

TCA Mission: To develop an appreciation of and to preserve an important segment of history – Tinplate Toy Trains –through research, education, community outreach, fellowship, establishment of collecting standards, and to promote the growth and enjoyment of collecting and operating toy, model and scale trains.



# Desert Division *DISPATCH*



ARIZONA • NEW MEXICO • WEST TEXAS

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Volume 40, No. 2

February, 2010

## IN MEMORIAM



**Frank Koenig, TCA #71-3452  
1943 - 2009**

## IN MEMORIAM

by Dale Downey

It is with a heavy heart that I inform you that Frank Koenig passed away Monday, December 21, 2009. Throughout this year, he had faced many problems. It started in January 2009 when he fell at home and broke his femur. In September 2009, his mother passed away. In mid-October, he was not feeling well and was admitted to the hospital. The diagnosis was pneumonia and COPD. His health then gradually declined. He developed a mass on his right lung which (the mass) was removed. From that, his heart became affected and subsequently he had a pacemaker inserted. Both procedures were successful.

His condition would go up and down. Even though the procedures he had were serious, we didn't get alarmed. There was no indication that he would not survive. He did not want to worry anyone and nothing was said due to his wishes.

In December 2009, he improved to the point that he was discharged to Specialty Select for physical therapy. The goal was to get him home finally. Although the doctors don't know why, he stopped breathing two days later.

Frank and I were together a total of 27 years and married for 16 of them. Although I will miss him, I am picturing him now with some of his friends, such as Bill Schulte and Cole Gibbs. They are all sitting around a train layout spinning their tales over their toys.

There was no funeral service for him as he would want you to simply remember him as the independent person he was.

by Jerry Calkins, TCA #85-22009

When you mention the name Frank Koenig, there are two thoughts that come to mind. The first involves the Desert Division. The second involves working with Frank on a home project.

For several years, Frank, Dan Palaschak, and I were the nominating and voting counting committee for the Desert Division. When it came that time of year to count the ballots, Frank would always insist that we do it over breakfast at Dan's hotel. He always said that he worked better on a full stomach. Although Frank's integrity was beyond reproach, he would always pose methods that could be used to rig the election, and then wonder if someone had tried it.

As many know, Frank was a contractor with a very unique sense of humor. When Connie and I moved to Paradise Valley, we needed a dog door installed for the family pet and some additional doors fitted and hung. I contacted Frank and he agreed to take on the project. He installed the dog door and hung the new doors. The only problem was that he installed the dog door at the wrong location and door. When I brought it to his attention, he just smiled with that grin of his and stated in a matter-of-fact manner, that Connie would just have to retrain the dog to use the new door! Of course, I must confess he might have been distracted by our numerous conversations about trains.

Frank was a very special person, and he will certainly be missed by those of us who knew him.

By Dan Palaschak, TCA #89-28891

I have many a fond memory of Frank Koenig. He was a master craftsman having worked on both my homes on Northview Drive and Tuckey Lane. He did superb work and was always diligent in his attention to detail, except for the time he dropped a French door and broke both glass doors and had to buy another. We laughed about that many a time.

What I liked about Frank was his fair prices, great work, and honest to goodness disposition, not only on the job but as a toy trainman. Whenever I needed something for my train room or a repair, Frank always made himself available. His handwork with glue, yes glue, was absolutely amazing. He could repair (glue) anything without seams or the appearance of glue. We used to laugh about how I could glue my fingers together trying to repair something but not Frank....ever the master craftsman!

He was devoted to Dale also and always came with her when I hosted the TTOS board meetings at our house. He would sit for hours talking with Elizabeth, while we debated the business of the Grand Canyon TTOS Chapter. He was always a welcome presence at our home. Honestly I cannot think of anyone who did not like Frank, except Buster our Springer.....for some reason Buster would growl under his breath when Frank was in the room. Why, we could never figure out, as our other two dogs adored him.

