

Volume 35, No. 4 April, 2006

# The Lion Roars



PUBLISHED BY THE LIONEL® COLLECTORS CLUB OF AMERICA IN FEBRUARY, APRIL, JUNE, OCTOBER, DECEMBER







**GAS**

# Fill 'er Up!

**53% OFF  
MSRP**

**Note: Four figures included; 1959 Chevy not included.  
Layout courtesy of Al Otten, HM 429**

When a gallon of gas was 36.9 cents and cars were finned and fast, your neighborhood gas station may have looked like this petrostructure model designed by Lionel®. It'll be a good fit to your transition-era layout, and the building can be "dressed up" with cars of the 1950s at the pumps, in the service bays, or pulled up to the rest rooms for a family "potty pause." Four figures in company uniforms are included.

The rooftop billboard lights up sequentially with active, lighted arrows and GAS letters. The station includes lighted pumps, lighted and detailed interior with sales counter and

graphics, and lighted service bays. Its "footprint" is very manageable at 12x12 inches, so it will fit in a modest space without requiring much, if any, reconfiguration of the landscape of your layout.

LCCA bought out the remaining inventory of this item from the Lionel warehouse so the club could offer it to members at 53% off the catalog price of \$149.95. Order one before the supply is completely sold out! Use the form for a mail-in order or visit the online LCCA Store at the club's website: [www.lionelcollectors.org](http://www.lionelcollectors.org).

## ORDER FORM – Esso Station

*Note: UPS will not deliver to a P.O. Box; a street address is required.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ LCCA # \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ St: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Check this box if any part of your address info is new. E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**One** Esso Station \$ 79.95  
Shipping and handling included

Members in AK, HI, & Foreign;  
add \$8 for extended S&H \$ \_\_\_\_\_

6.5% Sales Tax (for IL residents only);  
add \$5.20 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Payment Method – Check or Credit Card

My check made payable to "LCCA" for the full amount is enclosed with "Esso Station" written on memo line.

Bill my credit card account for the full amount.

CC#: \_\_\_\_\_

Disc  MC  Visa Exp: \_\_\_\_\_

Verification Code: \_\_\_\_\_

*(The last three digits at the signature panel on the back of your card)*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*I authorize LCCA to bill my account for this purchase.*

**Mail with payment to: LCCA Business Office • Dep't. ES-0406 • P.O. Box 479 • LaSalle, IL 61301-0479  
Or place your order online at: [www.lionelcollectors.org](http://www.lionelcollectors.org) – go to "MEMBERS ONLY" and open "LCCA Store."**

*Note: This order form may be photocopied.*

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**ON THE COVER**  
**The spectacular waterfall on Dale Berger's Chevy-powered train layout. See page 16.**  
*Photographs by Jon Bouwer*

**Contacting the LCCA Business Office**

Members can contact the Business Office through the club's website at [www.lionelcollectors.org](http://www.lionelcollectors.org), by e-mail at [lcca@cpointcc.com](mailto: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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*The Lion Roars* (USPS 0011-994) and (ISSN No. 1079-0993) is published bi-monthly except August by the Lionel Collectors Club of America, 1622 Fourth St., Peru, IL 61354-3527. Subscription rate of \$15.00 per year is paid through membership dues. Periodical postage paid at Peru, IL 61354-9998 and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *The Lion Roars*, 1622 Fourth St. Peru, IL 61354-3527. The LCCA is an Illinois not-for-profit corporation. Lionel is a registered trademark and is used with the permission of Lionel L.L.C. Copies of Lionel copyrighted materials have been used in this publication with the permission of Lionel L.L.C.

**Answers to the Lionel Puzzlement in this issue**

**Across:** 1. Can, 3. Bib, 4. Bar, 6. Gas, 8. Rod, 9. Two

**Down:** 1. Cab, 2. Nab, 3. Bug, 5. Red, 7. Set, 8. Rio

**LCCA Web Site: [www.lionelcollectors.org](http://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

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# The President's Report

by Louis J. Caponi  
RM 8735

## Spring into Spring

Spring is in the air, and it's time for the proverbial spring cleaning. Get into your train room, dust off your collection, spiffy-up the layout, and add something bright and new. Speaking of new, LCCA has a deal for you.

Our friends at Lionel® have come through with another special offering to club members. It's the operating Esso Gas Station shown in the 2005/2006 Lionel catalogs.



The club purchased the remaining inventory from the factory at a special price. These fueling stations bore a factory list price of \$149.95, but as a club member you can order one for \$79.95 with S&H included for addresses in the continental USA. See the full-page ad and order form in this issue and in the LCCA Store at the club's website. How's that for membership value? Fair warning – there are only 300 pieces available, and they will be sold on a first-come, first-serve basis.

## More about Club Special Offers

In *The Lion Roars* and through our online LCCA Store, the club recently offered the Lionel Swing Bridge at a fantastic price. Although we purchased Lionel's entire remaining inventory of this item, the quantity was finite. Our intention was to fill as many orders as we could, but we were unable to fill every order we received — the bridges sold out in just two days! This is why it's important not to delay. Place your order for these special offers right away.

The club did an excellent job of filling orders for the Lionel Norman Rockwell cars (which are now sold out) and the #56 M&StL switcher (which will likely sell out soon). Your feedback in the form of orders for these products sends a clear message: you and other members like the opportunity to purchase Lionel products at attractive prices.

## Timing and Posting Special Items

From now on, members will be notified of special club offerings not only through our online LCCA Store but also through our printed publications. We will do our best to ensure that the printed and electronic notifications appear simultaneously in order to maintain a level playing field for members who have access to our website and those who don't.

## Be on the Lookout ...

... for a new and exciting train set offer. Over the past year, we have worked closely with Lionel to bring to LCCA members an exclusive Limited Edition — an almost impossible-to-find, postwar train set. Lionel President Jerry Calabrese will unveil this "Mystery Set" during the Lionel Seminar at our 2006 Convention in Denver.

## Denver Convention Tours

We quickly sold out the tickets for Convention tour #1 — "The LCCA Special" rail excursion aboard the UP Heritage Fleet. More than 600 seats were sold within 45 days of posting the information!

Other rail tours sold out too. Our Conventions have ascended to a level above and beyond other train clubs, and the 2006 Convention will be one of our largest events ever.

Members who attend this Mile High adventure can help us maintain good order through thoughtful cooperation. Please follow directions given to you by tour guides/volunteers. They are there to keep you smiling. Also, please be on time for your tours — those who are "unfashionably late" cause inconvenience to everyone. Remember, all tours are on a tight schedule.

Ticket sales for the Get Acquainted Party and Banquet have far surpassed those of previous years. Not everyone who attends the Convention participates in these social activities, but word travels fast. The buzz is out about Lionel's special announcement and additional surprises at the party; also, everyone who attends the banquet will receive a wonderful gift. One lucky member at every table could win a one-of-a-kind, highly collectible surprise. You could be that lucky person!

## Setting the Record Straight

I have been asked by many members, "Why is there so much hoop-la about the upcoming Convention?" Here's your answer. Our annual Convention is a once-a-year, week-long function that includes a significant number of members who enjoy good family fun during the social event of the LCCA. Years ago, conventions were little more than a fancy name for a large train meet. My friends, those days are gone and will never return. In a manner of speaking, the Convention is our "York" — where members get together, enjoy the hobby, and have a great time. I guarantee it — if you come to just one of our Conventions, you will be back the next year and the next and ... well, you know. Happy Railroading!

P.S. Send in the LCCA 2006 Convention Registration Form today — don't miss our social event of the year! 🚂

# At Trackside

## LCCA Members in Action

### Ringgold, Georgia (near Chattanooga, TN) Saturday, July 1, 2006

Host Bill Stitt (RM 259) and co-hosts George Baltz (RM 14094) and Ron Herman (RM 1761) will present the Chattanooga Area Train Show at The Catoosa Colonnade on Old Mill Road in collaboration with the LCCA at the beginning of the Fourth of July holiday. For registration information and table reservations, call: 423-894-1284, 423-842-6094, or 423-344-5799. There is no limit to the number of tables one can request at \$13 each. To reserve tables in advance, contact Bill by mail: 9727 Shadow Valley Circle, Chattanooga, TN 37421. Make checks payable to "LCCA" with "Table Reservation" written on the memo line.

Dealer set-up and on-site registration will be from 8 to 9 a.m. that morning with club member trading from 9 to 10 a.m. The general public and guests will be welcome from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. closing. Members admitted free, adult guests pay \$6 with children under 18 admitted free.

Directions to the site: From I-75 take exit 350 (5 miles south of the Tennessee state line), west on GA H-way 2 (Battlefield Parkway), go 1.6 miles, at third light west of I-75, turn right on Old Mill Road and go to the Catoosa Colonnade. This facility is in Georgia, but it's near the border with Tennessee.

### Lexington, Kentucky November 17 & 18, 2006

Because of scheduling conflicts at the facility, Harry Overtom (RM 1185) has announced that there will not be a

spring 2006 train show in the Lexington area. However, the well-established fall train show will be held at the new location on November 17 & 18, 2006. It will follow the normal pattern: LCCA members will be admitted free on Friday night and Saturday, and the public will be admitted beginning at 9 a.m. on Saturday. To reserve tables, contact Bill Crace (RM 3066) at 859-299-2423. He is the sole contact for table reservations, so if you do not call him, you cannot be guaranteed a spot at this train show.

### Denver, Colorado July 23 - 30, 2006

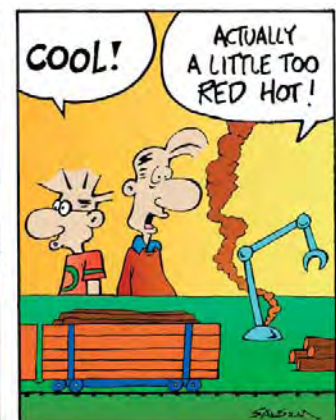
#### Update: Convention Hotel Accommodations



As *TLR* went to press, the rooms initially allocated (plus additional allocations) for LCCA Convention-goers in the host hotel — Denver Marriott Tech Center Hotel — were sold out for Sunday through Wednesday of Convention week. However, some rooms remain available for Thursday through Saturday. Refer to the Hotel Registration Form on the inside back "ghost cover" of this issue. 🚂

## Toy Trunk Railroad

by Erik Sansom





# Mighty Mite

**SPECIAL  
PRICE**



*Note: Layout features not included*

First introduced by Lionel® in 1958, this classic postwar-era M&StL diesel switcher is reborn with a Pullmor™ motor and modern, state-of-the-art TrainMaster Command Control (TMCC™) system on board. Front and rear ElectroCouplers™ allow easy remote control of realistic switching operations via TMCC on your layout.

It also has directional lighting, traction tire, die-cast metal frame, and postwar plaque and packaging.

This special purchase from Lionel by LCCA for our members is a significant savings compared to the MSRP. Proof of delivery by signature is required, so the mailing address must be a residence. Quantities are limited, so don't miss out on this specially priced item!

## ORDER FORM – M&StL Diesel Switcher

*Note: UPS will not deliver to a P.O. Box; a street address is required.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ LCCA # \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ St: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Check this box if any part of your address info is new. E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**One M&StL Diesel Switcher** \$ 179.95  
Shipping and handling, with insurance 9.95  
Sub-total: \$ 189.90

Members in AK, HI, & Foreign;  
add \$10 for extended S&H \$ \_\_\_\_\_

6.25% Sales Tax (for IL residents only);  
add \$11.87 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Payment Method – Check or Credit Card

My check made payable to "LCCA" for the full amount is enclosed with "M&StL" written on memo line.

Bill my credit card account for the full amount.

CC#: \_\_\_\_\_

Disc  MC  Visa Exp: \_\_\_\_\_

Verification Code: \_\_\_\_\_

*(The last three digits at the signature panel on the back of your card)*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*I authorize LCCA to bill my account for this purchase.*

**Mail with payment to: LCCA Business Office • Dep't. DS-0406 • P.O. Box 479 • LaSalle, IL 61301-0479**  
**Or place your order online at: [www.lionelcollectors.org](http://www.lionelcollectors.org) – go to "MEMBERS ONLY" and open "LCCA Store."**

*Note: This order form may be photocopied.*



# More Power to You



Note: Figures not included

The actual model produced may be slightly different from this pre-production prototype.

"Power up!" with this unique car made by Lionel® and offered exclusively to club members. This Union Pacific Auxiliary Power Car is the LCCA 2006 Annual Convention car. It is conceptually related to one of the highlights of our upcoming Convention in Denver – "The LCCA Special" excursion train trip with motive power from the UP Heritage Fleet.

The model will be a memento of the Convention, a souvenir of the excursion trip, and a celebration of a once-in-a-lifetime train travel experience.

If you already own a UP steam locomotive and some "big yellow" passenger cars, you'll probably consider this car a "must have!"

Approved by the UP Heritage Fleet Program, this car bears the "UP Overland" shield – the official and exclusive identification of the fleet.

The car includes the quality features of Lionel products: authentic UP colors including UP silver color on the diesel generator set inside the car, die-cast (not plastic) trucks with operating couplers, and crisp graphics. A discrete mark, "LCCA Annual Convention, Denver CO, July 24-29, 2006" is stamped on the undercarriage.

Prior to the 6-30-06 deadline, you can place your order at the club's website:

**[www.lionelcollectors.org](http://www.lionelcollectors.org)**

If not online, mail this order form before June 30th. Delivery is scheduled in late 2006.

## ORDER FORM – LCCA 2006 Convention Car (UP Auxiliary Power Car)

Note: UPS will not deliver to a P.O. Box; a street address is required.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ LCCA # \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ St: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Check this box if any part of your address info is new. E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**ONE** LCCA 2006 Convention Car \$ 69.95

**TWO** LCCA 2006 Convention Cars \$ 139.90

My check made payable to "LCCA" for the full amount is enclosed with "CC-0206" written on the memo line.

Bill my credit card for the full amount.

### Shipping & Handling in cont. U.S. [no charge]

Members in AK, HI, & Foreign; add \$12 per car for extended S&H \$ \_\_\_\_\_

6.25% Sales Tax (for IL residents only); add \$4.37 per car \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

CC#: \_\_\_\_\_

Disc  MC  Visa Exp: \_\_\_\_\_

Verification Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
(The last three digits at the signature panel on the back of your card.)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

I authorize LCCA to bill my account for this purchase.

Mail with payment to: LCCA Business Office • Dep't. CC-0406 • P.O. Box 479 • LaSalle, IL 61301-0479  
Or place your order online at: [www.lionelcollectors.org](http://www.lionelcollectors.org) – go to "MEMBERS ONLY" and open "LCCA Store."

Note: This order form may be photocopied.



## Lionel Railroad Club of Milwaukee



### A Big Club with a Big Bridge by Mike H. Mottler RM 12394

*Editor's Note: This article is the fourth in a continuing series about model railroading in its group form at local train clubs. To nominate your train club for coverage, contact the Editor.*

#### Let It Snow

It only happens in Disney movies — a group of earnest kids work together in a team effort to successfully save their neighborhood, their city, or even the country from a menacing threat. Except in Milwaukee — the locale where a true life story of a group of neighborhood children actually did save themselves and their families from impending, maybe terminal, boredom.

