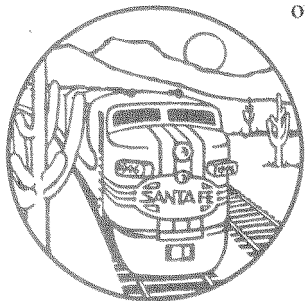


TCA Mission: To preserve an important segment of history – Tinplate Toy Trains – through research, establishment of collecting standards, education, community outreach, fellowship and to promote the growth and enjoyment of the hobby.



Desert Division

DISPATCH

ARIZONA • NEW MEXICO • WEST TEXAS



Volume 33, No. 2

March, 2004

A SWEETHEART OF A MEET!!

Judging by the cars filling the parking lot and then extending for two blocks in an easterly direction from the Jaycees Hall, it was obvious that Valentine's Day wasn't going to keep the Desert Division faithful away from their toy train meeting. Inside, the hall was absolutely jammed with guests, members and their trains. Every table was pressed in to use and a wonderful variety of wares were present; something to tempt any budget or interest.

Christie Wilson introduced our guests, who included Steve Bienstock's friends Neal Pascoe and John Addeo, Clark McClure's twin brother Mark, and Ron Kuhn's brother-in-law Charles Larkins. The Division's newest members, Art Beard and Tom Keys were also in attendance. Treasurer Bob Herman reported that the Savings account has \$13,929.08 and the Checking account has \$7,972.87. A newly initiated policy of 15% of raffle prize income going to the "Trains 4 Kids" Program resulted in a \$29.25 donation from the January raffles.

Tom Plies reported that the Zoo Project Railroad Layout is completed and in place at the Phoenix Zoo. This is a remarkable accomplishment. Certainly all members will want to check out the Desert Division layout on their next visit to the Zoo in Papago Park. To help offset the expense of this project, the Division is raffling off a Lionel O gauge Thomas the Tank Set. Tickets are \$3.00 each or two for \$5.00, with only 100 tickets to be sold. This provides you with a great opportunity to help the club and at the same time have a chance to win a very desirable Lionel O gauge set.

Chris Allen reported that the "Planes, Trains, and Automobiles" event held at Falcon Field in Mesa, was a success. Thanks to all who helped accomplish the set up and running of our module.

The 2009 Convention Steering Committee (Ed Micale, Chair; Chris Allen, Bill Mack, Paul Wassermann, and Gordon Wilson) met with National Convention Committee Chairman, Dannie Martin at the J.W. Marriott Desert Ridge Resort. A tour of the complex resulted in rave reviews. The facility is stunning and will provide a tremendous venue for the 2009 Fourth of July "Star Spangled Convention." With huge carpeted ballrooms, elegant meeting rooms, plush suites and standard rooms, the juices really got flowing to get this convention underway. Five years will seem all too short as the complexities of putting on the convention become a "just around the corner" day to day challenge.

Pizza Meetza and its annual spring auction are less than two months away. Chet Henry is accepting items for the auction. Remember there is a single fee of just \$5.00 per lot. Contact Chet and get your name on his sign up sheet if you have some items you wish to place in the auction.

It is an absolute must; we must find at least 200 additional lots for the Turkey Meet Auction. The success of the meet is heavily dependent upon the auction as a division revenue generator. To date we have commitments for 100 lots. We need the remainder committed by July so we can get final lotting accomplished and the catalog published. Please, if you have a significant number of trains you would like to include in the auction (or have leads as to a collection that might be disposed of in the auction) contact Chet Henry or President Chris Allen at once.

COMING EVENTS

MARCH 14
MARCH 27

REGULAR DIVISION MEET – JAYCEES HALL – 9 AM
**RAY KORTE MEMORIAL PICNIC – McCORMICK-
STILLMAN RAILROAD PART – 11 AM**

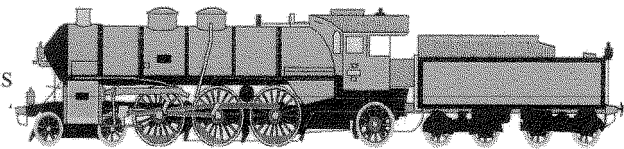
Christie Wilson opened the Valentine "Trains You Love" Educational Segment with the saga of the Mervyn's Lionel Train. After complaining to Mervyn's about the difficulty she had trying to get their promotional materials, the company responded by sending her a free train! (Despite over one hundred chances filled out for Gordon, he did not win...the train is Christie's!)

