NOTE:

A. FLANGES FOR FLOOR USE
B. SIMULATED RUBBER OR PLASTIC TIRES.
C. STANDARD RAIL WHEEL.
D. STAMPED FRAME.
E. FREE PIVOTING FRAME.

FOR FLOOR OFF TRACK OPERATION CAR RIDES ON WHEEL FLANGES.

HARD PLASTIC TIRE
ON METAL WHEEL
DIAMETER LARGER THAN DIAMETER

Jul. 1957.

F. Harre
Cheri Neil sent a letter.

Who Done It? Part 57.
John Newbraugh empties part of his mail pouch.

Look What I Found!
Stephen Hayes shopped the toy stores of Russia.

Lionel Standard Gauge Track Variation,
Type II 1915 to 1919.
Donald Richardson continues his examination.

Historian's Corner.
Lou Redman discusses TCA's Conventions.

New Product Review #32,
MTH — RailKing Die Cast Articulated Challenger.
Al Ruocchio says it's a winner.

A Rose, is a Rose; But Not a GP-7.
Carl Byron explains the differences between a -18 and a -20.

Designing The Lionel 68 Executive Inspection Car.
Joe Mania compares the concept with reality.

An Interview with Lionel's New Vice President of Sales and Marketing Manager, Mike Thoresen.
Todd Wagner and Bruce Manson ask what's "on track" for Lionel.

News on the 'Net.
Todd Wagner brings us information from cyberspace.

9" Ives Cars They Never Made.
Bernard Kuehnle describes how he made these interesting pieces.

Two Dorfans In One Season.
Nelson Williams witnesses two lighting strikes.

Lionel Corp. Authorized Display Sign, or Retail Store Authorized Display Sign?
Steve Bictor asks which it is.

Low Budget Flat Cars.
Allan Moore describes how to save some money.

1946 Trial Runs — Early S Gauge Production Samples.
Dave Garrigues shares more pictures.

Rusty Sage explores his hometown.
**President's Column**

It seems like only a few weeks since I sat at my trusty old Royal and typed my first President's Column, but here I am typing my farewell message. Truly, time flies!

It has been a good, calm, quiet year for the TCA. For this we owe thanks to Bob Caplan, Al Levin, Don Fraley, and Cary Lavinus, all of whom generously gave their time, advice and counsel so that I could continue in the direction that they set during their terms as President.

The National Toy Train Museum is in better shape than ever. The office is functioning efficiently under Tony D'Alessandro's capable leadership. All of our committees were productive, particularly Membership, Standards, Strategic Planning, and on and on. Bruce Manson has edited four more encyclopedia-like Train Collectors Quarterlys, and we have a new, well-received format for the Headquarters News.

We had another wonderful National Convention, this time in Dallas, thanks to Pat Nell, Bill McClanahan, Newton Derby, and all the others who worked so hard to ensure its success.

The Board of Directors did an excellent job in Dallas — the very few contentious items that did arise were quickly settled in a spirit of compromise and good fellowship. Thanks, BOD members.

Thanks, too, to Kae, Joe, Donna, and Bill, who kept asking for more things to do — there just weren't any additional tasks to give them. I've already mentioned Tony but congratulations for a productive and successful year also are due to Carol Bair, Mark Miskinis, Betty Perini, Thelma Rapp, and Jeanette Swartzentruber. They frequently are the infantry of the TCA, being the first to hear about problems and the last to be thanked.

Primarily, though, thanks to all 29,000 members who make this great organization what it is: the largest and best toy train collector/operator club in the world.

Lastly, my best wishes to our new President, Kae Yohe, for a successful year.

Richard J. Mertes

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**Editor's Column**

This issue of the Q, in addition to several outstanding articles and our continuing features, sheds some new light on Lionel's past and its future.

In 1957, Frank Pettit 90-31409, originator of many of Lionel's innovations, saw the enjoyment that his son John, was having with a toy automobile that Frank had purchased at Polk's Hobby Department Store. "How can I transfer the enjoyment John is having with the toy automobile to a circle of track?" he asked himself. Drawing sketches and making notes, he showed them to the "Old Man," a name that Frank frequently uses with affection to describe his former boss Joshua Lionel Cowen. The boss said with equal affection, "Frankie, go to it." The rest is history. Frank has graciously shared this bit of toy train history by loaning his drawings 'of the auto that ran on track' for the wrap around cover and ensuing article in this issue.

Thirty-nine years later we find Frank busy in his workshop tinkering with new ideas, in addition to writing his memoirs. Lionel is under new management facing perhaps its fiercest competition ever, as well as a changing marketplace.

We continue our interviews of the Lionel team, to the dismay of some I am sure, by talking to Mike Thoreson, VP of Sales. I say to the dismay of some, for we have received letters saying, "I learned about Oneida tableware, but what about Lionel? We need people who know toy trains, etc. etc." For better or for worse there appears to be a trend in corporate America today for a new CEO not to be from within the ranks — IBM immediately comes to mind. Will Lionel be successful? Only time will tell. I strongly believe that these interviews will be a valuable resource for studying the success or the failure of the company that bears 'Pop' Cowen's middle name.

It is easier to answer yes to another question — Will Frank be around? He says he feels great, has a new doctor, and some great Ideas on his workbench.

See you at York.

Bruce D. Manson, Jr.
Dear Dave,

I can't believe you missed the TCA National Convention in Dallas! In my opinion, it was the best ever in 42 years. They named it the "Texas Special," and was it ever! Here's an overview of all that happened.

You know I took my wife Sally and the kids, thought we'd make a vacation out of the driving trip. The road to Dallas wasn't nearly as long as we expected, and the ride was really pleasant. Many of the members flew in to the big DFW International Airport, and they said they had an easy time of it. Wish we could have arrived in style on Amtrak, almost to the door of the hotel, like Kae and George Yohé did.

The Hyatt Regency Dallas is a beautiful place. It has a huge atrium with flowers and plants, and the neatest "water ball" sculpture on the second floor that mesmerized the kids every time they passed by. Everything is open and airy, the kids loved the pool, and the food was really good. But the best thing was our room — I heard that the staff assigned all of the TCA rooms to face the train yard at Dallas Union Station! The new Dallas Area Rapid Transit Light Rail system had just started running on June 14th, and we rode it many times to the West End and even out to the Zoo one day with the kids. We all watched the activity in the yard, with lots of surprises from UP, BN, and Amtrak. I'll show you the pictures when we get together.

I'm really getting smarter in my old age. I started pre-registering for meets several years ago, and it saves so much time, although Sara McClone and Louise Holder sure looked as if they had everything under control at Registration. There were several other events going on at the hotel, but you could tell which tables belonged to the TCA! Fences, bales of hay, and cactus, all mixed in with big crossing lights, gates, and Lionel's two big train balloons. What a show! The Dallas group had a great idea — a TCA Souvenir Shop at Registration. Glad we stocked up early because they sold out of a lot of items. Sally bought one of each — T-shirt, cap, mouse pad, mug, and pins — Everything had the "Texas Special" logo on it. We even remembered to get you a T-shirt!

Since we arrived early, we toured downtown Dallas and the West End. (It's a revived area of warehouses with shops, restaurants, and open air music court called "Dallas Alley," and lots of people!) We visited the area where the Kennedy assassination took place. There's a museum in the School Book Depository building — thought they handled the subject matter in the right way. And you wouldn't believe the larger-than-life bronze figures of a Texas cattle drive, going right through a small stream, in the middle of downtown!

We were lucky to be on several of the tours. We had already seen a lot of Dallas and wanted to travel to Fort Worth, 30 miles away. It really looked the way I had always pictured Texas — lots of office buildings, but not as tall, lots of boots and Stetson hats, and it's spread out so you can see far and wide. But the Stockyards were great. It was an old working stockyard for cattle and shipping. Now it has hotels, eateries, shops, and of course, Billy Bob's Honky Tonk. That place is amazing, and huge! The kids were awestruck by the mechanical bull, the barbecue, and they even learned to Texas Two-Step on the dance floor.

One day, we even had time to ride the trolleys. Yes, Dallas has a small trolley system built on the rails from the 1950's, and the best part is they use trolleys that they have refurbished to their original state. We would ride until we found an interesting place to stop and eat, then re-board and look for another adventure. The guys at the trolley barn were hospitable, telling us the history of the system, and even let us pet their official "Trolley Barn cats."

We couldn't decide about going to the baseball game at the new "Ballpark in Arlington." Since it was a really popular tour, it filled up early, and we missed our chance. The guys that went said it was a real treat sitting in the "Diamond Club," (especially in the Texas summer heat) with a/c, lots of food on the buffet, and a great view of the field.

I didn't get to visit much with Dick Mertes and the other Board members. It's a shame they don't get to participate in the Convention as much as we do. They
had meetings almost every day, busy keeping TCA up and running smoothly. I
did hear they took a VIP ride on the DART trains, with a transit system executive
showing them the headquarters downtown.

You won’t believe how easy it was to unload my trains on Thursday, courtesy
of Scott Johnston and his super friendly crew. The trading hall was big, and open
from 9 to 5, which gave me a leisurely time to unpack and set up my tables.

While I was setting up, Sally’s sister took our kids and hers to Six Flags over
Texas, about 30 minutes from the hotel. Sally took a breather and enjoyed the
antiques tour, excited about finding the missing pickle fork! She told me I missed
a great train layout at the Galleria Mall. Seems the Dallas Ronald McDonald
House sponsors the “Wonderland Express” during the Christmas holidays. The
tour people told her that last year almost 100,000 people showed up! It is an 0
gauge layout, huge according to Sally, with scenes of the “Night before Christ-
mas,” with LGB trains and Lionel’s Thomas the Tank Engine in G scale. Think
they’re going to add some Playmobil trains this Christmas, and also a “Snow Vil-
lage” scene using 0 gauge equipment.

We had a busy day on Thursday, and almost skipped the Welcome Party that
night. Am I ever glad we decided to check it out — it was a Texas Fiesta, and I
have to say it was the neatest Welcome Party we’ve ever been to. We walked over
to Union Station through the underground tunnel that connects the hotel to the
station, and found the party in the Grand Hall. What a sight! The hall has been
beautifully updated, but still has the look and feel of a first class train station.
Tables were everywhere, even on the outside porch, decorated with candles and
Mexican hats. There was an entire meal! Fajitas (I had to ask how to spell that)
with all the trimmings, shrimp appetizers, fresh fruit, chips and salsa, and a
dessert called sopapillas. There was a wonderful mariachi band that strolled
around and played music all night. Sally and I went to the Pullman Room and
bid on some of the Silent Auction items. You should have seen Nancy Swan bor-
rowing a wheelchair to cart the heavy Texas gift basket she bid on back to the
hotel. It was so full of neat things, I’m not sure she’s finished unloading it yet.
An announcement was made at the Banquet that the Welcoming Party silent auction
brought in 64,001.00 — amazing! All that money goes to the Ronald McDonald
House Children’s Charities in Dallas. Nice for TCA’s prosperity to be shared like
that.

Where were the kids, you say? In the Stationmasters Room next door. Ronald
McDonald himself dropped by with a neat show for the kids. Two local high
schoolers gave a very professional magic act, with balloon animals and something
called the “Chicken Song,” which was a big hit with all. A bunch of the “big kids”
found out about the show and the pizza and ice cream they were having, so the
audience in that room was larger than expected!

After a fun night, we went to bed early, so I could hit it hard on Friday morn-
ing when the trading hall opened. As usual, everyone was anxious to get started,
and the closer it got to 9:00, the more restless we got. The Convention people had
a clever idea and put life-size crossing gates at the top of the escalators, which
was the only way to get to the trading hall.

With almost 400 tables, I was glad my tables were on the end of an aisle where
I like them. Apparently I brought the “right trains” because I sold a lot. It seemed
everybody else had a good meet, too. I found the 6464 boxcar I’ve been looking
for, and some of the parts I wanted for the 736 I bought last year in Seattle.

After the first rush, I was attracted to the display the 1997 Convention Staff
from Phoenix had, all Southwest colors, even their vests, and I took home
brochures and Information about the host hotel, the tours, and things to do in
Arizona. I plan to register early next year, and you’d better, too. After this super
Convention in Dallas, I can just image how great the one in Phoenix will be!

Sally and the kids went to the city of Grapevine on Friday, did a walking tour
of the old historic downtown, shopped, ate, and went to a small local vineyard for
a guided tour and wine-tasting (the kids had Cokes!).

Friday’s schedule was hectic, and that evening we had to board buses for the
Layout tours. Some members went to homes in Dallas and others to Ft. Worth.
All in all, it was a fun night with really interesting layouts.

Almost forgot — the new President of Lionel, Gary Moreau, had a seminar on
Friday afternoon. This was his first National Convention (he was in New York in
April). We were all anxious to hear what he had to say about Lionel’s future, and
he answered our questions, and admits he has a lot to learn. We told him we’d
help him.

Saturday was mostly trading. The family was out by the pool relaxing, then to
the room for a movie. The Annual Membership meeting was that afternoon, and
TCA’s business was taken care of. The best part of Saturday was the evening
when we left the kids happy with a movie and room service, and headed for the
1996 Board of Directors

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* Alternates
Banquet. They called it their “Cattle Baron’s Banquet,” and the ballroom was decorated in pure Texas...an enormous Texas flag behind the head tables, tables for 450-plus guests decorated with cowboy boots, yellow roses, bluebonnets, and candles (we got to bid on the boot centerpieces later; Sally knew that Jean Mercer and Vivian Palacheck had decorated the ballroom, and she made sure she got one of their designs). There was another Texas backdrop with cactus, fences, saddles, and other Western decorations.