During the winter blizzard of 1947, the city was snowbound from a snow storm that dropped about two feet of the white stuff on the area. Everything was at a standstill. To pass the time and have some fun, winter-weary Jerry Brettschneider along with five other boys and one girl formed a train club that was initially based at his house. Over a time span of nearly 60 years, that informal neighborhood group has grown into one of the premiere train clubs of its kind in the nation.

### Jerry – The Keeper of the Flame

Young Jerry was elected as the first president, and the other kids became officers of their club. “My parents plus the parents of the original club members supported and guided us as we created the nucleus of friends who loved to play with toy trains,” Jerry said.

Jerry recalled, “My mom and dad encouraged me to keep busy during summer vacation from school. We kept the club going by having meetings every week, collected dues (a nickel per meeting at the start), and made fantastic plans.” The precursor of the Lionel Railroad Club of Milwaukee (LRRC-Milw) was born.

The youngsters realized they needed a place to play with trains, activities to make it interesting and fun, fundraisers to cover expenses, and a larger purpose than their own entertainment. These four mega-points still guide the club's programs today.

#### Finding a Place

The initial club layout was set up in the Brettschneider house on the dining room table and then moved to the basement. The premise was to have a family club where kids could enjoy trains with help from their moms and dads. It was a modest beginning but a memorable one. Looking back in time from 2006 to 1947 — a club history of nearly 60





years — and viewing their current facility, one would have to say, “It’s remarkable.”

### Keeping Busy

The kids decided to have a train festival where they could set up trains and have fun. A member furnished a large parachute that covered the entire backyard like a tent. Another family furnished tables for an outdoor train layout. Mrs. B. called the local Pepsi-Cola distributor and they brought out a cooler and ice with soda. She visited a local wholesaler and bought small toys and trinkets to use with games of skill — bean bag, ring toss, whatever. The club showed silent movies in the garage and collected a nickel or a dime for participation in the games and entry to the “theatre.”

Their efforts raised public awareness of the hobby and the club as its presence and impact extended beyond the neighborhood. When the kids grew older, they called this sort-of-block-party venture “Train-O-Rama.” As high school students in the 1950s, they asked for and received permission from the Police Department to cordon off the alley for a train-focused neighborhood party. With soda pop, pop corn, and live music provided by club members who were in the high school band, the event became a regular feature.

### Raising Money

The young entrepreneurs learned the skills of fund-raising and raised money for club activities through family-friendly functions, bake sales, paper drives, car washes, whatever. As new activities emerged, fund-raising projects and methods became more sophisticated and successful.

### Thinking Big

As the kids grew older, their activities grew with them. Programs evolved and included

an annual Christmas potluck supper at the local church. Later on, an annual summer picnic became a major club activity. The group and the parents scheduled a train ride to Chicago on The Milwaukee Road. Another train trip carried club members to Madison on the Chicago and Northwestern. They visited Green Bay and the Wisconsin Dells. Some of the funds were given to charity. The club donated train sets to two local orphanages.

As a young adult, Jerry joined the military. His assignments took him to several cities around the country. Not surprisingly, he applied the train club paradigm at every locale: St. Louis in 1983, San Francisco in 1989, Chicago in 1994, and finally Kenosha in 1997 — but relocated to Racine. Jerry founded these independent clubs in the pattern of the successful Milwaukee club, and all remain active today. They maintain the general program of activities pioneered at the “Mother Club” in Milwaukee but with local accents.

### Three Layouts at Three Locations

The first permanent layout of the LRRC-Milw was located on the north side of the city on West Burleigh Street in the basement of a building that housed a realty company. In 1984 after eight years of club occupancy, the club had to seek another location because the building was purchased by a day care center that needed the basement for a kitchen. The club lost its lease.

The second clubhouse was in the basement of a small strip mall on the northwest side of Milwaukee and remained there for 18 years. When that facility was sold and converted to a church, the congregation announced that they needed the downstairs area for family functions. Again, the LRRC-Milw lost its lease.

In 2001 the club decided to explore the feasibility of buying its own facility. They found a unit in a commercial condo complex on South Calhoun Road in New Berlin, Wisconsin — ideal for a large train layout and club activities. At last, there was little or no risk of losing a lease.

This new, club-owned facility came with a hefty price and mortgage payments, but by this time the club had money on hand from the proceeds of five years of







systematic development and marketing limited-edition, collectible club cars. Made by Lionel in The Milwaukee Road nameplate, the cars in this project now total 16 collectibles to date.

The clubhouse is now open on Sunday afternoons twice a month so families can run their trains. Parents enjoy sharing fun time at the clubhouse with their kids and learn about all the aspects of model railroading: bench work, wiring, layout design and operation, and CAB-1 technology.

### **Connectedness and Communications**

“The LRRC-Milw is like a melting pot. People have to be tolerant of each other’s ideas and goals. We’ve had some growing pains, but the club has weathered a storm or two and has continued to grow,” Jerry explained. He keeps in touch with all the clubs in what could be called the “Brettschneider Network” through their monthly newsletters and occasional personal visits. He attends practically all of the meetings of the Racine club, visits the Chicago club quarterly, goes to the St. Louis club for their annual Christmas party, and travels to San Francisco once every few years. “It’s like I never left. I get a warm feeling when visiting with them. I’m welcome in their homes, enjoy supper at their houses, and they’ll pick me up at the station or airport. It’s family. It’s wonderful.”

### **Mike – Proud of the Club’s Legacy**

The organization recently entered its fifth year of residence in its clubhouse. Members are now engaged in building a large dual-gauge layout with several O-gauge routes on the main platforms and both O-gauge and standard gauge lines on the uppermost, wall-mounted level.

Current club president Mike Hilbert joined the club in early 1993 when the group had about 80 members. He got involved in leadership tasks as a board member, membership chairman, secretary, vice president, and now president. At the second location, membership peaked at 105 or so members. The current clubhouse is located a bit west of Milwaukee in the city of New Berlin. The membership includes three active women members as well

as wives of many members. The club roster now includes nearly 200 members.

### **50 Years and Still Growing**

As vice president, Mike helped lead the club during its second year of transition from a leased to an owned facility. Nine months later in 2002, he became president. The change of location and the club’s new role as its own “landlord” had some ups and downs with some problems here and there, but he has always tried to iron them out.

When the club acquired its new unit, members studied the space and went to work on drawings for the proposed layout. The field narrowed to two or three finalists, and one of those was finally accepted. “We try to stay as close to that design as we can, but we make adjustments to improve it or change things that have to be corrected,” Mike said. His talent is in repair work and fixing trains. He helped build the layout and install trackwork.

He estimates that the bench work of the layout in the current facility is about three-quarters done, yet there’s a lot



of track work yet to do. As is customary, the scenery will be applied after the electrical grid, switches, and tracks have been thoroughly de-bugged. “The finished layout will include many little scenes depicting past and current Milwaukee area sites,” Mike explained.

The club maintains an impressive library with information about railroad history, three-rail trains, prototype trains, and current railroading events. In the workshop area, club members repair their own trains, work on the trains of other members, and help non-members bring their vintage trains to life or tweak the performance of their modern trains. “The hobby is a great way to teach people about electronics, wiring, mechanical systems, and thoughtful problem-solving,” he added.



## The Layout with the Big Bridge

The clubroom contains three distinct layouts. A dogbone along two walls is capable of running five trains. The main layout in the center of the room has three levels and can handle up to eight trains simultaneously. And there's a "nose bleed" division mounted high on the wall with two O-gauge loops and a dual-gauge loop that accepts both standard gauge and O-gauge trains on the same rail bed with five-rail track — the three inner rails are for the O-gauge train and the center and outside rails are for the standard gauge train. This elevated route goes half-way around the interior walls of the building at nearly eight feet off the floor and traverses the large, built-to-scale Hellgate Bridge — a "golly gee whiz," eye-catching feature of the layout.

Although many members have home layouts, a lot of them don't. The hobby in its group form can be like a "team sport" in that many club members feel they have a bond with other hobbyists and enjoy more fun in a group than at home alone with their trains.

## David – A Busy Organizer

"It seemed to me that the LRRC-Milw had more activities than a lot of the other groups I was involved with; they were always doing things." That's a perfect fit for David Rohr (RM 25897), a guy who enjoys keeping busy on the job as a GE Healthcare Support Engineer, in business as an owner of a local train store, at home as a family man, and in the clubhouse as a full-throttle train club member. One wonders when he sleeps, eats, or shaves.

David joined the club in 1980 and within four months was elected secretary. He later served as vice president, president, board member, and VP again. He became involved with organizational and technical matters and was deeply involved in many facets of club activities, including the planning committee that presented the club's 50th anniversary celebration in 1997. "It seemed like a national convention held over a three-day weekend. We met at the clubhouse on Friday evening and presented slide programs at a local hotel. On Saturday we offered layout tours followed by a banquet that evening. On Sunday we scheduled more layout tours. It was quite an accomplishment for a local club."

As membership chairman, he directed the club-sponsored picnics and outings to train-related locales. As coordinator of the club's layout displays, he led the efforts

to set up a large and two smaller layouts in shopping centers and at train shows on an ambitious schedule. David also enjoys the hands-on tasks: trackwork, wiring, and repair.

## Media Moguls in the Making

In the early 1980s, the club sponsored "All Star Program Nights" with people presenting slide shows in the clubhouse at the West Burleigh location. Then-president Chuck Zehner organized the activity and called upon people to create slide show programs. At the first presentation, 30 or 40 people attended, and the group quickly outgrew that space. They moved to a church hall but outgrew it and another church. These programs are still presented today, currently at the MSOE University in downtown Milwaukee.

Years later, Chuck grew that visual idea into a local cable TV program series with Viacom. It was unrehearsed and perhaps crude by today's standards, yet he produced two or three hundred different sessions. Then he pitched the program concept to the local PBS TV station (Channels 10/36) and sold them on the idea. That venture has grown into the "Tracks Ahead" TV series presented in Milwaukee and throughout the country on PBS stations. Now in its sixth season, this TV program has its roots in the LRRC-Milw, so the club has stretched the reach of the hobby to the dominant communications medium of our time.

## Reach Out to a Scout

David is also the club's prime mover for the Boy Scout model railroad merit badge clinic held at the clubhouse every year. It is always filled to capacity with about 40 scouts enrolled for the learning sessions. The material is



presented in a round-robin style with five to seven scouts per station. Each group has a leader, and the scouts rotate through the whole program: types of locomotives, types and uses of railroad cars, the role of the railroads in the economy and our transportation system, and so on.



“Sure, it’s a lot of work, but it’s worthwhile for the scouts and the future of the hobby,” he said with a smile that suggested he was eager for the next new project.

## Ray – Twice Enrolled

When Jerry Brettschneider was in St. Louis in the early 1980s on military assignment with the Army, he invited train hobbyists in that area to form a train club based on the well-established pattern of the Lionel Railroad Club of Milwaukee. Ray Moulis (RM 6308) was one of the first to join.

At that time, Ray was in private law practice in the city, so the group asked him to perform the legal task of incorporating the new club as a not-for-profit educational organization — which he was pleased to do.

Ray wanted to return to the banking field, and when an opportunity opened up in Milwaukee he relocated his family there. In railroad parlance, he gave up a Frisco identity and adopted The Milwaukee Road. Ray explained, “At that time, Jerry had settled in Milwaukee after his military service, and I reconnected with him and joined the Lionel Railroad Club of Milwaukee. It seemed like the same song, second stanza. I was thrilled to be a member of the original Lionel Railroad Club.”

## Hands-on for Kids

Some train clubs have a very strict rule — look but don’t touch — and they apply heavy monitoring when kids are around their layout. The LRRC-Milw wants kids to learn how to operate and enjoy toy trains, so the members give them the CAB-1 controller and show them how to blow the whistles and sound the horns and, within limits, speed up or slow down a train. Ray contends, “It’s got to be a hands-on experience. Some parents are surprised that club members encourage kids to run the trains because they realize some of the trains are very valuable. But they are pleased that their kids can be an engineer. After an operating session, each youngster receives a junior engineer certificate.”

Most hobbyists don’t have the space at home to build as large a layout as they wish. A train with a scale locomotive pulling scale passenger cars on a home layout can seem like the engine is chasing the observation car. “Place that same train on a large club layout and it looks

great cruising around O72 curves and along the straight-aways,” Ray noted.

The LRRC-Milw sponsors a Round Robin event at least once a year where members open up their home layouts so others can see what they are doing. “It’s fascinating to see how everybody expresses their creativity through their trains or collections,” he said.

## Ted – Treasurer/Money Manager

Keeping the multi-faceted programs of a large local train club on track requires not only vision, volunteer time, and dedicated effort, but enabling funds as well. The fund-raising activities of the LRRC-Milw have always been and remain well suited to its ambitious plan of work.

Long-time club treasurer Ted Knutowski joined the club in 1978 after attending Trainfest®. He pointed to the successful sales of the first five club cars as the reason why the LRRC-Milw had sufficient funds on hand in February,



2002, to make a down payment and purchase their current clubhouse. He’s also in charge of the commodities committee that sells club cars and other merchandise in the aftermarket during Trainfest and other train-related events.

The philosophy of the club is to keep membership dues affordable — better to have many members paying \$4/month than a few members paying \$40/month to maintain a budget. Combined with revenue from their “All Gauge Swap Meet” and occasional on-location modular layout set-ups around the area, the club stays on track.

The first perception of a train club may well be the delightful fun of playing with trains, but Ted knows the club’s resources must be appropriately managed and accounted for so that it can survive and grow. Now in his 14th year in the “job,” he’s obviously doing it well.

## Club Conversationalist

A long-time club member, Ted still enjoys the opportunity to run long trains on a large layout and “talk



trains” with club members and friends that have a great interest in the hobby. The LRRC-Milw has some active women members: Sue Lindsay and Jill Zettel. Jill’s young son Cole brings their train to the clubhouse, ready to run. Long-time member Stacey Biefeld joined the club in 1993 with her dad and brought her own trains to the layout. Now she brings her husband along — perhaps that is a train hobby variant of a familiar message: “Love me, love my cat.”

Ted enjoys talking with visitors and new members about their interest in trains, especially with youngsters. “I ask them what kind of trains they have at home. Sometimes they tell me that they’re working on a layout with their Dad,” he said, “and that’s good to hear.”

## Roman – Getting Organized

In 1976 the club filed the necessary forms with the state of Wisconsin to become an educational, not-for-profit corporation. The club also became non-profit with tax-exempt status as a 501 (c) (3) organization with the IRS. It was an important and necessary designation for their fund-raising programs and organizational integrity.

## Family Focused

Roman Berdes (RM 26555) joined the club in 1978. A co-worker, Ken Greifenhagen, took him to the clubhouse as a guest and pre-warned him, “Be careful, you’re going to get hooked.” He put a finger in his mouth and pulled it up like he was a fish on a hook. Roman was hooked by the scenery and detailing on the layout.