Chuck McClure, who grew up along the Louisville & Nashville line, enthralled the audience with a story of his fascination with the railroad's Mikado Locomotives. Chuck brought the Mikado blueprints, which he had drawn as a shop project in high school along with a stunning O scale model of the locomotive, and has promised an article for the Dispatch. Paul Wassermann followed with wife Irene's Marx Honeymoon Express, a boxed Lionel 1915 700 passenger set previously owned by Harry Osisek, and a mint American Flyer clockwork set that included an original General Battery. Bill Schulte concluded the presentations with a music box that plays "I've Been Working on the Railroad", which incidentally was a Lionel item sold during the Holiday season by Mervyn's.

Tom Plies was honored as "Member of the Month" for his yeoman work with the Kids Club and as being the spearhead for the Zoo layout project.

Katie Elgar still has a few division shirts left for sale. The TCA - TTOS Picnic will be held on March 27. Once again hot dogs, sodas, ice cream, pot luck and lots of fun will be found at the Stillman Railroad Park. The after-meet visitation on March 13 will be held at the home of Dave and Judy Brown. Mystery Greeter Tom Keys awarded the 10 extra monthly raffle tickets to Chris Allen. Kids Club member Nathaniel Davis pulled the first winning ticket, belonging to none other than club Treasurer Bob Herman. He chose the Hudson Raffle ticket as his prize. Other Raffle prizes were awarded as follows:

Bill MacDowell	MTH Wilson Car Lines Reefer
Bob Dennison	Rail Kind McDonald's Flat w/Billboards
John Wiley	Lionel Monon Boxcar
Angelo Lautazi	Lionel helicopter/truck set
Pat Eiff	Lionel Trains Video
Dave Brown	Plasticville watchtower and Lionel Rock Piers
Thomas Plies	Branchline Kit/ train candy, and books
Brad Martin	Lionel Bank



DESERT DIVISION WARMTH GOES EAST AND WEST

The Desert Division's officers and members wish to extend our sincere condolences to California member Mark Boyd and his family. Mark was summoned to Texas in January upon learning of the sudden death of his father. We all wish Mark the very best at this difficult time.

In Pittsburgh, Zella Fraley found herself hospital bound with an unknown ailment. A combination of wonderful medical treatment and much needed rest have helped in her recovery. Zella is now resting comfortably at home. It is our hope that she will be able to resume her normal lifestyle in the very near future.

GOT YOUR TICKET? SPRING RAFFLE BEGINS AT MARCH MEET

This year's Spring Raffle is sure to please everyone. The prizes, which can be viewed on our website (www.tcadd.org) include the following: A) Black Santa Fe F-3's by K-Line, B) Lionel Berkshire locomotive and tender, and C) Lionel Hobo Hotel. Tickets for the three superb prizes in this raffle will be available for purchase beginning during the March meet, and continuing through June. You do not need to be present to win a prize, so be sure to buy your tickets, fill out the stubs with your name and address, and place the stubs in the appropriate raffle tin. The cost is \$10 per ticket or three for \$25. Yours could be a winning ticket on June 12th, but only if you participate. Don't forget! Get your tickets during the next meet and support your Division in this fund-raising activity.

BOARD MEETING

The next meeting of the Desert Division Board of Directors will be held on Wednesday, March 10, beginning at 7:30 PM at the home of Phil and Jeanine Monahan. Call 480-607-3956 for directions.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings to you all!

The smell of fresh mowed grass and the crack of the bat means spring training and the "boys of summer" are back in town. OK, I'll risk using the parody of baseball spring training and our often misuse of the word training as an active verb, but in the Desert Division, we sure have been training a lot so far this year. As announced last month both in the newsletter and the General Meet, *The Phoenix Zoo train table* has been installed and is up and running. Thomas Plies and his crew have done a wonderful job and I can report after meeting with several of the Phoenix Zoo's administrative staff that they are excited about it too! The learning curve for everyone involved with this project has been a bit steeper than originally imagined, but considering that we are using many well-loved postwar locomotives, rolling stock, and transformers, along with some very energetic children pushing buttons, things are going just fine. The one thing we have had to do is move up our preventive maintenance schedule a bit, something we are doing with a smile as the children at the zoo are really putting these trains to the test! We've already had to pull one motor apart and clean the armature, plus lubrication that we thought would last for a month is only lasting a week. Yes, the Phoenix Zoo's visitors are really enjoying the new train table. I would really like to install a counter on one of the buttons just to see how much "love" these toy trains are getting. Thanks to all of you who helped make this project possible. Please look for a more in depth article about the train table elsewhere in this issue.

We also had the regular Division module up and running at the Rotary International's "Planes, Trains, Automobiles, and Up on Two Wheels" event held at Falcon Field in Mesa. This one-day event is turning into a real crowd pleaser. We were competing for floor space with several of the other train clubs in town. Keeping communications lines open and making new ones is essential, as we try to plan our own events. The old adage of "one hand washes the other" really applies here as we continue to further our contacts and commitments with these other clubs and organizations in the area. Several good things came out of this show, and we will be implementing them for this and other future shows. I have a write up about our day and the great work done by our Kids Club and the fun they all had, also in this issue.

