration form on the GIFC.

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ON THE COVER

"Gallery Express"

by Angela Trotta Thomas

For more information about Angela's paintings, visit her online shopping website at: www.angelatrottathomas.com or call: 750-223-1401

Contacting the LCCA Business Office

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

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

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Answers to the Lionel Puzzlement in this issue:

1. J, 2. H, 3. E, 4. D, 5. M, 6. A,
7. L, 8. C, 9. I, 10. N, 11. G, 12. B,
13. F, 14. I, 15. K.

LCCA Web Site: www.lionelcollectors.org

People to Contact:

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

The LCCA is not affiliated with Lionel or Lionel L.L.C. Opinions and comments made in by-lined columns in this publication do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Board of Directors or the views of officers and appointed officials; nor do they indicate a club endorsement of any products mentioned.

The President's Report

by Louis J. Caponi
RM 8735

Christmas Is in the Air

Can you believe it's already Christmas time? You know the holidays are upon us when the smells of freshly baked cookies, pine trees, and smoke from your favorite Lionel steam engine fill the air.

Thinking back to my childhood days and growing up in a small row house in West Philadelphia, I still remember my dad moving the living room furniture aside and clearing the way for my 4x8-foot train layout. I bugged him to set up that board! Before he was through, I had trains, track, and accessories all over the place! I couldn't wait to run those trains. I suppose I've never grown up because I still can't wait to operate my holiday layout.



A Great Gift Idea

On the subject of the holiday, the club has a great gift idea — place a pre-order for the New Haven #209 Alco passenger train for that special engineer or collector in the family. Take advantage of the split-payment program and be an assistant to Santa! Although the set will not be delivered until late 2007, by ordering now you'll guarantee that your favorite railroader won't miss out on this great limited-edition offer. If you choose the three-payment plan program, you could possibly cover two more special occasions; maybe a special birthday or anniversary. It's like giving a gift certificate! Well, you get my point.

To "B" or Not To "B"

Only those club members who order the New Haven #209 train will have the option to purchase its three add-on items: a matching "B" unit and two more cars. These additional items were never produced for "The Merchant's Limited" set in 1958 and will be exciting extras to the basic train consist. We will keep you informed when these items will be available for ordering. The "B" and the two add-on cars will be produced at the same time as the basic pieces so that the paint will match perfectly. **THE DEADLINE FOR ORDERING THIS TRAIN IS APRIL 30, 2007.**

In the Pipeline to You

Members who ordered the add-on #2 cars for the "Halloween" General train should have them by the end of December. They will look great in operation on your layout or on display in your collection. If you don't receive your order by the end of the year, please contact the Business Office so they can check the records and take care of it.

Be on the Lookout

One sharp-looking 2006 Convention Car — a Union Pacific Auxiliary Power Car — should arrive at Lionel any

day now and at your door within the next few weeks. These cars are really hot; the entire production run was sold out!

Seal the Deal

I am meeting with Lionel soon and finalizing the \$30 rebate program for purchasing the new TMCC II system. All members will receive a rebate coupon shortly.

A Christmas Wish

On behalf of myself, the Board of Directors and appointed officials of the LCCA, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year! 🚂

Photographs by John Gardberg, Center Rail Productions



December, 2006

Amtrak Offers 10% Discount

by John Fisher
RM 6541

Windy City, Here We Come

I am pleased to inform you that our 2007 Convention will be held in Rosemont, Illinois, at the newly renovated Crowne Plaza O'Hare Hotel. As many of you know, there are activities and attractions galore in the Chicago area. Our tour schedule will be exciting. Personally, I can't wait to visit the Illinois Railroad Museum. They are planning something very special just for the LCCA. Your convention team is working hard to ensure that you have another memorable experience. Stay tuned — the details will appear in the next issue of *The Lion Roars*.

Some LCCA members regularly plan to extend their enjoyment of annual LCCA Conventions by including rail experiences on their way to and from the event. Our friends at Amtrak® will help make this possible in 2007 for club members who are also railfans.

Special Amtrak Convention Fare Code number X62M-907 has been activated for the time frame of July 19 to August 01, 2007. LCCA Conventioneers who mention this code when making their AMTRAK reservations will receive a 10% savings off the lowest available rail fare when making their reservations. No other discounts will apply.

Amtrak offers this discount off the lowest available fare to Chicago between the dates cited. Travel dates are approved three days prior to the Convention start date and three days following the last day of the meeting.

To book your reservation call Amtrak at 1-800-872-7245 or contact your local travel agent. Travel to the LCCA Convention cannot be booked via the Internet. Please be sure to refer to Convention Fares Code X62M-907 when making your reservation. This offer is not valid on the Auto Train™. Fare is valid on Metroliner™ and Acela™ service for all departures seven days a week, except for holiday blackouts. Offer valid with Sleepers, Business Class or First Class seats with payment of the full applicable accommodation charges. 

All aboard Amtrak, Chicago bound!

Photograph courtesy of Amtrak



Sneak Preview of the Illinois Railroad Museum

Eric Fogg
RM 12768

You'll have plenty of time to explore all the museum has to offer, including anything you might have missed earlier in the afternoon. To top it all off, plan to spend time with friends and family at a family-style BBQ, complete with all the fixin's. Nobody does a railroad museum tour like the LCCA. 🚂

Photographs provided by IRRM

A LCCA 2007 Annual Convention Tour

Do you remember, as I do, elementary school field trips? My secret fantasy then was to somehow get "accidentally" separated from the group and end up spending the night inside in a museum and enjoying the fabulous exhibits all to myself. This summer, you won't have to dream it. You can do it; at least much of it!

Plan to join the LCCA on a very special visit to the Illinois Railway Museum — one of many tours that will be part of our Windy City Convention, July 22-29, 2007. Complete details about all the Chicago tours and activities will be presented in the February, 2007, issue of *TLR*.

You can count on a full afternoon of surprises and discoveries at the IRRM along with everyone else who buys a ticket. You'll learn about the vital role railroads have played in the growth of Chicago, Carl Sandburg's favorite city and "Player with Railroads and Freight Handler for the Nation." You'll see all the quality items on display. Some of it may even look familiar because some museum equipment has starred in a "supporting actor" role in TV commercials and films such as "A League of Their Own" and "Flags of Our Fathers."

After-hours Fun and Food

The fun will continue for LCCA conventioners after the museum closes that afternoon.

Other visitors will be ushered out the gate, but you, on the other hand, will stay on and experience in-depth tours presented by the museum staff and participate in twilight runs on special equipment.



The Smoking Zone

by Erol Gurcan
RM 26800

Improve the Smoke Output from a Mini-Berkshire

In October, 2003, I purchased a Lionel® 2-8-4 Chesapeake and Ohio mini-Berkshire steam locomotive with Railsounds (6-28627). At that time, the loco & tender listed for \$230, but I was able to purchase it by mail order for \$190. I liked it because it ran smoothly, moved quietly, and glided to a stop with its internal momentum flywheel. It also presented a good level of detail for the price. The Lionel tender contained a more realistic coal load than MTH's Railking New York Central 4-6-4 Hudson, a train I purchased last year. The retail price of the Hudson was \$380; \$150 more than the C&O mini-Berk. In **photo 1** the C&O tender is on the left. In addition, its "conventional" Railsounds™ sound package always performed well.

My only complaint with this C&O steamer was its weak smoke output — even at higher voltages and when pulling several passenger or freight cars. I noted this point in my recent review* of a similar mini-Berk — Lionel's popular Polar Express set. Weak smoke output was common in Lionel's mini-Berkshire locomotives manufactured a few years ago. Here's the good news — there's a simple, reasonable-cost option.

While preparing the PE article, I appreciated the level of smoke output and considered purchasing a PE smoke unit from the parts department at Lionel and installing it in my C&O loco. The shell, chassis, and inner workings of both locos are the same, except for larger front pilot on the PE loco and the lack of a momentum flywheel. I envisioned a "smoke transplant" and hoped for a positive post-op outcome.

PE to the Rescue

The PE smoke unit assembly by Lionel is part number 6-20-8616-200 and sells for \$14 plus S&H of about \$6. After delivery, I took the part and the C&O loco to my friend and fellow LCCA member Charlie Hirschberg (RM 237), owner of Nassau Hobbies in Freeport, New York. For a modest labor charge, he installed the smoke unit assembly. Hobbyists who are mechanically inclined should be able to install it themselves.

The PE smoke unit assembly worked well in the C&O mini-Berk. It produced good smoke output as it pulled four C&O passenger cars at moderate speed with 14-15 volts of power from a Z-4000 to the tracks. I selected these four cars for the test because they were offered by Lionel in both 2003 Catalogs as a separate-sale item (6-15169) to match the C&O loco and tender.



What a Difference One Part Makes

The smoke unit delivered nice round puffs of smoke. An added benefit that I can not explain is that some smoke comes out of the loco's steam chests at the front side rods, resulting in an even more realistic effect.

Some might think that purchasing a new smoke unit and installing it in a locomotive with a weak unit when new would be like "throwing good money after bad." However, given the reasonable cost of the part and modest labor involved, I believe it was a wise investment with an important dividend: more smoke!

If you have a Lionel mini-Berkshire manufactured a few years ago that is a solid all-around performer but seems to be nearly a "non-smoker," I recommend purchasing the PE smoke unit assembly and installing it in your mini-Berk.

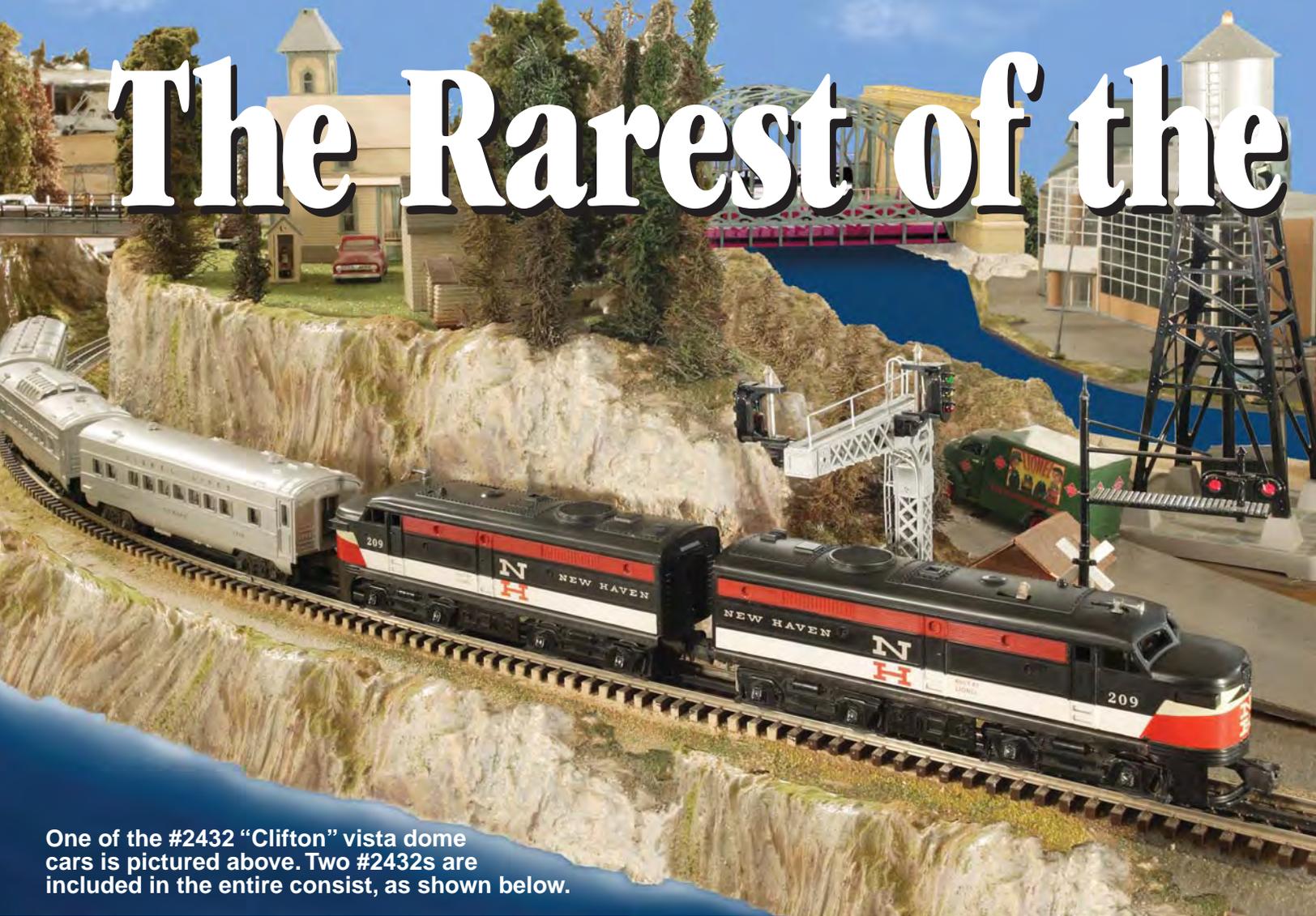
Get smoking! 🚂

Photograph by Erol Gurcan

* October 2006 TLR

December, 2006

The Rarest of the



One of the #2432 "Clifton" vista dome cars is pictured above. Two #2432s are included in the entire consist, as shown below.