As club president from 1993 to 2002, Roman established a pattern of holding two open house events at the clubhouse; one on Thanksgiving weekend and another on the first weekend in April. Inclement weather seemed to help draw a crowd to an indoor railroading event. New members soon found their own niche and channeled their efforts to that.

Roman arranged many club trips for members and their families, including three outings to Carail in Detroit and visits to the Lionel facilities at Chesterfield, Michigan. The first two trips involved 100 people on two buses. While on the road to and from “Toy Train Heaven,” they also visited train hobby shops and venues related to model railroading. The group invited its sister clubs to ride along for a national meeting. There’s no question that the LRRC-Milw knows how to create train-related fun for train-fan families.

## Club Cars

The club developed a plan to produce a steady source of income — presenting limited-edition, collectible club cars in The Milwaukee Road nameplate for sale to hobbyists. In collaboration with Lionel, Roman designed and helped to market the first club car in conjunction with the club’s 50th anniversary celebration in 1997. That first release of about 1,400 units sold out, covered the costs of the celebration, and established the pattern for this important fund-raising venture. The 16th car in this continuing series will be ready soon. “In the beginning, we thought it was a good time to start putting money aside in case we had an opportunity to move to a larger rental unit or buy a building,” Roman said.

Roman remains committee chair for the club car sales program. He designed all the cars in collaboration with The Milwaukee Road Historical Association. A committee considers and selects the cars to become their projects, and he performs the research to assure their authenticity.

Now settled-in at an owned — not leased — unit, Roman is pleased that the club has a firm footing at its own facility. “Not even a tornado could blow us out of here,” he said with satisfaction.

## Gil – Super-Duper Detailer

Gil Bruck (RM 26301) has invested about 20 years of his life in the LRRC-Milw. Like many others, he discovered the club at the local Trainfest event. The club’s modular layout included some features he wanted to build into his home layout, so he joined, looked for fresh ideas, and learned from the work or approach of others.


“I’ve always liked scenery work and super-detailing; creating interiors and people figures,” he said. “I let the other guys build the mountains and tunnels and lakes. I make the scenery and structures come to life.”

## It’s All in the Details

Gil is a people person — although not in the usual sense. He has placed about 4,590 people on his basement home layout — in automobiles, in the streets, or in homes. Most of the homes are detailed inside. His home layout even includes the Green Bay Packers cheerleaders in action. The dining car of a passenger train is super detailed with tablecloths on the tables with knife, fork, plates, soup bowls, coffee cups, everything. In the galley he placed a guy making strawberry shortcake, and the grill has steaks on it. “In every spot there’s someone doing something,” he said. When the time comes for scenicking the club layout, Gil will shift into high gear to add super-details to the club’s layout.

## Postscript

Although toy trains were the toy of choice of boys in the 1940s and 50s, as adults those once-young train hobbyists realize that most of today’s youngsters are drawn to computer gaming and Internet-related activities.

However, Roman Berdes sees the introduction of electronics and command control to the train hobby as user-friendly technology that captures the interest of children. “Give them a CAB-1, and they can figure out how to use it in 30 seconds,” he said. “I see the current popularity of Thomas and His Friends and the Polar Express train set as signs of a renewal of interest in the hobby in this generation.” We’ll see how good a prophet he may be. 

*Photographs by Jeff Johannes*

*Editor’s Postscript: TLR gratefully acknowledges the creative contributions of the LRRC-Milw members cited in this article. For more information, visit the club’s website at: [www.milw-lrcc.com](http://www.milw-lrcc.com).*

*“Trainfest” is a registered trademark of the Wisconsin Southeast Division of NMRA, Inc.*



# Lionel's Dockside Switchers

by Erol Gurcan  
RM 26800

## Recent History of this 0-6-0

In 2004, Lionel® introduced an all-new, steam 0-6-0 dockside switcher locomotive. It was initially offered for individual sale in Santa Fe and Reading Locomotive Shops road names. A Jones and Laughlin Steel Slag Train was also cataloged in 2004 as a 2005 premium train set, selling for \$250. In 2005, a New York Central, Bethlehem Steel, and North Pole Central Lines versions of this steamer were offered and are presently available in train hobby stores and at online vendors. A Copper Range 0-6-0 leads one of Lionel's ready-to-run starter sets at \$220. It too is currently available in stores and online.

## A Lot of Features for the Money

The 2004 docksiders shipped late that year quickly sold out because of the attractive \$100 price. In 2005, the price increased to \$105, but the items can be found discounted for less. In addition to their low price, the engines became a hit because of the long list of features, including a die-cast (not plastic) body, a puffing smoke unit, electronic steam whistle, an operating headlight AND back-up light, momentum flywheel, front operating coupler, two traction tires, and engineer and fireman figures in the cab. The backup light, front operating coupler, and momentum flywheel were rare (and welcome) embellishments in this price range.

The question now becomes, will these small locomotives with a low price, long list of features, and nice level of detail live up to expectations? The answer is — mostly yes — although I noted two minor shortcomings, and I have a concern about the smoke unit. But more about those points later on.

## Appearances Aren't Deceiving

For this review, I tested both the NYC and NPCL versions of the docksider switcher. Mechanically, both should be identical because of their price, size, and shape. However, appearance-wise,

they are quite different. The NYC loco is mostly black with gray smoke box, and white lettering. The NPCL version is mostly red with a gray smoke box and some white and green lettering. Several details were green — the side ladders, front steps (textured to look like wood), and the eyelets for the grab irons — a nice touch. Both have a brass colored whistle and bell, but the locos do not have an operating bell. The front headlight is located above the smoke box instead of on the front of it. The NYC loco has engineer and fireman figures in the lighted cab, and the NPCL docksider has a fireman in the cab with Santa at the engineer's window.

Overall, both engines bear a relatively high level of detailing that would be acceptable in a steam locomotive costing much more. My only gripe was the wiring; it can be seen inside both locomotive cabs. The red wires for the NPCL docksider were quite noticeable.

## On the Test Track

For the purposes of this review, I predominately tested both locos on a 50x70-inch oval of Lionel Fastrack; it's slightly larger than the standard 40x60-inch loop included with starter sets. I used the Lionel CW-80 transformer, which is now included with all less-expensive Lionel starter sets.

I also tested both locos on an oval of tubular track with 31-inch curves using a postwar 190-watt KW transformer. I found no differences in performance between the Fastrack/CW-80 and the tubular track/KW combinations, except that the direction button on the KW had to be held down longer in order to change direction after the locos were in neutral. However, this has more to do with the nature of the older technology of the KW; I have experienced the same thing with other locomotives.

I expected these small, 8-1/2-inch locomotives to pull three to five cars — an expectation based on the three slag cars offered with the Jones and Laughlin Slag set and the five cars offered with the Copper Range set. To my surprise





and delight, both engines easily pulled 10 or more Lionel traditional boxcars at a moderate pace. Both engines also performed well in reverse with the same number of cars.

Out of the box and after lubrication, they ran smoothly and quietly. The momentum flywheel was an important feature since these locos were capable of pulling many cars on a small length of track. When I stopped the train pulling five cars, it stopped gradually; thanks to the flywheel. Stops became more abrupt when I added more cars to the consist — which the laws of Physics would predict.

As a side note, the momentum flywheel is a welcome and useful addition to the dockside switchers. This indicates to me that this feature could be offered as standard equipment on all Lionel lower-cost locomotives. Hopefully, it will be standard on all Lionel steam and diesel locos, regardless of cost.

The whistle was sufficiently loud, but it sounded more like a diesel horn than a steam whistle. Lionel should re-do the sound of this whistle for the sake of reality. My suggestion is to make it sound like the realistic air whistle in the tender of the Polar Express Set (6-31960) — if there is sufficient space inside the docksider for this audio technology.

## Up in Smoke

A review would not be complete without a discussion of the smoke unit. The NYC 0-6-0 delivered an average output of smoke, but the NPCL version performed very well. They were tested pulling five boxcars at a moderate speed determined by a 14-16 voltage range of the KW. The locos have a smoke on-off button as well as whistle and direction on-off buttons.

I tested the NYC docksider first. The instruction sheet stated to add four drops of smoke fluid. After doing that and running the loco, the smoke output stopped after a few minutes. When I looked down at the element in the bottom of the smoke stack with the engine in neutral at higher voltages, I noticed it was glowing orange. The short period of smoke output and the sight of the orange glow led me to believe the engine was burning smoke fluid at an excessive rate. I called Lionel and spoke with a technician who said that wasn't normal. He also said it was not a widespread

problem. I returned the first locomotive to Lionel and received a new replacement 10 days later. Customer service doesn't get any better than that!

During that turnaround time, the NPCL docksider I previously ordered arrived. When I tested it, the same thing occurred: smoke output for only a few minutes and a smoke element that glowed orange when the loco was in neutral with higher voltage on the track. The replacement New York Central docksider also showed this same orange glow.

I feared this might be symptomatic of a larger problem, so I again called Lionel. A technician told me to “add 8-10 drops of smoke fluid when the smoke output decreased instead of only four drops — keep the element wet. The orange glow was not an indication of a potential problem,” he said.

I have never previously seen a smoke element glow orange in any steam locomotive, so I was concerned that it may burn out prematurely. I endorse the recommendation to add 8-10 drops of smoke fluid (instead of four) as cited in the instruction sheet.

There was also a second smoke-related issue with the instruction sheet. It stated that the locomotive does not smoke when in neutral. However, the NYC docksider had greater smoke output when in neutral than when in motion. The NPCL loco did not display this condition.

In summary, these are good locomotives with a long list of useful features and nice details at a great low price. Two minor points — the noticeable wires in the cab and unrealistic whistle sound — should be added to Lionel's “Things To Do” list. Of greater concern to me is the smoke element glow. If Lionel can improve, eliminate or mitigate the orange glow in the smoke element, the company will have even better 0-6-0 dockside locomotives in its stable. For this price, either one is well worth purchasing now. 🚂

*Catalog photographs courtesy of Lionel LLC*





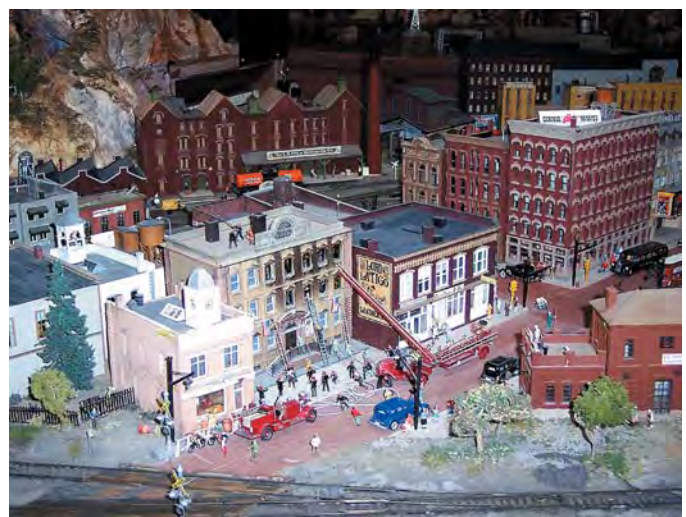
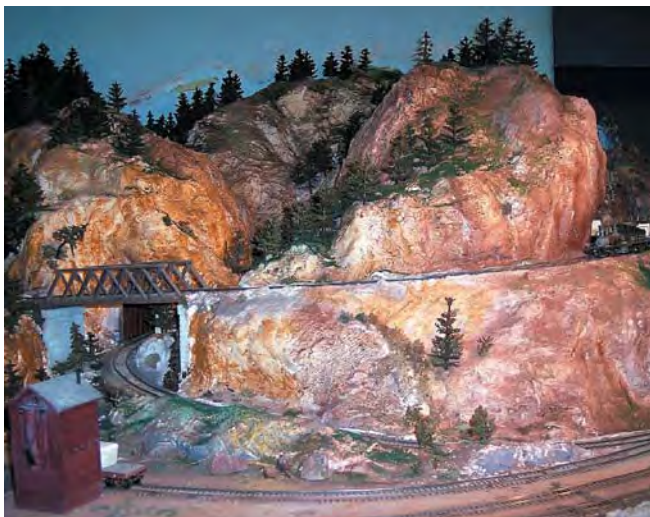
# Convention

## A Sneak Peak at the DHOMRRC Layout

LCCAers signed-up for Convention tour #10 should bring their cameras and camcorders along to capture the realism and rugged terrain of a spectacular, fully dressed, mountainous model railroad.

The members of the Denver HO Model Railroad Club have built an impressive layout in the lower level of the Colorado Railroad Museum building in Golden, Colorado. Although “half of O,” this HO layout presents mountain scenicking, detailing, and scratch-building as an art form.

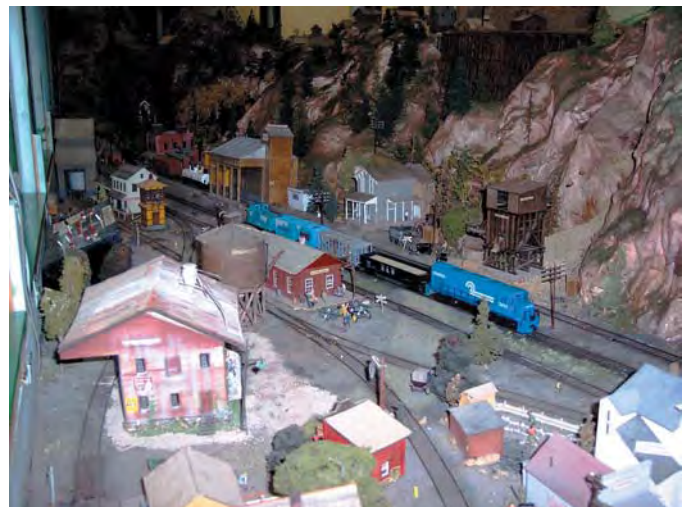
Founded in 1947, the club initially held meetings in members’ homes. In the following year the club obtained space in an unused coal room in the basement of the Izet Building. In 1950 it was forced to move because of remodeling of the building, and the group relocated to the basement of the Mayan Theater. Thirteen years later, in 1963, it changed homes again.



Since February 1968, the club has operated at the present museum site. From February to June 1968, the group remodeled a room and built the replica of the side of a passenger car to wall-off the railroad layout while allowing visitors unlimited viewing opportunities. The first bench work was started in June 1968. Approximately 4,000 work-hours were invested per year during a time span of nearly 40 years to achieve the results shown here. The club layout features HO, HOn3 and traction; replicating the various types of Colorado mountain railroading.

The layout is true to Colorado realities. It serves the thriving mining communities along the route. All the buildings were patterned after real properties, and nearly all of the structures were scratch built.

Colorado once had a number of electric railroads, and this model layout combined those lines into one with representative features from all the prototype roads. Electric





# Tour Profile



power for the road is generated by a turbine using mountain run-off water, and a watchman faithfully tends to the power house. The power is transmitted to a substation where it is converted to DC and fed to overhead trolley wires in the same way as the prototype electric trains drew their power.

A scratch-built model of the Colorado Midland's Victor station serves that mining community. The quality of the interior modeling is outstanding. The Pitkin County Courthouse has full interior and lighting. The made-famous-by-post-cards Lace House located in Blackhawk is reproduced in full detail.