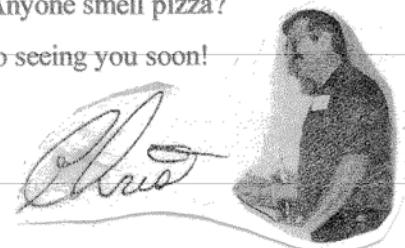
And continuing on this "train" of thought, the Ray Korte Memorial Spring Picnic is on the horizon.

Through our friends at the Paradise and Pacific Railroad Club, we are able to book the same weekend every year, the fourth Saturday in March. It turns out that this year GATS and NorCal also have picked this weekend to host their meets. Because we must make our reservations as soon as the park makes them available (six months prior to the month of use) we were unaware in October of the schedule conflicts. We will still have a wonderful day at the park and our grill chefs have promised hot dogs done to perfection. (Would you have it any other way?) As always what makes the spring picnic so special is YOU and all the wonderful side dishes and desserts you bring along. I know several cookie monsters will be in attendance. My own personal favorite is all the different salads available. Unfortunately the Queen of our fun and games department, Beth Stange, will be enjoying the gray skies of NorCal that day but the TCADD Kids Club is organizing some activities for the young and the young at heart. I'll be there, hope to see you there too!

The one place I won't be is at the March general meeting. Our Bi-annual trek to my parent's house falls during spring break and our meet, so Vice President Katie Elgar will be at the podium. However, I'll be back in time for my favorite meet of the year in April. Anyone smell pizza?

Looking forward to seeing you soon!

Chris



PRESIDENT ALLEN WINS ELECTION

Each year the twenty TCA Division Presidents who comprise the National Board of Directors hold an election to select their three representatives to the TCA Management Committee. Only the members of the BOD may do the nominating and only those twenty Presidents may vote in the subsequent election. The Desert Division is very proud to acknowledge the election of Chris Allen to this very select group. Chris becomes the *third Desert Division President* to be so honored by his peers. (Gordon Wilson and Fred Hunter were the other two.) He will join Great Lakes Division President Gordon Knight and Metca Division President William Brennan on the Management Committee. The Committee serves at the pleasure of the TCA President. In this, TCA's 50th year, that President is Desert Division Past-President Paul Wassermann. Congratulations to Chris on this nationally recognized achievement.

VISIT OUR WEB SITE: www.tcadd.org

CONVENTION (2009) STATUS REPORT

by Ed Micale, Convention Chair

On Friday, February 13th, another major milestone was accomplished in the Desert Division's bid to host the 2009 TCA National Convention. Your Convention Committee, along with Dannie Martin (National Convention Guidelines Chair), conducted a site inspection of the JW Marriott Desert Ridge Resort and Spa with the Senior Sales Manager representing the JW Marriott. We were escorted through the entire resort and then conducted a thorough review of our contract. The meeting was successful in confirming the Convention needs with a few minor issues being resolved at this time. Holding the Convention at this resort will establish a new benchmark for TCA Conventions to come. This is a five-star venue with spectacular accommodations and amenities for the entire family. Furthermore, it will be offered at an affordable price. The resort offers:

- Luxurious guest rooms, all with patios and great desert views.
- Four acres of pools and waterways that include meandering lakes, waterfalls, a lazy river, and a serpentine slide.
- Ten restaurants from which to choose.
- A wide variety of spacious, luxurious, and well-lit ballrooms, conference rooms, and board rooms to hold the banquet, welcome party, table sales, public exhibits, exhibition halls, and various other meeting activities needed for the Convention.
- Two 18-hole golf courses.
- A magnificent array of onsite unique resort shops and boutiques.
- Close proximity to many shopping malls, including The Desert Ridge Marketplace, a unique family oriented site of restaurants, shopping, and a multiplex movie theater.
- Easy access to the 101 freeway and Sky Harbor Airport.
- Continuous shuttle service between the Resort, Airport, and malls.

For a more in depth review of the resort accommodations and amenities, see their website at: http://www.jwdesertridgeresort.com/home/home_static.asp. The JW Marriott will also be providing us with a video of the resort that will be available in late summer 2004.

The next major milestone will be the formal presentation to the TCA National BOD at the June 2004 Pittsburgh 50th Anniversary Convention. This presentation will consist of a fifteen-minute review of the proposed Convention plan. During this meeting the BOD will give its approval of the site/host Division for the 2009 Convention. At that point, we will begin selecting the necessary Convention Committee chairpersons and commence with the detailed planning for the 2009 "Star Spangled" Convention.

Have You PADE Your Way?