Own this Re-make of the New Haven #209 Passenger Train

One of the rarest passenger trains of 1958 can now be yours to enjoy. In collaboration with Lionel®, LCCA offers this limited-edition re-make of "The Merchants Limited" to club members exclusively. This O27 traditional-style passenger train includes New Haven #209 A-A ALCOs on point, a #2434 "Newark" Pullman car, two #2432 "Clifton" vista dome cars, and the #2436 "Mooseheart" observation car.



Photo used by permission of Kalmbach Publishing Co.

Rare from 1958

The motive power of this train will be made using as much of the original tooling as possible. The powered A unit will have an AC motor similar to the original and will also contain:

- Magnetraction™
- Diesel horn (no battery required)
- Stamped steel frame
- Electronic e-unit
- Fixed couplers front and rear
- Original paint scheme
- Headlight lenses & windshields on both A units
- Note: track and transformer not included.

The coaches will bear the original car numbers printed in red and will have:

- roof ventilators
- die-cast trucks with fast-angle wheels

- operating couplers
- two interior lights per car
- window silhouettes.

As a bonus, Lionel will reproduce the original set box and the 1950s-style inner cartons. The set box will include a reproduction of the original painting and this discrete text: "Produced exclusively for the Lionel Collectors Club of America."

You could wait — probably for years — for an original #209 passenger train to emerge in the marketplace at a high asking price. But why? The LCCA offers another way for you to own this train now. This production run will be limited, so place your order well before the deadline!

A Limited-edition Offer for LCCA Club Members

RE-MAKE OF LIONEL NEW HAVEN #209 ALCO A-A 1958 PASSENGER TRAIN

LIMIT: ONE TRAIN PER MEMBER. DEADLINE FOR ORDERS: APRIL 30, 2007. DELIVERY IN LATE 2007. ONCE SUBMITTED, LCCA WILL CONSIDER THIS A FIRM, NON-REFUNDABLE ORDER.

Name: _____ LCCA No.: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip + 4: _____

Phone: () _____ e-mail: _____

PLAN A — PAYMENT IN FULL Charge my credit card account for the total payment. Or, send your check made payable to "LCCA" with "NH-TLR/209" written on the memo line.

PLAN B — THREE INSTALLMENTS Charge my credit card account for three equal payments of \$156.65: #1 now; #2 in January 2007, and #3 in June 2007. If applicable, IL sales tax & extended S&H&I will be included in payment #1. *There will be absolutely no refunds of any payments if you subsequently decide not to complete your purchase of this train.*

Purchase authorization to charge my credit card account:

No.: _____

Discover Mastercard Visa Exp. date: _____

Code No. _____ (last three digits at panel on the back of your card)

By my signature, I authorize LCCA to charge my account for the amount shown below according to the terms and conditions cited herein.

Sig.: _____

DO THE MATH

- New Haven #209 ALCO passenger train (\$469.95) \$ _____
 - S&H with insurance to continental USA (Included)
 - Extended S&H w/insurance to AK, HI, & foreign countries: add \$34.00 \$ _____
 - Illinois residents only — apply 6.5% sales tax: add \$30.55 \$ _____
- Total: \$ _____

Mail with payment to: LCCA Business Office, Dept. NH-TLR/209, P.O. Box 479, LaSalle, IL 61301-0479
To order online: www.lionelcollectors.org and go to "MEMBERS ONLY" and open "LCCA STORE."

Order form may be photocopied. For additional information visit www.lionelcollectors.org.

Christmas Memories versus the Dollars

by John Mateyko
RM 23791

My 1940 prewar Lionel® train set has a special place on my home layout, in family history, and in my heart. However, a couple of times a year comes a fleeting thought, “I should sell that set. It would bring a few hundred dollars.”

According to family lore, after dropping off my mother at the hospital to give birth to me, my father returned home, raided the cookie jar, and drove to the Maxwell Street Market in Chicago to purchase a Lionel freight set and a three-car passenger consist. He bought the 1940 2-6-2 with a livestock car, Shell tank car, side-unloading coal car, and caboose. My now-tattered 1940 Lionel Catalog shows the price of this train set as \$19.95.

I’m glad my father purchased the trains for me, but — like many fathers of that generation (and probably today) — he purchased them for himself and enjoyed them during the early years of my life when I was too young to pronounce “Lionel.”

My brother was born in 1943 and later received an 0-6-0 steamer with a slope-back tender, the long Pennsy automobile box car, long Sunoco tank car, a black coal hopper with hatches underneath that could be cranked open, an operating log dump car, and a Pennsy caboose. Our dad realized that domestic tranquility required a train set for each son!

In 1944 we lived in a two-story walk-up apartment in Calumet City. Dad mounted track on a 4x8-foot sheet of plywood that extended over the upstairs railing. In a test of the pulling power of the engine, he attached the baggage car, coach, and observation car to the locomotive and opened the throttle. The train set leaped forward, derailed, and ran across the plywood. Its final stop — the wooden staircase 10 feet below. The only damage to the house was a dent in the stair.

As for the train set, the locomotive cowcatcher sustained a metal chip, the tender lost the pin from the center of the box coupler, and the passenger cars received

damage to the mechanisms that held their roofs in place. I learned about this train incident many years later. When the family moved from that apartment in 1963, I confirmed it. The dent in the stair validated The Great Train Wreck of long ago. I doubt that a modern-era train could withstand that type of abuse.

In subsequent Christmas seasons, we installed a train layout around the base of the tree. Each year, we added a switch or more pieces of track to it. After the tree was removed, our parents allowed my brother and me to make a big floor layout in the living room and dining room — but for one week only. We ran trains along the walls to keep the tracks off the carpet, but sometimes we placed a switching yard on the carpet. The coal furnace in the basement provided the real stuff for the coal unloading car and hopper car. We became proficient at unloading coal on the fly, but mom didn’t like coal chips on her carpet.

One day our Bowman milkman stopped in and told us that our switching yard was just like the one at the Bowman Dairy. Hearing that, we were ecstatic for a month! For many years, we set up our trains every December; then in every January we put them back in their orange and blue boxes. In time, the boxes literally fell apart.



After college and five years in the military and two years of marriage, my parents reminded me that my boyhood trains were still in their house. “Take them to your house,” they said kindly but firmly. I relocated them to our home in Cincinnati, Ohio, and continued the family tradition with trains around the Christmas tree in my generation and the next.

Thankfully, I soon found Davis Trains in Milford, Ohio, an easy 30 minute drive from our home. Proprietor Joe Davis (RM 10805) was a resourceful train expert in that region, and his inventory of spare parts was a treasure trove to me and many other hobbyists. In his store I found the replacement tip for the wires connecting the tender to the engine of my brother’s 0-6-0.

I modified a new Lionel tender to replace the 1940 tender behind the locomotive so it could pull a consist of modern cars. The prewar passenger cars had their trucks and couplers replaced, but I kept the prewar trucks. The passenger cars with both sets of trucks were later sold at auction. A respected train repair expert in that area, Frank Timko (RM 18460), replaced the e-unit in my vintage steamer in the late '80s and extended its lifespan.

When I moved from Cincinnati to Lansing, Illinois, I considered various track plans for a train layout in the house. I always took into account the need for a dedicated loop of track with Lionel switches to preserve the under-frame sliding shoes on the prewar engine and cars.

During an April 2006 Train Open House with 15 guests, the guys and gals talked while the modern trains were running in the basement train room. When my prewar train



made a couple of loops around the layout, everyone stopped to watch it. Clearly, after 66 years, the magic is still there — like a friendly ghost in the machine. I don't think I'll sell the steamer this year. 🚂

Photographs by John Mateyko

TLR Toy Trains, VBS, and Life Lessons

by Rev. Mike Valentine
RM 10666

I enjoy railroading, particularly as it relates to toy trains, and trains have been a part of me ever since I can remember. I still recall the fun days of boyhood when a neighborhood friend and I would play for hours with our Lionel® train sets on the front porch.

As a result of the acquaintances and relationships developed over the years through membership in the major toy train clubs, I have discovered new dimensions to the camaraderie within this hobby. Through correspondence, work sessions with friends, attending club meets, and participating in annual conventions, I have gained experience with and pleasure in the hobby. I've proven it true several times, "Once a train enthusiast, always a train enthusiast."

I have especially appreciated our hobby because it has also extended the performance of my ministry. The toy trains on display in my office help "break the ice" with people who may feel a bit intimidated whenever they run into a preacher. The trains are great "show and tell" items for the Children's Moment in the worship service.

Very early in my ministry I decided to replace the book shelves in my office and convert that space into display shelves for my toy trains. Whenever people drop by, many

immediately make a connection and recall a particular train trip, remembering the toy train set they enjoyed as a child, and lament its loss. Many conversations have started with, "I once had a Lionel" After reminiscing a bit, the subject of the visit can be addressed in a more comfortable setting. See **photo 1**.



The 10x24-foot operating layout at our home has changed perceptions of parishioners about life in the parsonage and makes a very positive impression on children and youth. Some may be thinking, "A minister who likes trains must be approachable and 'real.'"

The layout is very much a work in progress and conveys two aspects of model railroading. Focused on the Pennsylvania Railroad during the steam/diesel transition era of the early 1950s, the upper half of the layout reflects scale-proportioned, TMCC-controlled trains. Yes, I'm another one who believes trains, even the expensive ones, were made to be run and not just displayed on shelves.

The lower half is a typical hands-on traditional layout with push button controllers scattered around for operating sounds and accessories. Together, these two sections give visitors a good impression of both old and new toy train

technologies, as shown in **photos 2 & 3**.

For a number of years I wanted to develop a train-related theme for Vacation Bible School, but none of available packaged curricular programs offered any help. Boat themes, island themes, jungle themes, western themes, fiesta themes, and safari themes are the norms, until now. The Augsburg Fortress Vacation Bible School series — “Gospel Express: All Aboard God’s Celebration Train!” — offered just what I was looking and praying for. If parents and others are interested, it’s available at www.augsburgfortress.org/vbs.

Using these materials as a base, along with an interactive DVD starring Melvin the Puppet, I was able to enhance the week-long VBS experience with railroad memorabilia from my own collection and with operating sessions at the train layout with kids at the controls. See **photo 4**.

Each evening was focused on a particular Bible lesson that could also be compared with actual train operation. Themes centered around how God comes to “connect” with us; how God calls “All Aboard!” how God searches for us when we are lost; and how God blesses us with friends as “travel companions.”



The youngsters learned valuable life lessons and gathered an understanding of how real trains function. See **photo 5**.

Averaging more than 50 children per night, we enjoyed assembly time, study time, craft time, recreation time, snack time, and train time. Each evening closed with the children taking turns running the trains. On one throttle was a Lionel New York Central Flyer freight and the other controlled an Amtrak passenger set. The “Oohs” and “Aahs” from wide-eyed children showed their genuine excitement and joy, shown in **photo 6**.

A VBS contest based on attendance, memory verses, bringing their Bible, bringing visitors, etc. offered recognition prizes. The big prize was a new Lionel New York Central Flyer set donated by my good friend, Jim Molinary, owner of the Railyard Hobby Shop here in Roanoke. The winner, Chris Mundy, is shown in **photo 7**.

As we continue to age and wonder about the future of our children and grandchildren — not to mention the future of our hobby — I find myself encouraged by opportunities like this. The experience introduced them to our wonderful relationally-centered hobby and impacted kids in a spiritual dimension. Don’t underestimate the kids! Their interest in toy trains — and in God — is as manifest in today’s generation as it was in ours. With willingness to share on our part and a spark of creativity, we could make trains available and provide a memorable life-long experience. 🚂

Photographs by Rev. Mike Valentine

Editor’s Postscript: Rev. Mike Valentine is the Pastor of Bethany Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Roanoke, Virginia.

The "Club" within a Club

by John Edgington
RM 15132

Editor's Note: In a continuing series of articles about train clubs in America, TLR has explored the practice of O-gauge railroading in a group setting. Some local train club members are also LCCA members. The San Diego 3-Railers Club is a destination attraction located within the San Diego Model Railroad Museum at Balboa Park in the city. Their large O-gauge layout is the result of years of volunteer effort by dedicated club members. TLR will tell their story in the February 2007 issue, but this first glimpse is about their kids program.

Grow or Die

The San Diego 3-Railers Club (SD3R) has a wonderful history, a great layout, and a terrific location in a city facility that houses the San Diego Model Railroad Museum in the city's largest park. SD3R sponsors an ambitious kids program that reaches out to kids and families that show an interest in electric trains. As a founding member of SD3R and three-term President of this growing organization, I and other members realized that the average age of our club was in the mid to high 50s. Unless we did something to extend the age range to younger persons and families, there wouldn't be a club in the future.