A double-headed ore train rounds a scratch-built curved trestle near the town of Troublesome. Whitwell Junction was named for one of the club's founding members. Klinker Coal Company generates business for the railroad. An oil terminal is the destination on the narrow



gauge "Gramps" UTLX tank cars. The town of Summit, high in the Rockies mining district, receives all its supplies by the narrow gauge.

The fire department battles a blaze in downtown Calamity, but rail traffic continues to move. In another scene, a special train brings Santa and his reindeer to town, cleverly avoiding the crowded skies.

A new industry, typical of what you'd find in cattle country, has opened in town — a hide processor. A nearby shoe factory will use the hides for necessities for mountain men — miner's boots, gloves, saddle tack, and razor straps. 🚂

*Based on text provided by Denver HO Model Railroad Club  
Photographs provided by Bob Jensen, Colorado RR Museum*



## A Room Full of Trains

My train room layout is more like a potpourri of railroading. It isn't focused on one railroad or particular region and has a mixture of steam and diesel motive power. When I had it built, I wanted a layout that would feature trains running at speed on the mainline rather than engines performing intricate maneuvers by making up trains in the switching yard. Although there are uncouplers on all the sidings, I can't remember ever pushing an uncoupling button. Of course, I wouldn't have to with TMCC™ by Lionel®, but my style of operating is mainline running.

My wife and I built our present home in 1993. The train room is 36x48 feet with an entry through double pocket doors. We presented our ideas for a train room to our architect and he designed it for this specific purpose. His plan spanned its 36-foot width with large laminated beams which eliminated the need for supporting pillars in the room.

### Trains on Display

A year ago I made the decision to thin out my inventory and totally change my display. Half of my inventory was still in boxes, and frankly, I was out of room! I removed the trains displayed on the wall shelves, sold them, and replaced them with the trains I had stored under the table. The trains that are now on display on the shelves are products by Lionel and Proto II items by MTH®. There are 14 shelves with about 1,800 pieces on display. I use my computer to track my collection and can select an item on the PC and usually can find it on the shelf. My collection is now basically complete train sets. The passenger sets are located on the longest wall; some are from the MPC era, but many are later production sets with command control. On the left wall are the steam passenger sets, and the freight train sets are on the right.

There are twelve switches for shelf illumination and layout lights. The shelves have plenty of illumination, but the 75-watt spots seem inadequate. If I had it to do over again, I would put more light on the layout. The learning curve of this



# Like Going to Train Heaven

by Dale Berger RM 8347





My wife and two children felt sorry for me because of the ordeal, and they encouraged me to build a train layout for my new-found hobby. I drained the indoor swimming pool and placed the train layout there. I had a train table built, mastered the art of bending track, and soon had a 13x26-foot layout set up in that space. Dinny (my understanding and patient wife) and I spent hour after hour building plaster mountains, painting, and landscaping the pike.

hobby can be a steep hill to climb, but childhood memories and adult experiences opened the way for me.

### My First Train Set

My first layout, which my father constructed on Christmas Eve 1948, was on a 4x8-foot sheet of plywood. For that Christmas, I received a Pennsy steam turbine freight set. A couple of years later, Santa brought me the Santa Fe F3 diesels. Like every kid, I ran the heck out of them. One of my fondest memories of that layout is that of my parents coming down to the recreation room and watching me run my trains. A couple of Christmases later, one of my father's best friends, who happened to own a furniture factory, designed and built us a new train table. Basically, it was two 4x8-foot tables joined as an "L." Built with furniture craftsmen quality, it was almost "too nice" for trains. Dad was always busy with the business, so my trains weren't a father-son bonding thing. Decades later, I built a slot car set-up for my son on top of that same table. I realized and accepted a mystery of biology – the "toy train gene" didn't transfer to him.

### My First Layout in Adulthood

Like many other men in my generation, I returned to the train hobby as an adult. In my case, it was for medical reasons. In 1981, after experiencing a heart attack, my doctor advised me – ordered me is closer to the fact – to find a hobby and reduce stress from the my automobile business. (Think 20% + prime interest rates!) While I was recuperating in the hospital, my wife bought me the book, *All Aboard*, written by Ron Hollander. I couldn't put the book down and read it from cover to cover in a couple of days. I was so excited I picked up the phone and ordered a train set from my hospital room! When I was finally released, a train set was waiting for me at home. I had that "Chessie Steam Special" set running on the carpet in a matter of minutes!

Later, because of the noise and the fact that the indoor pool was the focal point of the house, she wanted the pool back. I worked with an architect and built an addition for the specific purpose of a new train layout.

That layout was built by Model Railroad Custom Bench Work in Virginia by Vern Peachy and Don Danuser. I discovered the company in the mid-1980s through an ad in one of the model railroad publications. That layout project was a learning experience for myself and for the layout builders. I learned from that venture that I wanted double-throated yards on my next layout. Many times my derailments were caused by the backing-up of a train.

Another thing I learned from layout number one – I wanted reversing loops. On that layout, I had to back-up a train in order to turn it in the opposite direction. That's a real headache.

I quickly learned through operating the layout that grade changes are difficult to control. Those were the days before "cruise control" technology in toy trains, so a







locomotive would struggle up a grade like *The Little Engine that Could* and then misbehave like a runaway on the descent.

### The Current and Best Layout

Our architect had previously designed and built the train room addition onto our previous house, so the second layout task wasn't all that unusual to him. However, the heating, ventilating and air conditioning subcontractor seemed puzzled by the project. He looked at the plans and then came back with a presentation. He said, "I don't understand why you need such a big training room." He thought it was a workout room!

The train room has in-the-floor, radiant heat. Recently, when I removed the trains from the shelves to clean and sell them, there wasn't much dust on them at all, even though they had been on display for 11 years – I was amazed. In contrast, forced-air heating systems seem to blow dust everywhere.

This current layout is the second one built for me by Vern and Don, and it's quite different from the previous one. They delivered the sections of this layout in two big van loads, assembled all the sections together, and had it running in three days. They did the bench work, wiring and the control panel, the big scenic effects including the mountains and waterfalls, and laid the track bed. I did the track ballasting, "planted" the trees, and added the buildings, streets, and scenic details.

Although the control panel is quite elaborate and works fine, it now seems somewhat obsolete. About two years ago, I installed TMCC™ and now

operate most of the trains with a CAB-1™. I thought it would be a real complicated process, but all it took was one wire. I haven't extended CAB-1 control to the switches on the layout, so I use the control panel for that task and for controlling the turntable. The layout has operating blocks, but they see little use.

### Areas of the Layout

The main train station is in the town area of level one, and the mainline goes along the wall toward the mountain. Along the way there's a small suburb with older-style buildings, and there's an island in the middle of the room with the roundhouse, turntable, and locomotive service areas. I can run trains up to and down from all three levels, but the main lines of each level are flat. Even though it's a big layout, most of the grades are four percent or less.

The second level is Rocopila, and the rock-clad train station is an eye-catching feature. The third level includes a logging train. This level is included in an area of the layout that I consider totally finished with trees, weeds, and bushes along the rail right of way. On the lowest part of that area there is a campsite with travel trailers, people, and even swimmers in the creek.

The other areas of the layout are almost finished. The buildings need lighting and the roads need shoulders. Telephone poles and street lights still need to be installed. I've earned a Ph.D. in Track Ballasting. I spent a year and a half on that task, doing four or five feet a night. It's monotonous, and it takes forever; but it looks great and sure quiets down those trains.

Because I have display shelves on the walls of the train room, the layout is landscaped on all sides. Most hobbyists







this set! The Acela passenger set had a long waiting period for delivery, but I could see why when I opened it. The technology is just incredible. Push a CAB-1 button and the passenger coach doors open; push another button and I hear the message, “Stand back, the doors are about to close.” It’s a remarkable piece of equipment.

I’ve never seen a real Acela, but this model sets a new standard for fidelity to the prototype. However, the added-on details applied to this and most of the top-of-the-line

place the layout around the walls with the center of the room open in a “U” or “O” or “T” configuration. My layout is shaped like an “E” and I can walk completely around it. The mountains were made from stacked layers of foam board. The constructors used chisels, hammers, and screwdrivers to gouge it for realistic effects; then painted it. The big waterfall was made of vinyl caulking over a cotton base. It looks pretty realistic.

### The Trains

When I received Lionel’s Acela set, it reminded me of the emotions I felt when I was a kid and Santa delivered the Santa Fe diesel set. I couldn’t wait to get that train out of the box. I realize that some collectors never take their trains out of the boxes and probably those trains will be more valuable than the trains that have been operated, but I just had to run

trains are fragile. You must exercise care when handling these pieces or you will accidentally bend or break one of the detail parts. They’re not toys anymore.

### The Structures

A Union Pacific GP-40 is shown at the rural Rocopila station on level two. That building was built by the late Mike Thompson for his basement layout. He and his wife built many fine quality buildings and a layout that ran around his entire basement, yet they never ran a train or wired the layout for operation. They often worked until three or four in the morning on these structures. My wife got in touch with Mike one day because she heard he was tearing the layout down and planning to relocate. She bought nearly every building from his layout.





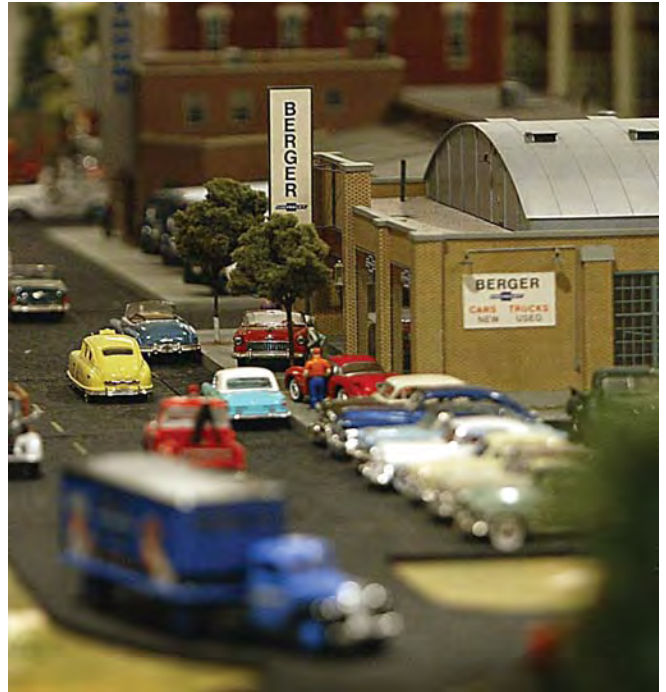


The stone depot with a turret was made from plaster; it's another building kit assembled and painted by Mike. The coaling tower is a Lionel product, but the wooden water tower next to it was also hand built by Mike.

### The Main Drag of an Urban Setting

Most of the buildings along the main thoroughfare were created by Bill Alexander. Bill and his brother owned a company with a name that might be familiar to HO modelers. Alexander Scale Models manufactured scale craftsman structures for the HO industry. Bill was a master modeler, and built airplane models for the Smithsonian Air Museum. Sadly, he passed away a couple of years ago. I met another gentleman from O-Gauge Scratch Buildings in the Gold Hall at the York, Pennsylvania, train meet a few years ago and admired his work. My wife noticed my interest, secretly ordered the Coca-Cola® bottling plant, and gave it to me as a Christmas present. In fact, she gave me all the buildings along this main street as Christmas gifts through the years. She always has been a great "Santa Claus!"

Fire Department Engine House No. 4 in the foreground is an accurate scale model of an actual engine house in Grand Rapids. The fire engines by Corgi® were also Christmas gifts from my wife. The big front doors open and close, so I can place the fire engines inside or outside on the driveway.



The Greyhound® depot is quite detailed and a very busy site. There are realistic oil and grease stains on the driveway where the buses are ready for boarding. The buses show "the whale" 1940s décor on the sides.

The train station was also scratch-built by Bill. He designed it so that the entire roof can be removed. I can light different rooms in the building. The station is a rough approximation of a building in Cumberland, Pennsylvania. The brass-frame billboards around the parking lot of the train station came from another vendor at York. The poster-like ads in the frames are actually matchbook covers.

The hotel building behind the train station is derived from the Rowe Hotel, another Grand Rapids landmark. The building is still standing and is a senior citizens home today. The convertible with the top up and parked at the curb of the hotel is a die-cast Brooklin product – a 1940 Cadillac V-16 Convertible Coupe.



Along the main thoroughfare is an auto dealership – Berger Chevrolet – which is the family business. The model is a very close replica of the dealership at that location from 1931 to 1966. My grandfather started the business in 1925. Today, my son Matt is at the throttle.

The interior of the building is detailed with cars in the showroom and in the shop area under the Quonset-style roof. That roof lifts off and reveals the service department underneath. Bill Alexander went to the site and measured the building for accuracy, then spent five months building the model.

The streets are by Moondog®. The road strips smell like old tires, but I understand that’s what they are made from.

### **The Island**

The roundhouse is a kit by Korber®. I built it years ago. If you look closely, you probably can see where the roof is slightly caved in! Chessie, my cat, enjoyed taking an occasional nap on it! The pit-type turntable was built by a cousin of Vern Peachy. It bears a tag with serial number ONE on it. The indexing feature works perfectly, and it turns in either direction. There are nine spurs off the turntable to the stalls and to several outside tracks. It’s huge and was costly, but it works flawlessly. The wire going to the peak of the bridge on the turntable is the power feed to the center rail of the bridge, so a train can travel over it.

As I said earlier, I like to run trains on the mainlines, but visitors to the layout like to see engines spinning on it. The roundhouse, turntable, and train service area are on an island in the middle of the room.

### **In the Hall of the Mountain King**

The mountain has a large waterfall that cascades through all three levels of the layout. The builders constructed that feature in their shop in Virginia for safe transport, and the top of the mountain can be removed. The summit of the mountain is nine feet high; it nearly touches the ceiling. Vern and Don sculpted the mountains, but I’ve done the remaining scenic work around the layout.

The trestle was built by Don Danuser’s father. It fits perfectly and matches-up to the rail bed at both ends – a sign of a great craftsman.

### **Share the Fun**

We host an open house every couple of years during the Christmas holidays and invite friends to drop by. One enthusiast walked in with his wife and looked around. In a dead-serious manner, he turned to his wife and said, “This must be what heaven is like.” Some visitors ask, “If you ever do this again, give me a call so I can bring my grandson to see your trains.” I try to keep a list of the names and call them. The Train Collector’s Association held their 2000 annual convention in Grand Rapids (as did the LCCA in 1996) and we were on the layout tour. It was estimated that more than 200 people were able to see the trains perform.

In the past, my wife has set-up a lighted Snow Village™ display on a 10x12-foot table for open house



visitors. That display grew and grew and has really become too time-consuming and took up too much space.

The local NBC TV affiliate produced a “Live” segment about the layout and the hobby, and aired it on the 6 pm news.

When people meet me, they sometimes say, “Oh, you’re the man with the trains.” That’s how I’m known – not as representing the family in the Chevy business for 80 years! I like the automobile business, and it’s certainly made my hobby possible financially, but I don’t want to make the car business my hobby. If I were in business as a train dealer, I probably would have cars at home as a hobby!