Purchase raffle tickets

Author an article for the Dispatch

Donate something to the club

Enlist to help

Kids Club members Melissa and Rebecca Peiffer play with Brio play set during February meet.



PADE PROMOTIONS

The Desert Division thanks everyone who made a PADE donation during the past months. Kids Club thanks the following: John Huber for a Plasticville Hardware Store Kit; Jonathan Peiffer for a complete HO Santa Fe train set with track and transformer and an AC Tech II transformer; Bob Bates for the six unit Marx passenger train set. We also have two guest authors in this issue. Werner Hennig wrote a Caboose article and Clark McClure sent in a Louisville and Nashville article. Thank you to all of you who bought raffle tickets. We appreciate the efforts of Denise Micale and Laurel Allen who staffed the kitchen this month. Finally, as a result of your generosity, the "Trains 4 Kids" program earned \$29.25 in January and \$25.50 in February.

Your name could appear in this column. You need only do something generous to improve the Division.

ENROLL YOUR CHILD(REN) IN KIDS CLUB

Use the form found elsewhere in this bulletin.

Desert



Division

NO CHILDHOOD SHOULD BE WITHOUT A TRAIN

KIDS CLUB NEWS

By Rob Davis, John Huber, and Tom Plies

Effective with this issue of the Dispatch, Tom Plies will contribute items on the subject of "Kids Club Collecting" each month. Here are two thoughts on this subject, edited from an article "Young Collectors" by H. Rinker.

- A. Allow the child to decide when he is ready to collect. Do not force him into it. Starting to group like objects together and showing an interest in a specific object group are signs of a child's interest in collecting. Based on limited observations, this seems to occur between ages 2½ and 4.
- B. Let the child decide what he wants to collect. This is extremely important. I have lost count of the number of parents I have met who began their child's collection the moment the doctor confirmed the pregnancy. Parents make a major mistake when they dictate what their child should collect. The collecting focus needs to be the child's focus. It is the act of collecting that is important, not what is collected. Parents must resist the temptation to be judgmental. A child's collecting interests should differ from those of his parents, if for no other reason than to prevent rivalry and comparison.



Kids in attendance on February 14 received a two-piece airplane to fly, and Plasticville or K-Line house kits to build. In addition there were three train videos, the Brio mat was set up, and an O scale train with tracks was available. Bring your kids to the March Meet. We'll have activities for them to do.

Do you want to enroll someone "FREE" between the ages of 4 through 17 in the Kids Club? Use the form below. Give it to one of the Kids Club Chairs at the Meet on March 13 and we will see to it that it is sent on to the TCA National Business Office.

Kid's Club Registration Form

PLEASE PRINT

Name _____ Date of Birth _____ / _____ / _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP Code _____

SPONSOR INFORMATION

Sponsor Name _____ TCA No. _____

Phone No. _____ Relationship to Kid's Club Member _____



Left: Abigail and Nathaniel Davis watch Toy Trains #10.

Right: Kids Club Co-Chair John Huber helps Alison Huber, Colton Starley, and Mark Huber make Plasticville houses.



DESERT DIVISION DONATES TRAIN TABLE TO THE PHOENIX ZOO

(Excerpts edited from the Desert Division website)

The idea to donate a train table was first proposed by Kids Club co-chair, Thomas Plies in the spring of 2003. Thomas thought that it would be a viable project in which to have the Kids Club participate. Working as a volunteer at the Phoenix Zoo, Thomas first approached the management of the park to see if there was any interest in the project. Getting assurances that the Zoo was indeed interested in an operating layout, the Desert Division Board of Directors gave the nod and work began. From early in the project it was decided that due to the scale of the trains it was not feasible to do an actual scale replica of the Phoenix Zoo, but rather pick certain key landmarks and attractions and then highlight them on the table. In addition, elevating the trains above the layout would also free up some much needed areas on the suddenly crowded 4' x 8' table. Wanting to add some interaction with the visitors, rather than have them watch trains running in circles, it was decided to add some operating accessories to the display as well. Many members of the Division, as well as the private sector helped bring the project to completion through their generous donations. Garden railroad builder, Dan Hoag of Eaglewings Iron Craft, was approached and graciously donated the frame for the Plexiglas cover needed to keep young and anxious engineers hands off the layout. Although Dan does not operate "O" gauge trains, his donation, plus his contact with Jim and Scott Bishop of Century Plastics (who donated the Plexiglas for the project) helped turn the project from concept to reality and under budget. The table is designed to be only 30" off the ground so that youngsters would have a better view. Seven "pinball machine" type buttons were installed to activate the trains and accessories. Steven Palmer of Arizona Train Depot and Ken Burling of Burling's Ton of Trains donated and otherwise helped to procure the operating accessories, rolling stock, and many other needed "essentials", while Tom and Beth Stange of Trainland Express donated K-Line's "Steven's Hideout Tree House" to help complete the table. These four Division members are constantly asked to "answer the call" and came through again. K-Line Electric Trains, also a long time supporter of the Desert Division, helped round out the table top display by donating the numerous figures needed to "populate" the Zoo.