Joe Lesser, a well-published hi-rail hobbyist, member of SD3R, and former chairman of a train convention held in San Diego nearly a decade ago suggested that the club give serious thought to a kids program. With great enthusiasm the club decided to launch its program on the last Saturday of each month except for holiday weekends in November and December. We began with about 17 families involved at the outset. The program is now completing its fifth year, and it

has evolved to the point where we have over 160 families on the roster. If they all showed up at once for a regular monthly session, we'd be overwhelmed!

Some Work, Some Play, All Fun

In addition to the monthly structured programs during the year, we schedule Fun Runs in the Toy Train Gallery of the museum on some of the major holidays; the most recent one was Labor Day. All four main lines of the layout were staffed by 20 children who signed up for an hour each to run their trains or the trains provided for them. Owning a train is not a requirement for participation in the kids program, but we have noticed — in the last year and a half particularly — more parents are buying trains for their children.

We offer a two-hour session from 9 to 11 on the last Saturday morning of the month in the upstairs library of the museum. The first half-hour of the program is devoted to some aspect of the hobby. We've taught kids how to oil and lubricate locomotives, clean the wheels, create basic scenery, and construct Plasticville™ buildings.

In at least one of the sessions each year, children receive a flat car and an automobile or other vehicle for it. They learn how to fasten the vehicle to the flat car with Velcro™. They discover things around their house that can



be "shipped" on their trains. Inexpensive cars and trucks work just fine as cargo.

The second half-hour of our program is a layout-building exercise with Lionel tubular track sections and manual switches. Kids learn how to put a simple rug layout together as a loop of track and some switches, and they soon understand the concept of symmetry and asymmetry in layout design.



After a break for juice and doughnuts, groups of four kids each go downstairs to the main layout to run trains for 10 to 15 minutes apiece. The others remain upstairs and learn how to connect and operate a transformer and run trains.

Only One Main Rule

Kids age six and older are welcome to participate in the program. There is no attendance requirement, so youngsters and their parents can attend only once a year or every session. There are no fees or expenses, and the only program requirement is that an adult — mom, dad, grandma, grandpa, aunt, uncle, or an older brother or sister — accompany each child. We want parents or an adult involved so that they become an integral part of the kids program. We are not a babysitting service. Of course, if the children get really interested in this hobby, they'll need their parents to buy them a locomotive or show them how to earn money for buying the things they want and need.



We started out with a four-year-old threshold for kids program members, but we increased it to six last year. Lionel® recommends eight years of age for its products, but we think there are some six year olds who can easily handle the trains with success.



We also use Lionel starter sets so that children will learn how FastTrack™ works in addition to the traditional tubular track. They learn about other track systems and other train makers too. We underestimated the impact of the juice and doughnuts to the whole program. The kids look forward to it; like the pizza party after a Little League baseball game.

Learning by Doing

We believe we are sowing the seed of the hobby in these kids. When they get to that point in life where they settle down and raise a family, we hope they will remember the fun they had with toy trains, seek out the boxes of trains resting in the closet, and rekindle the flame.

During the five and a half years of our kids program, at least 10 parents joined SD3R to enable their children to have the important benefit of regular access to the large layout. Five or six active members originally started by bringing their child or grandchild to the kids program, so it has become self-perpetuating. Oftentimes, people come to the Model Railroad Museum on a holiday with their kids and then see 20 children running a large, impressive layout. When they ask, "How can I get to do that," we tell them.





Last year we reached the point where we had to create a waiting list for participants. Interest has grown beyond our ability to handle a large group. We announce the whole schedule a year in advance, and we send reminders every month. If everyone showed up some month — 150 to 160 children with the adults — well, we couldn't handle it. There are now a dozen girls in the kids program, and we have both girls and boys who always show up dressed in engineer's costume with an engineer's cap.

The kids program is growing, and it'll continue to grow. We realize that we have a limited amount of time with some of the youngsters. When they first come to the Toy Train Gallery, we see a great interest in them and overhear excited chatter like, "I want to do this. I want to do that." After three or four sessions, the excitement may fade away in some of them, but others will "graduate" from the club by outgrowing it or moving on to something else in life. Some come back to visit every once in a while.

As for future projects, we want to engage kids in constructing a 4x8-foot layout from scratch so they can learn by doing everything. Youngsters coming into the program today missed our previous history of building the large layout in stages, so we need to start something new for them. They'll have a good idea of what to do when they're ready to build a layout at home — with help from dad and mom.

About the Program

The kids program goals are simple. Have fun. Learn about the hobby. Show kids how to run three-rail trains. Teach kids how to create and build layouts. Promote bonding with parents or guardians. Encourage respect for one another.

Typically, I'm upstairs handling the structured part of the program while Mike Hays is downstairs at the large layout cleaning the track and getting things ready for the children waiting for their turn to operate trains for 10 or 15 minutes. We enjoy watching the kids running from one end of the layout to the other, following their train around the rails.

We have a successful program, yet I see some of the problems that some other clubs located in this same museum have in recruiting younger members. Some of them won't accept children six to ten years old, but they will accept teens. However, the potential for participation by teens is not nearly as long as what we can establish.

To me, the joy of this hobby is looking at a child and seeing the happiness from holding a controller and running a train. I get a lot of satisfaction in seeing kids enjoy themselves and having a good time. I'm just a big kid at heart. I'll sit on the floor, help them find a problem, and coach them to fix it.

Whenever we have an accidental collision, the comical thing we say is, "Drug test!" And everybody laughs because



they have learned that real railroads perform drug tests of the train crew involved in any kind of accident. When an accident happens on the layout, some of the kids shout, "Drug test!" It's our way of affirming reality and subtly teaching a lesson about life.

Parents Are Enablers and Exemplars

Parents have as much fun as we have. A rewarding experience came my way from a mother who said to me, "I woke my husband up this morning and told him we're taking our child to the Model Railroad Museum for the kids program. He admitted that he'd promised to be part of this experience but he wasn't too happy about it. So he grudgingly got dressed and came down to the program, complaining all the way. So, who was the first one down on the floor with the kids and the trains?"

Parents are very appreciative of the opportunity to enroll in the kids program, and many say, "Thank you so much. My child has dreamed of doing something like this for years, and he really enjoys it." We relaxed our own rules

a bit this year and let kids become human bridges as the train goes underneath them. The bottom line for us is fun. We also have taken several thousand pictures of participants. We post photos at the following session, have photo albums for review in the library, and send copies of the pictures electronically to proud parents that request them.

The Team

The kids program is my concept, but I've had great help from Debra Ritch and her husband, John, Charles Smith, Jim Osborne, and George Kime, who as a grandfather brought his grandson down to the program and has since become heavily involved. We also have had tremendous participation from many SD3R members who have contributed their time and talents to educational programs for the children. Mike Hayes has been with me from the start and takes over the program on those few occasions when I'm not available. It's a team effort, and I'm pleased to be the leader of the team for the benefit of the kids and the hobby. 🚂

Photographs by Mike Hayes

Toy Trunk Railroad

by Erik Sansom



Lionel Returns to its Roots in NYC

by Erol Gurcan
RM 26800

A Conversation with Lionel President and CEO Jerry Calabrese



Lionel President and CEO Jerry Calabrese

The Past Is Prologue

Train hobbyists familiar with the history of Lionel® know that when New Yorker Joshua Lionel Cowen entered the electric train business more than 100 years ago, he set-up shop in lower Manhattan. During Lionel's golden years following World War II, the company had an office and display showroom at 15 East 26th Street in mid-town Manhattan. After General Mills bought Lionel in 1969, the company moved to Chesterfield, Michigan. The connection to New York City all but disappeared.

The good news is that on February 16, 2006, President/CEO Jerry Calabrese announced in an online press release that Lionel would open an office and showroom in Manhattan. In essence, the company has come full circle and returned to its roots in New York City. On October 17, 2006, I visited Lionel's new office and met Mr. Calabrese, who now works at this location as home base (see **photo 1**).

The New NYC Office

The new office is located in the NAP building, on the northeast corner of Madison Avenue and 33rd Street, not too far from the old office/showroom on 26th Street. The offices for Calabrese and Vice President of Marketing Mark Erickson are on the 11th floor. A large room on the second floor currently contains three small operating display layouts shown in **photos 2, 3, and 4**. Currently, the room is used to display and demonstrate Lionel products to corporate buyers from retail stores.

Jerry explained the purpose of a New York City office as "Being close to the executive offices of potential retail buyers, such as those who attend Toy Fair, and licensors like NASCAR. Retail buyers representing the major department stores will not travel to Chesterfield to see Lionel products," he said, "so if they won't come to the mountain, we'll bring the mountain to them."

The Man and His Plan

Calabrese became the President and CEO of Lionel LLC in September, 2004. Prior to that, his career posts included: President of Marvel Comics Group, the ad agency of record for NASCAR's 50th anniversary in 1998, a Senior Vice President for Playboy, and Editor of "Games" magazine. He is an expert at rebuilding and redeveloping hobby-based businesses, which of course makes him ideally suited to lead Lionel.

When I asked him about Lionel's current marketing plans, he was eager to talk about it. He has a specific two-level vision for the company — to offer a diversified line of high-quality Lionel products and to broaden the retail base where the company's trains can be purchased. He cited The Bose Corporation® (maker of speakers, Surround Sound™ systems, and the Wave Radio™) as a business model that Lionel should try to emulate.

Quality throughout the Line

"In order for Lionel to be successful, we must offer a diversified product line in terms of cost, but with high quality," he said, "beginning with a \$200 starter set such as the Pennsylvania Flyer set [6-30018] for first-time buyers at





3

Seeking Retailers but not Discounters

Jerry emphasized that Lionel must expand its retail base beyond the traditional hobby stores in order to reach more first-time buyers and bring them into the hobby; thereby increasing sales. “Lionel needs to sell trains in mainstream retail stores where they will be discovered and purchased by the general public,” he said.

“We have worked hard to convince upscale retail stores to carry Lionel train sets with the understanding that the trains would not be cheaper versions of cataloged sets nor built-down to meet a certain price point. We told retailers of the value, tradition, and quality of the Lionel brand, and we pressed for agreement about not discounting the sets. Also, retailers will not be entitled to sell our other items such as track and operating accessories. Those products will be reserved exclusively for the hobby store market.”

Making a Christmas List

He cited several specific examples of how Lionel would accomplish this during this holiday season. First, they teamed up with Target, the nation’s second-largest retail store chain, as its exclusive general merchandise retailer. Target will sell an exclusive uncataloged starter set with the venerable 4-4-2 Atlantic steam locomotive and tender with Trainsounds and four freight cars for \$249. The set will include such extras as a tractor-trailer truck, play mat, and railroad signs. Jerry excitedly referred to this set as “the big box of trains” (see photo 5).



4

Train layouts like these now in operation in Lionel’s NYC showroom will be placed in retail stores for the Christmas season.

one end of the spectrum and continuing to top-of-the-line products such as the Acela set for \$2,000.”

He stressed that quality consciousness must include everything in between: low cost accessories, expansion packs, and mid-priced engines in the \$300 to \$800 dollar range. “Once a ‘newbie’ to the hobby has purchased a starter set, the next step may be to add-on an expansion pack for that set. That’s why we offered them for the less expensive starter sets a couple of years ago. Similarly, it’s the reason for presenting additional passenger cars, the elf hand car, and an add-on figure set for our very popular Polar Express set [6-31960]. The third step would be to point customers to a mid-priced engine, and the ultimate goal would be to get as many devoted enthusiasts into the hobby as realistically possible.”

This uncataloged Lionel Lines train set will be sold in Target stores this Christmas season.



5



Lionel's new NYC showroom includes this G-scale Christmas set.

Lionel will also provide its starter sets to upscale stores including Macy's, FAO Schwartz, Dillard's, Fortunoff, and Belks this Christmas season. All these stores will carry the Polar Express set, O-gauge Christmas set [6-30040], and the Holiday Tradition Express G-scale Christmas set [7-11000] (see **photo 6**). Lionel has sold almost 20,000 G-scale Christmas sets to retailers and hobby stores.

Most of these stores will also be selling the Thomas and Friends set [6-31956]. Macy's will offer the Pennsylvania Flyer set and the New York Central Flyer set with Trainsounds. Because it is located in the south where NASCAR events are very popular, Belks will also be selling NASCAR train sets.

Due in part to these efforts, Calabrese expects Lionel's gross sales for 2006 to be in the \$65 to \$70 million dollar range. Lionel will honor its one-year warranty for purchases made in retail stores as a confidence builder.

Visual Excitement on Rails

Lionel has installed operating display layouts in some retail stores — at Macy's in New York City, FAO Schwartz stores in New York City and Las Vegas, Fortunoff stores in New York and New Jersey, and the Dillard's store in Dallas, Texas. All the stores will have one or more of the three layouts shown in **photos 2 through 4**. The layouts were built by TW Designs in Dallas, Texas.

Lionel will also operate two large public layouts during the holiday season in New York City; one at the New York City Transit Museum within Grand Central Station (42nd Street and Lexington Avenue), and the other in Santa Land at Macy's at Herald Square (34th Street and Sixth Avenue). The Grand Central layout will be open through January 15, 2007.

