

Start of the LCCA's Second Decade, 1981-85

1981 - 2nd Decade's Launch

Rising costs to operate the Club resulted in a dues increase in 1981 (the last increase was in 1978). Dues for Charter Members rose to \$12.50 and Regular Members became \$16 while Family Members stayed the same at \$5. With a large quantity in inventory, a special offer of previous LCCA Convention Cars was made available. For \$50, any active member could purchase a "package" that included one each of 1978's #9728 UP Stockcar, 1979's #9733 Airco Boxcar (with matching Tankcar inside) and 1980's #9358 Sands of Iowa Hopper. The 1980 Rock Diesel Locomotive was also still available for \$125. This special offer was well received by the membership as 100 or more orders were being processed each month. With the combined influx of moneys from the new dues structure and the sale of past years' commemoratives, the Club's treasury closed out the calendar year with a positive balance of \$72,465.20 based on income of \$113,836.76 offset by expenses of \$61,588.15.

Election results for 1981 had Larry Black, President; George Hudzik, Vice-President (he won by 1 vote over Mel Price!); Bradford Smith, Secretary; Edwin Hunt, Assistant Secretary; Bruce Cox, Treasurer and Bill Hourigan, Immediate Past President. The Board of Directors consisted of: Art Broshears, Ernie Davis, Jim Hunt, Al Otten and Bill Stitt. By the middle of the year, Fred Sanford became the fifth Editor of *The Lion Roars* and, near year's end, Art Broshears was the second appointed Editor for the *Interchange Track*.

Chattanooga, Tennessee, was the site for the Club's Annual Convention in 1981. A total of 833 people (made up of 384 members, 226 spouses and 223 children) came to the mid-South for an array of family-oriented events that included tours to the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum as well as the home of "Track 29" and the fabled Chattanooga Choo-Choo. In addition, there were 19 LCCA sponsored meets held throughout the country which 2,175 members and guests attended. By year's end, membership number 7865 was assigned.

1982 - Luxurious Convention Site Chosen

The Club's 12th Annual Convention in Dearborn, Michigan, drew a new high attendance record of 645 members and when combined with a larger number of spouses and children accounted for 1,363 people joining in on the three days of festivities! Also, the LCCA took train club Convention sites to higher standards when we moved up to the "World-Class" Hyatt Regency as the headquarters hotel. The 3" round, white badges with the Club's name and 700E logo in black printing were first offered at this Convention and the extras were sold for \$1 each the next year.

1982's elected Officers (and their previous year's position) were: Art Broshears, President (was Director); George Hudzik, Vice-President (he was reelected); Edwin Hunt, Secretary (from Assistant Secretary); Bill Button, Assistant Secretary and Mike Stella, Treasurer (both newly elected) along with Larry Black, Immediate Past President. On the Board of Directors were newly elected Bruce Cox, Bill Hourigan and Chuck Seddon along with Jim Hunt and Al Otten being reelected. Also, Dick Johnson became the third Editor of the *Interchange Track*, so that Art Broshears would not have double duty during his term as President.

Membership rolls continued to grow and by the end of the year, #8448 was assigned. The special "package" of 1978-80 Club Commemoratives continued and was made even more attractive so that a member could order 3 Cars and a Locomotive for \$150. Also, the LCCA "Meet Special" train was completed this year with the addition of the over stamped #6483 Central of New Jersey SP Type Caboose.

Financially, the Club closed out its fiscal year with income of \$178,499.42 less expenses of \$136,851.17 to have a cash balance of \$41,648.25 (through July 31, 1982). In an effort to offset its high production costs, the *Annual Roster* included paid advertisements for the first time in 1982. This practice was used only once more in the 1983 *Roster*.

1983 - A "Colorful" Era Begins

The April, 1983 issue of *The Lion Roars* featured full-color on both the front and back covers for the first time ever! (Although it would be several more years before color was added to the inside pages of *TLR*.) Membership #8940 was assigned by the end of 1983 as the Club's growth rate leveled off somewhat from that of previous years.

Because of health, personal or other reasons, early in the year three elected Officers vacated their positions. For Vice-President, George Hudzik was replaced by Al Otten (who moved over from his Director position); Dienzel Dennis took over the Secretary duties from Edwin Hunt and Mike Brown assumed the responsibilities of Treasurer, replacing Mike Stella. This "interim" group lead the Club until the elections in July when the "new" leadership for the LCCA once again consisted of five Directors with Mel Price, Stewart Roberts and Bill Stitt newly elected along with Al Otten and Chuck Seddon winning reelection. Officers were Bill Hourigan, President; Jerry Dangelo, Vice-President; Dienzel Dennis, Secretary (elected from his interim title) and Steve Patterson, Treasurer all newly elected with Bill Button reelected to Assistant Secretary. Art Broshears was Immediate Past President and he resumed being Editor of *Interchange Track*.