Construction of the Zoo table began in early November and was completed by the end of January. Several Desert Division members were given a blank "plot" of zoo land in which to construct a diorama of a certain area using their imagination. The original concept of involving the Kids Club into the building of the dioramas gave way to the time constraints of our meeting schedule during the holiday months. Instead, the Kids Club plans on having the children build Plasticville houses and teach them other areas of model landscaping. Certain zoo landmarks and "personalities" were faithfully reproduced, while others gave way to artistic renditions. The Phoenix Zoo's unique Entrance Portal and Membership Kiosk was faithfully reproduced by Jonathan Peiffer.. In one corner is a tribute to one of the Phoenix Zoo's most colorful and endearing guests, Ruby the Elephant, who will be remembered fondly by those of us who grew up and visited the zoo over the past two decades. Also represented, and popular with the children who visit the zoo, is the tree house and playhouse area along with Harmony Farm and the Petting Zoo.

The Phoenix Zoo train module was delivered and went into service to the delight of the parks guests on February 6th, 2004. This is an unmanned exhibit that is located in the Safari Station, where zoo visitors purchase tickets and wait for the parks electric tram which runs every 30 minutes. The operating buttons were purposely left unlabeled to allow for hard-working fingers and active minds to go on a discovery tour to see what each button operates. Seeing the energetic ways the buttons are "pressed" made us feel very comfortable about spending the extra money for the pinball type machine switches. The module is constructed with an isolated track section so that the trains will run only as long as the button is pushed and will stop out of the way at the rear of the module, when released. The two post war locomotives were donated by Desert Division member Phil Monahan of Quality Repairs, the local Lionel Service Station, and the passenger coaches were donated by Bob Dymacek. The locomotives have been hard wired forward only, have received a "custom" paint job, and we have disabled or use non-operating couplers on all rolling stock. The Phoenix Zoo staff has a list of Division members on call when problems might arise and are responsible for the daily dusting and fingerprint cleaning of the Plexiglas. The Desert Division has a member who visits the module for routine maintenance, operational inspection, and cleaning of the tracks on a weekly basis. The next time you and your family visit the Phoenix Zoo, stop by the Safari Station and check out what this dedicated group has accomplished. Last year over 160,000 guests bought tickets at the Safari Station - that's going to be a lot of button pushes and exposure for our local Division.

2004 BOD DINNER

by Chris Allen, TCA 95-40580

Unless you read the Desert Division Annual Report, you probably are unaware of a little known function held each year. What started out as a pot-luck dinner has evolved into an evening of honoring spouses and outgoing members of the Division's Board of Directors. To expand the list of revelers the Division also invites all Division Past Presidents and all past National Presidents who live within the Division boundaries. This no-host event is typically scheduled to occur early in February with Bill and Jean Mack acting as the Division's party coordinators, seeing to all the little details.

This year the BOD Dinner was held the day before Valentines Day, which seemed romantic until the calendar revealed it was to fall on Friday the 13th. What a day to honor our spouses. Typically we try not to talk shop, though it is hard when so much experience is together in one location, and that is one of the added benefits of the evening as the torch is passed, so to speak, to the next group who will manage the Division. Friendships are kindled and the often heard refrain of "Don't worry; you'll do just fine" is echoed throughout the room. In recent years Bill has been able to secure "The Cottage," a small dining room located behind Dale Anderson's "The Other Place" in Scottsdale. This affords us a degree of privacy as we have a slow dinner and enjoy each other's company.

As the dinner concludes we normally share stories of past faux pas or events that happened during each President's tenure. This year, however, we broke from tradition and let the ladies speak about what they enjoyed (or didn't) during the time they were the Division's "first ladies." Although unplanned it was a real treat to hear so many speak of the friendships that they had made and that train collectors (and their families) really are the friendliest people around. One unexpected highlight of all the ladies comments came from Shirley Hunter, who revealed to all that there was a gnome running around Scottsdale. Seems every time Shirley would clean up Fred's files and throw out the old unneeded transcripts, the old gnome would find them and bring them back into the house! Shirley's solution, which brought a chuckle to all, was that she was BURNING the old paperwork, so the gnome finally had to give up. Unfortunately many of the wives were taking notes, careful notes, on Shirley's new file-cleaning method. As the stories wound down, we adjourned for some home-made desserts at the home of Paul and Irene Wasserman. Paul's fabulous collection and Irene's gracious hospitality made a magnificent evening even better.