Frank will be missed by many members of the Division for he was a true friend, a founder of TCA in the Valley and a wonderful trainman and valuable resource to us all! God Bless you my friend. Say hey to Cole when you see him for me!

by Sam McElwee, TCA #94-38786

I cannot think of the train clubs without also thinking of Frank. I know that any time we get together, I'll miss seeing him. Several times Frank and I would get together at his house to run trains and go out for a bite of lunch. I'm going to miss those times. We are all a little bit better because we knew Frank.

by Gordon Wilson, TCA #76-10233

I first met Frank many years ago, while on a Sabbatical Leave of Absence from my teaching position in New Jersey and studying at Arizona State in Tempe. Frank was as gregarious and friendly then as he was when I became a full time resident of this area in 1988. Frank was one of those rare individuals who, no matter the negativity of a situation, could ALWAYS find the Silver Lining in anything. I always wished I could do that; it was a gift, a very rare gift.

When we needed a garage built for our home in Fountain Hills, there was never a doubt as to who the contractor would be. Cost would not be the issue – Honesty and Integrity would be the ONLY criteria. I needed someone I could trust to have access to my home when Christie and I were away at work. I knew Frank was the type of person I could trust with my life. The comments Frank received from “interested” Fountain Hills residents about how best to build this garage were “priceless,” especially when I suggested to Frank that he should advise them that he was building an “Adult Toy Store.” This was actually true, as one of the 3 bays would hold many of my excess Lionel toy trains. We shared many laughs over the reactions this comment brought.

It's hard to believe Frank has passed from this landscape. His smile, positive outlook on life, and happy-go-lucky way of life is already greatly missed. Thankfully, when I think of and remember Frank, I do not dwell on his death, but on the Joy of Life that exemplified everything Frank did. I'm sure that's how he'd like all of us to remember him.

Frank, as a much younger man, had the foresight for which we are all indebted to him today. He was never afraid to “put his energies where his heart was.” He was one of the original signers of the petition that was presented to the Train Collectors Association National Board of Directors in June of 1971, which led directly to the formation of the Desert Division at that Disneyland Hotel/Western Division Convention. Later, in the early 1990's, we sought to give our monthly newsletter its singular identity by giving it a distinctive name. We ran a contest requesting names be suggested by our members. The winning entry of Desert Division Dispatch was submitted by Frank Koenig. So, in addition to being a faithful member, Frank was also a Founding Member of this Division and the one who gave our highly respected newspaper its personal identity. Frank was truly one of a kind, the “kind” whose warm heart and thoughtfulness can never be duplicated. Rest well, dear friend.

### **DUES ARE DUE**

It's that time of year again. Check the label on the front of this newsletter. If your label is highlighted in blue, you owe dues. The cost remains \$10 per year for up to 5 years in advance. Please fill out the form on Page 8 of this issue of the Dispatch and mail it along with your check, made payable to TCA – Desert Division, to the address on the bottom of the form. Should you wish to change any of your information in the Division Roster, please fill in the same form, as it will be used to create the roster during the early part of March, 2010.

## **COMING UP . . . .**

**FEBRUARY 13 – Regular Division Meet – Phoenix, AZ – 9 AM**

**FEBRUARY 20 – Rio Grande Chapter Meet – Albuquerque, NM – 10 AM**

**MARCH 13 – Regular Division Meet – Phoenix, AZ – 9 AM**

**MARCH 20- Spring Picnic –Railroad Park, Scottsdale, AZ – 11 AM**

**MARCH 20 – Rio Grande Chapter Meet – Albuquerque, NM – 10 AM**

**APRIL 10 –Division Meet and Auction – Phoenix, AZ – 9 AM**

**APRIL 22-24 – Eastern Division Meet – York, PA**

The Dispatch is published monthly except July and December by the Train Collectors Association, Desert Division, 16231 E. Ocotillo Drive, Fountain Hills, AZ 85268. This issue is Volume 40, No. 2 (February, 2010).

## JANUARY MEET NOTES

The Desert Division Meeting on January 9, 2010, was called to order at 10:05AM by President Jonathan Peiffer. This is our first meeting at our new location at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, 1500 West Maryland Avenue, Phoenix, AZ.

Several guests were in attendance as well as visitors from other Divisions: Bob Kamenca (who rejoined the Division), Gary Varner, Lorraine Cripps, and Roger Meekhof. Clark McClure also dropped in to check out the new location. Fred Hunter reported that there are about 98 persons who still owe Desert Division Dues.