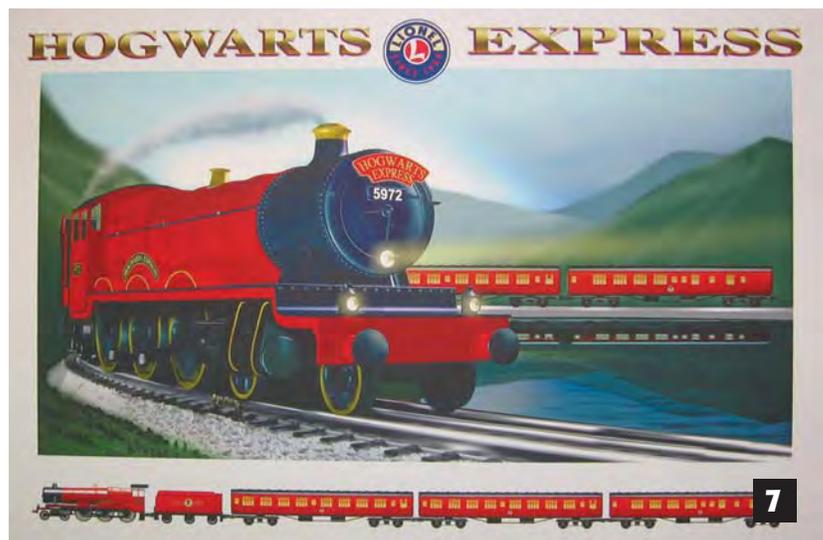
What's Happening Now?

He described Lionel's much-anticipated, new Big Boy locomotive, the first engine available with TMCC II Legacy Command Control™ as featured on the cover of the 2006 Volume 2 Catalog. "Dealer orders for this locomotive exceeded expectations by fifty percent — an encouraging situation, especially since this locomotive is expensive, listing for \$1,700. The free Legacy set offered with this loco was the driving force behind it."

Both the locomotive and TMCC II are currently scheduled for release in January 2007. TMCC II was first demonstrated by Jerry and Lou Kovach in Denver during the LCCA Convention in July.

NASCAR train sets were scheduled to hit stores in mid to late November, in time for the Christmas season. The NASCAR expansion packs are scheduled for release in January or February 2007, in time for the beginning of the car racing season.

Regarding the future integration of the K-Line brand into the Lionel portfolio, Jerry said there will new K-Line products offered in 2007 with an emphasis on mid-priced locomotives in the \$300 to \$800 range. On a related note, K-Line orders from the old K-Line Collector Club, most notably the SD-70MAC diesel locomotive, are scheduled for January 2007 delivery. Lionel previously agreed to honor Collector Club orders placed before K-Line declared bankruptcy but not delivered.



The Harry Potter Hogwarts Express train set is scheduled for release in the summer of 2007.

What's Happening Next

Lionel's product plans for 2007 will include an O-gauge Harry Potter Hogwarts Express passenger train set for release in the summer (see **photo 7**). This set will bear a retail price in the \$300 range. Jerry hopes this set will become the successor to the popular Polar Express passenger set.



This is a pre-production sample of Lionel's G-scale Polar Express loco and tender.

Lionel will offer familiar trains in G scale: a Polar Express set and a Thomas the Tank Engine set. To me, the most interesting thing about these sets is they will be powered by a rechargeable battery pack instead of a transformer and operated by an infra-red remote control. The trains will be retail priced in the \$130 to \$140 zone. Lionel has entered into licensing agreements for these sets. Jerry showed me a pre-production sample of the Polar Express set (see **photo 8**). The locomotive will not have a puffing smoke unit. The observation car has a panel in the roof that flips and shows the "hobo ghost" from the movie on one side (see **photo 9**).

A G-scale General set will also be produced. With the rechargeable battery pack and remote control, it will list in the \$120 to \$130 range, as a licensing agreement is not involved.

Lionel will also offer low-cost accessories to those who have previously bought starter sets. One of the items will be

a play mat with computer-generated imagery on it. The ballast on the production sample was so realistic that I had to touch it to determine if it was real ballast or part of the computer-generated picture.

A second accessory item will be a "scenic panorama" desert scene (see **photo 10**). The panorama will have openings through it so that track and a train can pass through. It is possible, but not yet definite, that the computer-generated play mat and scenic panorama will be sold together as a modest-cost accessory set.

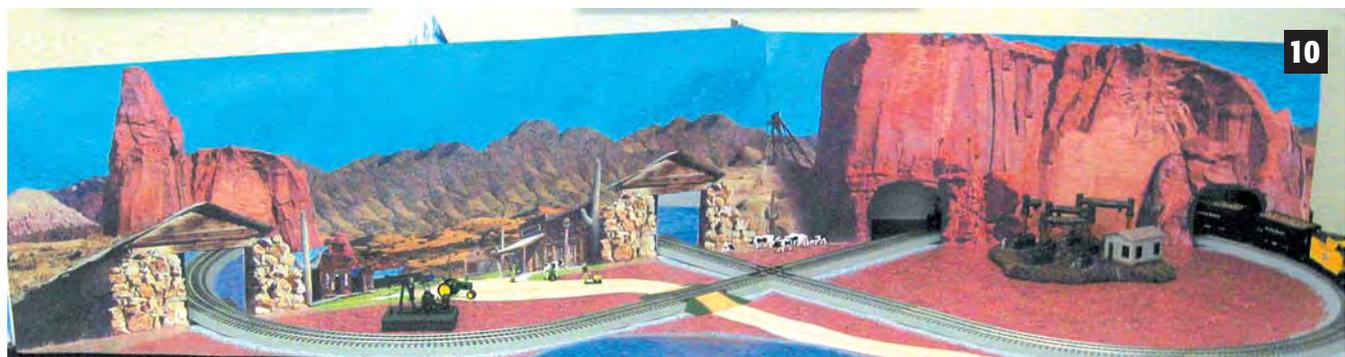


The PE observation car with a "hobo ghost" on top. A panel in the roof can be flipped to show or hide the ghost.

Stay Tuned for More

I'm sure there will be other surprises in the pipeline for hobbyists in 2007, but I didn't expect Calabrese to reveal them all and risk deflating the excitement when the Lionel 2007 Volume 1 Catalog arrives in a few weeks. Monitor your mailbox! 🚂

Photographs by Erol Gurcan



This scenic panorama of a desert setting will be available as an accessory. Track and train will be able to pass through it at the openings.

Fun as Number One

by Charles Ro
RM 462

Editor's Note: You've probably seen the Charles Ro Supply Company ads with the Superman-like character and perhaps wondered as I have, "What's that about?" This interview was conducted in his office, and as usual Charles wore the "company uniform" to work — a golf shirt with that image embroidered on it. I had to ask the Superman question.

The "Superman-like" imagery started when my career path changed in the late 1970s. I owned and operated a beauty parlor then, but I made a leap forward — somewhat



like Clark Kent to Superman — and started a hobby store in the Boston area. Our graphic designer created the image as a different style for our ads. It was different — a complete break from mere black-and-white price lists published in hobby magazines. It worked, and it caught the attention of customers. We're still using it today.

I'm very happy to be a Superman in the hobby, thanks to the clientele that has put me there. I did what I had to do to become number one in the train hobby business, and today I'm the world's largest Lionel® dealer. I did the same thing in large scale trains, and today we are the best in that scale with a full line of USA Trains.

Quite a Career Shift

When I was a hairdresser, my wife and I considered going into the hobby shop line. We talked it over for a long time and then decided to sell three of the four beauty shops but to keep one as a back-up — just in case. We went forward, and the train store in Everett, Massachusetts, became very successful. We were at that location from 1976 to 1979, and then I bought a nearby building

which was an A&P Grocery Store. We converted it to a hobby store and expanded the business. We established USA Trains in 1987 to manufacture G Scale trains, and at that time we were renting a place. In 1988 we decided we had to move forward and purchase our own building to move both companies under one roof. I looked at a building that was a machine shop, purchased it, and remodeled it for manufacturing. We added on to it and then in 1989 we moved our retail operation to the building which is a lot easier to work with because it has elevators and loading docks and everything we need.

The First Million

After I decided to go into the hobby business with trains, it didn't take long to build it up. I can remember it distinctly — I received a telephone call from Peter at Train World in New York. He said, "Charlie, I want to tell you something you probably don't even realize. You're the first guy to write a million dollar order with Lionel."

It's been that way since the 1976 and '77 timeframe. That was 30 years ago when trains were cheap; I bought 9200 series cars for three dollars way back then. For 30 of Lionel's 106-year history, I wrote orders for the most dollars. The numbers are strong, but I don't let that go to my head.

The March to Number One

We became the number one Lionel dealer ranked according to largest annual dollar volume. There's no mystery to it — we worked hard; seven days a week, 12 hours a day on Saturdays. On Sundays, were at the train shows — a rigorous schedule. Within the last 10 years, I have changed my style of work, so I don't do as many train shows now; only a couple in a year. I still invest long hours in the business every day. I'm here six days a week.

The employee count varies during the years — growing at wintertime, waning during the summer in sync with prevailing hobby trends. The train hobby business is now a six-month cycle, and that's the way it's going to be. In my





view, dealers must look at what is happening today. The business is about trains — not who makes them, who sells them, or what gauge. When business is brisk in O-gauge near the Christmas season, it's frantic around here. But in the spring and summer, that part of the business is slack. So I have G-scale trains, and that part of the business picks up in the spring and summer months because hobbyists are building backyard garden railroads.

I think hobby magazines have spent too much time and effort in emphasizing the gauges and what sells. I think that you have to pay attention to the locality where you are and what type of clientele is walking through the front door. Market research is mostly paying attention to what's happening right in front of you.

A Shift in the Industry

Once upon a time — not that long ago — there was competition to Lionel from a gentleman that changed the business dramatically. He made every manufacturer step up to the plate, improve quality, and offer it at a reasonable price that customers could afford. However, when the other manufacturers responded to the competition, he fell behind.

When we place products on the shelf, we monitor the shelf life carefully. If it doesn't sell fairly soon, in effect, we own it because it's not sellable. When we decided to place orange and blue boxes on our shelves, we sold them. That taught me a valuable lesson about how to make investments in inventory based on shelf life.

Marketplace competition has already forced some drastic changes. Customers are getting more for their money and better equipment — a great value. Look at commercials on TV for new automobiles. Car makers must provide nearly a lifetime guarantee on an automobile in order to sell it. I think we'll start seeing that in the train hobby too — better warranties and better products.

The manufacturers have made just about everything there is to make, so the only remaining strategy is to remanufacture and improve existing products. But how many more improvements can be made?

The Great Divide

A long time ago I predicted — and I see it happening now — that the hobby is two-field market. There are the people that want high-tech electronics and more gadgets and gizmos, and there are those who can't or won't handle it. This is to say, the market is defined as complicated engines and starter sets. Manufacturers must be careful not to go beyond what people can handle. I think they're on the borderline now.

Most train equipment is bought by guys in two age brackets: a father with youngsters or a gentleman getting ready to retire — many are grandpas. They have the money to spend, but if a manufacturer goes beyond their capability, they've lost them.

Look what Atlas has done. Atlas has removed a lot of the complex electronics from engines and made the hobby easier for many people to enjoy. I see Lionel doing it too with their starter sets. Williams Electric Trains has survived for many years making uncomplicated, basic trains.



Stick with It

Train manufacturers should place an accessory, operating car, or a train set in the catalog for more than one year. Keep it visible for two or three years to give Mom and Pop hobby stores an opportunity to sell it off their shelves. Once an item is removed from the catalog, sales are lost; even for mail-order companies and even if they have it in inventory. Maintaining items in the catalog for a longer time

gives the product new life and allows the hobby shops to keep selling it. For example, consider the 397 Coal Loader. It should be in the catalogs for three or four years. Take it out; put in another kind of coal loader. Same for a log

loader. Place a lumber car or a coal car in the catalog and offer them with an operating accessory — they go together. Produce a diesel lash-up and also offer the passenger cars to go with it so that the customer can buy it all in one deal. Santa Fe warbonnets have been in catalogs for years and no one has complained.

In my view, the nicest road name décor available today is the “pumpkin” décor scheme of BNSF diesels. Union Pacific is giving them a run for their money right now. These trains should be presented in the market year in and year out, also a basic steam engine, a basic yard engine, a Prairie-type engine, a Berkshire-type engine. All these should always be in the catalog with different road names. And everything should be die-cast, not plastic. Lionel made a fine decision to offer die-cast trains, and they have been good sellers.

Look how this industry has changed in 30 years. We’ve gone from simple operation on a ping pong table in the basement to very sophisticated layouts with TMCC and electronic exotica. I don’t know how much further they should go with it. Too much electronica is, well, too much.

About TMCC II

It’s a bit premature to assess the prospects for Lionel’s new Legacy™ TMCC II control system and the Legacy-equipped locomotives that fully respond to its features. I think there will be a certain market for it, but I don’t think it will take over. How many guys will lay out the money for something they don’t quite understand? As we move along in life, it becomes more and more difficult for us to make changes in long-established habits and patterns. Many people are hesitant to make a change, even if it’s a simple change and an improvement. It needs time to prove itself.