Top: L-R: E. Georgevich, A Triant, P. Atonna, M. J. Atonna, J. Herman, R. Herman, F. Gibbs, C. Gibbs, F. Hunter, S. Hunter, P. Monahan.

Right: Denise Micale seemed surprised when she discovered EVERYONE knew it was also her birthday. Helping Denise Celebrate are husband Ed and friend, Jean Mack.

PLANES, TRAINS, AND LOTS OF WHEELS!

Helping out the Rotary International is becoming an annual event each spring and I hope you had a chance to stop by and visit. Last year was the first year the local Rotarians hosted the event and, to be honest, it was a bit rough around the edges, but they sure fixed up things for this year. Thomas and Patricia Plies, DeLon Freije, and I showed up Friday afternoon around 3 PM to a designated spot taped out on the floor with power at the ready. We did the basic bench work, laid out the track, and electrically tested everything before calling it a day at 4:45. Bright and early the next morning Don Locke and I began decorating the module. We were soon once again joined by DeLon and Thomas, plus Rob Davis, John Huber and Kids Club members Nathaniel Davis and Mark Huber. With all this help, the buildings and operating accessories were set up and running, along with plenty of static train displays, well ahead of the 10 AM start time. Mark wanted to run a locomotive he brought along and, with no help from the adults, hitched his MTH Dreyfuss Hudson to a large freight consist and started the morning.

Running MTH DCS along with K-Line and Lionel TMCC had the hangar jumping as all four mainlines were "singing" from start to finish. Jonathan Peiffer was running his beautiful Williams Pennsy FP-45's and a MTH P-5a (not your usual motive power) pulling 20" aluminum passenger cars, while my trusty MTH SP GS-4 Daylights added some contrasting color. Janet Mattern ran the Lionel Phantom and her clear shell F-3's to the delight of all present. Looking into the "guts" of the clear shells, we were able to relate to many folks how the hobby has evolved and what is inside the newer trains. The little module gremlin must have taken the day off as we ran all types of pre- and post-war along with the latest digital trains on the market with nary a glitch. My Lionel 1663 "Torpedo" looked really small next to all its scale and semi-scale running mates. What module run would be complete without the Calkins Cacophony Consist? Jerry and Connie arrived with, what seemed to us as, all of Jerry's QSI animal sound cattle cars. He then proudly announced to everyone, "I just put fresh batteries in them all!" We could hardly contain our glee.....

Seriously though, it was a beautiful February day with temperatures in the mid 70's, and it made strolling outside and looking at all the custom and highly detailed automobiles and motorcycles a nice break from the module table. This part of the Rotarians event also was greatly improved from last year. The custom and restored cars were fantastic and many of us came back to the module telling tales of similar cars we once had or rode in. With 4:00 PM and the end of the day came tear down. It went faster than I had ever imagined. Jerry, Connie, Janet, DeLon, Thomas, Jonathan and I all busied ourselves wrapping Plasticville, track, and accessories and loaded everything up. Jonathan and I headed for our storage shed and had the module unloaded and the rental trailer back to U-Haul by 5:30!

Thank you one and all who came out and helped and also those of you who came by the module to say hi while you were there to enjoy the fabulous show. We have already been invited back for 2005. With as much fun as we all had this year, I'm sure we will be back.



I. to r. - Before the event opened, Don Locke and DeLon Freije lubricated engines while Thomas Plies put Plasticville back together with good ole' Elmer's Glue.



I. to r. - Always smiling, Janet Mattern watched Kids Club member Mark Huber run trains while Nathaniel Davis (back turned) asked Dad, Rob Davis a question. Also in the picture are DeLon at the controls and John Huber

TRAINS WE LOVE: ONCE UPON A TIME ON THE L&N

by Clark McClure TCA #97-45212

No doubt you have a favorite locomotive that for some reason holds a special place in your heart. For my twin brother Mark and me, it will always be the M-1 Class 2-8-4's of the Louisville & Nashville line, called "Big Emmas" by their crews. Fifty years ago, the sleepy town of Cynthiana, Kentucky, would be shaken awake by the thunderous passage of 100-car coal trains. A river of coal flowed north from the coalfields to steel mills and power plants somewhere north of Cincinnati. Normally my brother and I had things to do around my Dad's grocery business in town, but when we heard those chime whistles blowing at the far edge of town, it was the 700-yard dash to trackside! There was a grade northbound through town, so the heavy trains were easy to beat to our vantage points. We were always rewarded with a spectacle of thunderous sound and sky-high exhaust as the big 2-8-4's coaxed their 100 or so oxide-red hoppers northward. Southbound empty trains came through town with no fanfare at all and could be on you with no warning.