I have several unfinished tasks on my things to do list. I’ve got probably 300 Artista® and Bowser® figures stored in boxes – intended to be the population on the layout. I have several lighted billboards to be placed in key locations. I don’t mind working with Woodland Scenics® products when I have the time and can reach the areas I’ve selected.

Three good friends were of great assistance when it came to planning, troubleshooting, etc: Orville Hoxie, Russ Abel, and Nelson McBride (RM 939). These three guys have been invaluable with their help and guidance. Anytime I needed help, they came running. Never forget that the trains, the buildings, and the layouts are the foundations upon which life-long friendships can be built. 🚂

*Photographs by Jon Brouwer*



# My Pride and Joy

Reflections by  
LCCA Members

*Editor's Note: In the December 2005 issue of TLR, Harold Moore shared a real-life story about the LCCA "Halloween" General set he purchased for just-in-time presentation to his friend, Jim Fluckey, just before Jim passed away. Here's the rest of the story.*

## by Harold Moore RM 22533

After a beautiful memorial service for Jim, I waited outside the building for the family to appear. Jim's daughter came out to tell me that her mom wanted me to come back

Photograph provided by Harold Moore



*Grandpa Harold runs the General set for granddaughter Rachel (3) and grandson Sam (5).*

inside. When I entered the room, his widow stood with the "Halloween" General set in her hands. She walked over to me, tearfully gave me a hug, and presented the train set to me. She said that she and her children knew Jim would want me to have it as a remembrance of our friendship.

I have a very large collection of Lionel trains including the one that belonged to my father; it got me started in the hobby. But no train I have (or probably will ever have) will have the meaning for me that this General set will have for the rest of my life. I now share it with my family.

We all know we aren't going to live forever. When my time comes to board the Ethereal

Express bound for the Summit of the Line, I hope to see Jim standing at Pearly Gate Station waiting for me. I can imagine him asking me then, "Did you bring along any track?"

## by Bill Fuller RM 11746

My current layout, the fifth or sixth I've built, is a multi-level arrangement with an eclectic inventory of products by several O-gauge manufacturers along with a collection of railroad-related items.

At the top of the wall of my train room I have displayed a framed series of photographs. These were included in a Teacher's Kit produced and distributed by the Association of American Railroads in the early 1940s. Interestingly, all the photos depict actual railroad equipment but were retouched by AAR, which replaced the original road names with "East West Railroad." From GG-1s to M-10000s, every locomotive bears the name of that fictitious railroad.

On the lower level of the layout, an NYC Empire State Express (a Christmas gift from my daughters) moves left to right in the foreground with a Union Pacific 49er (an anniversary gift from my wife) pulling in the opposite direction.

On the middle level, the Alaska Railroad geep freight makes its way across a series of extension bridges.

On the upper level, a diesel-powered Märklin Minex freight locomotive peeks out from behind the last passenger car of a steam-powered passenger train. Made in Germany in the early 1970s, the Minex line rides 3-rail, AC-powered, HO-gauge track. The cars were made to a larger scale than HO and present a convincing appearance of an O-scale narrow-gauge line. Both trains belong to my daughters who graciously allow their dad to run them — if I'm very careful with their toys! 🚂



*Photograph provided by Bill Fuller*



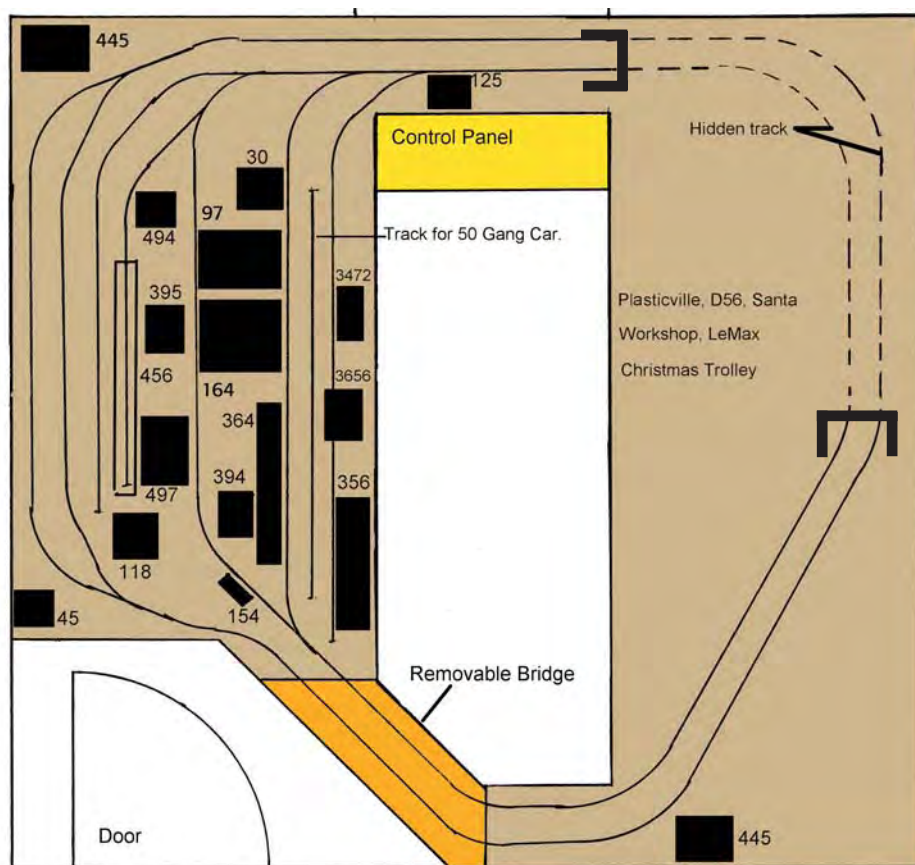
# Bright Ideas

A Continuing Series  
of Layout Tips

## A Removable Bridge

by Dick Trzeciak RM 319

When I read Keith Beyer's trials and tribulations about building and installing a swing-up, entry-area bridge across the entryway to his home layout (*TLR*, June 2006), I thought my solution to this same problem might be of interest to others.



I recently graduated from a basement location for my trains to an 11x11.6-foot upstairs room with a carpeted floor; a comfortable bonus when lying on the floor and running wires underneath the train platforms. I wanted to optimize the available layout space in the room yet provide for the “swing space” required for the door. My geometry and kinetic problem was — how to get me, my aging knees, and two grandsons to the control panel located in the middle of the layout without awkward contortions so we could all play with toy trains.

I envisioned a 4'8"x8' table on the left side of the room at the entry and a 4'x10'11" table on the right wall. The two tables would be connected by a 15-inch fixed span along the window wall. The controls would be placed inside the U-shaped layout, facing the window. See **figure 1** for a top view of the “lay of the land” of the platforms; shown in tan. The removable bridge near the doorway is shown in orange, and the control panel is yellow.

I have a classic 1950s layout with cotton snow on the longer side and green grass paper on the shorter side with 31 operating accessories or lighting fixtures placed on the grass. There are two loops; the outer one is for passenger trains with a siding for a second train at the ready. Freight traffic with operating cars is designated to the inner loop; three trains total.

After constructing the tables according to plan, I built the removable span across the gap in the layout near the door. I measured carefully, drew it out on graph paper, cut the plywood, then test-fit the removable bridge before proceeding. Better to measure twice and cut once!

I wanted the removable bridge section to easily lift up and out, then set down with perfect track alignment. I placed cleats on the fixed table ends that mated with the sides of the bridge at the proper location. See **photos 1 and 2**.



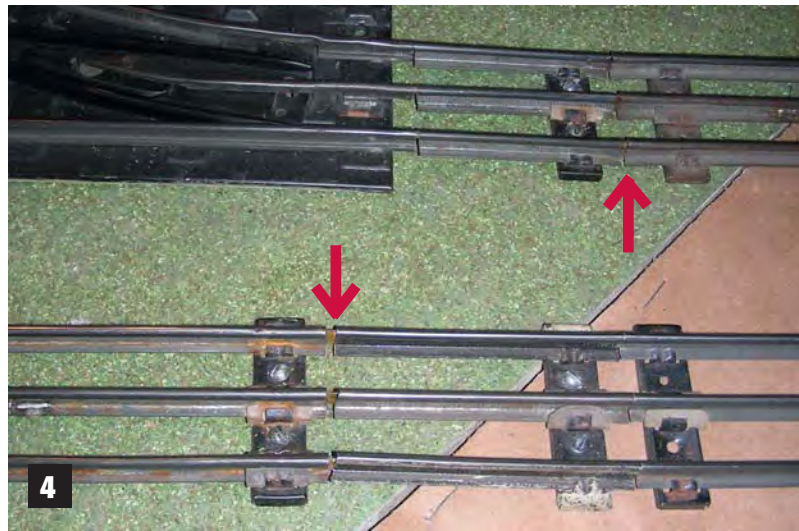




With the removable bridge set in place, I installed O27 trackwork across the span so that it extended onto the fixed tables by half a section or so.

I found 3/8x1/32-inch brass strip stock at the local train store and cut several pieces of it for use as “alignment pins;” see **photo 3**. I pressed the brass strips into the track webs at the fixed ends of the approach tracks and soldered them in place so they wouldn’t pull out. Since O27 track is only 7/16-inch high, once the track is screwed down the strips won’t come out at the bottom.

I spread the webs of the track at the ends of the removable bridge so they would accept the aligning strips;



then set the entire track in place from the fixed tables to and across the bridge — screwing everything down as I went. The track on the bridge simply slips over the brass aligning strips in the fixed sections of track. This method created a great electrical connection with no jumper wires or other electrical exotica required; see **photo 4**. The crossies of modern Lionel track are a little closer to the ends of the rails, so this will require shorter brass pieces and stout solder joints.

I finished the work in the summer of 2000, and it’s still working fine. I just lift the bridge up and out to get in and out of the center aisle zone and replace it from the inside when I’m ready to operate the trains. I noticed during the

winter that the train on the outside loop slowed a bit when it approached the bridge. With needle-nose pliers, I closed the track webs a little. This adjustment improved the connection, and train operation returned to normal.

This idea will work with Lionel-type tubular track and probably could be adapted to Gargaves® track too. It also “works” for my back and knees! 🚂

*Photographs by  
Dick Trzeciak*



*Dick and grandsons Trey (5) and Derek (4) are at their favorite play station directing the work of operating milk cars and cattle cars. Grandpa brags that neither boy has ever put a milk can into the car wrongly; a feat their mother didn’t master until age 12.*

*Editor’s Postscript: Share your tricks of the trade with club members and layout builders. Send your Bright Idea along with how-to photos to the Editor of TLR for consideration for publication.*



# A Nifty Club Collectible



## 2005 set uncut

Regular LCCA Convention-goers know and love the Convention Collector Cards presented as the “Stars of the Show” of each Get Acquainted Party held during the Conventions of the past four years. If you were unable to attend our last four annual Conventions, you may now acquire the complete set. There is an extremely limited number of each set remaining (Series One being the rarest), and this will be your last opportunity to obtain all four sets in NEW condition with the original envelopes. As a bonus, one uncut sheet from the series (our choice) will be included with this offer.

Each set contains 12 colorful cards showing Lionel® products from yesteryear. When assembled in correct order, the back side of all the cards in a set reveals a vintage Lionel scene from the 1940s and 50s. These will be offered on a strict first come, first served basis. Your funds will be returned if the supply is exhausted.

To order a packet containing all four sets of Convention Collector Cards and a rare uncut sheet of one of them, send \$75 per packet to:

Convention Collector Cards  
c/o John Fisher  
1730 St. James Road  
St. Paul, MN 51118.

Make your check or money order payable to LCCA, with “Collector Cards” written on the memo line. Sorry, credit card orders cannot be used for this particular purchase.

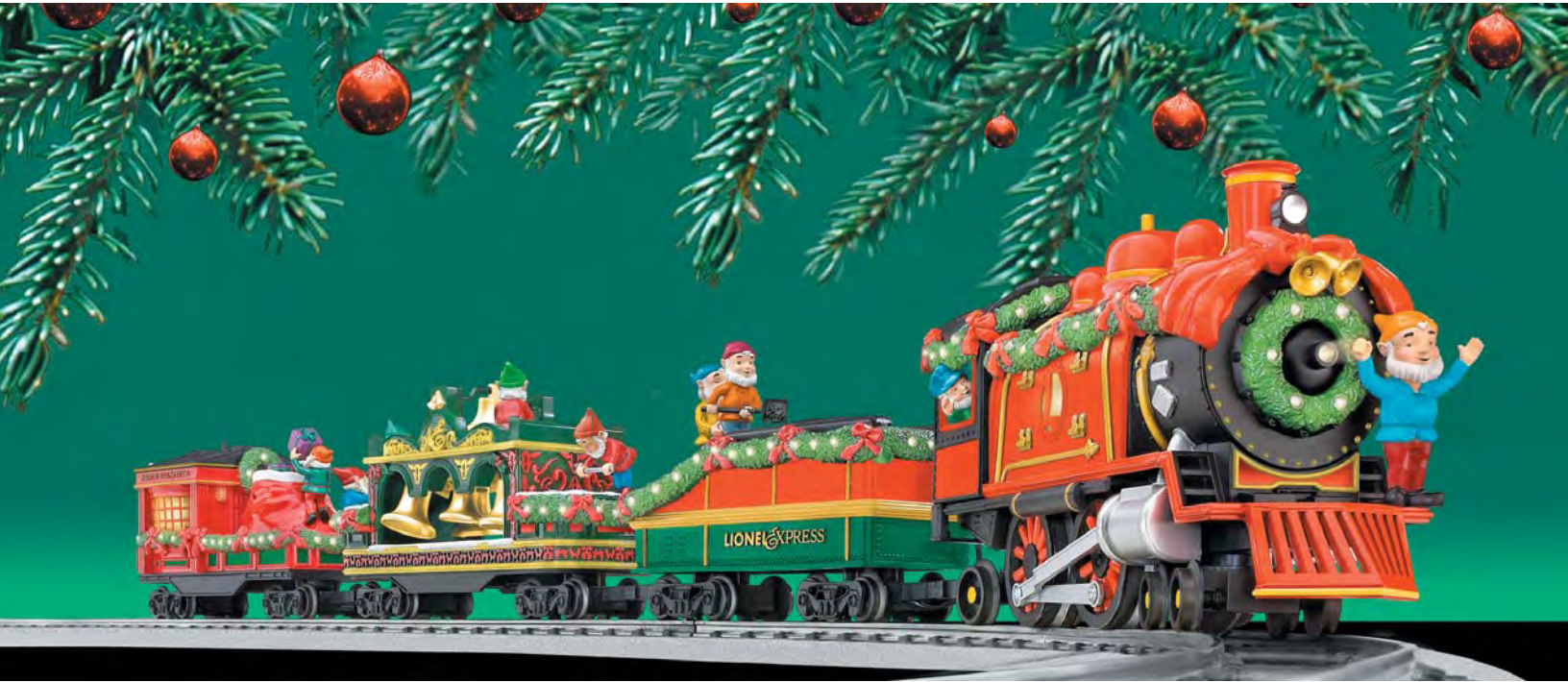


# Lionel News & Views

by **Bill Schmeelk**  
RM 6643

comes with snow-covered G-gauge track; 12 curved and four straight sections.