Trains and Family Life

I see another mega-trend in the hobby within families. Today’s parents take great interest in their children and are eager for their kids to succeed. The American lifestyle has changed and women have become

very progressive and want to be independent; at least dynamically interdependent. Some women earn more



money than men and are actively involved in careers. Wives — including single moms — want to make a happy home for their children and be involved with them. They do a very nice job of it. This involvement connects them to the train hobby for the sake of their sons; and some daughters, too.

They want to be able to transform a 4x8-foot sheet of plywood into a modern layout with their son; or at least set it up on the floor. They’ve done their homework, and they are not intimidated by power tools. They understand the fundamentals, and some fathers don’t. Many women who come into my store are very knowledgeable about what they want and don’t want to buy.

On Operating Accessories

I think there’s an open avenue for offering new operating accessories; not just re-making the “golden oldies.” Lionel made the Wash Rack, Steam Clean, and Wheel Grind Shop. It was new and clever. They produced the Nuclear Power Station — flashy and fun. The former K-Line Operating Milk Platform and its Operating Car is another example; I hope Lionel keeps it in its line-up. It’s a continuing challenge to stimulate creativity within a company, produce something that hasn’t been offered before, and make it desirable and sellable.

Lionel has recently produced space stuff. The International Space Station, the shuttle, and current space adventures capture our imagination today on a larger scale than the moon trips of decades ago. Lionel’s Missile Launch Pad accessory was fresh and exciting. The Army set and the Coast Guard set were quite successful. They made the Marine Corps set, which was unique with all of the vehicles on it. I suggested to Lionel that they should make a military set as a tribute to the National Guard for its fine service and in appreciation for the way they have conducted themselves.

Kids and Trains

On a typical Saturday at any time of the year the store is busy and nearly half of the visitors are children. It’s no surprise to me that about 30% of my sales are Thomas-

related. The Polar Express trains have exceeded all expectations and production capacity. We can thank Hollywood for that boost. We couldn't get enough Polar Express trains in the first year; same in the second year. It was phenomenal. We are now into our third year. The Polar Express sells itself in October and November when theatres book the movie during the holidays and ads appear on TV.

During the Christmas season, the upstairs layout in the store is open to visitors every day. It's a big job to maintain it, but kids love it. Many dealers don't have the square footage to install a large layout in their store, but I think a great layout is a major attraction that gets kids interested. Local train clubs know this and sponsor a family day once a month. Parents bring their children to the club house and encourage them along the path of the hobby.

We sent letters to schools and invited classes to see the layout and learn about railroading. The word got around, and every week or so we have one or two or three bus loads of youngsters. Kids are kids, and they want to touch everything, as if they are learning by touching instead of by listening. The staff gets a little nervous because they worry about kids "fingering" the expensive stuff.

Dealers have to look for new and creative ways to bring people into their stores. We added airplanes, and it was an enhancement to the business. Some stores incorporate slot cars and plastic models. Wooden ship models are interesting too, especially to older guys. It's a way to remember their service in the Navy, I suppose.

My Own Collection

My train collection started way back when I built a layout in the house for my son. I advertised my interest in buying electric trains and placed signs in all of our beauty shops. I soon learned that collecting trains could lead to investing in trains for resale. Rare variations intrigued me, and I met "rivet counters" who took these items very seriously — as in, financially seriously.

After collecting for years, I reached the point where I just had too many trains. I had to make a decision: sell them all, sell some, or keep the items I really wanted. My collection is in my store, but I also have a lot of trains in storage. I like to have the collection here so people can see it and remember what they had when they were younger.

Repurchasing Trains of the Past

There's a certain "thrill of the hunt" to searching and finding a train from boyhood and rebuilding good memories with it. As a kid, I owned a #2025 with the Baby Ruth

boxcar — all of that. We provide a search service for customers, provided they stay within the bounds of common items in the market. At one time you could buy trains at a fair price, but those days are gone, probably forever. The market is now divided. There are two kinds of train people: those who are strictly prewar and those that are postwar and beyond.

Looking and Listening

During my time in business, I've talked with Lionel, attended their dealer meetings, made suggestions, and responded to questions. At the time, it seemed to me like they weren't paying attention, but when I left the room that information was written down. They really were paying attention. Now the company constantly looks for ways to improve their products. The Top Ten Dealers meetings are useful sessions because those dealers are working at the leading edge of the hobby and listening to the public.

Too Many Train Makers

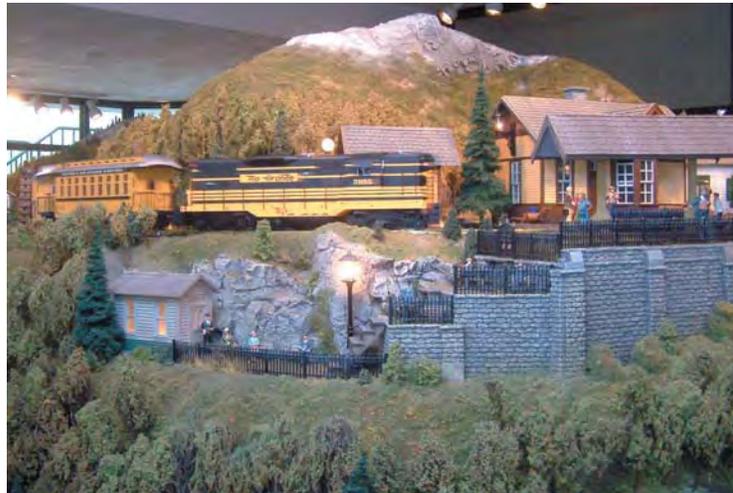
I feel there are too many manufacturers out there. The manufacturers are confusing the business by the amount of product being pushed into the market. Dealers carefully consider the items in the company's catalog when they fill-in order sheets. No one has a crystal ball, and it could be risky to guess-timate, like "I need 200 of this, 100 of this, and 100 of that." What dealers must do is analyze what they think they can sell and buy only that number — minus 10%. Then they'll be on the right track. However, dealers must stock the "bloodline" products and keep them in inventory all the time.

Each and every manufacturer has made so much product that the average hobby store can't take it all in. It's all about shelf life. How long does it take to get a product off the shelf and the money in the cash register? My conclusion: HO sells, N gauge sells, S gauge sells. Large scale sells. Thomas sells. With O gauge, now that the new line of FastTrack is available, we have found that Lionel prevails over the others.

Keep Moving Forward

I always had a positive attitude that the train hobby business is moving forward. I believe the hobby will always be here, it's not dying off. I think we're now entering the finest stage for all of the gauges, and I believe we are going to see a lot more forward momentum in O gauge and G gauge. In large scale, there are a lot of improvements in what's being made. We haven't even touched the outer limit of what the train hobby industry could be. 🚂

Photographs by Mike Mottler



by **Bill Schmeelk**
RM 6643

Lionel Crossings

The crossing has been a popular track configuration from the very beginning. Lionel's first one, the No. 130, was a two-rail, 90-degree crossing and appeared in their 1902 catalog. Lionel® considered the crossing an important piece; that was confirmed by the catalog description which included the line, "... if a well-equipped road is desired this part is indispensable." The rails were mounted on a base six inches square. The price was fifty cents.

In 1906, the cover of Lionel's catalog featured a prominent sign stating, "Look Out for the Third Rail." This was the year that Lionel introduced its three rail track. In that same catalog was a new No. 21 crossing, Lionel's first three-rail crossing. The rails were mounted on an eight-inch-square base, and the price was now sixty cents.

The year 1908 brought another change to the crossing. Now cataloged as the No. 20 crossing, the rails were now mounted on a base 12 inches square. The price went to eighty cents. Although the 1912 catalog used the identical illustration and description as the year before, the catalog number was changed to 23 and the price went to \$1. The year 1913 brought a return of the No. 20 crossing at the \$1 price.

In addition to the existing No. 20 Standard gauge crossing, in 1915 Lionel introduced O-gauge track to its line with the No. 020 O-gauge crossing. This O-gauge version was built on a 10-1/4-inch square and sold for seventy-five cents.

The next change was made in 1917 with the introduction in O gauge of the No. 020X 45-degree crossing, listed at \$1.00. Lionel offered no such crossing in Standard gauge. The year 1920 marked a substantial increase in the price. The No. 20 was now listed at \$1.45, the No. 020 was \$1.00 and the No. 020X was \$1.45.

The year 1927 offered the same crossings with the same catalog numbers, but a new construction method was used. The rails were now mounted on an enameled ornamental steel base. The prices changed slightly from year to year going both up and down. Finally in 1928, Lionel offered a 45-degree crossing in Standard gauge, the No. 20X priced at \$1.75. By 1933 the Standard gauge 45-degree crossing was no longer listed in the catalog.

The Lionel Jr.® line was added in the 1935 catalog and introduced with a cheaper line of track. Although the track formed a 27-inch diameter, it was not yet called O27 track. In this line was the 1021 90-degree crossing listed at eighty-five cents. This year also saw the introduction of a new track called Model Builders Solid Rail Track™, often called T-

rail. Also introduced was Model Builders Tubular Track™, which we would now call O72 track. Two new crossings were introduced, the No. 720 tubular for wide radius track and the No. 730 for the solid rail track. These 90-degree crossings measured 14-1/2 inches square.

The 1938 catalog introduced a new track — three-rail OO™ gauge. Next year's catalog offered the No. 0070 OO-gauge three-rail crossing. Another new track, OO gauge two rail was introduced in 1939, but Lionel didn't offer a crossing.

Standard gauge sets were not offered in the 1940 catalog and only a small one-eighth-page block offered Standard gauge track. The solid rail and O72 crossings did not return after the war. The O and O27 gauge crossings continued until in the 1951 catalog. No crossings were shown for O gauge. In 1952, the O gauge 90-degree crossing returned, but not the 45-degree crossing. Although O72 curved track returned in the 1954 catalog, the O72 crossing did not. Finally in 1955 we see the postwar return of the O-gauge 45-degree crossing and a new version, the No. 1023 for O27. Also this year, the O27 90-degree crossing is listed as NEW and is now numbered as the 1020.

The year 1957 was historic for Lionel track as the year the company introduced Super O™. In this first year Lionel offered both a 90-degree and a 45-degree crossing in this new track. In 1960 the O-gauge 45-degree crossing was no longer offered. The 1966 catalog, also used in 1967, was the last to offer Super O. Lionel's decline became quite apparent with the 1968 catalog in which O-gauge track was only offered in straight and curved sections — no crossings, switches or remote control track. A crossing was only available in O27 and only as a 90-degree version.

When Lionel was gasping for breath in 1969, it again offered the O-gauge 90-degree crossing and the O27 45-degree crossing. The O-gauge crossing was gone again in 1970, but returned in 1971; only to be absent in the 1973 catalog. This catalog also introduced the ill-fated TruTrack™ system. Touted in the catalog as "the perfect track ... truly unique," no crossing was ever offered in TruTrack. By 1975, this "perfect" and "unique" track system was only a memory.

Through most of the 70s, O-gauge track was all but ignored by Lionel. In 1978, not even the straight and curved O-gauge sections were offered; though they returned in 1979. Finally in 1981, Lionel reintroduced the 90-degree crossing in O gauge. The 45-degree crossing returned in 1984. Both remain in the catalog today.

FasTrack Crossings – A Difference

Lionel introduced its new FasTrack™ in its 2003 Volume 1 Catalog and offered a 90-degree crossing. The 2004 Catalogs contained a 45-degree crossing and — a first for Lionel — a 22-1/2-degree crossing. Although it appeared in the 2004 catalogs, the 22-1/2-degree crossing was not produced and was withdrawn from the catalogs in 2005. Finally, it reappeared in the 2006 Volume 2 Catalog; now we see it on the shelves.