Treasurer Bob Herman reported that we have \$25,289 in savings and \$16,125.61 in checking. President Peiffer reported that the 2009 Turkey Meet was very successful. There was attendance of approximately 900 on Saturday and 300 on Sunday. The 2010 Turkey Meet is in need of a chairperson, and it is probable that it will be for two days. Channel 12 did come out to do a spot for the Sean Dana show on Sunday which brought some folks out on Sunday.

Tom Plies has resigned from Kids Club due to his travels. Jonathan is looking for a leader there. Other positions are needed to be filled. Tony Saulina will be the Sergeant-at-Arms. Gordon and Christie Wilson will continue to serve as editors for the Dispatch. There is a need for more articles for the newsletter. Jonathan will assist anyone not sure of how to get them formatted or scan in any pictures, etc. Any kind of train related material is welcome. This communicating helps others to learn about trains and the hobby.

Coffee and sodas were provided by the 2009 Convention Committee. In the future, coffee and donuts will be free at meetings.

For the Spring Auction, we currently have about 100 lots. We will be accepting lots if anyone wants to sell good items. The Desert Division also has Copper Hoppers for sale. Paul Wassermann brought four of the cars in to show what he did with them. He made a load with gold glitter and paint as well as turquoise glitter and paint. He is looking to make up an ore car set with the hoppers and possibly have an engine and caboose plated as well.

Jonathan introduced the New Board:

Bob Johnston – Vice President

Fred Hunter – Secretary

Bob Herman – Treasurer

Ralph Treichel - Director

Marty Wik – Director

Katie Elgar – Past President Director

We need to address the bylaws and change them to conform with the new National Bylaws. President Peiffer will be appointing a committee to work on them. The after-meet visitation was at the home of Fred and Shirley Hunter.

Raffle Prizes were awarded as follows:

Lionel Chief's Inspection Car Chris Allen

Bakery O-Scale Kit Ralph Treichel

Die Cast Figures Roger Miller

G.P. Cornelius & Gila Bend Ore Car # 6-52011 Jack Eaton

Postwar Lionel Trains Book Bill East

Ralston Purina Reefer 6-9873 Ken Barnes

So Pacific Box Car K-6417 Brad Martin

Mechanical Semaphore 6-2311, Billboard Set, and Die Cast Car Phil Todd

110 Trestle Set Beth Stange

A large crowd at our new venue



President Peiffer at the microphone



Copper Hopper Consist



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With the recent passing of Frank Koenig, there is much to reflect upon. I did not have the honor of knowing Frank in the way that many did and I feel that I have truly missed something special. In the pages of this Dispatch, we can all read the memories that endeared Frank to many in the Desert Division.

Times like this serve as a strong reminder that regardless of a common interest in trains, it is the people of Desert Division that make the real difference. Without great people, we would not be as strong an organization as we are. We are also reminded that active participation helps us to learn more about each other and develop lifetime bonds that only serve to enrich ourselves and our hobby.

Finally we are reminded that we are all ambassadors for this hobby and the lifetime of enjoyment it can bring. My interest in model railroading was passed down from two generations of model railroaders before me and continues to be strengthened by the great relationships I have formed through membership in TCA and the Desert Division.

If you know someone who you might enjoy the fellowship of this hobby, invite him or her to a meet or event. If you have not been to a division meet in a while, take some time to reconnect and say hello. If you have never been to a meet, come on out and introduce yourself. For those of us who regularly attend the meetings and events, make sure we take the extra few moments to introduce ourselves more often and get to know each other just a little better.

It is no secret that the Division and TCA are not getting any younger. Perhaps that young person you introduce to this hobby, to the TCA, and to the Desert Division will be the person who is always helpful for the next generation or the one after that. I have recently reconnected with old friends through social networking sites such as Facebook. Friends from high school are now raising their own children and these children are interested in trains. With Lionel and Bachmann expanding their horizons with starter sets in available places such as Wal-Mart, Target and mail order publications, the manufacturers are reaching out to the general public. Did you know that MTH even has a Facebook page where you can see their offerings before everyone else?

How can we as a division reach out to the next generation and invite them to be involved in the greatest show on Earth, model railroading? Let's honor those who have come before us by sharing our

obsession with trains to those who have not yet been a part of this great hobby.



