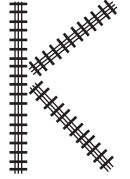


# KEEPING



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Volume 8, Issue 1

April 2011

Welcome to *Keeping Track* - the official newsletter of the Train Collectors Association Kids Club! In this issue we'll take a look at what is in store at the National Convention in Sacramento, CA, as well as catch up on some other news from around the TCA. A special bonus in this issue is a profile of someone who is really working to share toy trains with others. Check it out - maybe you'll have some ideas for ways that you can share the fun of toy trains, too! There's lots to cover, so let's get going. All aboard!

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## 2011 TCA NATIONAL CONVENTION

This photo shows the lobby of the Jelly Belly factory in Fairfield, CA. It's just one of the things you can check out if you are headed to the 57th National TCA Convention in Sacramento, CA. This year's convention takes place from June 26 to July 3 and is being hosted by the Nor-Cal Division. There will be rides on the Virginia & Truckee Railroad as well as the Napa Valley Wine Train and boat cruises to San Francisco and on Lake Tahoe. You can also visit Yosemite National Park and the California Railroad and Auto Museums - plus see lots of home train layouts. It should be a wonderful time for all who attend. If you go, be sure to take your camera as there will



be a special issue of *Keeping Track* published at the convention. You can be a photo-journalist!

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### 2010 CONVENTION CAR UPDATE:

Lionel has experienced some delivery problems with one of their production partners that has delayed the shipment of the Phillips Aquarium Car that was produced for the 2010 Convention in Baltimore. As of this printing, the finished cars are scheduled to ship from China in mid-April. Hopefully this means that members who ordered a car will receive it in June. Of course, we can't be sure about that until the cars actually leave the manufacturer in China, so a June delivery is an estimate. We'll stay on the look-out for them!

To say that First Class Boy Scout Andrew Schlaegel of Lindenwold, NJ, loves trains is an understatement. The thirteen-year-old's life has revolved around trains since he was three years old. It started with a wooden toy train set and his Dad's Lionel train from his childhood and it has constantly been growing ever since.

Andrew's collection of toy trains, which includes wooden railway trains, as well as HO, O, and G scale electric trains, has grown so large that much of it must be kept in storage boxes in his closet. It was this fact that led Andrew's parents to suggest to Andrew that, since many of his trains just sit in the closet, why not get some of them out, set up a few layouts around the house, and invite the kids from their Bible study group over for lunch and to play with the trains. With that suggestion, Train Play Days were born.



Andrew at the controls!

The invitations were created and delivered. Soon, Andrew had a house full of kids. The kids that came to that first Train Play Day had such a good time that Andrew knew that he had to do more of them – and make them bigger.

Within a year, Andrew and his parents had a train play day at their church which included wooden railway layouts, Lionel railway layouts, a die cast Thomas the Tank Engine layout, a children's play area, two O-gauge and one HO gauge layouts, plus train displays, videos, and railroad paraphernalia.

Since then, Andrew and his Dad have done two more train play days – each one larger than the previous one. The last play day took 38 man-hours for Andrew and his dad to set up. The electric train layout had grown to 8 feet by 25 feet and included a farm, a military display, Plasticville buildings, and a winter village. The displays include many one-of-a-kind hand-made trains, a 3-D train puzzle, and an oil switch lamp.



Despite all the hard work to set up, Andrew loves sharing his train collection with the kids and adults who attend. He and his dad start planning the layout of the room weeks before the play days and they start organizing all the boxes of trains and the various things they will need, including tape, scissors, signs, and lots of extra batteries for the battery operated trains and display lights. During the play day, kids and their parents come in and enjoy playing with the wooden and die-cast trains, watching a train video or reading a train book, looking at the displays, and watching the electric trains run.

Andrew's Dad usually handles watching over the little ones playing with the trains while Andrew runs the electric trains and answers people's questions about the trains and layouts. Andrew knows that it has been a successful train play day when at least one of the kids cries because he doesn't want to leave.

Andrew's love of trains extends beyond the play days. He and his Dad are avid rail fans who love to go train spotting. They have a list of hundreds of engine numbers from trains they have seen. They have visited several tourist railroads and museums, including the famous Horseshoe Curve in Altoona, PA.

On Saturdays, you can usually find Andrew and his Dad volunteering at the Haluwasa Shoreline Railroad – a 24 inch gauge railroad at Haluwasa Christian Camp near Hammonton, NJ. They spend a lot of time clearing and repairing the track, replacing ties, and performing other tasks to help keep the trains running on the camp's three miles of track.

What will the next train play day be like? Well, it will definitely be bigger. Andrew has already obtained a used HO 4' by 4' layout and is trying to save up for a new MTH train set. He is always on the lookout at yard sales and train shows for great bargains on trains that will add that special touch to the next train play day.



*Editor's Note:*

Thanks to Andrew's dad for providing the article and photos of Andrew and his Train Play Days. And a big congratulations to Andrew (and dad!) for their efforts to share the fun of toy trains with others! Are you doing anything to share

the fun of toy trains? It doesn't have to be as involved as what Andrew does. Just inviting some friends over to play trains after school will do it. Let us know what you are up to. Maybe we'll be able to share your ideas and you'll see yourself in these pages!

Oh, and one last interesting fact: when this article was written, Andrew wasn't even a member of the Kids Club. Don't worry - he is now!!

**Kids Club News**  
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## A BIG THANK YOU!!!

Have you ever been to the Eastern Division's semi-annual train show in York, PA? If so, have you had any fun in the Kids Corner between the Silver and Blue Halls? If the answer to those questions is "yes", then you owe it all to the work of Pete and Mary Jackson. Those members of the WB&A Chapter have spent many years setting up and maintaining the York Kids Corner. They decided it was time to step down after the October meet, so the Kids Corner at the April meet will be coordinated by Pamela and Chuck Morkosy, Mitch Boyd, and Jennifer and Martha Skinner. All of us in the TCA would like to thank Pete and Mary for all their efforts over the years, and to thank this new crop of volunteers for stepping up to help make York the amazing train show that it is!

**Keeping Track is published by  
the Train Collectors Association**

P. O. Box 248

Strasburg, PA 17579

This is Vol. 8, Issue 1, April 2011

**\*\*\*MOVING?\*\*\***

Please make sure your parent or sponsor updates your Kids Club information by contacting the TCA Business Office by email or telephone so you can continue to get your newsletter!

This is your newsletter, so if you have anything you'd like to share: pictures, jokes, articles, questions for N., reviews, etc., please send them to us at:

**Kids Club Newsletter**

**TCA Kids Club**

**P. O. Box 248**

**Strasburg, PA 17579**

You can e-mail us at: [toytrain@traincollectors.org](mailto:toytrain@traincollectors.org) and put "Kids Club" in the Subject line or e-mail the editor directly at [harbison@colorado.edu](mailto:harbison@colorado.edu).

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