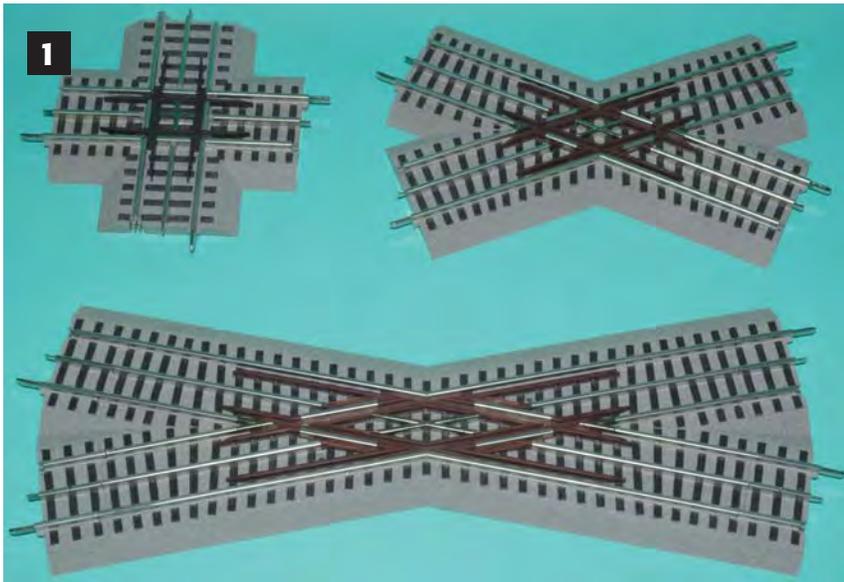


Photo 1 shows the three FasTrack crossings. The largest is the new 22-1/2-degree crossing. This is a first for Lionel, and it proved to be a challenge for the engineers. There is a design element on FasTrack crossings that make them different from all of Lionel's previous crossings; the

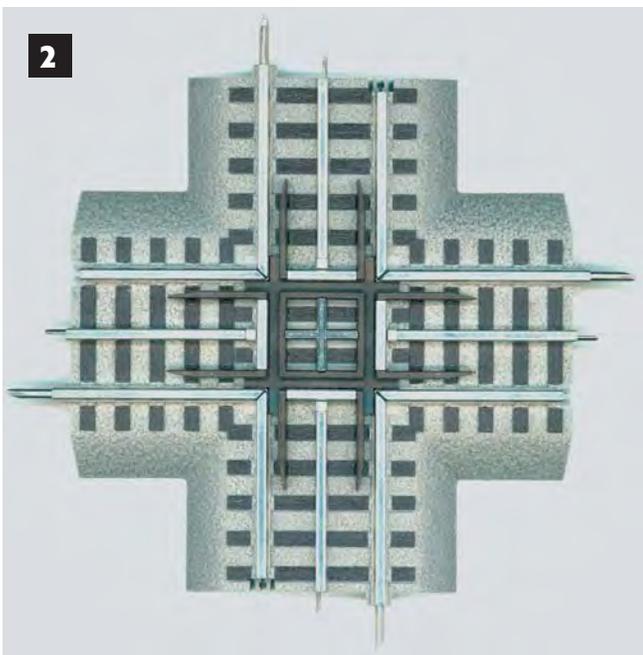
the "dead zone" at each of the crossings.

With a tubular crossing you have a dead space of just over an inch and a half in the center rail of a 90-degree crossing. Most locos have two roller pick-ups, so this would probably not be problem. However, an illuminated caboose with one roller pickup would go dark as it passed the center section.

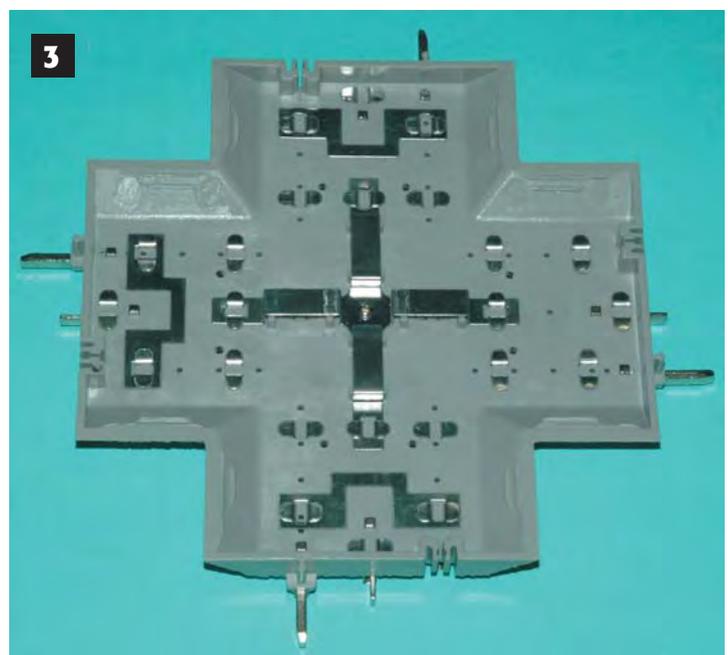
Notice the silver "+" section at the center of the 90-degree FasTrack crossing in **photo 2**. This "+" piece of die-cast metal is powered. As a result, the gap in the middle rail is slightly less than a half inch. For the 45-degree crossing, the center area is larger. As with the 90-degree crossing, the 45-degree version also has power at the center portion. The unpowered gap in the

middle rail is only 3/4-inch long. If the center section was not powered, this gap would be almost 2-3/4 inches.

The center section of the 22-1/2-degree crossing is almost 4-3/4 inches long. A gap this size would bring most motorized units to a stand still, unless they were traveling at



center of the intersection. Since 1902, the center section of a crossing was always dead — without power. A powered unit with only one roller pickup proceeding slowly across the crossing section will stall and need a push past the center section of the crossing, unless it has enough speed to coast across the unpowered center. The further from 90 degrees the crossing gets, the larger the area in the center without power. At one point, Lionel considered not making the 22-1/2-degree crossing but eventually decided that it would design its crossings with power to the center rail section at the center. Each of the three crossings produced for FasTrack supply power to the intersection of the rails at the center of the crossing. This greatly reduced



very high speed — high enough to coast through the dead section and receive power after crossing the dead spot. This was deemed unacceptable, and all FasTrack crossings were designed to supply power to the center of the crossing.

Photo 3 shows an underside view of the 90-degree crossing and we can see the steel connection in the center that supplies track power to the center "+" section through the center screw which secures it. The crossings also have electrical continuity between the middle rails of all parts of the crossing. Crossings have been wired in this manner since early prewar times.

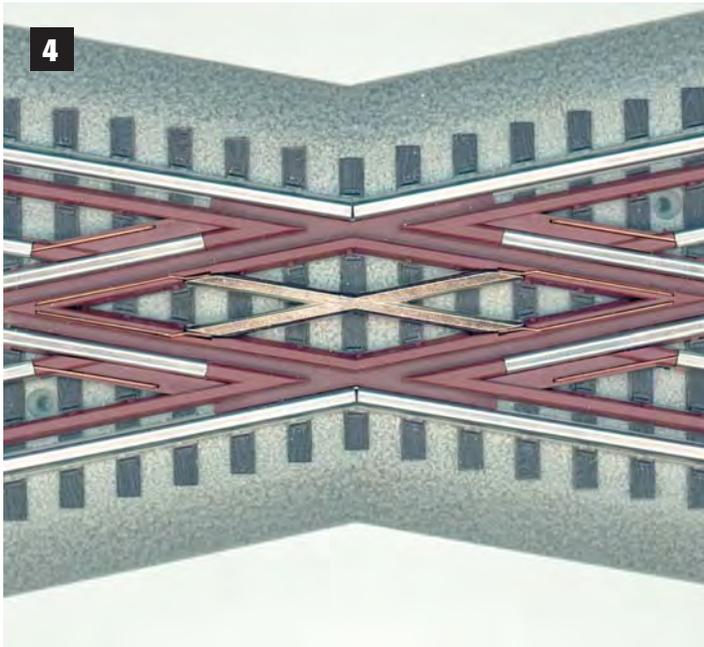
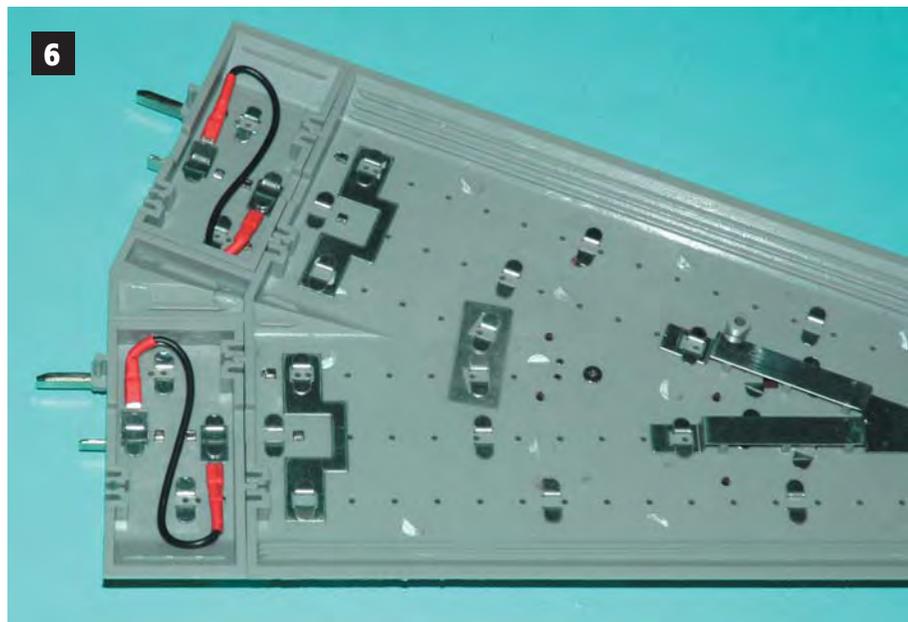
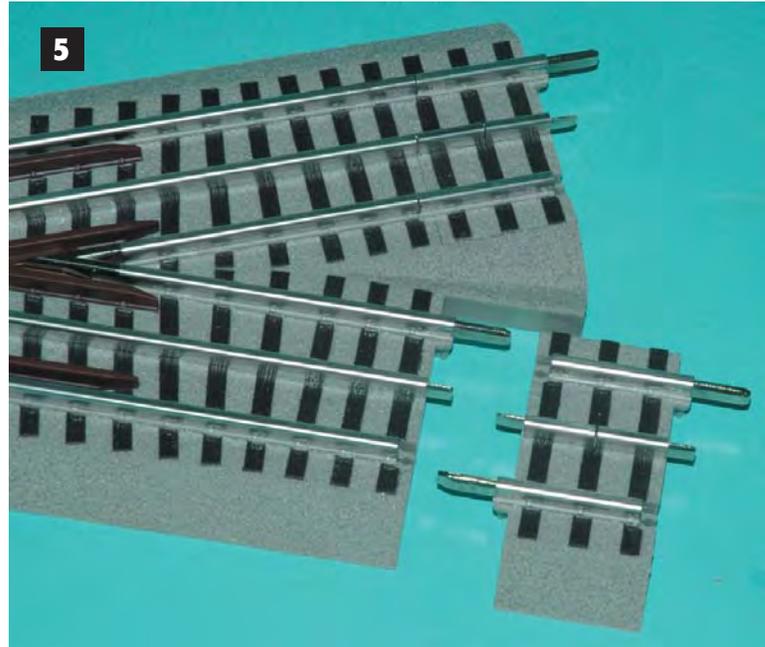


Photo 4 shows the center of the 22-1/2-degree crossing. If you look carefully, you can see that there are additional center rail contacts made of phosphor bronze. Because of the sharp angle in this crossing, and even with the center “X” powered, there would still be a power gap of almost 1-1/4 inches. To lessen this gap, Lionel added the phosphor bronze contacts. This very clever arrangement of contacts almost eliminated any gap. I tested the track under power and used an illuminated caboose with only one pickup roller. I pushed it through the crossing and watched its light — it didn’t blink. If I pushed it through the crossing very slowly, I found two points at each end of the center section where the light would go out. The length of these gaps was less than one-eighth inch. When the car was moving, even at a fairly slow pace, the light did not blink. I also noticed a difference depending on the width of the roller pickup — the SP-type caboose had a narrower roller pickup than the Extended Vision caboose.

The addition of these contacts means that of the three crossings, the 22-1/2-degree item actually has the smallest dead section of three crossings. The 22-1/2-degree crossing is unique in another way.

Photo 5 shows a removable 1-3/8-inch section which is used at each entrance to the crossing. These sections also have a cut in the center rail. **Photo 6** shows the underside, and here we can see that the break in the center rail of the small section is jumped with a removable wire. For most applications, this wire would be left in place. Removing the wires would allow you to isolate the crossing. The use of these sections would come in handy if you planned to use blocks in your layout and the two track lines of the crossing were in a different block. This arrangement could be accomplished using the isolated sections with the wires removed and a double-pole double-throw relay which would power the crossing in one of two ways depending on which



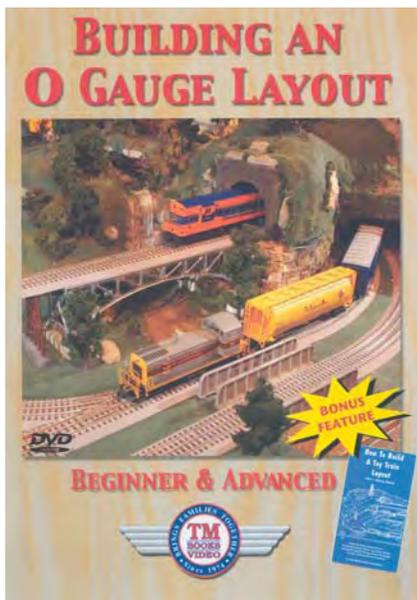
line of the crossing was being used. If there’s interest, we’ll explain that wiring situation more fully in a future article.

A Talk with Lionel

While working on this article, we spoke with Lionel’s Bill Leto in the product development department. He advised us that Lionel was going to add a 1-3/8 inch section of FasTrack to the line. We had heard some talk on the Internet about the need for such a section, and Lionel has now confirmed that it will be made available.