## DESERT DIVISION BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2010-2011

President:	Jonathan Peiffer	602-561-4131
Vice-President:	Bob Johnston	623-582-2110
Secretary:	Fred Hunter	480-947-3639
Treasurer:	Bob Herman	480-948-2730
Directors:	Katie Elgar	623-580-6957
	Greg Palmer	505-898-3840
	Ralph Treichel	602-863-6985
	Marty Wik	480-488-8625

### BOARD MEETING

The next meeting of the Desert Division Board of Directors will be held on Wednesday, February 10, beginning at 7:30 AM at the home of Fred and Shirley Hunter. Members are welcome to attend. Please call 480-947-3639 to be sure there are enough chairs.

### FEBRUARY MEET THEME

In honor of Valentine's Day, the theme for the February Show and Tell will be "Sweetheart Deals." Bring your favorite trains and tell the story of how you acquired them. Let's see how many entrants we can muster for the Educational Segment of the meet on the day before Valentine's Day, February 13, 2010.



### IN MEMORIAM

It has just come to our attention that long-time Desert Division member, Ralph Beardslee, of Deming, New Mexico, passed away recently. Those of us who knew him remember his attendance at the Turkey Meet and his love of toy trains. Our sincere condolences to his family at this time of grief.

## RIO GRANDE CHAPTER NEWS

by Gregory Palmer TCA#94-39039

The First Chapter Meet of 2010 started off with great warm weather, and a good turnout of members. No one brought toy trains to sell but just about everyone brought something to show the members during the Education Segment. I brought several items. The first is a Madison Hardware manufactured Block Signal, made out of tin and wood. It was made during World War II. Madison made a lot of wood items during WWII to sell to people for their layouts. This item I obtained from the Madison Hardware Auction. I also brought a Pre-War Wooden Lamp Container, and an original box of Eveready Light bulbs in the original box, plus some Pre-War Trains Magazines. Next up was Scott Eckstein, who brought his fully restored Lionel 252 Pre-War train Set. The Caboose had to be rebuilt, because of missing roof parts. Next up was Art Lites and his Lionel LLC Marvin the Martian Missile Firing Car. This car's price has gone up since it was made back in the late 1990's. Very unusual for Modern Era Lionel. Dale Schafer was next with his Lionel Stock Certificates, a business card signed by the famous Lionel icon Frank Pettit, a Madison Hardware label, and a 167S Whistle Controller for OO Lionel. He also had the reproduction issue of the trading cards. Thanks to Dale for bringing these rare items. Don Kuster brought an On30 K-37 Locomotive. A very impressive locomotive. John Trever brought a very rare Lionel 6456 Hopper Car with the three Lines of weight data, and he also brought a Lionel 2456 and 3456 Hopper to compare. We always learn a lot from John. George Swajian brought in some HO brass items. He wanted the members to help him establish the date and value of these fine items.

The business meeting part of the Meet took place with a Treasurer's report that we have \$941.10 in the checking account. This is a far cry for the amount the Chapter started with. Jon Spargo reported that the Trains for Kids program is moving along. He brought in photos to show the members the progress of the layout. Scott Eckstein reported on the 2010 TCA fundraising efforts, and informed us that the Chapter received prizes from National Headquarters for 2009. They were used at the 2009 Pumpkin Meet for raffle prizes. We then moved into the Election of Officers for 2010-2012. The following members were elected: Gregory Palmer, President; George Swajian, Vice President; Bill Harris, Treasurer; Scott Eckstein, Secretary; Art Lites, Carl Cataline, and Jon Spargo, Board Members at Large. We then moved into the 2010 Pumpkin Meet. It was learned that we made a profit at the 2009 Pumpkin Meet. With paying back the loan from the Division, the Hotel fees, advertising costs, and the raffle prizes we made close to \$300.00. This was due to the increase in attendance and the increase in table sales. We had 55 sales tables and close to 200 people came through the door. The membership decided on the date for the 2010 Pumpkin Meet to be Sunday, October 31<sup>st</sup> at the Sheraton Albuquerque Uptown Hotel. Bill Spofford will get the contract ready. This is Trick or Treat Day, and the members felt a great day for a Pumpkin Meet. It was also decided to look into having a Pumpkin Meet Auction and a Pumpkin Meet Banquet on Saturday October 30<sup>th</sup>. We will have further details at the February Meet. We made a motion to change wording in the Chapter Bylaws to state that the budget year will be from July 1 thru June 30. This will make it easier for our Treasurer to report to National on our annual budget. This change will be voted at the February Meet.