THE LOCOMOTIVES: Just prior to World War II, the L&N really needed bigger engines to handle the great increase in traffic on the Cincinnati to Corbin, KY (coalfields) line. Heavy Mikados could no longer shoulder all the load, and in September, 1941, the line ordered fourteen 2-8-4 types from Baldwin. The first locos from this order arrived the following summer, just in time for the crushing demands of the War. Six more engines were ordered from Baldwin and 22 more from Lima Loco in Ohio, for a total of 42 of these great machines. The final M-1's from Lima came in 1949 and were almost the last steam locos built in America. Four of the class were equipped with steam and signal lines and used on passenger and troop trains.

We didn't realize it at the time, but my brother and I were watching not only the final days of L&N steam, but also the last of mainline steam anywhere. By 1956 our beloved titans were getting only minimal maintenance and took on a sandy-white and rust-streaked appearance as they continued to thunder by as they always had, and so it seemed always would. But only TWO years later, they were gone, replaced by RSL-3's and Alco FA's. Not one of them was saved.

THE BLUEPRINT: One of my classes in high school was mechanical drawing. Boy, was I tired of drawing angle-brackets and machine screws!! By chance, MODEL RAILROADER magazine ran drawings of our engine, the M-1!! I took the H-O sized drawing to Mr. Hill, the instructor, and asked him if I could enlarge it four times. His laughter was more of a dare than approval!! At once the class was no longer work, but a labor of love as I poured over those handsome M-1 lines with my dividers. There was no computer-aided drafting in those days. It was all done by hand!! I still enjoy getting the print out sometimes and admiring the side elevation of a great locomotive.

THE MODEL: Since the mid-80's, various "M-1" 3-rail models have appeared. Lionel has issued several, as have Williams and MTH. Most are actually other engines just painted up to be L&N. Tired of waiting, I turned to the O-scale market, where I knew some accurate M-1's had been released in the past. An ad in an O-scale magazine lead to the web site of Hill's Hobbies in Chicago. Sure enough, they had not one Big Emma, but TWO!!! One look at the web photo and I was sold! Bit of sticker shock, though: \$1850!! And that's for a used loco!!! Now, it's times like these when it pays to have a brother. We went halves and brought that baby home. Now all I have to do is add an O-scale loop when I build my layout! (and find 50 scale hopper cars!!)

If you're lucky, perhaps your favorite engine has received the deluxe treatment from the likes of 3rd Rail or MTH Premiere. The joy of bringing the trains of our youth to life again is truly one of the great thrills of our hobby.



FEBRUARY FUN

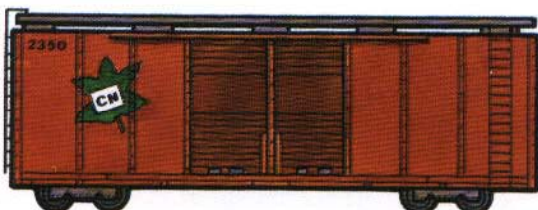
Tom Plies being presented with the Division's "Member of the Month" Award by President Chris Allen. Tom was the driving force behind the installation of a Desert Division Kids Club Operating Toy Train Layout at the Award-Winning Phoenix Zoo in Papago Park.

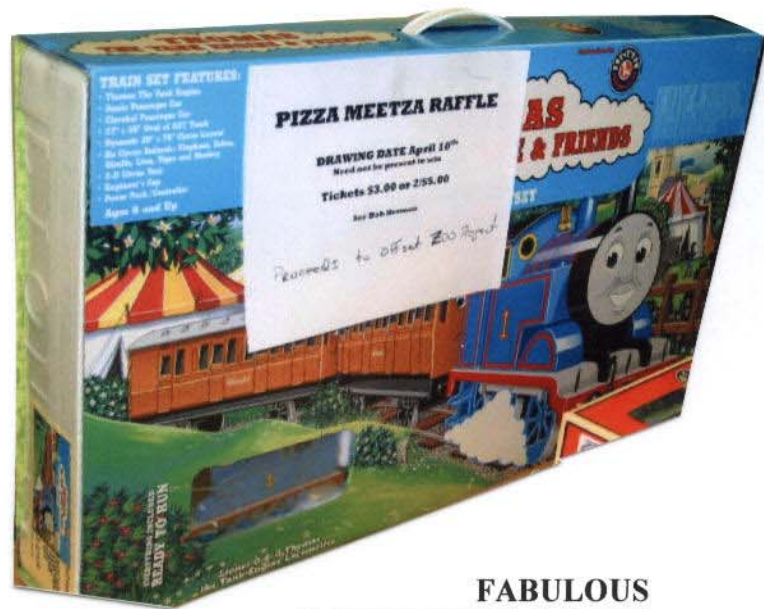


Treasurer Bob Herman is seen here Awarding Tom Stange with the first 2004 Hudson Raffle hundred dollar bill. Tom then promptly used the winnings to purchase more Lionel 773 Hudson Tickets. Do you have yours yet? Only 100 are printed and someone will win a green picture of Ben Franklin at every monthly meet, except July.