Dinner was fantastic (I had steak, Sally had red snapper). Dick Mertes began the program with a welcome, thanking all of the Convention workers, introduced the National Officers, and asked Lou Redman to speak. You know, Lou’s been around for a while, and has seen it all in trains, but he still got teary-eyed (and we did too), when he reminded us of all the fun we have collecting and operating toy trains. Later, Newt Derby, the Lone Star Division President, presented Lou with a special cowboy boot, loaded with decorations, as a memento of the Convention.

Did you know that TCA National gives a $1,000.00 gift to a train-related non-profit group located in the host city? I didn’t until they announced that the “Age of Steam Museum” was the recipient. The museum is buying a Santa Fe switch tower, and moving it to their permanent location at Fair Park (that’s where the Big Boy is). They were so excited about this gift, and I was proud to know that we do something like this every year.

You know I never win any door or raffle prizes, but I lucked out at the Banquet. I won the table favor, a Bowser Trolley replica of one that runs on McKinney Avenue that I told you about. It’s a neat piece, and was I ever excited! Everyone at each table received a die-cast baggage cart, with luggage labeled for the Chapters in the Division. Pride Lines made these and they’re really nice. K-Line donated MKT reefers specially marked for the Convention and my new friend, Bill from Kansas City, won that.

Bob Caplan headed up the auction, and it was full of very good items — lots of factory samples of the Convention cars and trolleys, and a one-of-a-kind Texas Special set from K-Line marked for the Convention. Bob’s a great auctioneer, but I don’t see how he lasted with all the items offered.

We were happy when the auction was over so that we could enjoy the entertainment — the “Levee Singers.” Sally found out that these four guys have a 30-year reputation for some great Western swing. We clapped and sang and laughed and danced ‘til past 11:00. Then we decided the night was young, so up to Dick and Lillian Mertes’ Suite we went for visiting, snacks, and a night cap. Apparently we weren’t the only ones with that idea because the place was packed. Sally and I were glad to get to re-cap the week and to say good-bye to friends, old and new.

Sunday morning was the usual packing up, last minute bargaining, and heading for home. Bert Holder and his crew made it easy with their help in providing carts and extra hands to finish the job quickly. I made sure I shook hands with Pat Neil and Bill McClanahan, the Convention Co-Chairs. They told me that it was a group effort, and that the hard work of almost 50 volunteers really paid off in every area because everyone they talked to had a “special” time in Dallas.

Well, I can’t believe this letter is so long, but we did so much during Convention week and had so much fun that I wanted you to know what you missed. I still can’t believe you said, “Dallas is too far and too hot.” You need more adventure in your life, then you’d have experienced the neat vacation we did. As I said, maybe you’ll have enough sense to make the next National in Phoenix next June — I hear its going to be a doozy.

We send our best to the family, and I’ll be sure to show you all my pictures and paraphernalia at York in October. You’ll recognize me — I’ll be wearing my new, authentic Stetson hat and Justin boots, from deep in the heart of Texas!

Take care — see you at York.

Mike
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The original purpose of this series was to provide a forum for TCA members to pose questions and formulate answers. This installment helps keep that tradition alive.

ROB'T, E. MILLER... Outdoor railroads were discussed in "Who Done It? Parts 11 and 37." An undated catalog recently found by Frank Love­land gives us some more insight into the Rob't. E. Miller company of Bath, PA.

Photo 1 is the front cover of this 14 page catalog and states that Lehigh Railroad Models, Texas Railroad Cars, and Miller Locomotives are all products of the Rob't. E. Miller company. The product lines of these three companies are all shown separately in the catalog and makes one wonder if they were three separate companies at one time and were eventually united by the Miller firm.

Photo 2 shows what one must assume is the Miller factory. It would be interesting to know if the gentleman in the photo is Robert Miller.

Continuing on through the catalog it is revealed that the engine shown in Photo 3 was powered by a 1½ hp Briggs and Stratton gasoline motor, as were several other Miller locos. The Miller diesel could be purchased in various stages of assembly, either finished or unfinished.

In addition to the diesel pictured in Photo 3, the Miller catalog offered three other style diesels, a steam engine, and five different freight cars.

DURALUMINUM RAIL... Georges Denzene has been doing a series of articles on various types of track. Georges and his readers may find Photo 4 interesting as it describes the track used with the Rob't. E. Miller system and is featured on the last page of the aforementioned catalog.

VALLEY NOVELTY WORKS... Thomas R. Ebersbach shares some interesting facts and photos on this Bloomsburg, PA. firm.

Valley Novelty was owned by Thomas' wife's uncle — Carroll C. Stahl. According to Thomas, the business operated from the 1930's through at least the 1950's.

Photo 5 shows the #203 Christmas Tree Fence and Photo 6 shows the #205 Rustic Christmas Tree Fence with original boxes. I'm sure these items are very familiar to TCA members.

According to Thomas, the company may have made other fence but he is
John deTreville has supplied Photo 10 from the Lafayette Radio Gift Guide for 1940, which also shows the reversible switch.

Frank Herman states these switches were made when Flex-I-Track was part of the Parfait Products Co. of Chicago. Flex-I-Track was also manufactured by Kaywood as discussed in previous installments.

NOMA . . . Andy Ferrone supplied Photo 11 of two lampposts which are believed to be Noma. Joe Lissi still seeks information on the lampposts and plans publication of his findings via the Quarterly.

THOMSON . . . John Torgerson has found another variation of the Thomson trains discussed earlier in this series. John’s set is in the original box and is marked on the lid as follows:

CARROLL STAHL, Co-owner of the C.P.&W.R.R., awaits his cue to start the train rolling for the filming of "THE MOLLY MAGUIRES." Mr. Stahl is made up in the attire of an 1870 locomotive engineer, complete with big mustache.

Photo 8

Thomas goes on to say, "Mr. Stahl went beyond most enthusiasts with regards to trains. He went on to build his own real railroad — the four foot gauge Carroll Park & Western Railroad. The railroad was used in the filming of the movie ‘The Molly Maguires,’ and Mr. Stahl appeared in the movie." Mr. Stahl died in the 1970’s and the railroad was ultimately dismantled and sold.

Carroll Stahl is shown in Photo 8 which is part of a brochure advertising the Carroll Park & Western RR also provided by Thomas.

FLEX-I-TRACK . . .

Many folks identified the mystery switch pictured in Part 55 as Flex-I-Track. George O’Connor shares Photo 9 from the Wholesale Radio Service catalog for 1939, which advertises the unique "Frog Switch" as being "new and different." A literal interpretation of this ad would indicate that 1939 was the first year of production for this piece.

Photo 9

not sure if the wooden and wire fence shown in Photo 7 was made by Valley Novelty. The Bloomsburg firm did make children’s furniture and toy boxes and during the war they supplied ammunition boxes to the military.

Photo 7

Photo 6

Photo 5
Junior Train — Set 310 — Pat. Pend — Mfd. by Thomson — Mineola, NY — USA (Photo 12).

**STROMBECKER** . . . George O'Connor has supplied a copy of a 1956 Strombecker catalog. Photo 13 is from that catalog and shows some of Strombecker's train line for 1956. Photo 14 is from the same catalog in a section advertised as "Strombecker Historic Ship Models and Trains."

**MECHANICRAFT** . . . Ron Morris shares Photo 15 which features a boxed set of Mechanicraft's Presidential Express. The original instruction sheet for this set was featured in "Who Done It? Part 40."

**METTOY** . . . According to Michael Bowes the Mettoy Company was established by Phillip Ullman and was originally based in Northampton, England. The company later moved to Swanson in Wales. Mettoy produced lithographed tinplate toys beginning in 1933 and finally closed in November of 1983; however, the company did continue to make tinplate as late as 1958. According to Bowes some Mettoy toy trains are difficult to date accurately since some models were produced for a number of years. The two 6 inch coaches shown in Photo 13 of Part 54 were first manufactured in 1937 according to Michael. The Mettoy trademark is shown in Photo 16.

**TRAIN RECORDS** . . . Sam Mathis has supplied another phonograph record on the topic of toy trains. Sam dates this record circa Aug. — Sept. 1971 (Photo 17).

**MYSTERY REAL ESTATE** . . . Joseph L. Jackson's grandson, Andrew, found the real estate shown in Photo 18 at a yard sale. Jackson believes the buildings are not homemade but they bear no manufacturer's markings. Can anyone shed some light on this subject?
from Bill Jorgensen's collection. Measuring 11 3/4" over the end sills, the car is slightly longer than the Ives hopper car. The trucks are neither sprung nor equalized. The springs visible in the picture are dummies. The lettering is rubber stamped and follows closely the Ives configuration, including the "Made in the Ives Shops" notation. The car is numbered 194, which is the same number used on the Ives car. Who made this car? Are there other cars in this series? Help!

**RIBBON RAIL CAR** ... Charles R. Powell is seeking information on the Ribbon Rail car shown in Photo 20.

**MYSTERY SWITCH** ...

Gordon McFadyen via Georges Denzene has provided Photo 21 of a switch he obtained circa 1936 in hopes that some TCA detective can identify it.

**RAIL CHIEF** ... Georges Denzene provides Photo 22 of a boxed Rail Chief HO set. One must wonder if this HO set is related to the New York based Rail Chief Co. that made the 0 gauge accessories discussed in Part 51. In Part 54, Ernie Howerling did confirm that Rail Chief had an HO line; however, the set shown in Photo 22 is credited to the Circle Twenty Corp. of Angleton, TX.

**MILITARY TRAIN** ... The three units pictured in Photo 23 submitted by Jim Roth are reminiscent of the Kusan set, but Jim believes that it may have been manufactured by Eldon and called the "Atomic Train." The diesel is 11 3/4" long coupler to coupler and has four axles with white wheels attached. Both flats are 11 3/4" long and also have the mysterious white wheels. Your help in identifying this train would be appreciated.

**LIONEL** ... Appearing in a 1950 Carmen Webster catalog are two items that may be of interest to Lionel collectors: #213 Lionel Lift Bridge and #455 Oil Derrick with a shed over the motor area. I bet that these two photos bring some questions! Photos 24 and 25 were supplied by George O'Connor. This completes another installment of "Who Done It?" If you have any questions or answers concerning this series you may contact the author directly (address is in the TCA Directory). Please send nonreturnable material only unless prior arrangements have been made.

© 1996 John S. Newbraugh
On a recent tour of eastern Russia we visited the city of Khabarovsk and as usual when I travel abroad I head right for the nearest toy store — in this case the toy department of the local GUM store. To my delight on the shelf was a complete, boxed Russian-made HO toy train set with track, power pack, wires, and a couple of extra "rubber bands" which transmit power from the motor's shaft to the axle.

The little diesel switcher and cars are of a very simple molded plastic with no markings. The box cover illustration reads, "Toy Children's Railroad" and according to the very detailed instruction sheet the toy was produced by a Russian company called "Computer".

Does it run? You bet it does! Before I handed over the Ruble equivalent of about $15.00 US, the lady behind the counter hooked it up and when I left we were both smiling.
After the description of all the details of Type I track, what is enough change to constitute another type? The change to what is labeled here as Type II includes different ties, different rails, increased curve radius and different construction procedures. However, the strange half round third rail track pins remain at first so this new track was fully interchangeable with the discontinued Type I.

When Lionel consolidated their operations in New Haven, CT they apparently started complete manufacture of their Standard gauge track. Successive refinements of their Type I track has been described in the previous article. They did not stay with the Type I design and while in New Haven they modified their rail rolling forming rolls and started a new design of track which we will call Type II. This new track lasted through the New Haven era and through the 1918 return to Hillside, NJ. Apparently Type II track was produced from about 1915 to 1919.

Fig. 1 Type I through Type IV features

The details that help in identity and sequence follow above. Look at Fig. 1 to see overall appearance of Type I through Type IV track, reading clockwise from the top left. The appropriate ties are also shown.

TIES

With this new track the ties are substantially wider, from 0.780 to 0.790 in. wide across the vertical sides. A new feature was the rolled radius at the bottom which made the overall width as much as 1\(\frac{1}{8}\) in. compared to the Type I 0.550 in. width. These ties are more than twice as wide and also considerably stiffer, thanks to their radiused base flanges.

This also made them much easier on mother’s carpets when they were laid on the floor, which was the usual practice. In addition, a new thicker 0.0172 in. or No. 27 U.S. Standard gauge steel was used, and we will see that in each successive type design the metal thickness was again increased.

The same circular raised portion under the third rail was continued, but this time it was increased to about 1\(\frac{1}{8}\) in. diameter. The ties were about 3.240 in. long or, say 3\(\frac{3}{4}\) in., which is \(\frac{1}{6}\) to \(\frac{1}{2}\) in. shorter than Type I ties.

The same two mounting holes are retained at 1\(\frac{1}{8}\) in. apart. Here the hole size varies all over the lot. Some are No. 36 or 0.106 in., some are No. 32 or 0.116 in. and occasionally they are as large as No. 30 which is 0.128 in. There is no explanation for this scatter of sizes unless it was to use existing stockroom punch sets rather than buy direct replacements.

On hand is one track, and maybe others too, with the middle tie that has a No. 36 hole on one side and a No. 32 on the other. The same section of track has an end tie with a No. 32 and a No. 31, the other end tie has both holes of No. 30 size. None of these holes show signs of a screw or a nail being used, or for that matter, a drill. They all show clean punching when viewed with a jeweler’s loupe.