Our next Meet will be February 20th at 10:00AM at the Sombra Del Monte Church, at 2528 Utah N.E., in Albuquerque, NM. I hope to see all of you at the next Rio Grande Chapter Meet.



Top (L) Greg Palmer's block signal, light bulbs, and 1940's magazines; (C) Art Lites' Marvin the Martian Missile Car; (R) Dale Schafer's 167S controller and paper collection.  
Bottom (L) Don Kuster's On30 K-37 loco; Scott Eckstein's restored Lionel 252 set; George Swajian's HO Brass collection.

## **773 HUDSON RAFFLE**

by Gordon Wilson, TCA #76-10233

Of all the thousands of Toy Trains made by the Lionel Train Company over the years, there is one locomotive that is virtually synonymous with the name Lionel. It is the New York Central's 4-6-4 Steam Locomotive called The Hudson.

So named because its main route was, for the most part, along the famous Hudson River, it just happened to be Joshua LIONEL Cowen's favorite engine. In 1937 he made a scale model of it, and the rest, as they say, "is history."

Reissued after World War II as the engine that pulled their "top of the line set," it was renumbered 773. It soon became the most collectible and desired of any locomotive they ever made and has retained that status until and through to this day.

In 1989 the Desert Division first began its famed 773 Hudson Raffle Drawing. It is so famous and popular, that many other TCA Divisions have tried copying what we did. None, however, has ever duplicated our "M.O." completely. Here is how it works:

1. We print and offer for sale, only 100 numbered tickets.
2. They cost \$25 each with no limit on how many may be bought.
3. They are sold only to Desert Division members until the end of September.
4. They are then offered to ANY other TCA member, if any are still remaining.
5. A ticket is selected at each monthly meet in February, March, April, May, June, September, and October for a prize of \$100.00. If the person selected is not present, he/she is awarded \$25 instead, so it pays to be present when the ticket is drawn.
6. The winning ticket is placed back in the group so it could win again at the next meet, if drawn again.
7. At each meet, one ticket will be offered as a regular Raffle Prize, and is eligible to win the \$100 and the Hudson.
8. At the "Turkey Meet" in November, one ticket will be drawn as the winner of the HUDSON. The person need not be present. Also, the winner may opt for a cash \$500 prize in lieu of the HUDSON Locomotive and Tender.
9. The 773 Hudson will be a TCA quality Standard C-7 or better.
10. Owing to our 501c3 status, the Hudson Raffle ticket is considered a donation, and therefore a tax deduction.



## **APACHE BEER REEFER STATUS**

by Peter Atonna, TCA 75-7578

I have just received confirmation that the container with the upcoming Atlas Reefers contains our latest Apache Beer Reefer and has been shipped. I expect them here in the first or second week of February, so if you have one on order, you should be seeing it next month. If you did not order one, I still have a few available. Just go to the Desert Division website at [www.tcadd.org](http://www.tcadd.org) to order yours.

# DESERT DIVISION REGISTRATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_ TCA No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Spouse's first name \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is a check made payable to TCA - Desert Division in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to cover my dues for the next \_\_\_\_\_ (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) years at \$10.00 per year.

The following is a list of categories from the Registration Form representing your preferences in toy trains and accessories. Circle numbers of all categories that apply.