The set has a retail price of \$279.99 and will be the high-end alternative to the cheaper, under \$50 sets we see at Christmas time. Lionel is marketing this set as, "The Lionel Christmas train that will be passed down for generations to come!" The package is designed to be an "easy to unpack;



## Toy Fair 2006

Although Lionel was listed in the directory of exhibitors at the Toy Fair in New York City, a change in their plans meant that they did not occupy their usual location in the Javits Center. Instead of setting up their large booth, Lionel® rented a temporary location in the Toy Center office building at 23rd street. Lionel's approach this year was quite different than that of the recent past. While they only displayed a small spattering of items including the Polar Express and the NASCAR sets, this office was used to meet with new potential customers and to display a new Christmas set which Lionel plans for the mass market. The above catalog artwork above shows the new set. Billed as "the round-the-tree Christmas train that only Lionel could make," this large scale Christmas set will be available through a wide variety of stores. The plan is market it to the masses and not just the hobby interest.

Each component of the Christmas set features animation. One elf is shoveling coal (for the naughty), two others are turning a crank to swing the bells back and forth, others are packing Santa's bag with gifts (for the nice) and Santa himself is waving from the caboose and delivering a message. The set is controlled remotely with an infrared controller that has eight buttons allowing you to stop and start the train, reverse direction, sound the whistle, ring the bells, play the music and hear Santa's holiday greetings. The loco features realistic start-up and shutdown sequences and

easy to repack storage box." The brochure also states that Lionel will add another fully animated train car each year.

## Lionel Returns to New York City!

Another announcement from Lionel is the opening of a sales office in New York. The new offices will be located on Madison Avenue at 33rd street. Lionel will occupy two floors there, with offices on the 11th floor and a showroom on the second floor. The showroom will feature a custom Lionel layout and windows to Madison Avenue. The new layout will be built by TW Designs®. It also built the layout featured at Grand Central Terminal during the Christmas season. That layout was shown in Erol Gurcan's fine article in the February issue of *The Lion Roars*.

Just when this layout will be ready is not known, but Lionel plans to open the showroom for tours with access to the public on a limited basis. This new office will be used in conjunction with the existing Chesterfield offices.

## Lionel to Control K-Line Assets

While I was there, Lionel President Jerry Calabrese informed me that an agreement was just made giving Lionel control of the assets of the K-Line® Company including the tooling and unsold inventory. This was announced on Lionel's website on February 16th. As part of this announcement, it was stated that those who have paid for and not received K-Line club products will get them. Lionel will make good on these orders.



Calabrese said, “It may take time to sort things out, but I believe giving people what they’ve paid for is the right thing to do, even though we will be doing so at our own expense. It’s also an important step in rebuilding the K-Line brand and demonstrating Lionel’s long term commitment to K-Line’s fans.”

It is Lionel’s intention to make new products under the K-Line brand and market and sell those products as part of the Lionel line. More details will follow.

### Accessory Activation

One of the distinct advantages offered by three-rail track is the ease with which an accessory can be controlled by a moving train. Although several of Lionel’s trackside accessories have for years been supplied with a weight activated switch, the No. 153C contactor and the 145C contactor, a far superior method of control has long been available — the Insulated Track Section™.

### The Basics

A factory-made, insulated straight track section is available from Lionel in both O27 and O. Lionel has also explained in its literature for years how to make a section of insulated track. On a normal section of traditional tubular track, the two outer rails are electrically connected through the metal crossies by an insulating paper installed between the rail and the metal tie. On an insulated section, one of the outer rails is also insulated, in the same way as the center rail. This insulated outer rail also has a fiber or nylon pin at each end. When this track is installed in a layout, there is no power to this insulated rail. When a train passes over it however, the wheels and axles connect the two outer rails and allow current to flow into the insulated rail for as long as there is a wheel and axle riding on that insulated section of track. In this way, the wheels of the train act as a switch, and this function can be used to operate an accessory.

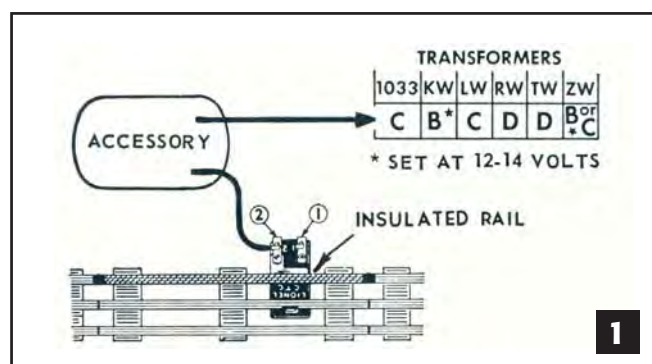


Figure 1 assumes that the train and the accessory are operated from the same transformer.

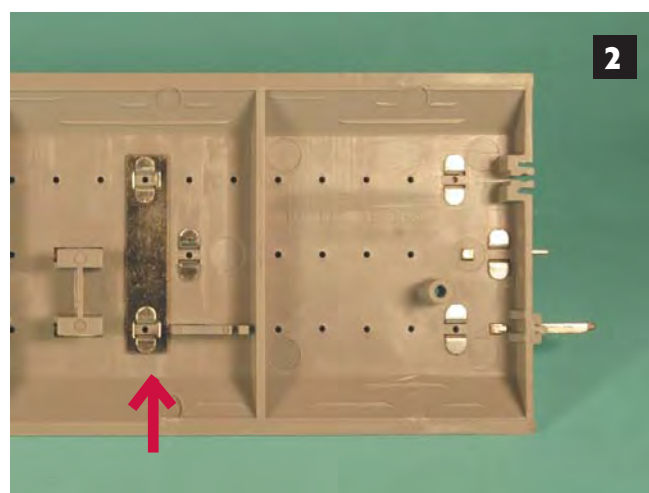
To operate an accessory, you merely connect it as shown in **figure 1**. For example, the accessory might be banjo signal. As soon as the train rolls onto the insulated section, power will be connected to the signal. As the train passes and the last car rolls off the insulated track, the signal will turn off. It is usually best to have more than one section of insulated track joined together. In this way, the

signal can be turned on at distance before the train reaches the signal and remain on until after the last car passes it.

Extending the insulated section is easy — simply connect multiple insulated track sections together. BUT — you only want to use two fiber or nylon pins, one at each end of the insulated section, on the insulated rail. So, if you’re making an insulated section that contains four pieces of insulated outside rail track, you would connect the four sections of track together with regular steel pins and use a fiber or nylon pin at each end of the four-piece insulated section. Also be sure that the nylon pins are inserted into the insulated rail and not the other outside rail. The center and remaining outer rail use the regular steel pins.

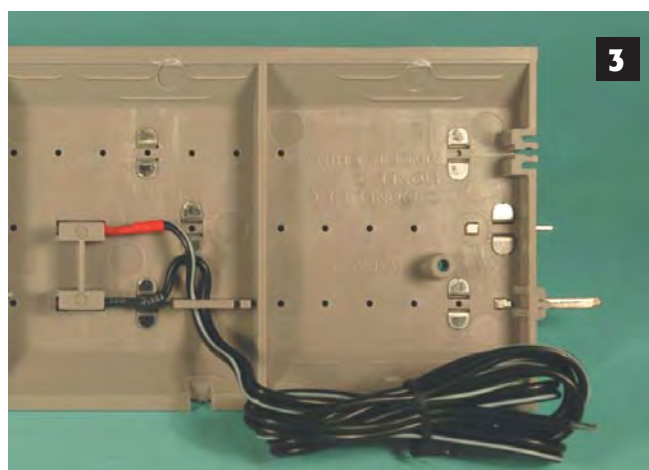
### What about FasTrack?

Although Lionel’s new FasTrack™ has its rails mounted on a plastic roadbed, the two outer rails are electrically connected with a metal plate, visible on the

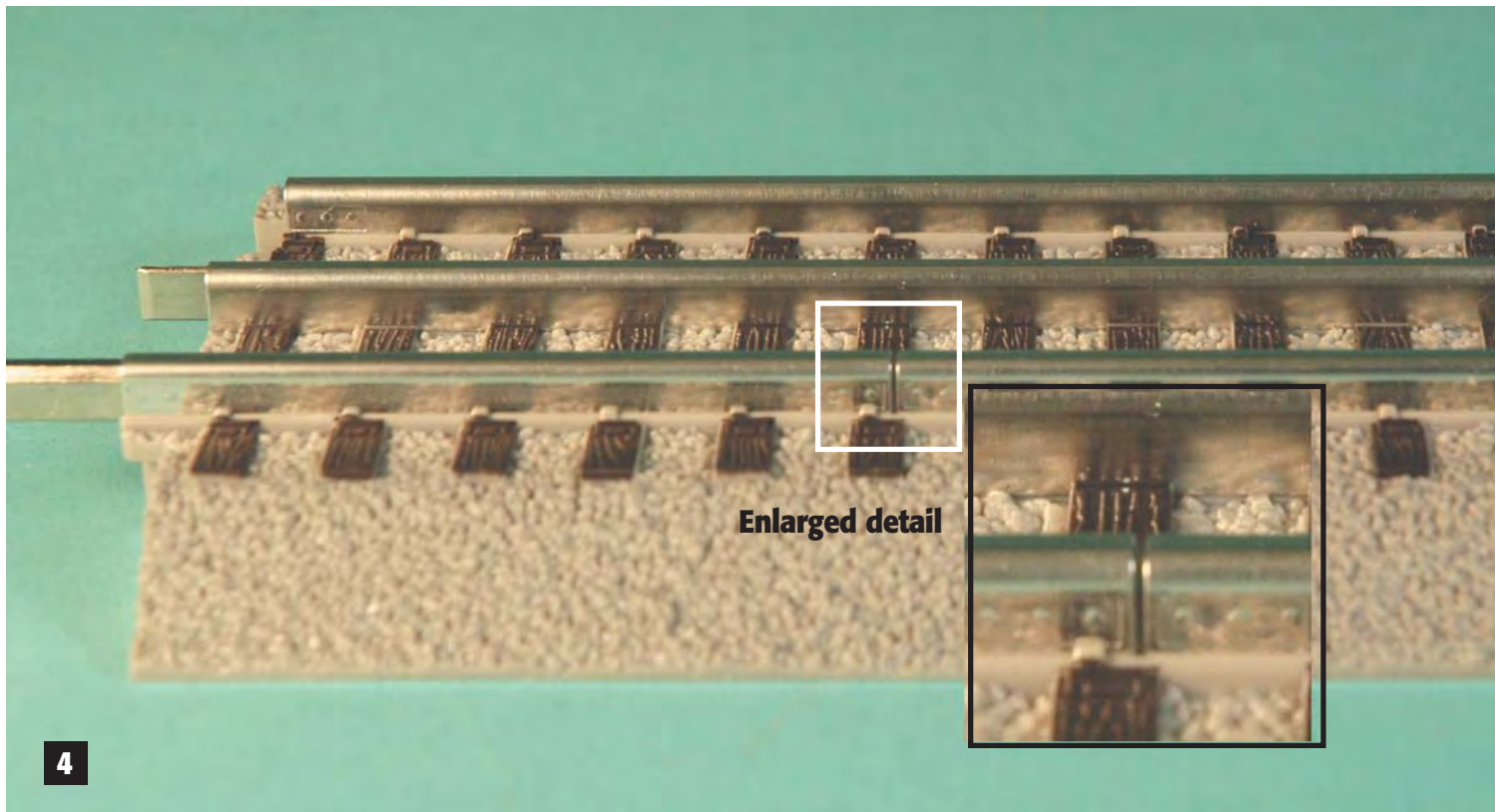


underside of the track as shown in **photo 2**. This makes them electrically similar to Lionel’s O and O27 tubular track.

**Photo 3** shows the underside of an insulated section of FasTrack and does not have the plate connecting the outer rails. The unique design of the rail pins on FasTrack allows the track sections to be assembled in any configuration without the need to ever remove a pin. In fact, the pins are not removable and are designed to be permanently installed.







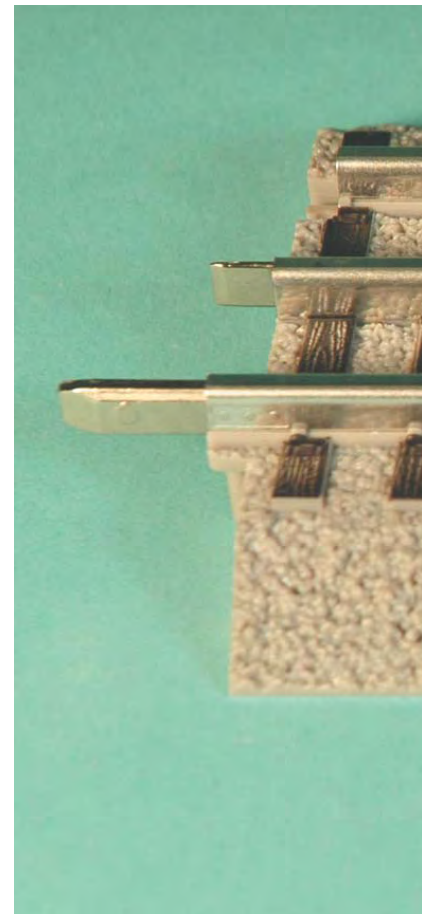
Since fiber pins cannot be added to the rails, Lionel's engineers designed a unique system to achieve the same results. A special half-straight section of track (called an Isolated Section™) takes the place of the fiber pin. This section differs from a normal half straight in two ways. First, there is no metal plate connecting the outer rails. Second, one of the outside rails has a break in it. This space, though only about 1/64 inch, is enough to prevent current flow from one end of the rail to the other. In that way it mimics the fiber pin. **Photo 4** shows the small break in the outer rail.

To use the insulated-rail method to control an accessory, Lionel offers the #6-12029 Accessory Activator Pack™. This pack includes two isolated sections and one insulated section. The insulated section supplied in the pack is essentially a terminal section, with wire, but without the metal rail connecting plate. By assembling this section with an isolated section at each end, you can operate an accessory as your train passes over the break in the isolated section. The insulated section in the pack is supplied with wire as shown in **photo 3** and has a small cutout to allow the wire to pass under the edge of the track, much the same as the FasTrack terminal track.

Although an accessory can be connected to the insulated track section so that it will operate on track power, it is clearly more prudent to use a separate power supply for the accessory. In this way, you can supply the accessory with the correct voltage, regardless of train speed; thus the operation of the accessory will not slow down the train.