The ties are all pierced with three H shaped slices with the cross-bar of the H aligned with the centerline of the rails. These cuts are not the same width with the outside rail cuts being around 0.510 in. along the rail, and the third rail cuts being near to 0.465 in. long. Probably this was to keep the cuts within the raised third rail circular portion while at the same time, the rail holding tabs for the outside rails were made as large as seemed reasonable. These tie tab cuts are slightly farther apart, being in the range of 2.257 in. center to center of the outside rails. This slight 0.007 in. increase in gauge seems to have no significance since this track connects with both earlier and later series.

The rails were held to the ties by the tie tabs which were probably fully opened out in their punched fabrication. This situation would appear like a pair of opened cellar bulkhead doors so the rails could be dropped in. Then these tabs were forced in and down with special ridged press tools. These tools had meshing ridges on the top and bottom die sets so that both the top of the tie tab and the bottom of the rail base flange were ridged in four places. This made a reasonably secure rail clamp without the extra clips of the Type I track. The third rail was clamped down in a similar fashion with the folded fish paper insulation as used before. Here the tab closure tools were plain instead of ridged. Again, four ties were used on the C curved section and three on the S or straight section.

RAIL

The rail appears to again be the same No. 28 gauge tin plated steel but this time used different roll tooling. This new rail now had its base doubled portion folded out, up and over. This became characteristic of Lionel track because Ives and American Flyer rolled their rail base flanges out, down, and under. The new vertical rail web now shows...
Same Type of half round cotter pin stock third rail track pin on both ends of third rail of type IIa and IIb.

The characteristic vertical striations that Lionel used until the end of Standard gauge production. This new rail continued the 0.145 to 0.147 in. head dia., plus or minus as the tool rolls wore and tool adjustment changed. There were also minor variations because of stock thickness and spring back. Since the lowest cost steel must have been used, the carbon content undoubtedly varied.

Some practical experience, when rerolling Lionel track to a different curve radius, shows that some is quite springy and some seems dead. See Fig. 2 for Type II rail and track pin detail.

This time, and in the later Type III and IV the curved track is enlarged again. When eight of the 45° curves are connected together they make a circle of 43 in. dia. over the outside rails by Lionel's type of measurement. This is 40 1/4 in. dia. on the third rail centerline or a 20 1/2 in. radius.

CATALOG IDENTITIES

The four-tie curve was still identified as C and the still 14 in. straight was S. Again, 1/4 S and 1/4 C were offered. This time the 1/4 S is about 7 1/2 in. long and the tie spacing remains the same as the regular S sections. Be assured that this measured piece is not a home cut-off from a regular S because samples have the full array of track pin clinches on each end. No Type II 1/4 C sections have been found so it is not known if the strange 24° instead of the geometrically correct 22 1/2° or 1 1/2° of a full circle's curvature was continued.

A straight SC battery connection section was catalogued starting in 1915 and lasting into early Type III track in 1921. This section was eliminated when the STC Lockon connector was offered in 1922. A Type II SC section is not on hand but a few curved connector CC sections are. This CC section was first catalogued in 1915 Type II track even though it had existed in Type I, probably from the beginning and certainly from Type Ic in 1910.

Both Greenberg's Guides and Fraley's book list the SC section along with the CC. A reasonable suggestion is that all sets contained a CC battery connection section. Some of the low priced sets had only eight curved sections for a plain circle and no straight. Thus, one CC piece would be necessary. Then any larger set could have any desired number of S sections. Just maybe an SC section would be available at a dealer if it were desired.

TRACK PINS

The Type II track originally continued the half round third rail track pins, similar but not quite the same as in late Type I. In Type II the technique of Patent No. 977,633 probably was used. See these new third rail pins in Fig. 2. They are a bit longer and different clinch tooling bends them a bit.

The outside rail track pins continued on the diagonally opposite ends of the track as pioneered in Type Ic. These pins were also new being partially made on a nail-making machine with the characteristic four sided pyramid end of a nail. There is a punched or coined tab about 1/16 in. in from the pyramid end. The inner end of these new pins are domed to a half round. This would have been a much more attractive and even safer end to have on the outside. Apparently no one worried about child safety in those days. Why it was done this way is not understood. However, these pins are the same 0.114 in. dia., or No. 9 American Wire Gauge stock, as some were in Type Ic through II. Samples now clearly show tin plating on the pins. These pins are about
Fig. 3 A selection of Type II track

TYPE Ila 1915 through about 1916

This track corresponds to the description above and does not have any track pin clinches on the outside rails. The 1917 Lionel "Apology" catalog still shows the same half round third rail pin, but this was a worked over 1916 catalog.

TYPE IIb probably about 1917 and 1918 if any

This track continues the same construction as Type Ila except that there is now a full complement of track pin depth stop indentations on the outside rails. There must have been a problem with pins being forced in too far to grasp with pliers and pull out. These depth stops are small round indentations on both sides of the rail. The small pip that resulted on each side of the inside bore of the railhead prevents a track pin from being forced in too far.

From limited experience, Type IIb appears to be scarce since only a single ½ S and a single C section are on hand. However, the distinguishing depth stops are very distinct. The dates for Type IIb are a considered guess but the place in the developing sequence of changes is clear.

TYPE IIc probably 1919 only.

On hand are a few pieces of Type IIc where the early half round third rail track pins were finally abandoned. The rail head clearly shows a different planned and tooled construction which was confirmed when what will be called Type IIIa was found. This IIc track is pure Type II in all respects except for the provision for the track pins.

The rails are similar to Type Ila and IIb but the railhead dia. has shrunk a few thousands of an in. The opposite ends of the outside rails, and now one end of the third rail, show very distinct double indentations on the sides and up into the throat of the round railhead. In addition, both sides of both ends of all rails show the point indentation depth stops of Type IIb.

The following is surmised since the few sections on hand had no track pins when found: the track pins used on most of the later Type III track fit here. This is consistent with the slightly smaller railhead which is a better fit with the later 0.110 in. or Stubbs No. 34 gauge pins. The coined tab on these new pins fits between the double throat indentations. The small side depth stop indentations are at the proper location for these new pins. These pins are shorter and have the four sided pyramid nail machine head on both ends.

Having no further evidence, it is thought that the standard was now set so that if you hold a curved C section with the concave side toward you, the new single third rail pin will be on the right hand end. These side indented, depth stopped rails carry over into the first Type III track so that it is felt that the sequence is correct. Who can supply good reliable dates on the full array of Type II track by checking known date train sets or original track?

Consult Fig. 3 to see an array of all the Type II sections that have been found so far. These include a ½ S Type IIb, Type Ila C and CC, a Type IIb section C, a Type Ila S and a single Type Ila S.

These Type IIc sections transitioned easily into the 1920 Type IIIa with another change of ties. This change will be discussed in another article and it will be seen that Type III was the most prolific of all with no less than seven recognizable varieties.

To be continued!

Historian's Corner

by Lou Redman CM-3

When the Association was organized, National Conventions were written into the By-Laws, with each Convention to have a membership meeting. In moving the Convention around the country, the Board provided local members the opportunity to attend the Annual Membership Meeting. So, in addition to a 'train meet' members could express themselves directly to the Board. This made the social and business part of the Conventions as important as the 'swap' meet.

Conventions have become solidly based on these three legs, each of equal importance.
NEW PRODUCT REVIEW #32
MTH — RailKing Die Cast Articulated Challenger RK1107
Union Pacific Gray/Yellow Challenger and RK1108 Union Pacific Black Challenger

by Albert C. Ruocchio, PE 70-3293

This is the first “mass-produced O31” articulated toy train designed with today's mechanical technologies and produced in the real tradition of the post-World War II toy train epoch, the latest and the best.

Therefore, since it is making tin-plate history, it rightfully deserves a very timely review in the Quarterly. The Challenger is a 4-6-6-4 wheel arrangement and MTH offers it in the UP gray or the common black (common for most steam engines).

In Photo Group 1 there is a broad side view, an elevated head on, as well as close-up details of the drivers and the tender wheel configuration.

This new Challenger comes from a very short heritage of a new line of Hudson’s, N&W J’s and Berkshire’s under the RailKing name. This entire line is a low cost, good quality advanced entry product, priced for people with an above average pocketbook for toy trains. That is, it's a medium price for both toy train operators and for the introduction of toy trains to the advantaged children of the 1990’s. It is priced well below some of the reissues of the endeared classic steam engines and diesels from the postwar Lionel Corp. (1946 to 1969). But, it is a new line, new designs by MTH making their own mark in the history of toy trains. It should be noted that companies like MTH, K-Line, etc., should all be applauded for their marketing and design directions away from the master plan of the 1950’s.

The performance of this engine is beyond your wildest dreams. It moves so smoothly at slow speeds you will think you have died and gone to some new and special toy train heaven.

No jerky starts as you find on some 700 to 1,300 dollar reissued engines, only smooth slow or fast rolling action and even silkier smooth stops. This new engine is definitely designed by people who understand tolerances and the proper fitting of parts.

Some other manufacturers in the field do not worry about tolerance build-up errors. Perhaps the quality and running performance of this engine will ring some bells and investors will see the importance of good engineering to achieve a quality product, not necessarily based on a technological masterpiece built in Silicone. This model is truly a classic in new design. I have never seen such a beautiful looking and running engine in this...
Group 2

class of toy train, new or old. Clearly, this model is offered by people who love trains and not decision driven by dollars only. It has an electronic whistle. ProtoSounds can be added.

You all know my feeling about these electronic additions — leave them alone.

Scale people will turn their nose up, as did my oldest son Paul. He said, in his usual dry sense of humor, "Where is the rest of it?"

I reminded him that it is a "Toy Scale" version of the Challenger and costs less than $600, not $1,500 to $1,600, as one would have to pay for a scale version.

The toy people are being served here and are being served the best, yet at low cost, a well done, beautiful toy train for their three rail 031 "track!"

On the subject of performance, I measured the drawbar pulling force and found a very interesting fact. At the point that all twelve wheels slip the force measured in at a terrific average of 52 ounces (3 pounds 4 ounces — Wow!) but as it continued to slip, I saw peak forces of 72 ounces, or 4.5 pounds! This engine is an all-around strong and unique performer.

There are two large can DC motors, (Photo Group 2), one per set of six drive wheels. The motors drive the center driver pairs in both sets and the motors are connected to the wheels through a worm and spline gear system. There is a fly wheel on each of the motors and on the whole, in my judgment, this mechanical system is absolutely superb, you can't get any better for the money.

It includes a whistle that is identical to the one issued in the RailKing Hudson and probably the N&W J. Unfortunately the J's were all gone by the time I woke up to their existence. All my comments in the Oct. 1995 Quarterly apply to this unit since the whistles are identical.

The engine has a smoke unit that is remarkable and is pictured in Photo Group 2. Note that it is not at all like the earlier Hudson with "pump" action. Instead, it has a tiny impeller (fan) driven by a small DC motor, the type you see in toy racing cars. As seen in Photo Group 3, the smoke is driven very high over the stopped engine. My layout room is 16 x 20 and after a few minutes it was too much for the room. There is switch on the bottom of the cab to turn off both the smoke unit and the fan should you find it overwhelming. I found it to be very interesting, even though a bit too much smoke. I think a solution is not to put too much fluid in the engine, just enough to keep things running.

The total look is very good (excuse me Scale or Toy Train perspective and I am not, as you can tell, a "Scale Purist"), running is fabulous, and all in all it is a very good buy for the dollar. Let me look at the value another way. The RailKing Challenger can be purchased from mail order people for about $520 (list is $599). For a person with a limited budget, with only about $500 to spend, I would go for the smooth running, good looking, high pulling power of this RailKing Challenger. Of course, there are some that will buy much more, but this retired IBM'er is making the decision to buy the RailKing Challenger as one of his 1996 purchases.

P.S.: It also passed the test — the grandchildren love it and can't wait until my unit arrives as this one was on loan from MTH. But I do thank Mike Wolf for the four day loan.

Hold The Press

Received an off-the-shelves MTH RailKing Challenger, all performances matched preproduction sample tested above.
A ROSE, IS A ROSE;
BUT NOT A GP-7
by Carl R. Byron 93-38373

In the immediate postwar era, GM’s Electro-Motive Division had more orders than it could fill for SW-model switchers, F-model road freighters, and E-model passenger units. Business was expanding at a phenomenal rate. Still, the railroad industry began to look for diesels that could handle road freight, local passenger, or heavy switching all at a moment’s notice.

Competitors Alco/GE, Fairbanks-Morse, and Baldwin had all begun to develop the so-called road switcher. Alco had pioneered the design, with its prewar 1,000 HP ‘RS-1’. By 1947, Alco/GE, and BLW all had 1,500 or 1,600 HP models with two, two axle trucks under them. The innards were the same as their comparable carbody type locomotives, but placed under narrow, removable hoods. Thus, 360 degree visibility from the cab was possible, as the units ran backward or forward with nary a complaint.

GM/EMD was slow to respond to this market, waiting until 1948 to field a half-hearted attempt known as the BL-2. It quickly proved no match for Alco/GE’s RS-, F-M’s H-, or Baldwin’s DRS- units. GM Vice President and EMD General Manager Cy Osborn called his troops together, and wanted results — NOW! Legendary Chief Engineer Dick Dilworth and Project Engineer Max Ephraim rolled up their sleeves, and preliminary design was quickly underway. The decisions agreed upon in those various meetings so long ago determined the style and format of the EMD road switcher for the next half-century and perhaps even longer into the new Millennium.