## TRAIN ERA

- 1 PREWAR (1850-1942)
- 2 POSTWAR (1945-1969)
- 3 MODERN (1970-Present)

## GAUGE

- 4 SCALE/ NMRA
- 5 STANDARD
- 6 G or #1
- 7 O or O-27 TINPLATE
- 8 S
- 9 HO
- 10 OO/AMERICAN
- 11 N
- 12 Z
- 13 LIVE STEAM

## MANUFACTURER

- 14 AMERICAN FLYER/GILBERT
- 15 LIONEL/WINNER
- 16 MARX/MARS/ALLSTATE
- 17 IVES
- 18 DORFAN/FANDOR
- 19 MTH
- 20 WILLIAMS
- 21 K-LINE
- 22 AMT/KUSAN
- 23 OTHER - PLEASE SPECIFY
  - 23A BASSETT/LOWKE
  - 23B BING
  - 23C BOUCHER
  - 23D BUB/KARL
  - 23E BUDDY-L
  - 23F CARLISLE & FINCH
  - 23G ELLETREN
  - 23H HAFFNER
  - 23I HOGE
  - 23J HORNBY
  - 23K ISSMAYER
  - 23L LGB
  - 23M MARKLIN
  - 23N METZEL
  - 23O MINI-SCALE

- 23P PHOENIX LTD.
- 23Q PLASTICVILLE
- 23R LITTLETOWN/SKYLINE
- 23S PRIDE LINES
- 23T REA/ARISTO-CRAFT
- 23U RIGHT-O-WAY
- 23V ROKAL
- 23W VOLTAMP
- 23X WEAVER
- 23Y McCOY
- 23Z NATIONWIDE
- 23AA USA TRAINS
- 23BB S-HELPER SERVICE
- 23CC ASTOR
- 23DD FLEISCHMANN
- 23EE CARETTE
- 23FF EASTWOOD AUTOMOBILIA
- 23GG AMERICAN MODELS S GAUGE
- 23HH DOWNS S GAUGE
- 23II COLBER
- 23JJ UNIQUE
- 23KK SAKAI
- 23LL BOWSER
- 23MM T-REPRODUCTIONS

## DO YOU HAVE A LAYOUT?

- 24 YES
- 25 NO

## PERIPHERALS

- 26 FIGURES
- 27 TOYS
- 28 PAPER/BOOKS
- 29 BUILDINGS
- 30 RAILRODIANA

Mail to: **Christie Wilson**, Secretary  
16231 E. Ocotillo Drive  
Fountain Hills, AZ 85268



## 2010 CONVENTION REGISTRATION

by Gordon Wilson, TCA #76-10233

After working so very hard for the past five years to prepare the 55<sup>th</sup> TCA National Convention last June and July at the J. W. Marriott Desert Ridge, you owe it to yourself to now attend the 56<sup>th</sup> TCA National Convention and strictly, KICK BACK, RELAX, and ENJOY!

Yes, you can surely appreciate now how “the other half lives,” because you’ve been through it. But now it’s your turn to enjoy the fruits of someone else’s labor. Register now for the Prime trips of this year’s TCA Convention in the Baltimore, Maryland, area. Among these trips will be the opportunity to visit the TCA Headquarters in Strasburg, PA. Strasburg is only an hour north of Baltimore via the Interstate Highway system. If you’ve never been to your organization’s “home,” here is the perfect time to visit it and without the crowds connected with the York Meet weeks of April and October. Check out the brick walkway containing all the Desert Division names; see the world’s most magnificent library collection of books, magazines, photos, catalogs, and paper memorabilia connected with the hobby of toy trains; then there are those five (5) operating layouts and the incredible full-size train displays. All of this before you feast your eyes on the largest selection of Toy Trains, dating back to the mid-nineteenth century. And that’s just ONE tour.

Baltimore is steeped in American History – Fort McHenry; the Star-Spangled Banner; the B&O Railroad Museum; Babe Ruth was born in Baltimore; the world famous Aquarium and Baltimore Waterfront are all part of various tours that are planned. Docked in Baltimore is the 19<sup>th</sup> Century U. S. Navy Warship U. S. Constellation and one of only two surviving World War II Liberty Ships, the John Brown. A trip to Baltimore would not be complete without tasting some real LUMP MEAT Crab Cakes – they will melt in your mouth. Not far away from Baltimore are two American icons: the U. S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, home to our future Naval Officers, and just an hour south of Baltimore is our nation’s capital, Washington, D. C. If you’ve never been to D. C., this is your chance to climb the Washington Monument or visit the Lincoln, Jefferson, or Vietnam Memorials. A “Duck Ride” on the Potomac is a relaxing way to also take in the sights. Nearly forgot – the Capitol Building with its famous dome and that big house painted white at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue are surely “must sees.”