A panoramic view of the trading hall. Every table was full by the start of the Meet at 9:00 AM. Up front it would appear that Past President Bill Mack (L) and Gerry Klei are enjoying a "funny" (?) story of some sort. It pays to socialize as the monthly Mystery Greeter will award 10 free raffle tickets to some "Chatty Cathy" type.





FABULOUS FEBRUARY FEATURES

In addition to Clarke McClure's "Big Emma," our February Meet brought out some rarities, both new and old.

Upper L: One of only 267 Lionel/Mervyn's Holiday Sets awarded to Christie Wilson;

Upper R: A boxed 1915 Lionel #700

Passenger Set;

Middle L: Marx "Honeymoon Express" with aeroplane;

Middle R: Thomas the Tank, whose Raffle Tickets can make you its owner;

Bottom L: A mint, boxed American Flyer clockwork set, complete with an Original Equipment General Mfg. Company Battery.



THE CABOOSE

By Werner Hennig, TCA 95-42155

My knowledge of model trains is limited and I am surprised when I talk to veteran collectors and they can't tell me, "What was the purpose of the caboose?" It was not there primarily for the conductor and brakeman to play checkers, although that was the most popular pastime among railroad crews.

During the height of railroading many of the primary freight routes were single track with sidings or turnouts. Freight trains were required to go onto sidings when a passenger train was coming through from the opposite direction. During the steam engine era, every freight train had a four-man crew: an engineer, a fireman, a conductor, and a brakeman. The procedure for the train to pull onto a siding was for the train to stop at the entrance of the siding. The brakeman would walk forward from the caboose to the head of the train with his red and green lanterns. He would unlock the siding switch and throw the large lever that would open the siding. He would signal the engineer to proceed and the train would go onto the siding. When the entire train was in the siding, the brakeman would signal with his red lantern, the train would stop, and he would close and lock the switch so the main line was open. He would then walk to the front of the train and wait until the passenger train had passed. He would then unlock the switch at the head of the train, which would then proceed back onto the main line. When the entire train was back on the main line, the brakeman would signal with his red lantern for the train to stop. He would then close the siding switch, climb into the caboose, and signal with his green lantern for the train to proceed.

When the train was moving, the conductor and brakeman would climb up into the cupola of the caboose, one at each side, and look out their front windows for "Hot Boxes." In the days before the development of the Timkin railroad car roller bearing, wheel bearings were metal against metal. At each end of a car axle, there was a door. When the cars were parked in a yard, it was the job of the "greaser crews" to go from car to car and inspect each axle to make sure there was enough grease. The grease was held in place with a rope-like material called Oakum. The old oakum was removed, a large amount of grease was pushed into the bearing box, and new oakum was installed. Occasionally, if the bearing box was not properly packed and sealed, the bearing box would overheat and catch on fire. You could not drive a train very far with a "hot box" because the axle and bearing block would seize and

then the wheel wouldn't turn. When a hot box was seen, the brakeman would go onto the rear platform of the caboose and signal with his red lantern for the train to stop. He would then take both lanterns, a five-gallon pail of grease, and some oakum and walk to the problem car, where he would repack the axle with grease and oakum, and signal with his green lantern for the train to proceed. When the caboose arrived where he was standing, he would signal with his red lantern for the train to stop, climb onto the caboose, and signal with his green lantern for the train to proceed.

With the decline of passenger service, it was no longer necessary for freight trains to go onto waiting sidings. In the few instances where a passenger and freight train come in opposite directions, the usual procedure is to hold one of the trains at a station where there are multiple tracks. Since there was no longer any need for a brakeman and a conductor, all that was required was an engine crew of two, and the caboose passed into history.

All railroad crews were required to own two official railroad watches because once a year a watch had to go to a registered railroad watch repair service for cleaning, adjustment, and timing, as a railroad watch could not lose or gain more than a few minutes in a year. These pocket watches were unlike standard pocket watches. You could not pull out the stem to set the watch. The stem was sealed against dirt and dust. To set the watch, you had to unscrew the bezel or glass and there would be a tiny lever at the edge of the dial. You would raise this lever with your fingernail, turn the stem to set the time, push the lever back into the case, and replace the bezel.

At the height of railroading, the Pennsylvania Railroad was the largest railroad in the world. If you are interested in the history of American railroads, I recommend:

1. The Great Railroads of North America by Bill Yenne, published in 1992.
2. More Classic American Railroads by Mike Schafer, published in 2000.

These books, which cover 35 railroads, contain many pictures and cover the history of most of the model trains you have in your collection.