As an example, let's assume you want to connect a banjo signal. First connect an isolated section to each end of

the insulated section, being sure that the break in each of the isolated sections is connected to the same outer rail. The rail section between the two breaks of the isolated sections will be dead and have no track power. Trains will run normally over it, as the remaining outer rail completes the circuit. Next, using the connection tabs under the insulated section, connect one wire from this outside insulated rail to one of the power terminals of the banjo signal. In the same way, connect another wire to the outside rail of the track beyond the break in the isolated track; i.e., not between the breaks. This wire should be connected to a regular section of track as the isolated section does not have connection tabs. The other end of this wire is connected to ground, usually the "U" terminal on a Lionel transformer. Alternatively, this wire can be replaced by a wire connecting the ground terminal of the accessory transformer to the ground terminal of the train transformer — establishing a common ground. Finally,







connect a wire from the other terminal of your power supply to the remaining connection on the banjo signal. Set the power supply to the proper operating voltage for the signal.

That's it — now, as soon as the wheels of your train cross the break in one of the isolated sections, from either direction, the signal will operate. Operation will continue as long as any car or loco is located between the breaks in the isolated sections. Once the last car leaves this section, the banjo signal will stop.

For more realistic operation, you might want to extend the length of your insulated section. Simply add more insulated track sections between the two isolated sections. Lionel offers additional insulated sections, called an Accessory Activator Extender™ at the same list price as a regular section of straight track. Frankly


though, it's easy to make any regular section an insulated section by merely bending the rail tabs underneath and

removing the rail connector plate. In this way you can also convert a curved track of any radius into an insulated section.

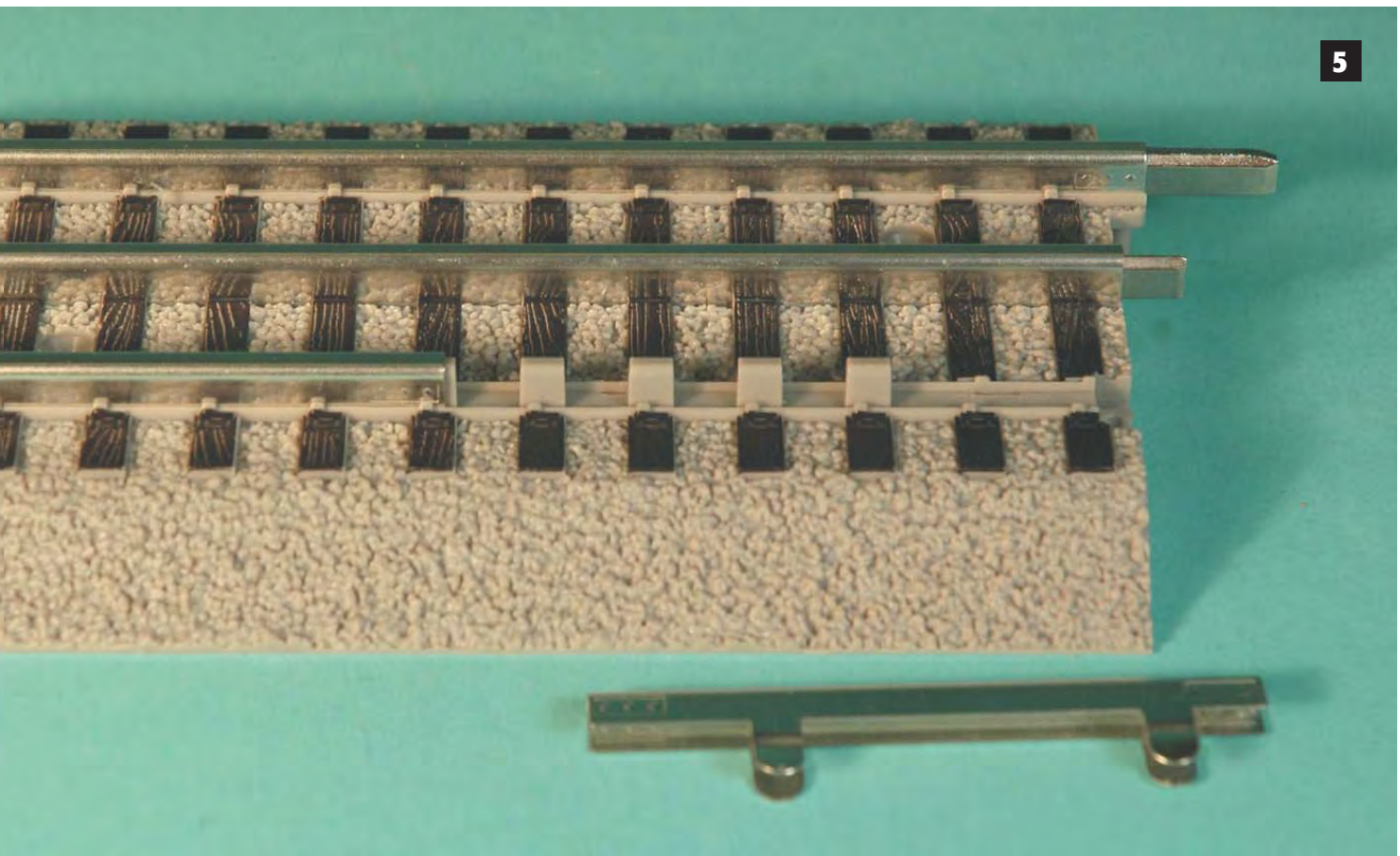
Once you try this method of accessory activation, you will never go back to the contactors supplied with many accessories. Those contactors were also never designed to work with FasTrack.

### FasTrack Construction

While working with FasTrack, I noticed that if you inserted a stiff wire into the open end of a rail, it wouldn't go in very far. I also noticed that I could not even slip the edge of a piece of paper into the break of an isolated section. To satisfy my curiosity, I removed a section of rail from an isolated track; **photo 5** shows the result. I simply straightened the tabs from underneath and lifted the section of rail from the roadbed. I was surprised to see the amount of support there is underneath the rail. Notice the closely spaced plastic tabs on which the rail rests. One of these tabs is also located at the break. I like this because it means that the space will always be maintained and the rail cannot bend at the break. Incidentally, the width of the break in the rail is quite small. In fact it's smaller than the gap you might have between sections of ordinary tubular track.

FasTrack has other innovative accessories and we'll talk more about them next time. 

*Photographs by Bill Schmeelk*





# The Tinplate Cannonball

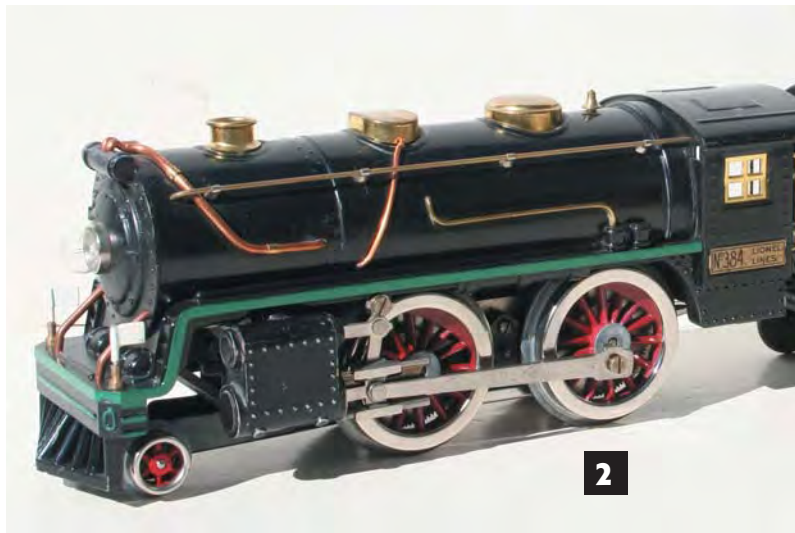
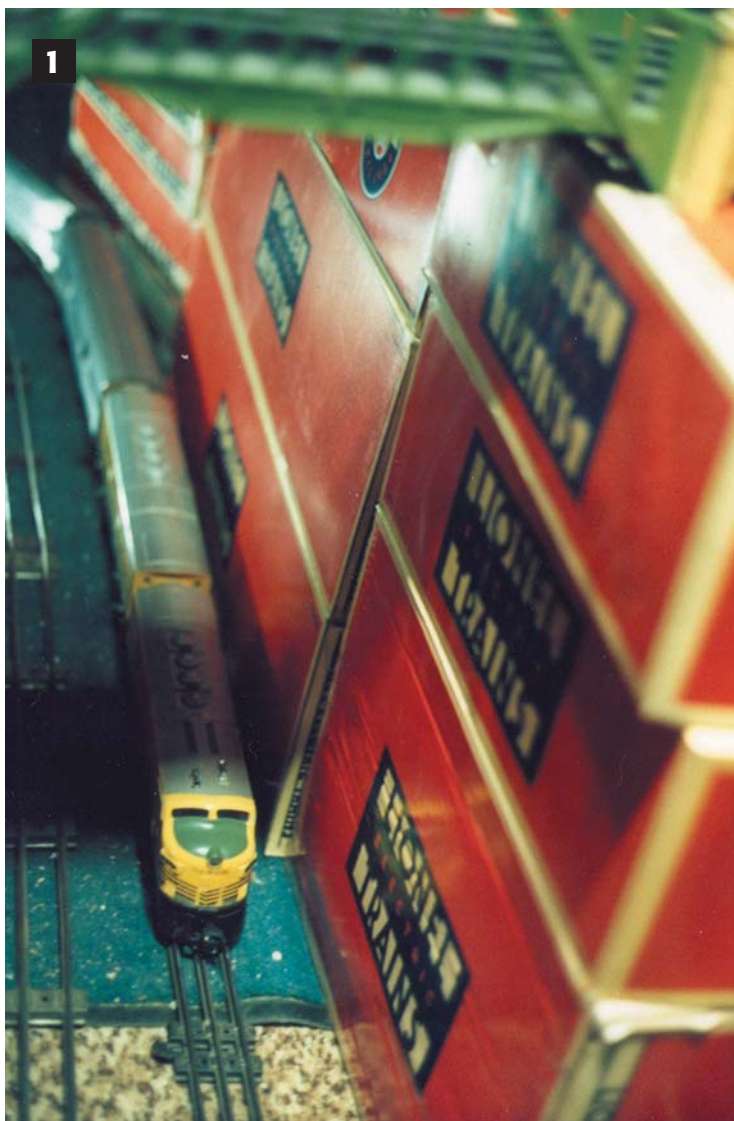
by Ken Morgan  
RM 12231

## Standard Gauge Primer

My muse ran dry, at least the one in charge of inspiration for O gauge, so The Tinplate Cannonball will move up a size for this issue to standard gauge; as in “Lionel — Standard of the World.”

Why did Lionel® apply the name “standard gauge” to its trains when other train manufacturers — internationally and domestically — used numbers to indicate track gauge? The larger train gauges were then named: 4, 3, 2, 1, and 0 (zero) in descending-size order. And yes, “0” is what is now called “O.” For the answer, see the end of this article.

In the meantime, here’s a quick quiz. Look at **photo 1**. What does it depict, and why is it presented here? Hint: it’s NOT Royal Gorge on the ex-D&RGW in Colorado, but



that’s a good guess. It’s actually Regal Gorge on the BCC&PRR in my house. Just look at the lovely orange rock strata with traces of blue and white. Isn’t it GORGEous! I included it here as a tribute to those early birds who bought tickets aboard the real Royal Gorge Route train excursion trip scheduled during the upcoming LCCA 2006 Convention.

Bring this issue of *TLR* to the Convention with you, and I’ll autograph the picture of Regal Gorge on this page for you. I wonder, would that enhance — or kill — the collector value of your copy of the magazine? Time will tell.

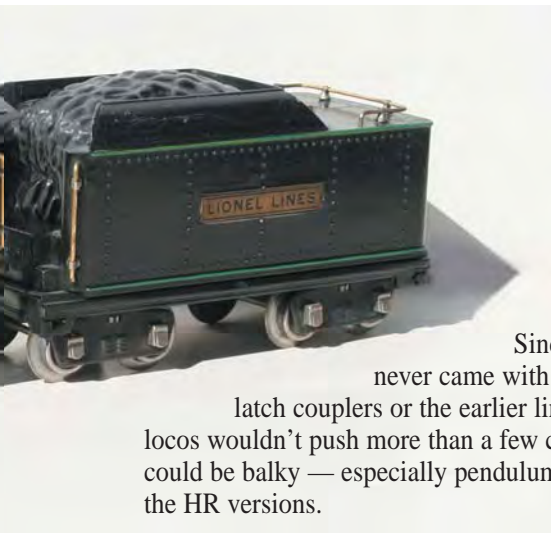
Notice that like much of the trackage of the prototype in Colorado, the BCC&PRR Regal Gorge is dual gauge; which brings me back to the topic of standard gauge.

## Bigger and Better in Standard Gauge

In the previous issue of *TLR*, I covered Lionel’s first O-gauge steamers. These were the smallest steam locos offered by Lionel in O gauge; not Lionel Junior, or Lionel-Ives, etc., which was how the slightly smaller 1681/1661 started out. Those little 2-4-0s had a standard-gauge sibling, the 384 — shown in **photo 2**.

Although a rather generic loco, it was a bit more realistic than the 257/258. It also had a relatively large tender. In fact, the same tender ran with the larger 390, 385, 1835, and 392 engines. The 384 and 390 used only this 384T (numbered 390T when paired with the latter loco), while the 385 and 1835 also used the ex-Ives 385T/1835T. The 392 was later offered with the larger 392T. The other classic period steamer was the big 400E; it pulled the 400T. The only other standard gauge tenders were the earlier #5, offered with either four or eight wheels, and the #6. The larger 8-wheeled tender was also offered in a nickel-plated version as #7. All ran with locos with the same numbers as the tenders. Standard gauge didn’t offer the variety of tenders that keeps O-gauge collectors on their toes.





Like many of its contemporaries, the 384 came with either a hand reverse (HR) or with an electronic reversing unit, in which case the loco is lettered 384E.

Since standard gauge never came with anything other than latch couplers or the earlier link/slot couplers, these locos wouldn't push more than a few cars in reverse. E-units could be balky — especially pendulum units — so I favor the HR versions.

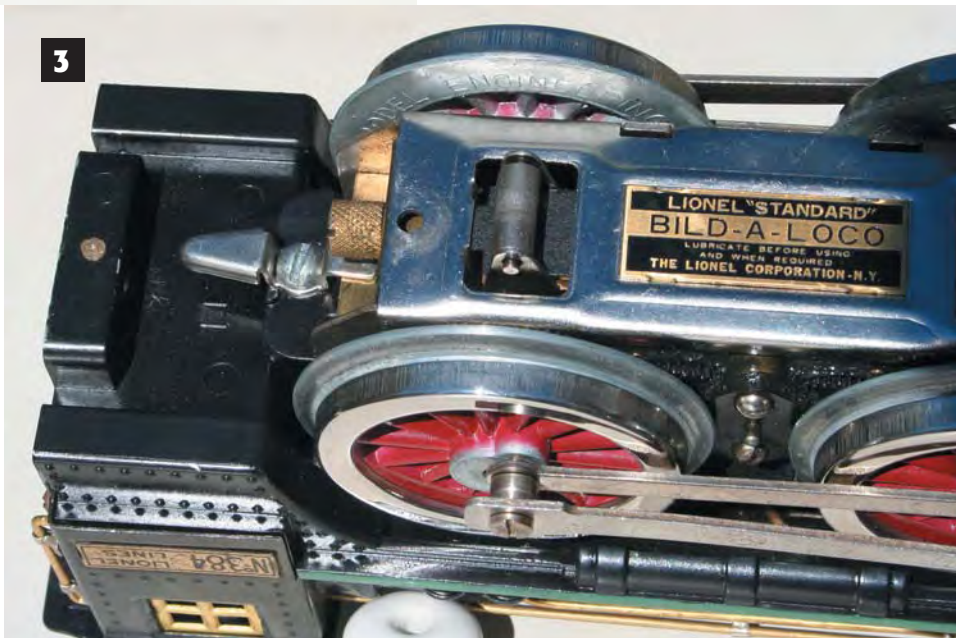
don't do as much damage to your wallet. When I bought my first standard-gauge train — a #10E with two passenger cars — I promised myself that it would be my only standard-gauge train. Obviously, I have broken that vow. But I digress, as usual.