Register now! Use your latest National Headquarters News or log onto [www.tcabalt2010.org](http://www.tcabalt2010.org). See you in Baltimore, June 20-27, 2010. Southwest Airlines flies non-stop from Phoenix right to BWI.

## JOIN US IN BALTIMORE 56<sup>th</sup> TCA National Convention Hosted by WB&A Chapter June 20-27, 2010

(reprinted from “The Trolley,” the Official WB&A Newsletter, Vol. 11, No. 1, Jan-Mar 2010  
by permission of Hope and Dan Danielson, and Eileen Rollyson, co-chairs)

In about six months, the 2010 TCA National Convention, sponsored by WB&A Chapter, will be a fond memory.

Convention dates are June 20-27, 2010. With the help of Dannie Martin, National Convention Chairman, and many wonderful volunteers, we have most of the details completed. Contracts with hotels, the Baltimore Convention Center, and lots of special activities and tours have been finalized. The Convention Headquarters hotel is the Sheraton Baltimore City Center, with additional space available at the Radisson Plaza Lord Baltimore and Holiday Inn Inner Harbor. Room rates begin at \$125/night. Trading Pits and Public Displays will be held in the Baltimore Convention Center. A FREE continuous-loop Shuttle Bus will transport convention visitors between the hotels, Convention Center, off-site parking, the Inner Harbor, and other convenient locations.

The first ever off-site Welcome Party will be held at Camden Station (an original B&O depot which is now home to two spectacular museums – Sports Legends and Geppi Entertainment). Try on a Ravens’ or Orioles’ uniform, learn all about Babe Ruth, Johnny Unitas, Cal Ripken, and other local sports heroes. See first issue comic books, toys, dolls, pop culture art, and TRAINS, including a complete Lionel Mickey Mouse Circus Set. A Silent Auction offers some amazing pre- and post-war trains. Dinner is included.

Baltimore is a diverse city with so much to offer, we’re providing a list of “On Your Own” tours in addition to 40+ scheduled tours. The tour schedule is available on the 2010 TCA National Convention website, [www.tcabalt2010.org](http://www.tcabalt2010.org). Baltimore is a railroading town; therefore, there will be tours to many of those sites. Many members have opened their homes for exciting layout tours. Special tours will be held for the ladies while the men are in the Trading Pits.

Fred Strieby is assembling the “Ultimate Train Room,” a special exhibit of B&O trains, Lionel handcars, accessories, and even a table set with B&O china and silver . . . so much to see and enjoy.

The Convention Banquet will feature a delicious Maryland crab cake dinner. (Yes, there will be other entrée choices.) . . . and, there will be spectacular items at a Live Auction.

## EXQUISITE MYSTERY DINNER TRAIN

by Gordon Wilson, TCA #76-10233

Immediately after the Fiesta Bowl of January 4, Christie and I flew to Florida for a long-booked cruise on the world's largest cruise ship, the massive 226,000 ton Oasis of the Seas. However, prior to boarding that ship, we planned to visit with a former student and her husband, now the chief ranger at the Everglades National Park, and then to cross the state to Fort Myers for a trip on a Dinner Mystery Train. It was this train trip that became the "Hidden Gem" of our two-week mid-winter vacation.

Fort Myers and Fort Myers Beach has long been our favorite spot in Florida, dating back to our early wedded days in New Jersey. We read about this trip in some Kalmbach train publication and thought it would be a nice diversion prior to a week on the cruise we'd booked a year and a half earlier. The fact that it was in Fort Myers didn't hurt its image at all. Driving west on the Tamiami Trail from Homestead, Florida (where the Everglades are located), we passed the smallest U. S. Post Office in Ochopee, an unexpected bonus and another "notch" in one of those 1001 places to visit before you die. The train turned out to be more than we ever hoped for or dreamt about.