One story on good authority clearly shows the impact those EMD designers had upon even minutia within the road switcher concept. Apparently, Chief Engineer Dilworth was still a believer in ‘streamlining’, from his prewar E- and F-unit days. The large 45-degree number boards that EMD and various roads were affixing to freight and passenger cabs at that time apparently annoyed him, but their practicality was undeniable. Thus, Dilworth decreed that both front and rear carbody ends of the GP-7 would be angled at 45 degrees — with the numberboards recessed therein! It was the only streamlined item on the Geep, and that angled carbody end has remained ever since.

October, 1949, found Dilworth’s ‘ugly duckling’ nosing out from EMD for public display. Rated the same 1,500 HP and riding on the same Blomberg trucks as its F-7 sibling, the boxy ‘geep’ was practical and equipment accessible. Unimagined at that time, the following decade would see the ‘General Purpose’ locomotive sweep the full-carbody F-series type off the rails even more quickly than diesels retired steam.

Back East in New Haven, CT, and Hillside, NJ, a locomotive battle of similar proportions was being waged. Lionel had introduced its EMD F-3 to rave reviews in 1948, and the order books were likewise overflowing. A.C. Gilbert’s American Flyer was not going to be left flat-footed for long. Chief Engineer Maury Romer had the Alco/GE PA in production to handle AF’s premier streamliners for the 1950 Christmas Season, and EMD’s new GP-7 would handle the freight and switching chores. Competition was just as fierce as in 12-inch-to-the-foot!

TCA lore says Lionel got GM/EMD to help pay some of the die costs for its F-3 diesel. Apparently, Gilbert likewise had some type of relation going with EMD, since the prototype Flyer GP-7 has ‘Electro-Motive’ spelled out on the long hood, just like the real EMD GP-7 demonstrator. (EMD actually built three demonstrators.)

Like its PA sister, the GP-7 takes a rightful place as one of the most accurate models ever made as a child’s ‘toy’. Of course, the Blomberg trucks had to be oversized because of the use of the same motor and gear mechanism which was designed into the PA’s 3-axle truck frames. Likewise, scale handrails would be short-lived in a youngster’s hands.

However, that plastic injection moulding was exceptional in its accuracy and quality. The two sets of twin, 35 inch roof fans, and dual exhaust stacks are virtually ‘right on’ to EMD blueprints. So too, are the three louver sets under the cab window and walkway. Likewise, the twin radiator grills and the two louver sets beneath them on the long hood. Even the access doors are correct, with seven higher ones adjacent to the prime mover, and groups of two and four respective lower ones under the radiator grills. Even the horn is correctly placed by Gilbert, but that uncommon mounting perhaps was done for maximum strenght. Plus, the proper number of grabirons (5) are moulded on each end of the GP-7 carbody!

The only concession Gilbert made on the plastic body was to slightly exaggerate the moulded-on detail, and to remove a couple of louvers so that the decal stripe could go on a completely flat surface. The effort would be considered ‘good’ today; it was masterful in 1950.

Between 1950 and 1961, the American Flyer GP-7 came in several paint schemes. First was the silver and blue EMD demo scheme, then the pumpkin orange and black of Texas & Pacific (and AFL), followed by the...
yellow/gray/red of the UP. The final paint scheme was the C&O's blue and yellow.

By 1983, Lionel had the AF GP-7 retooled and back in production as a blue/black/white B&M unit. The next reincarnations were the Southern GP-9 and Chessie System/B&O low-nosed GP-20 in 1985. The following year the GP-9 was in NYC colors, and the GP-20 was painted Santa Fe. 1987 found the GP-9 in Southern Pacific colors, and the GP-20 in Illinois Central Gulf orange and white. In 1988, Santa Fe and Chessie System/B&O came as dummy GP-20's, and the unpowred GP-9 was painted Espee. The PRR was represented on the GP-9 of 1989, and in 1990, the GP-20 carried the BN's green, white and black. In 1991 there was a reissue of the EMD demonstrator scheme.

All the above is true, and simultaneously false. Lionel has consistently called reissues of its AF GP-7 with a couple of modifications both GP-9’s and GP-20’s, which they are not! At best, we should call them modified GP-7’s, which is truly what they are.

In 1985, Lionel took the AF GP-7 carb body and added a torpedo-like structure to its roof, thus creating its so-called GP-9. That roof blister in reality models a dynamic brake housing, something which any Geep from 1949 on could have had applied at the factory or retrofitted years later. Its purpose is to hold a large fan-cooled toaster-like grid. This grid receives electric energy from the locomotive when its' traction motors are placed in the 'dynamic brake' mode. This is done when the train is on a downgrade and allows the locomotive's traction motors to become generators. The retarding effect of the motors slows the train, thus lessening the use of air brakes, and the electrical energy is dissipated into the air as heat. The fan insures that the grid won't overheat and melt. On GP-7’s the dynamic brake used a 36 inch fan; GP-9 and later models used a 48 inch one.

An extension to that dynamic brake blister on Lionel's GP-9 and GP-20 is a small rectangular box. This fits over the closer 36' diameter fan, and represents a 'winterization hatch.' These hatches have been applied for years, starting back with the early E- and F- units, right up to today's SD-70's. When in use, they block air flow to the enclosed cooling fan. For units operating in cold climates, these hatches help keep the engine heat within the carb body. They bear no relationship whatsoever to the adjacent dynamic brake housing.

Also in 1985, Lionel decided to modify the GP-7 mold with a low, or 'chopped' nose. This plus the combination dynamic brake housing/winterization hatch supposedly represented the EMD GP-20. Let's see how close they really were.

EMD built the GP-7 between 1949 and 1954. They produced 2,660 units for 74 railroads, and one-sixth of the units came with dynamic brakes. In 1954 the engine was uprated to 1,750 HP, and the EMD road switcher became model GP-9. A sales champ with 3,601 units built through 1959, the GP-9 truly signed steams' death warrant. It, too, came with dynamic brakes and/or winterization hatches as options.

In 1959, EMD once again upgraded its model line. The GP-9 was replaced by either the GP-18 or the GP-20. Both had short hood forward operation, the reverse of prior standard practice. Until vandalism raised its ugly head, most crews preferred the low-nosed units for their improved visibility.

The 1959 EMD model leader was its new turbocharged GP-20 at 2,000 HP. It was very similar to its normally aspirated GP-18 sibling, which was uprated 50 HP to 1,800 HP vs the older GP-9. However, the requirement to have both exhaust gasses and incoming air flow through that new EMD Turbocharged meant changes for the GP-20's roof line. The rectangular turbocharged stack replaced the second 36 inch cooling next to the cab, and obviously the straight exhaust stacks around the dynamic brake housing were gone.

Also, with the production of the GP-18/20 line, EMD standardized its radiator fans on the 48 inch model as used in the dynamic brake module, replacing its old 36 inch standard. The stock GP-18 had a single, 48 inch fan replacing each of the two 36 inch fans sets found on a GP-7 or GP-9. The GP-20 had a single 48 inch fan closest to the cab, but used an asymmetrical 36-48 inch pairing for the fans at the end of the long hood. The smaller fan could be housed in the standard winterization hatch as provided for on earlier model Geeps.

Concurrently, EMD used the GP-18/20 models to introduce its 'Unit Reduction' trade-in credit program. Many an aged FT, F2, F3, or even F7 arrived at La Grange to be stripped of rebuildable parts. If a unit with four 36 inch cooling fans was the trade-in credit for a GP-18, the new unit was built with the same, not two new 48 inch ones. New GP-20's likewise, came with a single 48 inch fan on the radiator section nearest the cab, dependent upon railroad and trade-in allowance. (The single 48 inch fan at the extreme end of the long hood was required, and present on all GP-20's.)

Particularly because of their continued use of 36 inch cooling fans, Lionels AF GP-20 is closest to EMD's GP-18. It commonly came with the low nose and dynamic brake and winterization hatch options, and the exhaust stack placement is correct. Lionel should have used the GP-18 designation, not the GP-20. Sadly, however, Lionel chose to ignore these prototype realities.

So, in closing, how should we rate the Lionel reincarnated AF GP-7 and its siblings? "Close, but no cigar," would be a reasonable commentary. Unfortunately, the eye for accuracy found with Maury Romer and his associates at Gilbert circa 1950 is nowhere to be seen at Lionel today. Clearly, the market has responded to this situation with the development of such train companies as Mike's Train House, K-Line, American Models, and S-Helper-Service. Dick Dilworth and Maury Romer would understand.

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**GP-18**

October 1996
It is amazing that the 68 Inspection Car went from concept to final form in a span of less than two months. According to the rough sketches, Frank Pettit started the project on May 25, 1957, and his last work on it was noted as July 9, 1957. When looking at the drawings I noticed a few things that might have been good ideas but were later scrapped. I can only assume why this was done, but it is fun to speculate.

As we know, the final production piece was modeled loosely after a 1958 De Soto station wagon. The artist's renderings appeared in various publications, such as the Sears catalog and newspaper ads and these show what appears to be a 1957 Chevrolet 4-door Bel Air wagon. The decision as to what specific automobile to model the Inspection Car after is not readily apparent in Frank's drawings. The one thing that is apparent though is that he put a tremendous amount of effort into this project and tried quite a few different theories before settling on a final design.

Now let's look at the drawings...

Page 1 shows a notation as to what motor to use. This proved to be a major concern as space would be limited on the interior and the smooth lines of an automobile left little room to make parts of the body serve double duty as motor parts as was done in the Gang Car. The possibility of a DC motor and rectifier was mentioned early on but dropped in favor of the tried and true AC universal motor. Forward and reverse operation also seemed to be an option. Not including the Gas Turbine and Vulcan switchers as motorized units as
some do, the Inspection Car is the only motorized unit to feature an E-unit for reversing. Several other motorized units employ bumpers and the 3360 Burro Crane uses track trips.

Also noted is the use of rigid trucks. This was dropped in favor of pivoting front and rear trucks. The reason may have been to keep a proportioned look to the car. If a rigid wheelbase was used, the length may have been close to that of the 50 Gang Car. The shortened length, to orient the wheels in the wheelwells, would have been mated to the width of the production piece. This undoubtedly would have made a strange looking low and short but wide automobile.

The most intriguing entry was the possibility of making it as a floor toy also. This would have required a battery operated motor if it were to run on anything other than three rails. Now there was an engineering problem as to where to place a battery inside, make it accessible from the outside, and fit all gearing, all within the confines of a small car body. Keep in mind that the battery would most logically be placed in the center of the car, longitudinally, with access from the bottom. This would severely limit the space available for all the other components that would be needed. Hence, the next entry — a freewheeling push toy. In Greenberg's Guide to Lionel Trains, Volume V — Rare and Unusual, there are pictured two 68 Inspection Cars. One appears to be a typical production piece but in a light blue instead of the usual red. The other is a non-motorized example with no flanged wheels, clear rather than frosted windows, and a clear red roof cap rather than the plated knob used to reverse the motorized version. It appears that this piece was not what was intended in the drawings as a “Freewheeling push toy.” Many of the sketches deal with what appears to be retraction flanged wheels. Even though the 1957 catalog shows two ec-
static boys playing with the loads of the 6800 Airplane Car and 6801 Boat Car, it seems foolish to have a completely static inspection Car. The equivalent can be found four times on the 6414 Auto Loader.

Real cars of this sort, and they actually do exist in real railroading, use a set of flanged wheels that can be raised and lowered. They propel themselves with their regular rubber-tired drive wheels. This seems to be the intention and most of the details throughout Pages 2 and 3. The grooved tire shown on Page 1 is dropped in favor of a flanged wheel. This was probably done to avoid the obvious problems that they would have encountered going through switches. Page 2 deals primarily with the structure of the wheels and frame. Swivel trucks are decided upon and carry through to production. Also shown is the worm gear setup that is also in the final design.

Page 3 shows a few different ways to transmit power to the wheels. Interestingly enough is that it is shown as a front wheel drive years before this would become the rule rather than the exception in the real world. Two other gear arrangements are shown here also. In one view, a set of bevel gears is used to transmit power from the motor that is sitting horizontally to a worm shaft mounted vertically. A variation of this is drawn below but uses a pinion and crown gear arrangement. This is needed because the centerline of the motor shaft is higher than the height of the axle gear. This was resolved in the production model by using two spur gears at the base of the motor to lower the height of the driveshaft.

The next area of interest is the wheel flanges. As mentioned earlier, the grooved wheels were dropped. Shown instead are flanged wheels with a tire mounted on the outside. A note next to them states that the tire is to be a larger diameter than the flange. This would seem to
cause the same problems as the grooved wheel. Floating flanges are designed May 25, 1957. They incorporate a two piece tire with a tab protruding from the slot between the two parts. Also shown is the Rotating Disk Flange. They seem to be nothing more than a set of small diameter flanged wheels behind the rubber tired wheels. The most complex is the Centrifugal Expanding Flange. Centrifugal force of the drive wheels would cause these to come out in motion and disappear when the car was at rest. This shows that the possibility of dual use track/floor toy was still alive. Undoubtedly this was a complicated system and would cause a few problems. Naturally, there would be spaces between the three flange sections when they expanded. This may have caused a problem with noise bouncing off the rails, but more importantly a potential derailment source. The final production uses a flanged wheel with a simulated rubber tire and wheel mounted to the outside. Page 4 shows this in the center with the plastic tire and wheel tread being the same diameter. This contradicts the drawing just to the left that shows the tire larger than the flange. A reference is still made to the possible use as a floor toy.

It appears that the motor was a bit of a problem, as reference is made to the delays in not winding it satisfactorily. The final production model uses a motor unique to this piece. Also used is a universal shaft as mentioned in the first page of drawings. These can be seen in the side projection along with its unique idler gear arrangement.