### Do It Yourself

One of the neat things about standard-gauge steamers is that they are much easier to overhaul than their O-gauge brethren, thanks to Lionel's "BILD-A-LOCO" motor. Virtually all variations of the classic period steamers came with this motor. Conversely, most of the contemporary electrics came with the "Super Motor" which is essentially a larger version of the O-gauge motors. **Photo 3** shows a "BILD-A-LOCO" motor from the bottom. Look at the left end. There is a small pointy thing with a screw and a brass knurled piece just above it to the right. Same pair is at the other end. If the screw is loosened, the pointy thing pivots. Doing this at both ends frees the motor from the body. You'll probably need to clear some of the running gear, but this is a much simpler task than for O-gauge engines.

**Photo 4** shows what you get after the motor comes out. This shot is from the top. The only thing now attaching it to the loco is the single wire to the headlight. It is connected to the motor frame by a screw, and it's easily removed. If you look closely, you can see the hand reverse unit just above that screw.

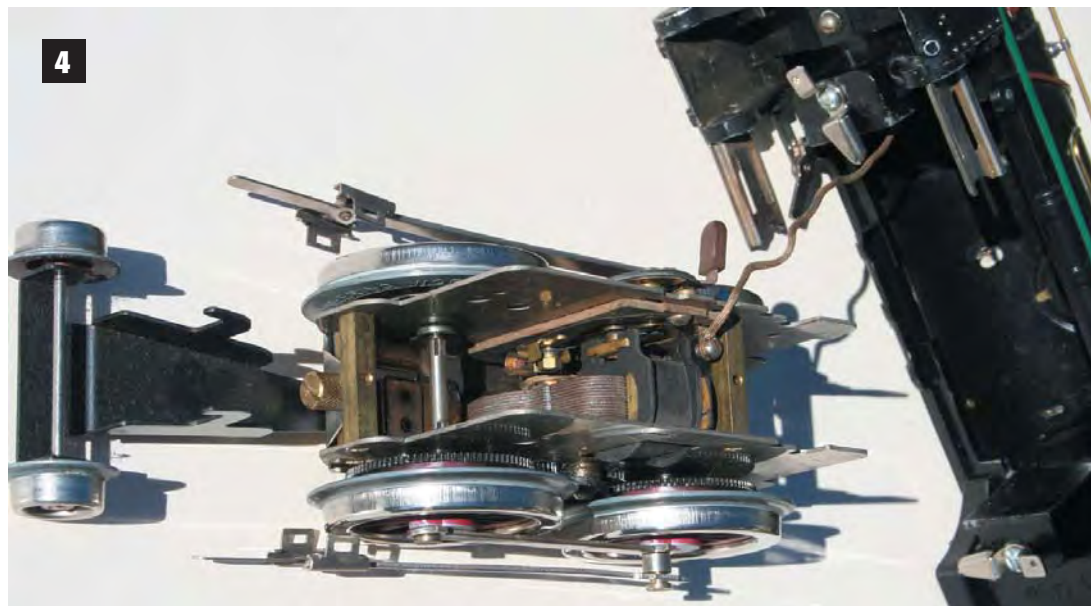
Now go to **photo 5**, which is a view from the bottom. The knurled screws shown in **photo 3** have been loosened just enough to drop the base plate. If you have ever tried to replace the wire that runs from the pick-up to the motor in an



One odd thing about this loco is that it uses O-gauge wheels on the pilot truck; it's the only Lionel standard-gauge loco with this feature. They are, in fact, the same wheels used by the 257/258 for its pilot trucks. They also were offered during the same years as the 257/258 — 1930-32.

As pictured, this is the version with the green stripe. The other version has no stripe, and either way it could have green or brass windows. None of the variations affect the price. While there seems to be some escalation in prices lately, this is the entry level, standard-gauge steamer.

Expect to enter the \$500 zone for these locos in relatively clean condition; standard-gauge steamers do not come cheap. On the other hand, entry-level electrics such as the earlier #33 or the classic #8 and #10 engines

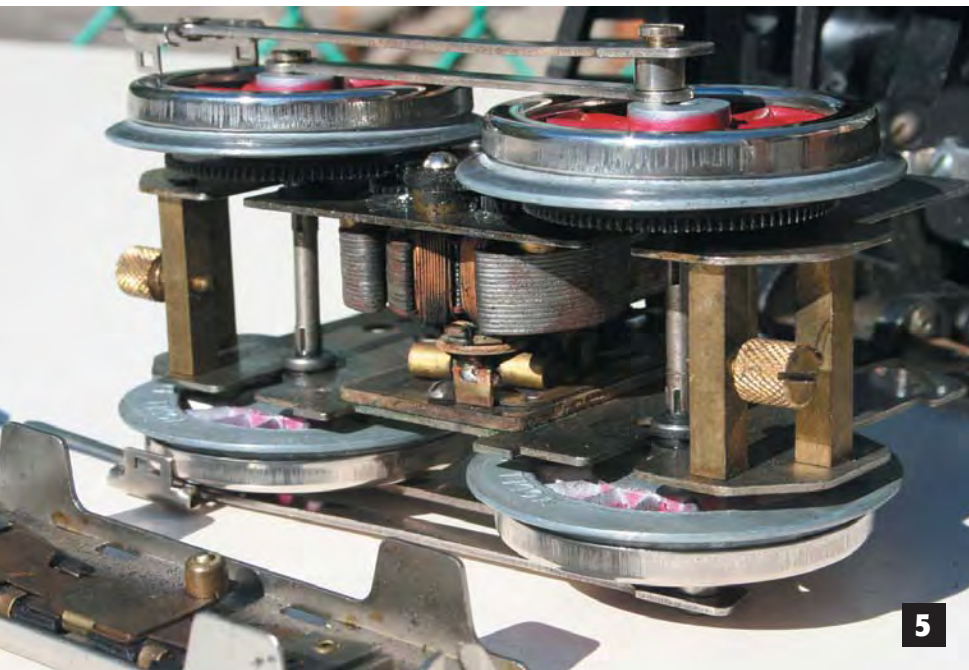




old O-gauge loco in order to replace the rotted insulation (normal after 75 years of age), you know why I love the BILD-A-LOCO motor. No wires to or from it, so one can easily get access the guts of the motor.

### Simple To Repair

What replaces the wire? Look carefully at the middle of the base plate. There's a transverse piece of bronze-colored metal with a cup and a ball in it. The ball has a spring under it. When you replace the base plate, the ball makes contact with a small tab on the motor. If you follow the curve of the bottom right driver, you'll see it. The aging process apparently made that contact weak and intermittent, so I soldered a small piece of brass onto the existing contact which effectively shimmed it just enough to guarantee good contact. Can you imagine getting inside an O-gauge motor to repair something like that? Neither can I; except in a nightmare triggered by excess pepperoni on a late-night pizza.



The two brass tubes just above the soldered shim are the brush holders. Unlike contemporary O gauge, the commutator is parallel to the armature shaft, rather than sitting on a plate perpendicular to it.

Take another close look at **photo 5**. The axles ride in slots. This makes them easy to remove if one needs to re-wheel the loco. Like most of my standard-gauge items, these are replacement wheels. I operate the stuff, and — at least in my experience — classic period standard-gauge wheels seem to suffer from metal disease more than any other part made by Lionel.

This ease of removal comes with a caveat: whenever you drop the base plate, before replacing it, make sure the wheels are properly aligned. They should be “quartered;” i.e., the right side must be set 90° behind the left side. That isn't critical, but what is critical is for the wheels on each

side to be in sync; so ensure that the counterweights (the crescent moons on the driver wheels) are lined up. Otherwise, the motor will bind after the drive rods are replaced. It's not hard, and you can eyeball it. Just make sure to do it, or else you'll have to disassemble the loco again. If you arranged a “show and tell” session with train friends to show off your loco, you'll be embarrassed by the lock-up caused by your failure to align the driving wheels properly. Your unimpressed guests may direct you to “Go directly to jail. Do not pass GO. Do not collect \$200.”

In contrast to the wheel alignment matter, replacing the base plate is simple. The tabs sticking up in the photo and the slots on the ends which fit around the screw threads make it well nigh impossible to put it back together any way but correctly. Neat!

### Why “Standard Gauge?”

Now back to why there is standard gauge. Internationally, there was #4 (nominally three inches between the outer rails) unless it was #3 at nominally three inches; except that #3 also included gauge widths of either 2-1/2 inches or 2-5/8 inches depending upon the manufacturer. And #2 was two inches, when it wasn't 2-1/8 inches. #1 was 1-3/4 inches. 0 (zero) rail spacing was usually 1-1/4 inches or 1-3/8 inches.

At least one reason for the minor differences was that Märklin measured between rail centers while most other manufacturers measured the distance between the rails. Confused? So were operators 100 years ago.

Why the name, Standard Gauge? Because Joshua Lionel Cowan was a marketing genius, that's why. As noted above, there was nothing “standard” about international toy train gauges in the early decades of the 1900s, so he established a standard. At least in North America, his declaration drove the market, and it became

the industry standard for big trains. It's the same marketing phenomenon that led us to apply the brand name Xerox as a collective noun for “photocopier” and Kleenex for “facial tissue.”

Ives had long produced #1-gauge trains in addition to 0/O gauge. They were forced to drop #1 gauge and compete with Lionel's big trains. Since they wouldn't use Lionel's terminology (indeed, they couldn't; Lionel had trademarked it), they called it #2, then 2-1/4 inch, and then Wide Gauge. American Flyer also called it Wide Gauge. Like all other domestic manufacturers competing with Lionel, they had to make trains that would run on standard gauge track; making it, if not the “Standard of the World,” at least the standard of North America.

See you in Denver, and along the rails of The Tinplate Cannonball! 🚂

*Photographs by Ken Morgan*


*February, 2006*



# A Lionel Puzzlement

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

## Lionel Plus

“Lionel Plus” sounds like a new health plan for LCCA members. In actuality, longevity is probably increased as members enjoy and relax with their favorite pastime. No stress in working with these easy clues to solve the Lionel Plus crossword. Enjoy. 

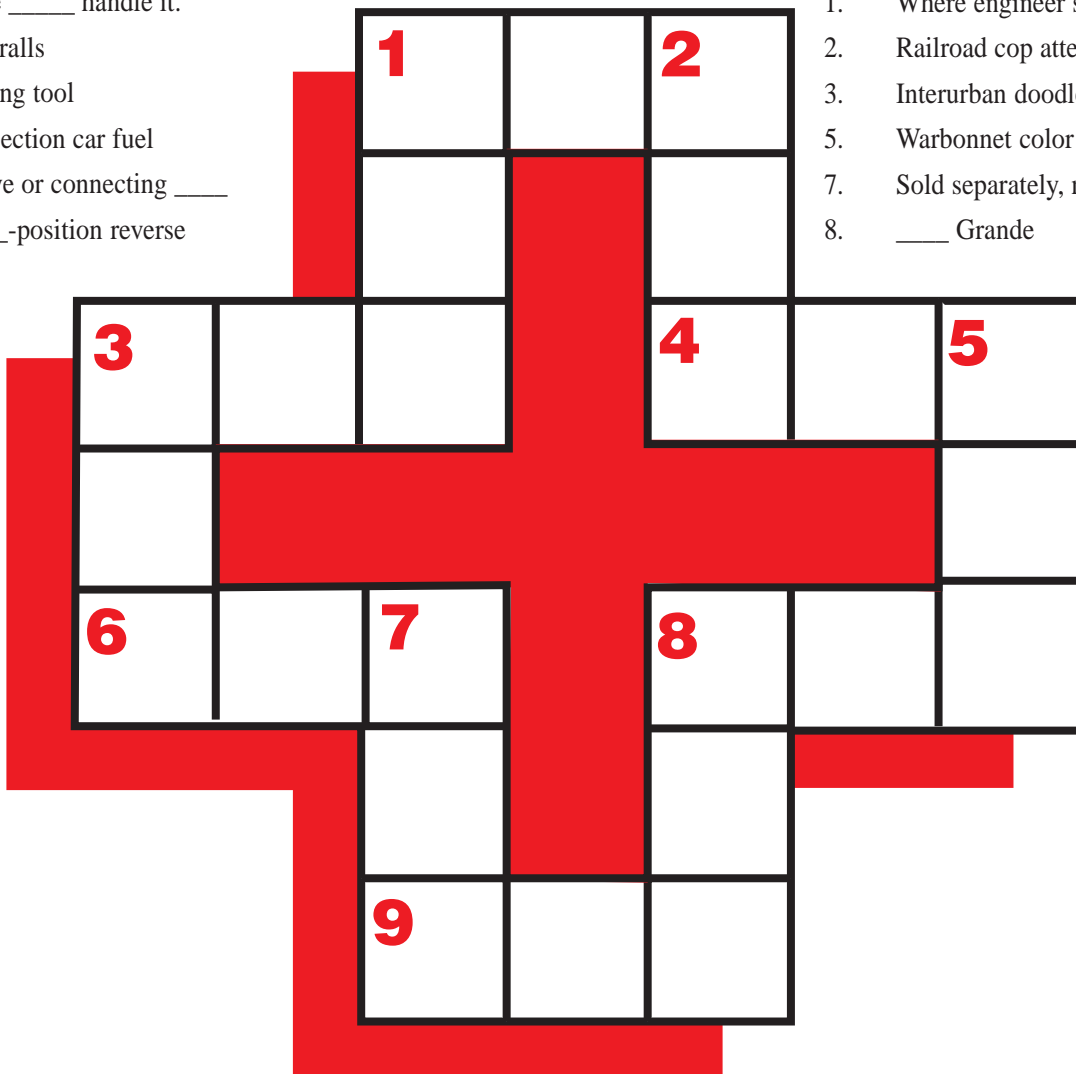
### Across

1. “We \_\_\_\_ handle it.”
3. Overalls
4. Prying tool
6. Inspection car fuel
8. Drive or connecting \_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_-position reverse

## Clues

### Down

1. Where engineer sits
2. Railroad cop attempts to \_\_\_\_ hobo
3. Interurban doodle \_\_\_\_
5. Warbonnet color
7. Sold separately, not as a \_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_ Grande



Answers are published in *TLR* ... somewhere.