Smallest USPS Post Office



Seminole Gulf F-7 Diesel



Mystery Dinner Train Actors

Flanked by a 1950's Florida East Coast F-7 and painted in Seminole Gulf Railway colors of blue, yellow, and orange, and pushed/assisted by an older GP-9, the four refurbished streamlined passenger cars were well appointed with period furniture, light fixtures, plus mirrors, paintings, and other niceties. The actors were quite professional and picked up on many of the reactions of the diners to make the affair quite personal for all in attendance. However, the most surprising thing to me was the quality of the food. Amazingly, the highly touted cruise ship did not have any "WOW" meals during our week aboard, but on this one night on a Dinner Train in Fort Myers, there was a "WOW" meal. A 5-course meal, served between acts of the Murder Mystery, was without a doubt the finest of its type we have ever eaten on such a train. This includes 6 trips on the Wine Train in Napa City, California and two other reputed "gourmet" Dinner Trains we've ridden and eaten on in Washington State and Minnesota. Service was also impeccable. We even figured out "Who Done It" but missed the Bonus Question, so we didn't win the Grand Prize.

My recommendation is that should you find yourself near Fort Myers, Florida, you should seriously consider a night on the Seminole Gulf Mystery Dinner Train. Go to [www.semgulf.com](http://www.semgulf.com) for further information.

Finally, while on the recent cruise, we obtained some very valuable shopping coupons good in many island countries in the Eastern and Western Caribbean Sea, plus several Mexican resort cities. Should anyone reading this be going on a cruise or trip to any of these places and be interested in any of them (they're free), please contact us at your earliest convenience at [christie1wilson@aol.com](mailto:christie1wilson@aol.com) or 480-837-5344.



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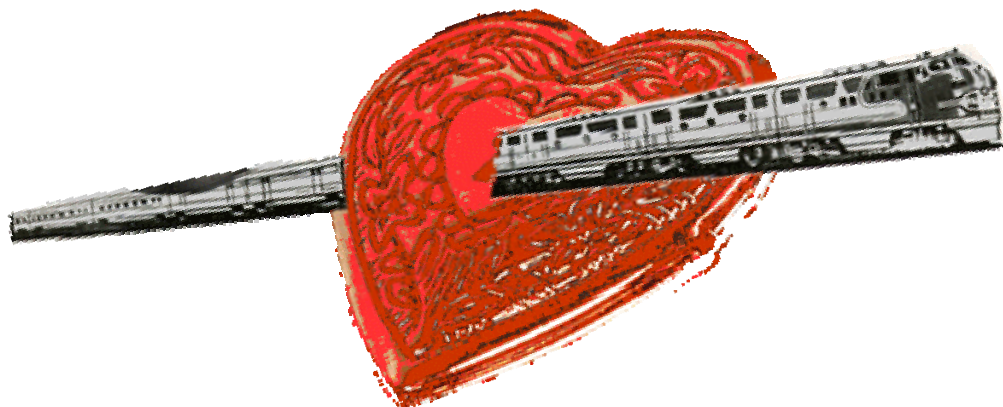
**TRAIN COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION  
DESERT DIVISION**

Gordon Wilson, Editor  
Desert Division Dispatch  
16231 E. Ocotillo Drive  
Fountain Hills, AZ 85268

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## DUES ARE DUE

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Click on the link to our e-Bay offerings.**

### COMING EVENTS

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| February 12 | Old Board-New Board Dinner – By Invitation Only   |
| February 13 | Regular Division Meet – Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, Phoenix, AZ – 9 AM  |
| February 20 | Rio Grande Chapter Meet – Sombra Del Monte Church, 2428 Utah NE, Albuquerque, NM – 10 AM  |
| February 27 | Grand Canyon Model Railroaders Mid-Winter Meet – 52 <sup>nd</sup> Street Armory, Phoenix, AZ – 9 AM<br>Contact: Art Triant 623-451-4604 |
| March 13    | Regular Division Meet – Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, Phoenix, AZ – 9 AM  |
| March 13-14 | Nor-Cal Meet – Santa Clara, CA – 9 AM   |
| March 20    | Spring Picnic – McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park – 11 AM  |
| March 20    | Rio Grande Chapter Meet – Sombra Del Monte Church, 2428 Utah NE, Albuquerque, NM – 10 AM  |
| April 10    | Regular Division Meet and Pizza MeetzaAuction– Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church,<br>Phoenix, AZ – 9 AM                            |
| April 22-24 | Eastern Meet – York, PA   |

## DIVISION MEET LOCATION

**Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, 1500 W. Maryland Ave., Phoenix, AZ 850151.**