FasTrack DVD

TM Books & Video has just released a new DVD entitled, “Building an O-gauge Layout,” that teaches you, step by step, the techniques required to build a permanent layout. There’s nothing better to encourage you to start that layout than to watch someone doing it from start to finish. That’s exactly what this video does. You’ll watch as Joe Stachler builds an 8x16-foot layout. He starts with a bare



floor and a sheet of plywood then takes you through the entire process.

The first step is building the table. From there topics include the process of planning the track design and installing the track. The planning stage is important, and Joe offers insights to help you make decisions you'll be happy with afterwards. For

this layout, he used Lionel's new FasTrack products. The layout was not merely a flat platform; it had two levels, a mountain pass through it, several switches, and a block system that allowed multiple train operation on the same loop.

Although TMCC™ is mentioned and installed on the layout, he did not offer details about it. Rather, he covered a multitude of techniques required to get the trains running in a scenicked, attractive layout.

A block system probably strikes fear in the hearts and minds of layout planners. Joe insists that it isn't difficult to do, and he proves it by taking you by the hand through the entire process. The wiring techniques include the use of insulated rails (both outside and center), accessory operations, and track modifications. Wiring diagrams are included, and you can watch Joe perform the entire process of installation.

If you've ever had any hesitation about building your dream layout, this is an excellent way to get started. The part of a layout that scares me most is the scenery. When I look at a completed layout, the scenery seems to me to be the most difficult part. In the video, we get to see Joe build a mountain, add trees, use several techniques for lakes and streams, and even create a waterfall. Joe also demonstrates how to improve the look of existing structures, like Plasticville. Watching Joe in the process of making scenery certainly removes some of the fear factor. I'm now convinced the process is not as difficult as it might appear when looking at the finished product.

The subtitle of the video is Beginner & Advanced. There's such a wide variety of techniques covered in this video that regardless of your previous experience, or the lack thereof, you'll find something of interest.

If you're building any kind of a layout, or just need a push to get started, you'll find lots of help in this video. In addition, the DVD includes an older TM video, "How to Build a Toy Train Layout." Additional techniques are

explained in this bonus. TM also intends to supplement the material on the DVD with additional articles and aids posted on their website. The video is reasonably priced at \$19.95 plus shipping, and it is available from your local train store or direct from TM Books & Video on their website, www.tmbv.com.

A Special Issue

Classic Toy Trains magazine has recently issued a second special issue entitled, "More All Star Electric Trains." This 100-page special issue contains a collection of 20 new articles covering a variety of interesting topics. One article discusses a mystery layout partially seen in photos of Lionel's postwar showroom. Another documents the story of Lionel's largest postwar display layout. It still exists and photos show it in great condition.



I'm always interested in articles concerning Lionel employees. Roger Carp writes two articles with stories from former Lionel workers. One was a draftsman who drew the blueprints for many Lionel classics. The other tells the story behind two venerable pieces of Lionel advertising and the artists who created them. Another article tells the backstage story of Joltin' Joe's Lionel TV show.

One of my favorite articles explains the probable origins of Lionel's Submarine car and includes a photo of the prototype car carrying a sub, the X-1, which looks amazingly close to the Lionel toy model. Flyer fans won't be disappointed with the articles on Flyer reefer cars and another covering O and S-gauge jewels. I enjoyed all 20 articles.

Senior Editor Roger Carp did an admirable job with this issue, and it is my hope that this second edition establishes a precedent and presages more of these special issues. You can purchase this issue directly online at www.classictoytrains.com. The first issue of "All-Star Electric Trains" is out of print, but you can purchase and download a digital copy at www.classictoytrains.com/electric.

Fun on the Floor

I'll be waxing nostalgic as I watch my Lionel trains running on a floor layout during the holidays. Best wishes to all our members and their families for a holiday season filled with health, happiness, and, of course, Lionel Trains. 🚂

Photographs by Bill Schmeelk

E-mail Bill at: bill@wellingtonent.com

The Tinplate Cannonball

by Ken Morgan
RM 12231

Standard Gauge on a Budget

I'm starting to enjoy this trip along Standard gauge tracks. I hope you are, too. Anyway, here's some more info about the big trains by Lionel®.

Price Is a Matter of Perspective

I think many collectors feel that Standard gauge collecting is more difficult or more expensive than O gauge. I used to, but that's not necessarily the case. You can get into Standard gauge relatively painlessly, especially when you compare the prices to some of the new stuff out there today. Over the next few installments, I'll show how easy it is to become a Standard gauge collector. Be careful, though; as I've said before, betcha can't have just one!

Yes, they require more room to operate; at least more than O gauge with O31 curves. If you're using O72 or larger curvatures, Standard gauge actually takes up less space. Lionel's Standard gauge track includes a 42-inch-diameter circle. Maybe we should call it "S42".

Speaking about calling things by a certain name, why was the famous NYC streamlined Hudson called the Commodore Vanderbilt? The answer is at the end, a usual.

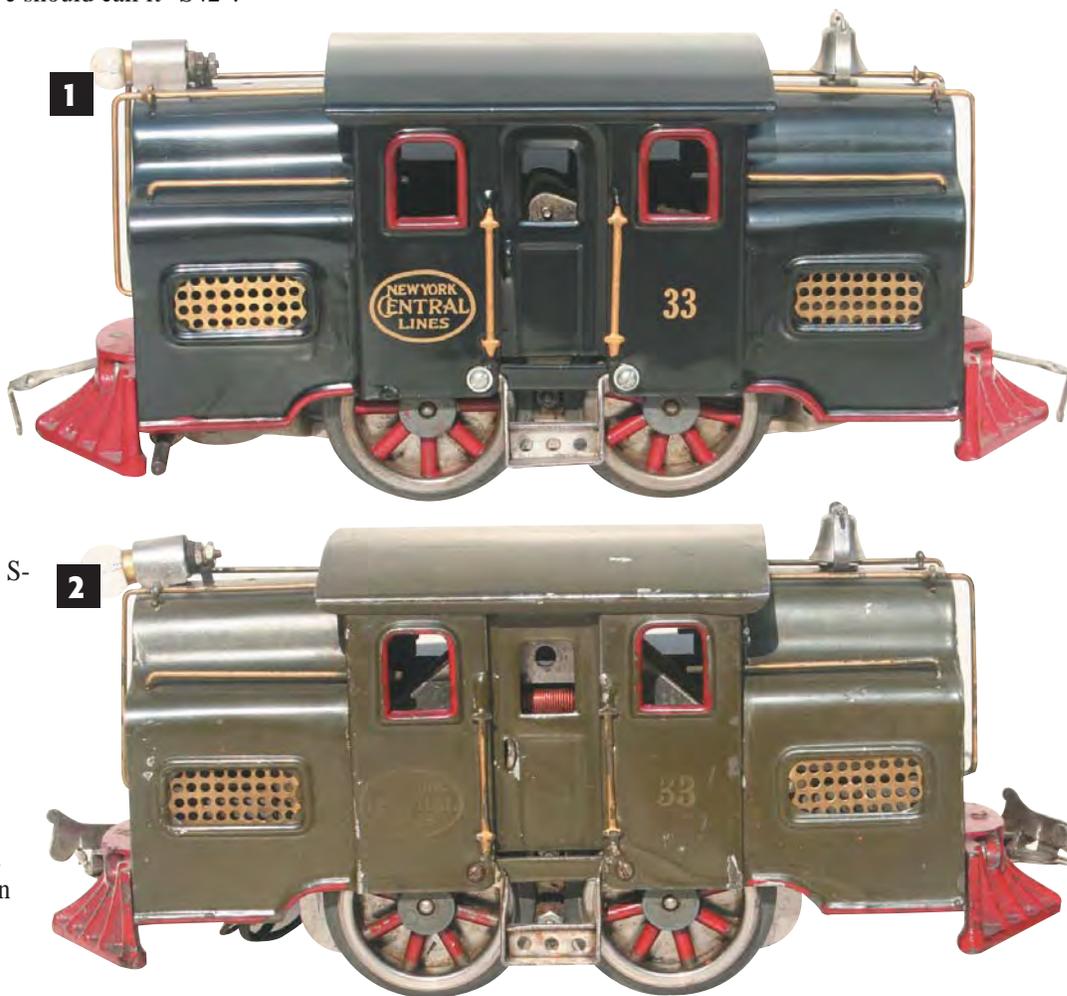
The 33 Electric Locomotive

Okay, so the hook is set and Standard gauge is starting to reel you in. Where do you begin? One good starting point is early Standard gauge; specifically, a number 33 S-type electric loco. If this isn't the quintessential Standard gauge loco, it certainly is the most ubiquitous one. As Hal Carsten says in his book, *The Trains of Lionel's Standard Gauge Era*, "At least one example should be found in any collection worthy of the name."

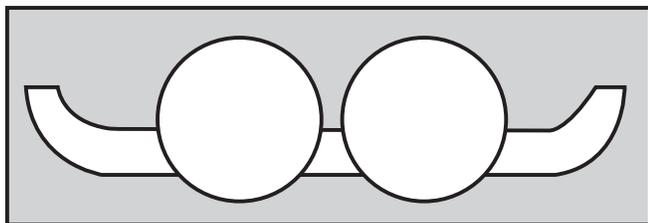
Let's take a closer look at it. In the previous installment I reviewed all of Lionel's early electric outline locos. In case you missed it, the 33 is derived from the very early 1910 loco, Lionel's smallest ever. It ran for only two years (1910-1911) in its original form before it was reborn in 1912 with a new body. The first version was a "sharply angled-corners body," the second, a round body. Both were 0-6-0s. Both are now expensive. In 1913, the second version was renumbered to 33, and sometime during that year it transitioned from a 0-6-0 to a 0-4-0. The 0-4-0 was available in dark olive green and is sort-of-moderately expensive. It was also available in "midnight blue" as a department store special made for Montgomery Ward stores. Very expensive.

Then in 1916 Lionel made a couple of production changes, and the result was the most affordable Lionel Standard-gauge locomotive in captivity. Permit me to offer a closer look at this beast.

Photos 1 and 2 show two number 33 locos. The black one (which is a restored loco) is a bit earlier than the olive green one. Yes, it is accurately identified by a sticker on the inside of the frame. I bought it long ago, well before I found the olive green one. At first glance, they appear to be the same. Look again. Even in these two photos there is a difference. You can see the frame under the body of the black one. Not so for the olive one. And that's just the start.



The earliest 33s have U-shaped frames, like this: You'll have to suffer with my artistry since these two locos have later frames.



In 1916, the “straight” frame was introduced. That is vertically straight as opposed to the U frame. It originally had six rectangular openings cut in one side and four on the other; three at each end, and three plus one respectively. The end with just one hole was necessary to mount the hand reverse (HR) unit which was introduced simultaneously with the new frame. That’s right, the 1910 and the earliest 33s did not reverse. Then again, the way the couplers flop around and the fact that there is a headlight on only one end makes me wonder if a reverse is truly necessary! Oh, well.

Presumably to simplify things, the straight frame was later modified (about 1916) to four holes on both sides. Since there is no front or back to the frame and the body fits either way, the result is that the HR unit can be found on any corner of the loco. I’m not sure if Lionel built them every way or not, but based on the ones I have seen, plus pictures in the various sources I use, there is no “right” location. So I presume that was the case from the start.

Assembly of these early trains involved a great deal of handwork, which means that the near perfection we are now accustomed to did not exist then. See **photo 3** and check out the handrails to see an example of this lack of perfection — which many of us may prefer to view as “charm,” not a “mistake.”



Photos 4 and 5 show both locos and their frames with their pilots and body separated from them. There are four screws, two at each end, that go through the cast iron pilots and secure the body to the frame. So the body, as noted above, will fit in either direction. **Photo 4** is the straight frame with four holes on each side; three at one end are

clearly visible. The fourth hole is partially hidden by the wheel, but if you look closely, you can make it out. The HR is also visible at the left end.



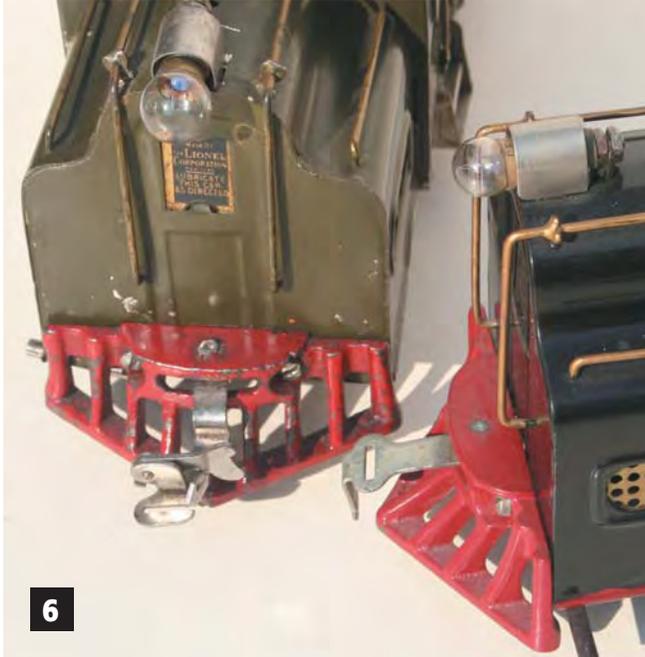
Photo 5 shows the next version of the frame. This was used only for late production in 1923-24, and the body rides a little lower, which is why the frame can’t be seen when the body is in place. That’s one of the tip-offs that the olive green loco is later production than the black one.