As it turns out, the 68 Executive Inspection Car was never produced as a floor toy, but is a popular piece among collectors and operators alike.
An Interview with Lionel’s New Vice President of Sales and Marketing Manager, Michael Thoresen
by Todd R. Wagner 90-31944 and Bruce D. Manson, Jr. 69-2795

The following is a transcription of a telephone interview that occurred on July 31, 1996. The participants were: Michael Thoresen (MT) of Lionel, Todd Wagner (TW) a TCA member, and Bruce Manson (BM) Quarterly Editor.

BM: It’s a pleasure to have you on board. This is the continuing saga of the “new” Lionel. We were privileged, Todd and I, to interview Martin Davis and Greg Feldman, the individuals who purchased Lionel, and then we had a most enjoyable dinner interview with Gary Moreau. Now there are three new Vice Presidents at Lionel — Judy Hoffman, Jim Bunte, and you, Michael. Could you tell us a little of what each of you will be doing?

MT: Judy Hoffman is Senior Vice President overseeing marketing, sales and product development. Jim is a Vice President in charge of product development and creative services, and I am the Vice President of Sales and Marketing Manager. Both Jim and I work for Judy.

BM: What about advertising? Who is going to determine where Lionel spends its media dollars?

MT: That’s going to be a team assignment for Gary, Jim, Judy and I.

BM: So this will be a team effort?

MT: Very much so. In every thing we do.

TW: First Michael, let’s start by telling us what your background was before you started at Lionel.

MT: Most recently I worked at an ad agency by the name of J. Walter Thompson (JWT). It is a very large international agency.

TW: What were some of your duties?

MT: My duties changed over the years. When I first joined JWT in 1988, I was in charge of Ford’s Taurus and Probe national advertising campaign from an account management point of view, which includes helping to develop strategic positioning, creative production, media, and just making sure that the whole implementation plan is in place and actually takes place.

TW: How do those duties carry over into Lionel? One of the first things that I saw your name on concerned Lionel’s sponsorship of Little League Baseball (LLB). Can you give us a little background and the details of that sponsorship and what a Lionel enthusiast can expect to see from that point of view?

MT: Lionel is one of eight corporate sponsors of LLB. It is an association that we feel very strongly about, both from a philanthropic point of view, and also from a marketing point of view. LLB is synonymous with positive childhood development. It teaches courage, teamwork, partnerships, good sportsmanship — a lot of the values that are critical to development. Obviously Lionel too, is synonymous with the values of society. Our product is about as G-rated as one can get. Model railroading is a very social hobby, it’s not just one person playing with a train, it is usually a few people playing with it. There’s really no down-side to model railroading.

TW: Are you going to have specific product aimed at the Little League market?

MT: Absolutely. What we are doing is developing a LLB train set. It’s going to be dynamic. It incorporates a lot of the logos of the other LLB sponsors. The specific products are still being evaluated now, but the people we do have on board include McGregor, Rawlings, Kmart, and Musco Lighting, and there are a couple of others that are being negotiated with. What it is is a train set that incorporates the LLB logos, the sponsor’s logos, including Lionel, and it fits them into a baseball theme. It has some other little items in there that help improve play value.

TW: Will this be offered for sale through regular Lionel dealers or will there be new avenues that this will be available through?

MT: Well, this will be marketed two ways. The first is we are offering it for sale through the Little League Baseball teams, where they can sell tickets for it as a raffle item, where they can sell X number of tickets, and award the set to whatever ticket is selected. Basically it is a very good revenue generator for the teams. And the second thing is it will be sold to our Value Added Dealers, as well. Based on the response we have received from LLB and some of the dealers we have presented it to, it’s going to be a huge success for us.

TW: Will it start this fall?

MT: Yes. The benefit is really two-fold. First it helps LLB teams earn money for jerseys, trips, or whatever they need their funding for. The second thing is it helps LLB from a corporate standpoint, because a portion of the purchase price goes to LLB.

BM: Will this train come all at once, or will there be a car or two added each year?

MT: It will be a ready-to-run set available all at one time. In order to be a raffle item it has to be a R-T-R item. Based on the response we have received from LLB officials, coaches, and players, it is really going to be a dynamite item for us.

TW: Is Lionel working on cultivating any other relationships along with LLB, such as Boy Scouts, or anything of that nature?

MT: Well, we’ve had discussions with Boy Scouts, but it’s really too early. We need to try to concentrate on Little League Baseball right now. Obviously, we used to be very involved with Boy Scouts, with BSA, and would like to start our involvement with them again. You know, LLB, BSA, both are excellent organizations from a child development point of view. I my self was a Boy Scout.

TW: I think Mr. Moreau is heavily involved with them too, if I’m not mistaken.

MT: Yes he is. I was involved with Boy Scouts for five years and made it to Eagle Scout, so I can relate to that. I had a very positive experience with BSA and I know when my son gets to be of age I’ll push him in the direction of BSA. It will be his decision, but I know I had a riot with Boy Scouts.

TW: One of the goals, certainly of this program, will be to get Lionel in the view of people who normally would not see it.

MT: Yes, that is one of our marketing objectives.

TW: Where else are we going to see Lionel turn up, say between now and Christmas, besides your basic Value
Added Dealers? Any special promotions with stores or retailers that are planned?

MT: We are working on a joint promotion with Bloomingdale's where they would have a specific train set, with the appropriate in-store merchandising, and catalog advertising. It is an exclusive customized product for Bloomingdale's and it fits the demographics and psychographics of the Bloomingdale's consumer. To help support it, we are working on a store display for all twenty Bloomingdale's outlets. And for their Flagship 59th Street and Lexington Avenue store in New York City. We have five windows, over 75 feet of display with each window representing a major city or state. The basic window display theme is a trip from coast to coast in a candy land type setting. Kind of reliving the fifties-type presentation of Lionel's product. It's going to be a phenomenal program.

BM & TW: Great!

BM: Is there a Sears set, too?

MT: We've done Sears-branded premiums for a few years now, and we will be repeating the set between Lionel, Zenith and Sears, where you buy a Zenith product and you get a Lionel train set. It has been a very successful promotion for Zenith, so we actually upped it this year.

TW: Now, just a generic question. What are the advantages of making a special product, such as the Bloomingdale's train, with Bloomingdale's marked places versus putting a regular Lionel train set in Bloomingdale's?

MT: Well, actually several. Our goal with Bloomingdale's is to present the Lionel brand name and Lionel products to people who haven't heard of Lionel in a few years, or haven't ever heard of Lionel. So, we are looking to re-launch the Lionel brand name. Lionel has a very unique spot in America, and there are very few brand names that are out there that are tied to Americana as Lionel is. Lionel, Schwinn, Harley-Davidson, are all synonymous with America, and we are looking to re-launch and reinvigorate Lionel as an American icon. Bloomingdale's provides us with a very nice avenue to do that. It is also a unique product for Bloomingdale's, and will help increase the awareness of Bloomingdale's at their key shopping time, with having in-store displays, the 59th and Lexington Avenue display, appropriate media coverage, and a good product at a good price. It's going to sell-through at Bloomingdale's, probably overnight, because of the mentions in their Christmas catalog, in-store displays, window displays, media coverage, limited quantities and a good price.

TW: Very interesting. And that product will only be available through Bloomingdale's, not through Value Added Dealers?

MT: That is correct.

BM: It's my feeling that with Sears and JC Penney, what Lionel has had for several years was not widely publicized except for catalog sales, where with this you're really going for the window displays, etc. Last year, Red Wing Shoes did have a small Lionel train display for the window, but Bloomingdale's is what Mr. Davis had said in our first interview as trying to get Lionel like it was in the fifties — except we have gone from Macy's to Bloomingdale's.

TW: I understand Lionel is going to be using some product placement in movies and on TV this coming fall. How about some details?

MT: We are in the new Arnold Schwarzenegger movie called "Jingle All The Way." It's a Christmas-release movie, as well as, "Leave It To Beaver," and several made-for-TV movies, bring Lionel's trademark.

BM: We have a whole group of our members who just love to collect movies with Lionel in it — now they will have a new collectible.

MT: Now they can add this one. It is actually a fairly small product placement opportunity. The Lionel train is not the focus of the movie. There's another one coming up with Angela Lansbury called "Mrs. Santa Claus," where we're actually going to have Santa's elves manufacturing the Lionel trains. That program is currently being put together, and it is not finalized at this time.

TW: Is this a vehicle you're going to be using extensively or just more or less as the opportunities arise?

MT: I would like to use it extensively. It's kind of a subjective statement but, product placement is a very unique marketing tool as it allows you to get your brand name and product message out to millions of people. But we are very careful where the product is going to be placed. Obviously it has to be a movie that is suitable for family viewing and the product has to be presented in a very positive light. In my experience at Ford, and J. Walter Thompson, we had great success with product placement. Our agency and a company called Rogers & Cowan, out of Hollywood, are the companies that placed the Ford Explorer in "Jurassic Park," when the Explorer was being launched. It had a real positive impact on the perception of the Explorer and the image development of it.

TW: In addition to the new accessory catalog, which was just recently released, I understand there are going to be some changes to the VAD catalog available before the end of this year. Could you give us just some general details on what will be featured in those catalogs?

MT: We have the Classic Lionel catalog which includes a cadre of different Lionel products, everything from engines to rolling stock to accessories. We also have our Heritage catalog which includes our upper end products. What we are trying to do with our catalogs is to come out with more catalogs so that we can introduce more new product throughout the year. Traditionally, we have had two catalogs a year, now we are going to a slightly different system where people can keep getting new product news from Lionel.

TW: Both those catalogs will be out before the end of the year?

MT: The Classics and Heritage catalogs are going to be shipped the third week in August.

TW: The general idea is to get new product information to enthusiasts on roughly a quarterly basis?

MT: I wouldn't say quarterly but, more than twice a year. But we're still shipping some catalogs at about the same time. What we are trying to do is shorten our introduction cycle, so people can say, "Oh, this is what's new from Lionel," so they won't just hear what's new twice a year.

TW: Looking at the Value Added Dealer network, any proposed changes in the VAD agreement?

MT: There are going to be some changes to the VAD agreement.

TW: When will those be announced?

MT: Probably in mid-August.

BM: Will there be any change of trains being sold outside of the train store, specifically at meets and such?

MT: Yes, we're working out the details. We are going to now allow train sets to be sold outside of the retailer location. We are working on some programs and procedures right now, for we want to make sure that train sets are displayed correctly and sold at a reasonable price. We don't want to have our train sets sold at below cost or dumped out into the marketplace. It doesn't do anybody any good. The primary purpose for allowing sets to be sold at certain types of events, and not just limited to train shows, is we are trying to get the Lionel message out to a broader group of customers.

TW: I know at Dealer Preview, back in February, Lionel did announce that they were going to start a three-
year warranty program on the train sets. Is that going to continue and will that three year warranty be honored outside of the dealers showroom?

MT: Well, the extended warranty is kind of a non issue right now. In many cases we just go ahead and stand behind our product, really no matter what. We have a very liberal warranty period. I've heard of cases where a product is much more than three years old where they had the parts in stock and we just went ahead and fixed it. I think the whole customer service and warranty thing is something that Lionel is very proud of. We have outstanding customer service here. If someone sends us something, "this broke" or "this doesn't work" or whatever, we'll take that product, repair it and send it back to the consumer usually within a week or less. It's really unprecedented in the model railroad industry, and it is something that really sets Lionel apart from competitive entries.

TW: Is that warranty going to be honored although the train sets are going to be moved out of the showroom?

MT: Yes. It will still be a retailer sold item, so it is still going to be up to our Value Added Dealers to market and stand behind these sets, we're just going to give them some flexibility on where they do it. The whole goal is to get our product in front of the consumers where the consumer shops rather than have to find their local hobby store and go inside. We're not just limiting our dealers to train shows. We're encouraging them to go into shopping malls, to county fairs, to state fairs, and other events that draw our target audiences.

TW: I can say first hand, my local dealership for the last three years has gone to the local county fair, which is one of the largest county fairs in the country. We have always taken a small Lionel display and have always had a large degree of interest.

MT: What county fair is that?

TW: Canfield, Ohio.

MT: We are very interested in moving those initiatives forward, and partnering with events like that. I just talked to a train club in Chicago on taking their existing layout and grouping in some Lionel dealers who want to participate in going to some high-profile events, mall shows, air and water shows, whatever it happens to be.

BM: A few years ago Lionel had a deal with shopping centers where they shipped them some Lionel trains, track, etc., but then there was nobody to set them up. I guess it just became a perk for whoever received them.

TW: That was the mall promotion. It was a good idea but the execution needed more attention.

BM: Are you going to have any layouts built?

MT: We're going to develop some partnerships with railroader clubs that are out there. It's up to us to partner with these railroad clubs. I am a big fan of partnering with our enthusiast clubs to help send the message in association with some of our marketing partners. These people are already Lionel enthusiasts. They're looking to partner with Lionel, and Lionel is looking for the opportunity to partner with them. It's in everybody's best interest to do things like that. It provides us with a turn-key way of reaching our target audience, and it provides them with some resources to help them achieve some of their own objectives. So it is truly a win-win situation, but this is a program which is just being developed right now.

TW: Just to reiterate your last point, the train clubs are still going to remain a very large part of your marketing program?

MT: Oh sure. Our train clubs are valued customers and we value their input in all stages. They know the product exceedingly well and we value their input on product development and on marketing programs, and it would be very shortsighted of us not to partner with people who are already partnered with us.