Our 13th Annual Convention was in Rockford, Illinois, where more than 500 people consisting of members and their families came in late July. Tours of local attractions, the Membership Meeting, trade hall and banquet were the featured events for all to enjoy. The Convention Car chosen for 1983 was the Commonwealth Edison quad hopper that featured a coal load (which was the first time Lionel had produced that style hopper with a load). Only 2,508 of these commemoratives were made and they were all sold out three weeks before the Convention. The practice of ordering only a reasonable quantity of Cars to eliminate the costly practice of excess inventory continues even today.

1984 - Member Recognition

To provide LCCA'ers with a unique and colorful piece to proudly display their Club affiliation, a Certificate of Membership was made available. Also, a new plastic Membership Card was issued this year in true Lionel orange and blue colors with a 700E across the front. As with the previous card, a space on the back was provided to affix an annual dues sticker. Both of these items were sent to LCCA Charter, Regular and Family Members at no additional cost beyond their dues. In addition, a Certificate of Appreciation (originally approved several years earlier) was launched. The attractive piece is presented to members who have provided a noteworthy service to the Club and is signed by the LCCA President.

To further promote the Club, shirts with distinctive LCCA notations on them became available to members this year. Included were a golf shirt in white with a black Hudson logo as well as a T-shirt in white with royal blue trim and our Lion Mascot in orange. The last of the "special" packages of past commemoratives was offered which included 1978 through 1981 Convention Cars along with the 1980 Diesel Locomotive (five pieces total) for \$160. The combination of commemorative sales (in addition, all 1982-84 Cars were sold), and a spurt of new members caused the Club's finances to grow. The Treasurer's Report dated July 31, 1984, showed the LCCA's total assets at \$122,962.59. (It was the first time the Club's "cash in the bank" figure topped six figures!)

Leadership consisted of Officers Bill Hourigan, President; Jerry Dangelo, Vice-President; Bill Button, Secretary; Chuck Seddon, Assistant Secretary; Steve Patterson, Treasurer and Art Broshears, Immediate Past President; along with Directors Al Otten, Larry Black, Dienzel Dennis, Jim Hunt and Bill Stitt.

Louisville, Kentucky, was the 14th Annual Convention Site and provided 454 LCCA members and their families with a wonderful vacation coupled with a train show. One of the featured events was a train ride excursion on the historic (operations began in 1883) Louisville, Corydon and Albany Railroad. With Lionel's reproduction of the LNAC boxcar as the 1984 Convention Car, many members could get an up close look of the prototype itself.

1985 - Membership Milestone Year

During the latter part of its 15th year, the LCCA reached a growth milestone as member number 10000 was assigned. This is a significant plateau of the Club's history since the 'Lionel' portion of our name specializes our members into a distinct and select category of toy/model trains.

The second edition of the special tri-fold, 6 page Toy Fair Flyer featured the new Lionel products in full color for the first time in 1985. It was mailed out shortly after this February event to give LCCA'ers a very timely, informative, inside look at the new Lionel product line. And, this was the year that the Club began the standard of an input form with a block of 100 spaces for submitting *Interchange Track* ads. The LCCA launched an inputting process which other clubs later adopted.

With New Orleans as the site of the 1985 Convention, nearly 500 attendees partied in the Crescent City with a theme of "Mardi Gras LCCA Style"! Many events encompassed the entire family (an essential element for all of our Conventions) and the Grand Parade during the banquet was a very gala show. One of the Club's most unique Convention Cars was the Illinois Central six-wheel crane offered this year. It was a break from the tradition of freight hauling types of cars as commemoratives and once again demonstrated by example the evolutionary style typical of the LCCA.

The 1985 Officers were: Al Otten, President; Mel Price, Vice-President; Bill Button, Secretary; Chuck Seddon, Assistant Secretary; Charles Pegrum, Treasurer and Bill Hourigan, Immediate Past President. Directors included: Art Broshears, Bruce Cox, Jerry Dangelo, Dienzel Dennis and Steve Patterson. The LCCA closed out this part of its history on solid financial ground with assets in excess of \$200,000.

Epilogue 1981 - 85

From its onset, the LCCA was founded to promote the enjoyment of collecting and operating Lionel trains. In its first fifteen years, membership ranks had grown at a rapid rate with more than 10,000 member numbers assigned. Certificates of Membership and Achievement set the tone for a "fun to be in" group of fellow enthusiasts who's main interest is with Lionel products in the toy train hobby.

Through its innovative procedures, such as Conventions at 1st Class facilities, unique and prototypical Convention Cars from a railroad in the site's area, and an ad submission form with pricing requirements in a "buy/sell/swap" publication, the LCCA has pioneered practices which have become standards within the toy train collecting/operating world we all enjoy!

Even with a few rough spots both administratively and financially in this era, the LCCA emerged with strong leadership and solid cash reserves to best serve its members in the future.

Part V of this six segment article is in the next issue of *TLR* and will cover the *Last Half of the Second Decade* of the LCCA's history, the years 1986 through 1990.