Couplers and Details

Another can be seen in **photo 6**. The black 33 has the older drop hook coupler. The olive green one has a combination latch coupler. Lionel referred to their new latch couplers as “automatic” The only thing I have ever considered “automatic” about them is the *agita* they cause when trying to uncouple them. But they usually work better than the drop hooks, which — if properly maintained — don’t accidentally uncouple as often over uneven tracks. This is a combination coupler because it has a plate on the bottom with a slot for drop hooks to mate, so it will be compatible with either old rolling stock or newer

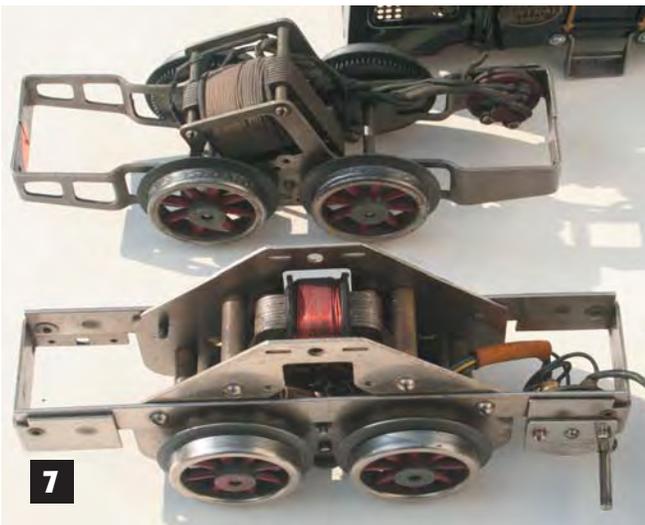
equipment. Many sets, including the one I have, came with a loco with the combination coupler and cars with drop hooks during the transition period.

Photo 6 also shows a feature of all the later 33s which changed in 1916 along with the frames. The handrails are held in place by solder applied to Y-shaped stanchions instead of the more expensive turned stanchions of the earliest 33s.

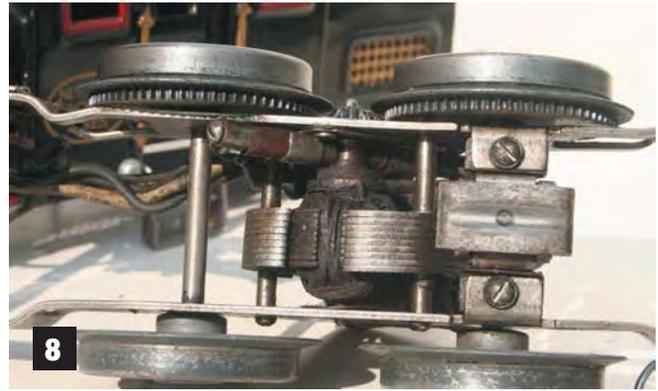


Look under the Hood

The other major difference between these two locos is their motors. **Photo 7** shows the sort-of-pyramidal structure of the newer loco in front and the older one in the rear. It also more clearly shows the four openings in the frame. Notice why I said “straight” frame in the vertical sense. Clearly not horizontal! The real difference here is that for



the 1923-24 production, Lionel used its new “Super Motor.” What’s the difference? Actually several things. **Photo 8** is the older motor from the bottom. **Photo 9** is the Super



Motor. The early motor is obviously more primitive, especially the well-worn single sliding pick-up shoe. The tube with the screw is one of the two brush holders. If you look closely you can make out the other one directly opposite it on the far side of the copper commutator, which is mounted parallel to the armature shaft. Refer back to **photo 4** and you can see that the motor turns a small pinion gear which in turn meshes with a larger gear which engages the large gears behind the wheels in **photo 8**.

Photo 9 shows the changes wrought by the Super Motor. It has rollers, which, in the spirit of current train review articles in the commercial press, are 3-1/4 inches apart. But you don’t have to worry about either the dual rollers or the single slider losing power. The locos are HR, so a momentary power interruption won’t trip the reverse.



They don’t have Magnetraction™ and they coast through the switches. Maybe that old technology isn’t so bad!

Other changes involve the gearing: there is a fifth gear. The shaft turns a small gear which meshes with a large gear which is mounted on the same shaft as another smaller gear which turns the gears on the wheels. Don’t ask why because I don’t know; except to say that it constitutes a double reduction gear. I assume it is there because the new motor turns at a higher speed than the older one. I haven’t got a strobe, so I didn’t verify that assumption. Look at **photos 5 and 9**; you can follow the path. The commutator is still co-axial with the shaft, but the brush holders are different. While it’s hard to make out, using **photos 5 and 9** you can find both the commutator and one of the brush holders. Finally, Lionel changed the wheels. The early wheels are cast iron. The Super Motor has die-cast wheels with nickel rims. Look at **photos 8 and 9** again to see the wheels.

Both of these locos run fine, so I don't think it makes much, if any, difference which version you choose for your collection. Spare parts are readily available for both. Replacing the base plate or accessing the wire to it on the Super Motor is a tad tricky, so from a maintenance/repair point of view, it's easier to work on the earlier motor. Prices are the same. The early loco comes in black or dark olive green; the later one in dark green, dark olive green, and dark gray. Either may be found in brighter colors which are usually described as factory repaints of repaired locos. They are much more expensive, and, obviously, potential subjects for aftermarket enhancement. *Caveat Emptor*, or stick with the basic colors. And enjoy Standard gauge on a budget.

About the Commodore

Oh, yeah — the trivia question. Cornelius Vanderbilt was born into a poor family but became extremely rich later in life. We know him for his association with the railroad industry, but he started out in business as a boat owner at age 16. He eventually went on to control the NY harbor

ferries, then the NY to New England coastal shipping industry. In 1848 he opened a route from NYC to California which included an overland segment via Nicaragua, then went into trans-Atlantic shipping. He built the largest steamer extant — named Vanderbilt, of course. As a result, he was known as Commodore Vanderbilt.

In 1862 he decided that steamboats weren't profitable enough, so he moved into a new arena of business. He bought the New York Central and the Harlem River Railroad. Later he added the Hudson River Railroad (hence NYC & HRR on some old Lionel pieces). But the nickname stuck, so when the NYC inaugurated streamlined rail service, the first loco to wear the slick shrouding was the Commodore Vanderbilt.

See you next time with more Standard gauge along the rails of The Tinplate Cannonball. 🚂

Photographs by Ken Morgan

TLR Lionel at the Library

by Stan Kozaczka
RM 19634

Editor's Note: Every year, Stan sends a "Christmas Card" in the form of a general e-mail note to the students, faculty, and staff of Cazenovia College where he is the Director of Library Services. This year, the card is an invitation to drop by the campus library and view a portion of his collection of Lionel products on display in two large glass cases in the foyer of the building. Stan says he can keep this annual event fresh for another ten years!

In the Spirit of the Season

The wonderful thing about the displays is the very kind and enthusiastic responses I receive from the campus community — personal remarks and e-mails from individuals who are delighted by my holiday greeting card.

This year's display highlights the Lionel® series of 6464 boxcars and the grand #300 Hellgate Bridge — a showstopper in itself. Last year, I presented a grouping of Plasticville™ structures with Lionel's first postwar #463W freight train and an O27 1950s-style streamlined passenger set. In the previous year, I brought out Lionel's famous locomotives: the Santa Fe Super Chief, the Milwaukee Road Hiawatha, and Boston & Maine Flying Yankee.



Witherill Library of the college

Heralding the Holiday

Here are excerpts from my 2006 Merry Christmas Card about the Lionel train display at the Witherill Library on campus.

You are all invited to the third annual toy train display in the foyer of the library! This year it is a collection of the Lionel Corporation's 6464 boxcar series originally released between 1953 and 1969. The examples shown, however, are Lionel's re-release of these beauties between 1993 and



2001. Let me emphasize that the original 6464 boxcars are legendary to toy train collectors.

The big, blue, and beautiful Boston & Maine 6464-475 boxcar made its appearance in 1957 — both on that railroad and as a Lionel model. Bringing a part of the real world to my basement model railroad empire seemed like magic. Maybe some kids wanted to be a fireman, but I wanted to be a railroad tycoon! Becoming an academic librarian was an acceptable compromise.

Also striking was the silver Western Pacific (6464-100) with its massive yellow feather stretching across most of its side symbolizing that its freight "Rides like a Feather." There was an orange version of this car (6464-250) as well that had a smaller feather, but in blue. Very artistic!

The Central of Georgia (6464-375) seemed a challenge to the real boxcar painters in that a giant silver ellipse was painted within a maroon body with the phrase "The Right Way" proudly lettered. But the show-stopper had to be the Alaska Railroad boxcar which appeared in 1959; I loved the happy Eskimo boy that had his hand extended in a wave to you saying "At your Service."

I have included a modern-era, massive reproduction of Lionel's 1928 model of the "Hellgate Bridge" in the display. Spanning the East River, the actual bridge was the

pride of the Pennsylvania Railroad when it was completed in 1916. It was and still is the rail link between Manhattan and Boston and crosses a very dangerous portion of the river, hence its rather intense name. The real bridge has been vividly repainted and supports the route of Amtrak's Acela Express.

About the College

Founded in 1824, Cazenovia College is a small, independent, residential, co-educational, baccalaureate college devoted to developing educated, involved, and productive citizens through a range of professionally oriented programs. The curriculum combines a thorough grounding in the liberal arts with experiential and co-curricular opportunities. The college embraces learning as its primary focus and is committed to creating an environment that encourages intellectual, social, and ethical growth. Graduates are prepared for leadership roles in the global community. The college is located 20 miles from Syracuse, New York. 🚂

Photographs provided by Stan Kozaczka

TLR Supporting Cast

Working behind the scenes, these club volunteers and vendors help make this club magazine the best of its kind.

Pat Snyder	Graphic Designer
Mark Matthews	Advertising Photographer
Gay Roselle	Printing Process Liaison
Pat White	Mail Prep Director
Carol Mottler	Preliminary Proofreader
Rich Chatfield	Pre-press Proofreader
Ed Richter	Chief Photographer
Authors & Photographers	Creative Communicators
Larry Black	IT Liaison
Cathy Rios	Utility Outfielder
President Lou Caponi	Marketing
Board Members	Enablers
Club Members	Feedback Providers

With thanks to all who give LCCA the greatest gift: a portion of their time and talent.

Mike H. Mottler, TLR Editor

A Lionel Puzzlement

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

Guinness Rail Facts – Part 1

During a recent visit to the legendary Powell's City of Books in Portland, Oregon, I found a copy of *The Guinness Book of Rail Facts and Feats*. It is indeed a "unique compendium of the superlatives of the railway systems of the world." Below are 15 questions about U.S. railroad facts with the correct responses in an Answer Pool. Match a year with each rail fact. Enjoy! 

Answer Pool

A. 1830, B. 1833, C. 1836, D. 1856, E. 1883, F. 1891,
G. 1895, H. 1910, I. 1929 (use twice), J. 1934, K.
1935, L. 1936, M. 1960, N. 1970

Questions

1. The first diesel locomotives in main-line service in the U.S. were used on the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy and Union Pacific railroads in _____.
2. The first of the Southern Pacific "cab forward" Mallets was built in _____.
3. Standard time was introduced in North America by the railroads in _____.
4. The first bridge across the Mississippi River was at Davenport, Iowa, and opened in _____.
5. The last regularly scheduled steam train in the U.S. ran on the Grand Trunk Western system in _____.
6. The first railroad to offer a regular service as a public carrier was the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. It began service in _____.
7. The first "figure 8" oscillating headlight was introduced in _____.
8. Sandboxes were first fitted on U.S. locomotives in _____ following a plague of grasshoppers in Pennsylvania. The sand was sprinkled on the rails and prevented the engines from slipping on the squashed insects.
9. The first air-conditioned Pullman car went into operation between Chicago and Los Angeles in _____.
10. The National Railroad Passenger Corporation — known as "Amtrak" — was formed under the Rail Passenger Act in _____.
11. The first electric train service in the U.S. began on the seven-mile Nantasket Branch of the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad in _____.
12. Andrew Jackson was the first President to ride on a railroad train. This event took place in _____.
13. The highest railroad in North America is the Manitou & Pike's Peak Cog Railway in Colorado. It opened with steam power in _____.
14. The longest railroad tunnel is the "Cascade" in Washington and was completed by Burlington Northern in _____.
15. The world's longest railroad bridge is the "Huey P. Long Bridge" over the Mississippi River at New Orleans, Louisiana. It opened for service in _____.

Answers are published in TLR ... somewhere.