BM: Is Lionel going to be at the New York Toy Fair?

MT: We really don't know yet. We're going to be there in some capacity.

TW: You don't know if you'll be there just as an observer or if you will have a display of some sort?

MT: That's correct.

BM: I have heard that Lionel is on the Internet.

MT: We are developing a web site right now.

BM: I understand Gary Moreau has mentioned on the Web that Lionel is going to have a new club other than the Railroaders Club. Can you tell us about this club?

MT: Yes, we are in the process of developing another club called "The Century Club." The details are being confirmed at this point.

TW: Is there any general focus on how it is going to differ from the existing club?

MT: It will differ, as we're not going to have two clubs that do the same thing. The Railroaders Club is a very good information source — we have a lot of background information on new products, and we offer some Railroaders Club products like a club car every year. It's good background information on Lionel, the people at Lionel, the products, other enthusiasts, etc.

BM: So there will be two clubs?

MT: Yes there will. The details on the Century Club are still a little sketchy, so I'm a little hesitant to provide information on it at this time. It will be a member-based club and it will be run by Lionel itself.

TW: Licensing has played an on-and-off again role with Lionel in the last few years. Certainly the most notable have been Thomas and the Crayola sets. Any future in licensing for Lionel?

MT: Yes, we're going to continue our licensing agreements. All of our licensing partners are top quality, and are really the leaders in their industry, like Warner Bros. and Disney. These licensors have very positive images and we are going to continue working with them on developing specific products that meet the needs of identifying our target audiences, like all the Disney items. It's fun, it's entertaining, and it's good product. The same thing with WB. Thomas had great appeal among our younger consumers. I know, I just bought a set for my two-and-a-half year-old son and he just loves it.

BM: Where are you and the rest of the team going to get your ideas for new products — from the prototype railroads, e.g. the Dash 9-44CW, intermodal, etc., or from nostalgia, or a mixture of both?

MT: Well, it is going to be a little of both. Lionel is not a prototypical model train company. We have different types of products to meet the different needs of our consumers. Some of our consumers really like the fun and innovative type products that we offer. We just introduced a new tank car, the "lava" car, and that is obviously not prototypical, but it is fun, it's entertaining, and it has great play value for people like that type of train. But for our consumers who are more prototypically-minded, we have more of the traditional line of engines, rolling stock, and accessories. So we are going to continue to take that dual path between the traditional and more railroad related products, and something that is a little more fanciful, something a little more fun and entertaining.

BM: You're not abandoning the prototypical or the real railroads?

MT: Absolutely not. Lionel has always taken kind of a dual path when it came to designing, manufacturing and marketing new products.

BM: This whimsical, fun thing, although not new with
Lionel, will there be a little more emphasis on that?

MT: Yes and no. We're going to continue with both types of products. We're not going with just one or the other. There is a demand for both, the more fun and entertaining or whimsical type products, but also there's a huge demand for the more traditional, prototypical products, so we're going to continue our dual path.

TW: Your competitors, I feel, have made their in-roads, by targeting their own segments and marketing towards them - Mike's Train House towards the person who desires the prototypical train set, and K-Line with the person who desires the more whimsical product. In this day-and-age of modern segmentation and targeting, is it still feasible for Lionel to be all things to all people?

MT: We are not all things to all people, but these segments are each large enough to warrant specific products and marketing initiatives.

BM: One of the things I saw that I thought was very interesting in the new Accessory Catalog, on the inside back cover, was an appeal to Made in the USA patriotism. Are you going to play this up?

MT: Made in the USA is not a primary brand attribute but it's something that we are very proud of. We are not an importer like some of the competitor entries that are out there. We have a majority of our products right in our back yard in Chesterfield, MI.

TW: In terms of your advertising this year, will we see any national advertising from Lionel?

MT: We are going through a re-evaluation process right now. As far as mainstream consumer advertising, the answer would have to be no. Right now all of our advertising is concentrated on the hobbyist using publications like CIT and O Gauge Railroading.

TW: So you will be keeping the status quo for at least this year?

MT: For this year. We are in the process of developing a very aggressive marketing plan that addresses new consumer targets, and as those targets have products specific to their wants and needs, then the appropriate level of marketing support will follow.

TW: Both you and Bruce mentioned the Internet web site. When will that be up and running?

MT: We are hoping to have that up by Labor Day.

TW: And your web site address will be?


TW: What are your general plans for it going to be? What sort of information do you plan for us to find?

MT: We're planning a phased roll-out for our website. We are going to be providing some basic company information, a lot of product information, and new product news. We are going to identify our Value Added Dealers, so if people want to know where their closest Lionel dealer is, there will be a locator in there. A lot of it is news that you can use. Once we get further down the track we are going to make it interactive. We are also going to partner with some of the other companies that are out there, such as railroad museums, other railroad clubs, and develop some links so that we can cross-promote each other.

TW: I just have one final question. You mentioned that you have had some train background in your past. You recently attended the TCA Convention in Dallas, and the LCCA Convention in Michigan. What's your general feeling of the hobby?

MT: I was into it as a kid. I hate to admit it, but I was an N scale railroader. I had a fairly elaborate N scale layout. My brother, too, was big into N scale. We both had 4x8 foot sheets of plywood, what seemed back then to be miles of track, and all the electronics, switches, buildings, mountains and tunnels. We had a ball with this stuff. Youth being what it is, priorities changed when I was around fourteen. But I kept all my equipment. My dad actually had a Lionel train set that we used to take out occasionally. He was very protective of it, and rightfully so. He had a 1936 259E that his father, my grandpa, gave to him. I now have this set, much to the dismay of my two older brothers, and I'll keep it well out of reach of my two-and-a-half year-old son and my ten-month old daughter. They will see it at the appropriate time.

TW: What specific kind of vibes did you get at LCCA and TCA?

MT: Oh, very positive. People are very enthusiastic about the new direction that Lionel is taking. They know that current management is focused on the product. We all firmly believe that everything we do starts and stops with product. Quality, durability, reliability, all the attributes that Lionel is famous for. We also want to make sure our product continues to be fun and entertaining, and that we are also promoting the hobby. Model railroading is a wonderful hobby. There are very few hobbies out there that are as social in nature, that are basically G-rated, and it's a hobby that crosses all age barriers. It is a hobby or activity that grandparents can share with their grandchildren. We have competitive entries out there like Nintendo or Sega, where it's basically "boy against the box," and it is very difficult to have conversation or interaction with someone when they are operating a computer game. But model railroading, especially Lionel model railroading, is very social and very interesting and it never ends. You can always expand it. I have heard so many stories, people saying I have just finished my layout and now I've torn it up again, because I wanted to add this. The fun of the hobby for many people is the development of the layout and that is why they are never done. It's like an old car, you're never done with it. Or in my case, my house - I'm never done with it.

BM: I just have two more inter-linking questions. What do you consider the greatest challenge to the model railroading hobby? And what do you consider Lionel's greatest challenge?

MT: The greatest challenge is re-launching the brand name and re-introducing model railroading to new consumer segments. We have many programs in place right now to re-introduce Lionel to kids. In the fifties and sixties, if you received a Lionel train set, that was the best gift you could get. A lot of those initiatives have changed a bit and so we will be re-introducing Lionel to today's youth. Early indications are that America's youth is very receptive to Lionel model railroading. You know, Lionel still stands for rugged, durable products. These are not flash-in-the-pan type products. You get a Lionel train set and it is something that you can expand and grow with and really get in and out of.

BM: So there will be an emphasis for the youth market?

MT: Yes. You know we are working now on product that addresses the wants and needs of primarily boys, ages five to twelve. They are primary prospects for Lionel train products. Our product attributes really give us a good advantage with youth. We have very tough and durable products. My son picked up the NYC Flyer I have at home and threw it against the wall and proceeded to go pick it up and put it back on the track. I don't know of too many other products that you can do that to. We are going to continue to make top quality products that fill the various needs of the consumer segments, in and out of the hobby.

BM & TW: Thanks for your time and good luck!
For those with an insatiable need for up-to-the-minute information on happenings in the train world, look no further than cyberspace! While the Internet and other information superhighway-related ventures have yet to truly find their purpose in the real world, they have proved to be the place for train heads. I subscribe to America Online (AOL), which is one of the major providers of online service. Gary Moreau and Jim Bunte of Lionel, Jim and Debbie Flynn of Marx, Tom McComas of TM Books, Maury Klein and Jeff Cohen of K-Line, Jonathan Polk of Aristo-Craft, and Andy Edelman of Mike’s Train House are just a few of the folks that have made their presence known by providing information and answers to questions that seem to constantly arise. The purpose of this short article is to provide very brief highlights of some of the information and discussions that took place online during August 1996. Look for a future article in the Quarterly to delve into the much larger issue of toy trains in the Information Age.

Lionel announced several things on AOL. The first is what Michael Thoreosen mentioned in his interview — “The Century Club.” Lionel will use this new club to offer special products to members through the turn-of-the-century. Memberships will only be available until January 31, 1997, and according to Mr. Moreau, dues “WILL be expensive. BUT, if you can afford it, it will be worth it!” Membership benefits will include special membership bonuses, such as a unique Angela Trotta Thomas print that will be available free as part of the membership. See your local Lionel dealer for details.

Lionel also gave details of one of their new sets coming for 1997. To be called “The Surfliner,” it will be headed by a Santa Fe Alco PA-1 with another set of Santa Fe aluminum passenger cars. This Alco will be made in the USA with the original tooling that was produced in Korea by Samhongsa. The retail price on the A unit with Lionel’s new SignalSounds sound system, command control, and a host of other features is a very low $299.99.

Another Lionel item concerns the new “6411”-style die-cast flatcar. Concern was raised that even though the flatcar body was made in Korea, and the die-cast trucks were made in China, the box says “Made in the USA.” Lionel responded with an analogy comparing the flatcar to that of an American-made automobile. Needless to say, at least one American auto worker was not pleased with the comparison.

Word was first available online about the problem with two of Lionel’s Ertl flatcars — the Santa Fe flatcar with the Challenger, and the NYC flatcar with the scraper. These are the only ones affected. Incompatibility with the plastic used for the treads and wheels of the Ertl pieces and Lionel’s flatcar bodies have led to the flatcars “melting.” A similar situation happened with the 65 handcar of the 1960’s! Lionel’s solution was to make mylar spacers available to dealers to place between the car and the offending load.

Mike’s Train House recently joined the online forum with press releases defending their ProtoSounds compatibility with Lionel’s TrainMaster system and other solid-state power supplies. Finger-pointing went back-and-forth between Lionel, MTH and QSI (the designer of MTH’s ProtoSounds system) as to who or what was the problem. If anyone wants to witness modern-day drama in the train world, this was definitely it! While things have yet to be resolved on the compatibility issue between these companies, it does appear that some sort of a “truce” may be occurring, with Lionel wanting people to be able to run MTH’s locomotives with the TrainMaster system, and MTH wanting the purchasers of their products to not suffer the problems they have in the past when operating with a newer-generation transformer.

An interesting thing about the Internet and related online service providers are that they are largely unregulated. In other words, you’ll never know what you may find. In that vein, I found a complete listing of Lionel’s proposed 1997 line in an obscure web site. Some of the items listed were: 0 gauge Thomas the Tank Engine, a tie-jector, a NYC 622 Switcher, 193 Water Tower, Intermodal Cranes, the Culvert set, the Bascule Bridge, and a Lionel Dive Team train set. Time will tell if this undoubtedly underground listing is correct.

That’s the sound-bite version of this month’s installment. See you online!
After several years of Ives collecting I had acquired nearly all of the 6 and 9 inch Ives freight cars and one day while looking through the 1923 Ives catalog I came to page 19 which lists a 9" 167 caboose. Never having seen this car I questioned other Ives collectors and learned that it was never made. Further investigation revealed they never made nine inch in 0 gauge, not only the caboose but also the tanker, crane, hopper, flat or coke cars. And, of course, never made a 4-4-4 using a #3253 cab. So, it was then that I decided to produce the cars and a 4-4-4 locomotive.

The first requirement to make the cars was to find 0 gauge 9" platforms which I located at York from William Sanchez. I had some thin brass sheets and at the hobby store I found other metal parts such as the side rails used on the coke car. Using Standard and #1 gauge cars as models I took measurements and reduced those measurements to 0 gauge size. Also, I used parts from my parts boxes for items like brake wheels, couplers, etc.

The tank car consists of two round ends from spray painted caps with sheet brass wrapped around to form the main body with rivet details. The hopper car was all hand cut and soldered as shown, as was the flat car from sheet brass. The narrow vertical strips on the hopper are "U" shaped with rivet details.

The crane car boom was the most complicated and difficult to build. There are sixty-eight soldered joints on the boom alone. The cab and boom are on a swivel base so the car can be operated the same as the Standard gauge version.

The caboose roof is a nine inch boxcar roof, the rest of the car was cut and soldered from sheet brass. The coke car consists of vertical cross members with horizontal strips soldered to the uprights, the same as the Standard gauge car.

Now, with the cars completed they should have an appropriate locomotive to haul them. Tony Hay had a spare #3253 cab which I mounted on a steel frame, altered from a #3257. After some surgery on the frame, room was provided for the trucks, which I had, but they needed smaller wheels to enable them to turn under the frame. Again, the parts box supplied them.

The lettering on the cars was done with rub on lettering. The caboose number is 167. the same as the six inch caboose from the factory. The loco shell was in excellent condition and I didn’t want to disturb the number 3253 so I merely added the number 12 to the end of the existing number to designate it as a 4-4-4.

I matched colors from the Standard gauge cars as closely as possible. In making the cars and loco my ability was challenged many times but the pleasure of completion made it all worthwhile.
TWO DORFANS
IN ONE SEASON

by Nelson G. Williams  74-6535

Lightning often strikes us more than once during the rainy season in Florida, but it seldom brings good luck. I could hardly believe it when I found not just one, but two 60-year-old Dorfan Standard gauge freight trains in the summer of 1988. I do not remember ever seeing another complete set.

My first find had only four of the six freight cars — no flat car nor tanker. But it did have an original Dorfan cast metal "centipede" locomotive. Although barely half the size of the Lionel 381E, this 4-4-4 electric was the biggest engine Dorfan made. Any Dorfan engine is hard to find now because the copper and zinc alloy has usually oxidized and broken up. I bought my partial set by mail from a Minnesota collector who was liquidating his collection. In the same TCA Newsletter that listed it, an Ohio member offered a Dorfan tanker that I thought was one of the missing cars. Unfortunately, his tanker was 0 gauge.

What did I find at the very next meet of the TCA Southern Division?

There was a complete Dorfan Standard gauge freight train in much better condition than the set I had just bought. The young couple said it had been kept on a display shelf in their father's home for decades. They accepted my offer and I now had two Dorfans.

This was truly an embarrassment of riches. I had spent over my allocated train money on these two trains. Of course, I could not afford to keep both of them. I decided to keep the centipede from the first train and the cars of the second one.

Although the second locomotive looked better, Chester Holley told me it was a brass reproduction made around 1970 by a man in Miami. After that fellow died, Chet located his widow and tried to get the molds for the engine and the Dorfan trucks. She could not find them, and they are probably lost forever.

I had to sell my extra engine and cars as soon as possible. I live close to the show, so I drove home, got my four cars, and took them back to my table. One collector said to his friend, "How about that? It's been years since I saw a Dorfan for sale, and today there have been two of them at this meet."

However, no one at the meet bought my duplicate cars nor the reproduction engine. I sold them to a collector in New Jersey as soon as he read my ad in the next Newsletter.

Why was I so excited about getting a Dorfan freight train?

I collect only 2½ inch Standard gauge tinplate trains — the Classics made before World War II, and the modern trains built since 1965. I already had nearly all the Lionel freight cars since 1910, an Ives and an American Flyer, and a few passenger sets. But I still needed a Dorfan (and a Boucher) to complete my collection of Classic freight trains.

Dorfan was founded in 1924 by Milton and Julius Forchheimer, cousins of Joseph Kraus and former executives of his toy company in Nuremburg. Kraus himself emigrated to the United States about 1930. Their trains were named after their mothers, Allilla Dora and Fanny, being called "Fandor" in Europe and "Dorfan" in America. Otherwise, the Dorfan company in New Jersey was completely in-

The centipede was Dorfan's largest locomotive, but it is dwarfed by the giant 381E built by Lionel a decade later.

The Dorfan centipede pulls a 1928 freight around a curve in Floral City, FL. Four Lionel Standard gauge freights, 1910-40, ride the shelves between a McCoy-TCA set (above, 1966-81) and modern rolling stock built by "Red" Forney before 1985.
Dorfan lithography with brass ladders and trim made this Santa Fe boxcar, UTLX tanker, and PRR caboose, three of the best Classic era freight cars.

Dorfan passenger cars had little passengers who could be seated inside, and their freight cars were lithographed in beautiful detail that is still a joy to see. Dorfan freight cars are more than equal to their best Lionel and American Flyer counterparts. The brass trim of the Dorfan caboose, boxcar, and blue tanker place them among the most attractive prewar Classic tinplate freight cars ever built.

The consist of my Dorfan includes (1) a log car similar to the Flyer flat car, with a load of real branches from a tree or bush, (2) an NYC gondola with barrels that open, (3) a double door Santa Fe boxcar, like a Lionel 214, (4) a UTLX tank car, (5) a PRR hopper, and (6) a Pennsylvania caboose. The caboose has four windows to a side, but their brass inserts make each pair look like one window of a Lionel 517. To open the hopper doors, one must turn a long screw with a tiny "brakewheel" over 30 times.

Beauty was not enough to keep Dorfan in the running against the Big Three of Classic Toy Trains. Given a few more years, Dorfan might have overcome the problem of oxidation of their alloy. But after 1929, few buyers could afford the money and space needed for big trains. A decade later Lionel was the only surviving manufacturer of Standard gauge tinplate. Such trains disappeared in World War II, until the revival of modern Standard gauge in the 1970's.

I was fortunate to have owned two Dorfans that summer, however briefly, and to still have the best of both trains. By the way, I recently got my Boucher locomotive and tender. I still need the Voltamp/Boucher freight cars to go with it.

**LIONEL CORP. AUTHORIZED DISPLAY SIGN**

**OR**

**RETAIL STORE AUTHORIZED DISPLAY SIGN?**

by Steven Blotner 79-13966

Recently I acquired from a TCA member a florescent "Lionel Trains Approved Service" sign. The best part is it came in working order (no disassembling, please) and had two 6 inch chains to hang it from a ceiling or wall. The chains are attached to a cut-out slit on the top of each side. The dimensions of this sign are 19¾" long by 7½" high by 2½" deep. The back is made out of white painted metal. But, as you can see, the front is mostly made out of a plastic material that illuminates beautifully.

When I first examined the sign the lettering looked like a "Lionel Trains Approved Service" decal with a #5342 Hudson on it. But, on closer examination I found it to be silk-screened on — a two color (blue and orange) silk-screen job. The #5342 is a full 00 scale Hudson with all the valve gear showing. It is curious not to see the #5344 Hudson in the silk-screening. The silk-screen measures 18½" by 3½", with the "Approved Service" circle's diameter being 6¾".

As this is the only variation of its type that I have found in many years of collecting Lionel dealer train signs, the question remains, "Did Lionel authorize this or did a Lionel dealer have it made up special?" The unit shows many years of use and age, but would grade to V.G.+ or a low EX. Because the artwork on the Hudson is so detailed, my money is on the Lionel Corp. authorized theory, but still I'm not sure.

Anyone having information relating to this unusual Lionel (or retail) sign please drop me a note.
While looking through the new Lionel catalog, my grandson informed me that he would like to have the 16955 AT&SF flatcar with the Ertl Challenger and the 16958 with the New Holland Loader. I am usually receptive to his requests, but at a suggested list of $44.95, I decided to find a less expensive way to satisfy him. In the process, we created an interesting project to work on together.

I'm the type that loves to look through boxes of trains and train related items located under tables, as opposed to the items on the table. I look for repair projects and recalled seeing many flat cars built by Lionel that were missing the loads. These orphan flats can usually be purchased for $5.00 to $7.00. At a recent train show I found a red 6511 flat missing the stakes and metal pipes, and a red 6650 military flat missing the entire rocket launching mechanism. I purchased both for $12.00.

I went to a table with toys where I found the grader and backhoe for $6.00 each. Total expenditures so far, $24.00. When I arrived home, I raided my surplus wire box and found some #24AWG solid telephone wire, removed the insulation and used it to attach the construction equipment to the flat cars (Photos 1 and 2). Simply place the wire around both axles and part of the frame, feed it through the holes in the flat car and secure it underneath (Photo 3).

Now, my grandson is very pleased with his two flat cars. I've spent $24.00, and two otherwise orphan flat cars are now hard at work delivering their construction equipment instead of languishing in an under the table junk box.
1946 Trial Runs — Early
S Gauge Production Samples

Photos from the Collection of Dave Garrigues 67-1904

Upstairs at the Hall of Science

1946
50 years

Note: The Crane Cars have platforms that were not used in production models, the rare 579 and 580 Street Lamps, the black and the rarer orange Shell Tank Cars behind the K-5 on the bottom shelf. Can you find the Track Gang set?

#4613 1946 Hudson passenger set which was not mass-produced until 1947. #4615 Northern set, only a handful of '46 production Northern's are known to exist. Note crane appears to be red rather than yellow, hopper is lighter then production models.

Can you find the five Northerns and the several 0-8-0's? In front of the Mystic Station is the special track section for the 718 Mail Pick-Up car with inside rail, none are known to exist.

October 1996
Before we begin please allow me to clarify something. I am not an Ives collector as my interest is mainly Lionel. The information I have gathered might well be old news for educated Ives lovers and some of this material may be elsewhere in print. For years I have "toyed" with the idea of putting together a little information about the beginning of Ives. The reason for this, hey, why not it's in my back yard.

I have lived practically all my life in this small rural town called Plymouth, founded in 1795 (Photo 1) located in northwest Connecticut. I would estimate the present population of Plymouth township at about three thousand. Plymouth is located between Thomaston (Seth Thomas) and Terryville (Eli Terry). Terryville is actually part of the town of Plymouth. These men whose towns bear their names were the pioneers of clock and lock manufacturing that make this area historically rich, but that is another story and would take us off course here. Plymouth is about an hour's drive north of Ives' more well known home in Bridgeport, which is where I was born.

The following information was obtained from the Plymouth Public Library. I was able to locate a little additional material from conversations with senior lifelong residents of this town, including some direct descendants of Edward Riley Ives, but maybe a future article with expanded research could contribute more knowledge about this story. I took the pictures, some of them three times, to obtain decent ones. I'm not a photographer folks.

Edward Ives was born on Sept. 13, 1839, son of Riley and Mary (A. Judd) Ives in the Town Hill section of Plymouth. He was educated there. His parents met while working at the Terry Clock Company. His father helped install the old Terry clock in the Plymouth Congregational Church which is still in operation today (Photo 2). It is my understanding that this clock is the only operating wooden movement clock of its kind left in the world. A second clock was destroyed some years ago in a fire that leveled the old Terryville Congregational Church. Ives' mother painted and decorated many of these clocks.

Ives may have learned bit-making from his Uncle William Ives who operated an auger manufacturing business in New Haven. He established a toy business sometime around 1868 after gaining experience in mechanics and manufacturing with his father during the Civil War. They were producing uniform buttons probably in a shop where they also did metal stamping. All that remains of this shop are old foundation stones located near the pump house of the Thomaston reservoir off North Street (Photos 3, 4 and 5). It harnessed water power from the reservoir which then was known as Macon's Pond. In 1868, Ives' original factory, where he produced his exclusive hot air toys, was situated on Maple Street near the Blakeslee house. The shop was moved
several times, once near the Blakeslee brick carriage shop (Photos 6 and 7), and then across the street where it was finally torn down in the mid-1930's.

Two other buildings that are still standing were used by Ives in his toy manufacturing endeavours. One stood near the Blakeslee carriage shop and was subsequently moved down to Main Street where it remains today as the Grange Hall (Photo 8). The other building on the north side of Main Street west of the Green is now a residence. This building was once known as the "TOY SHOP" (Photo 9). There is some question as to whether the building shown in this picture is actually the old toy shop. When inquiring about it of the present owner who is remodeling the home, he said he found letters in the walls addressed to Ives dated during the Civil War. This would seem to confirm that this was the location. He said that at some future time I could see the letters.

Toys were also manufactured in a small building on South Street. Photo 10 shows a house that sits at this location. Photo 11 shows an old building behind the house that may have been used by Ives but this could not be confirmed. Photo 12 shows a street sign that bears the name of this enterprising individual or perhaps his predecessors or descendants. I really don't know who the street was named for, but this small country road with few dwellings lies in the close neighborhood of buildings and sites where the magic of toy making once took place.

It is a constant reminder to me and many other people, of the rich heritage of the past that brings us so much pleasure today.

As Ives' business grew and needed larger facilities he moved his business to Bridgeport, CT, in the 1870's, and this is where my story ends. True Ives collectors know...
the rest of this tale. He remained in business for about fifty years with the help of his son Harry C. Ives and his half brother Charles Andrew Ives. By the dawn of the 1880's Ives' business was one of the largest and most important in the entire world. Their exporting trade was enormous. Some of the items they produced besides trains and toys were augers, pewter mugs, and steel springs. They used several company names such as Ives, E.R. & CO. (Augers), Plymouth; Ives, Blakeslee & Company; Ned Ives Toy Factory, and, of course, E.R. Ives & Company in Bridgeport.

It has been both pleasure and relief writing this little story. Pleasure in the fact that I, a train lover, live in the same town where such an important part of toy train history began. Relief in the fact that I waited so long to satisfy that urge but finally have done so. I hope I have not insulted any true Ives enthusiasts whose knowledge is surely greater than mine. And if any of this information is inaccurate or has already been in print in other Ives publications please forgive me and accept my apology.

In conclusion I would like to thank the people who contributed information for this article. This would include local librarians, townspeople, and mostly my wife who was instrumental in talking with these people. As a clerk in our local post office she had the best opportunity to ask the questions that helped make this story possible. I also told you that my main interests are in Lionel and that is true. But do you really think that a train lover living in the town where Ives Trains were born wouldn't have a boxed Ives set? I mean let's be realistic people.

Happy Railroading!
Dear Bruce,

As usual — outstanding editorial interest and content. Of particular interest, as always, are the items of old or historical background. I can see the new and current things at meets and shops — but a trip to the TCA Museum is not as easy — when you include info such as the Voltamp article it is an alternative.

Keep giving us as much history as you can.

All the best,
John Steen 91-34171

Dear Bruce:

I was fascinated by the picture at the top of page 20 of the July issue, in Ray Fetzner's fine article in the series, "Advertising Tinplate Trains." The picture, taken from the Dec. 1950, Esquire, apparently shows a "yellow" oil derrick (it actually looks orange in my copy), as Ray points out in his text.

Upon closer inspection, one can identify several other curiously-colored Lionel items of the era, including a set of 2023 FA's with white roofs and black frames and trucks that should be all gray, and a 456 coal ramp with a white upper structure and orange base supporting a bright red bin and a light-gray twin hopper. The 455 oil derrick itself, in addition to its oddly-hued tower, sports a white/light gray base and black generator, among other anomalies.

Are these all rare color samples of some sort, loaned to Esquire for the photo before final production colors were fixed? I doubt it. Instead, the unusual "variations" are almost certainly the result of printing errors by people who were unfamiliar with the items in the photo. In fact, it is even likely that Esquire's print was black and white, tinted by their own photo department?

Nevertheless, the photo remains fascinating, if only for showing what is certainly the earliest version of the 2023, with the gray nose (even though it looks white in the photo).

Very truly yours,
Paul Leone Peters 76-8826

Bruce,

I collect Standard gauge reproductions and Lionel "AF", run LGB indoors and out, and enjoy every article you publish in the Q on all types of trains and toys. Don't worry about what's "hot" at the moment, help us all to expand our interests!

Many thanks for the great job you do as Editor of the Q. I am sure there are many like myself who have enjoyed every issue, but have failed to express our interest and appreciation.

Best wishes.
Kirk L. Lindvig, MD 88-27444

VOLTAMP UPDATES

In Joe Swisher's article in the Quarterly, on the Voltamp train and trolley, he mentions the name on the passenger cars, but what caught my eye was the name on the trolley — "United Electric." At the time the trolley was manufactured in Baltimore, the name of the streetcar system here was United Railway and Electric Company. I wonder if there is where the name "United Electric" came from. I am a member of the Baltimore Streetcar Museum.

Mike Citro 77-10425

Dear Bruce:

In his article continued in the July Quarterly, Mr. Swisher wonders why the "Ferris Wheel" has no accompanying carousel. The answer is simple. The building is a mill and the power to grind grain comes from a water wheel. This can be deduced from the size of the wheel, slats instead of seats, and the sluice for flowing water to turn the wheel.

Happy collecting,
George B. Lindgren 83-20051

THANKS FOR THE TRACK

Dear Bruce:

The article by Donald Richardson on Lionel Standard gauge track variations in the July Q certainly was the ultimate in explicit details. Evidently, Richardson is an engineer of sorts! Now he should continue the series and take up Ives and American Flyer Standard gauge variations for comparison with Lionel.

Also — in preparing for a train show at the local historical museum at which I will emphasize foreign toy trains, I find that there is no reference in the Quarterly Index to the Fleischmann Company, whereas Marklin, Karl Bob, Hornby, etc., have numerous articles. Some knowledgeable collector needs to address this omission.

Sincerely,
George Denzene 87-25307

Georges,

You really started something with your track series. Perhaps we should call you, "The writer who keeps us on track."

Hope a Fleischmann fan will answer your call.

BDM

SIX NEW INDUCTEES INTO NMRA PIONEER HALL OF FAME

Six individuals were inducted into the Pioneers of Model Railroading during the National Model Railroad Association's annual Awards banquet at the Long Beach Hilton in California, during NMRA's annual convention and trade show. The presentations were made by Railroad Model Craftsman publisher Hal Carstens, a long time NMRA Life Member and holder of NMRA's Distinguished Service Award.


Nathan Polk. NMRA Vice President 1963-1965, Nat also served on numerous NMRA committees. He received the prestigious IIIA Meritorious Award of Honor in 1968. In the early 1930's, with his brother Irwin, leased hobby store space in about 30 department stores. In the early 1930's, hosted WOR radio program "Junior Birdmen of the Air," which brought many youths into model building. Introduced low priced brass rail to hobby about 1939, 99 cents for 90 ft. Got Stephen Schaffan of Atlas to make low cost HO switch kits. Involved in the landmark Customs Tax case which reduced levies on imported scale models which previously had been taxed at the much higher toy rate. Under the trade name Aristo-Craft, imported train

REGARDING JULY 1996, VOL. 42, NO. 3!

Dear Bruce,

2023, with the gray nose (even though it looks white in the photo).

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Paul Leone Peters 76-8826

Bruce.

In California, due to make low priced brass rail to hobby about 1939, 99 cents for 90 ft. Got Stephen Schaffan of Atlas to make low cost HO switch kits. Involved in the landmark Customs Tax case which reduced levies on imported scale models which previously had been taxed at the much higher toy rate. Under the trade name Aristo-Craft, imported train trains. I find that there is no reference in the Quarterly Index to the Fleischmann Company, whereas Marklin, Karl Bob, Hornby, etc., have numerous articles. Some knowledgeable collector needs to address this omission.

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equipment from England, Germany, Italy, other European countries, Japan and China. Operated Polk's Hobby Craft Stores. Nat was active in industry fund raising activities for film promotion. Member HIAA, MRIA. In his 80's, now confined to wheelchair.

Two of the inductees and the presenter are TCA members: Howell Day 85-22230, Nat Polk 65-1347, and Hal Carstens 60-441. who was TCA National President 1964-1965. BDM

NATHAN J. "NAT" POLK 1913-1996

We were saddened to learn of the death of Nat Polk 65-1347, on Aug. 6th. We know that in the Heavenly Chapter, Nat is enjoying what he enjoyed most, socializing with his many friends in the hobby.

Nat, the boys and girls of TCA will miss you.

MY ORIGINAL SET RETURNS

What are the chances of receiving your original childhood train set back at age 58? The feeling I had when my 1941 Lionel 027 set was presented to me as a surprise at the July 8, 1995, Nor-Cal Meet is indescribable! At age 13, in 1950, I had traded the set to 'Easy' Schwafel of the Engine house then in Palo Alto, CA, for (probably) some H0 trains which are long gone.

With Mr. Schwafel's passing, fellow TCA members Scott Douglas 89-28926 and Bob Regan 89-30368 had been sorting his collection for the auctioneer. What a surprise, my name was on a card in the box, untouched for 45 years. These friends managed to obtain the set and presented it to me.

I can't thank them enough — I hadn't remembered what became of the set after all these years, and now it is back. This probably wouldn't have happened without the friendships developed through TCA Nor-Cal.

Thank you, Scott and Bob!

Pete Goodier 89-28503

A CLARIFICATION

Dear Editor:


Under the body color category, Mr. Ruocchio listed the Ultra Line Boxcar color as being molded plastic color. This is not true. Each Weaver Ultra Line Freight Car and Engine is individually painted in house with Scalecoat Model Rail Road Paint (which is also a division of Weaver Models). It is then paid printed with state of the art pad printers, for superior detail. I would also like to mention that the cars chosen for this review were fairly simple decorated cars. We offer numerous box cars that require masking as well as many trips through the pad printing process, all of which have the same suggested retail as the two cars used in the review.

Second, I wish to address the incorrect information regarding packaging. Mr. Ruocchio states that Weaver uses a tie down system, which sounds fairly delicate. Our cars are secured with foam, both under the trucks to eliminate security during shipment and also between the car and cardboard insert which the car is fastened to. Shrink wrap is used to secure the car to the cardboard insert, not tie downs. The shrink wrap covers the majority of the car, alleviating the need for a plastic bag. Rubber bands are used as added security to the trucks during shipment and are easily removed with a scissors, eliminating the possibility of breakage to the car during removal.

The alignment problem pictured in Photo 3 could have been corrected with a screw driver in less than a minute. Upon examination of the car underframe, you will notice the trucks are secured to the car with one screw in the middle of each bolster. Occasionally, these screws are not tightened enough which is the case in Photo 3. Operators should keep in mind that a little "play" is necessary in order for the cars to travel properly, but too much will result in the appearance of improper alignment. A brief telephone call to our customer service department would have resulted in providing instructions concerning what caused the problem and why, and the choice of an at home adjustment or instructions concerning the return of the car for factory assistance. We take pride in our product and offer excellent customer service.

Finally, I would like to address the weight of our cars. At the factory, we have an operating layout which is active 8 to 10 hours every day, 5 days a week. One engine will be found pulling approximately 20 cars. We have never experienced "very poor" tracking, or derailing problems resulting from poorly smooth track. When speaking with customers that experience tracking problems, we have found that they are operating on rough track. A simple solution to this problem is to add weight, which is what we intend to do. Effective September, 1996, a minimum of 3 ounces additional weight will be added to the majority of our rolling stock. This increase in weight will result in better tracking for those operating on rough track.

Perhaps more careful examination to the car would have resulted in a more accurate review of the Weaver Boxcars. I feel the article is misleading and this information should be supplied to the public.

Weaver Models is dedicated to providing accurate size, proportioned intricate detail and satisfaction with every model. When in the area, we invite you to drop in and take a look for yourself.

Sincerely,

Joseph Hayter
President

Weaver Quality Craft Models

Dear Bruce:


MEA CULPA. MEA CULPA. MEA CULPA! It is through my fault, I did make an error, in the table, in fact there are three. The bodies of the cars made by Weaver and Crown. They are indeed so well sprayed, no particles etc., and so smooth that I missed that fact and reported incorrectly that they were Molded Color not painted. After this error I checked the entire chart and found that there was a transcription error (The chart was prepared so many times for presentation and looks). The error was that MTH's cars are also sprayed. I hope you, Weaver, Crown and MTH will pardon and forgive me these errors.

This error brings all three to 10 in that column and increases Weaver's average rating from 3.9 to 4.0. Crown is now raised from 3.0 to 3.4 and MTH is increased from 6.4 to 6.8 out of a total rating of 10.

The comment about the test for poor operation is one that I will not retract. Ever since my boys were quite young, back in the 1960's, my father gave them a Lionel Corporation set that included a Quad Hopper with the light plastic trucks and every time you started on a curve it would derail. We used Super "0" track or 36" track at that time to better for this derailing than 027. This was so frustrating to the children and their father that this test I used was designed to check for this worst possible failure. In fact, I made it even easier on the manufacturers I ran the test on 42" track. The
track is fairly even, about what you find on most layouts that are carefully built. As you can see only two companies passed. It should be noted that any car will run at a set speed all day on almost any track but it is the sudden starts and sometimes the stops that I am concerned with and also the car position in the train.

The other two comments are obviously true or else Weaver would not be adding weights and would not have said to use a scissors to cut the rubber band. The term I used in the review, "tie down" included the shrink wrap. That too, if not removed with a scissors or knife will lead to problems.

Again I am most sincerely sorry for my error in recording the paint. I am.

Sincerely in Collecting,
AI Ruocchio 70-3293

ADVICE FROM MAX

Mentor Max Knoecklein 64-1079, sent us page 26 of a booklet entitled, For The Man Sells Lionel Trains, issued by Lionel in 1947, with the following note:

"Some good advice here which has held up over the years, and probably should be considered by some of today's policy makers."

BDM

WHAT FUN COLLECTING IS!

Dear Bruce,

As a collector of prewar Lionel 0 gauge sets I am constantly being frustrated in trying to put together sets where all the couplers are consistent. It seems I always have a few cars with 1938 or 1939 box couplers and some with 1940 or 1941 simulated knuckle couplers. I have legitimate sets with mixed box and horn hook couplers so I know there was no purity of mind at the factory. Old inventory had to be used up and I use that as rationalization to put together some of my sets. I recently came across a car which finally puts my mind to rest about mixing couplers of different years. I now have a 2654 orange Shell tanker with nickel plated. What makes the car unusual (I think) is that one end has a Type IV-F with a Type 1 box coupler (1939) and the other end has a IV-G truck with a Type 2 simulated knuckle coupler. The car was purchased from the daughter of the original owner and is in like new condition with a box in excellent condition. The condition is similar to a set which came from the same source. There are absolutely no marks on the frame to indicate that one of the couplers was ever changed. It would appear to be another case of using up the old inventory. Needless to say my concerns about matching coupler types has greatly lessened and collecting sets has become much less frustrating. What fun train collecting is!

Sincerely,
Al Galli 79-14707

HIGH INTEGRITY

Dear Bruce:

This brief note comes to give a special thanks to Bert Holder and Pat Neil who served as two of the many Lone Star Division Hosts of the recent TCA 42nd National Convention In Dallas. I was in a hurry to get on the highway with the close of the meet and forgot — yes, I forgot - eight boxes of trains on the sidewalk at the top of the loading ramp, with no I.D. tags of any sort. I did not even discover my missing trains until three weeks later when I had a panic-induced flashback I saw my trains at the top of the loading ramp, alone, my friend's truck was down at the bottom due to the minor congestion always experienced at such events. I left them there. I called Bert Holder, as he was one who helped me load the truck and told him of the oversight. He said rather matter of factly, "Oh, I found them and gave them to Pat Neil, who took them to his store for safekeeping." Pat Neil is owner of Collectable Trains and Toys located in Dallas.

I called Pat Neil. I told him of the boxes and identified some of the items (a scale 0-6-0 switcher, black and yellow Virginian FM, lots of F3s, etc.). He said he had them at his store and I stated that my son could pick them up before the Albuquerque TIOS meet in August. He said he was going there too and he offered to bring them to Albuquerque where I would pick them up. All I can say is Thanks a lot to two terrific gentlemen of integrity and helpfulness. These men were wonderful to me in my state of high anxiety. I thought sure I was "out" the toy train merchandise I needed to sell to help get my son through law school. Bert

Continued on page 28
Delay -
Winding of motor.
June 12 - No Results
June 13 - No Results
June 14 - No Results
June 15 - Di advised me
that factor would not be satisfactory.
June 14 - Asked Mi for another arrangement.