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*The Toy Train "Beacon of the West"*

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Bob Nichelini #81-16938

Summer is over and the Train Collecting Season soon will soon be in full swing. No one knows for sure why Train Collecting is somewhat seasonal, but meet attendance is always down in the summer and starts up again when summer ends. One could speculate that it has something to do with children going back to school, but unfortunately most train collectors are well beyond the child raising stage of their life (Past President Michael being one exception). The other theory is that toy trains are closely associated with Christmas and the train found under the tree was played with until the weather improved enough to go back outside. While this may not have been much of an issue in California, remember all the "good" trains are often found "back east" where snow and sleet kept the kids inside. Anyhow, just food for thought.

Don't forget, Nor-Cal is hosting the National TCA Convention in Sacramento in 2011. While that may seem far off, time flies and we will need a tremendous amount of support and help from our members to put on a great show. For those of you who have not attended a National Convention this will be a great time to meet TCA members from all over the United States, Canada and potentially from around the world. We will soon be seeking volunteers to help us with 2011 and we hope that you will have time to participate.

Finally, it appears that (cont'd. on page 2)

### WAYNE SHERIFF, CANDIDATE FOR THE TCA PRESIDENT-ELECT POST, ADDRESSED THE AUGUST MEET



Wayne stated that he had been urged to run by the TCA Board of Directors. He stated that, if elected, he would promptly address the problem of declining membership in the organization.

Wayne is running against incumbent Vice President Paul Elgar. Wayne is

President of the Western Division, has been on the TCA Board of Directors for five years, has served on several TCA National committees and was also instrumental in organizing the train display at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library.

Wayne has the strong endorsement of our Mark Boyd, and many others within the TCA. You can see Wayne's statement on page 3.

### FUTURE MEETS

Sept. 12, Oct. 10, at the Walt Disney Middle School, 3250 Pine Valley Road, San Ramon  
Nov. 14, Dec. 12, 2009- Lafayette Veterans Hall, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette

*Business Meeting: 9:30 AM  
Trading: 10-11:30 AM*

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Thomas McGill, Paradise, CA  
Catherine Huetterman, Berkeley  
Heinrich Brinks, Monterey  
Curt Darling, Galt  
Clifford Luscher, Sunnyvale  
Tony Basile, El Dorado Hills  
John Howell, Campbell  
Ed Guldner, Concord  
Michael Kryss, San Mateo

### Nor-Cal Officers

President: Bob Nichelini  
Vice President: Rod Cornell  
Secretary: Rickey Renfro  
Treasurer: Pete Goodier  
Newsletter Editor and Webmaster: Richard White

## In Memoriam—C. Adair Roberts TCA #HR 63-952



Photo from March 2004

It is with great sadness that I announce the passing of C. Adair Roberts HR 63-952 in Alameda, CA. He passed earlier this morning, Friday June 26.

Adair was the first real train collector I ever met. He was selling trains off of his dining room table at his house in Alameda in December of 1973 when I first met him. I was 23 years old. I had responded to an ad he placed in the Oakland Tribune, "Trains for sale," it read. Remember those good old days? Anyway, I went over and we talked. Eventually he said, let me show you some more trains you might find interesting, so we climbed up his ladder into the attic where I was surrounded with a train collection in which he claimed to have all but about 6 Lionel pieces from the postwar period and most everything from prewar. His round house was cluttered with 700E's, B-6 switchers, etc. There was a sealed Canadian Pacific Set boxed under the table along with many other sets. One of his legendary pieces was the 6464-100 orange WP box car with the 1954 date....rarest of the rare.

It wasn't until later years that I visited his vast Standard gauge trains downstairs in an off bedroom. I believe he had 12 Macy Specials....in extraordinary condition.

He loved trains and his flowers. The last year and a half he was confined to his home which was difficult as he loved to travel throughout his entire life. I remember a couple of years ago he took BART out to Pleasanton and waited for me to get off of work on a Friday evening so we could drive down to the Pasadena

together.

He is survived by his son Adair W. Roberts #73-5243. I remember him telling me how he and his son developed their love of trains together.

He was an extraordinary man. A military Colonel (I believe) who flew military flights every where he and wife Lois traveled. I remember they were stranded in Crete during the 9/11 attacks when all air traffic was suspended and it took him 2 weeks to get home. Adair will be greatly missed. My guess is that he was born approximately 1916...I'm not certain, but that is close.

Mark C. Boyd  
Editor, Train Collectors  
Quarterly

### President's Message (continued from page 1)

final approval should be received soon to reactivate the California Valley Chapter (Cal/Val) of the TCA. As of this writing we do not have any information regarding planned Chapter activities, but I'm sure they will be an asset to our organization and offer another opportunity for Northern California train collectors to exchange information and perpetuate our hobby. Good luck to the Cal/Val organizers and potential members.

### *Nor-Cal Express,*

Richard White, Editor Phone (925) 376-5821 email: [toytrain13@hotmail.com](mailto:toytrain13@hotmail.com)



For those of you who don't know me, my name is Jack Hornor and I have been the Cal Stewart clinic chair for the last eight years. We have had increasing success with the clinic attendance, and this year at least 60 members enjoyed the presentation of the new Lionel Legacy system by Lionel's new Chief Technical Officer, Dr. Jon Zahornacky. Over the years we have covered such issues as repair, restoration, types of track, technical advice on wiring and lighting, and tips on collecting as well as photographing and displaying trains. For the last several years, Jack Wittenmyer, Mike Raymond, and I have discussed and demonstrated using Lionel's TMCC and MTH's DCS remote control systems.

I'm happy to report that Dr. Z has agreed to come back in the Spring of 2010 to show more of Lionel's Vision Product Line including some new bells and whistles (and I mean bells and whistles, literally plus steam!). In our discussions with fellow operators, Mike and I have noted there is still a demand for more technical help with operating systems. So we are planning a troubleshooting discussion with questions from the audience. If you have something you would like discussed, please let me know.

Now ... I have run out of ideas for 2011 and beyond. I'm asking if anyone would like to take over as Clinic Chair or, at the very least, for volunteers with ideas and the willingness to put on clinics entertaining enough to pry train enthusiasts away from the trading tables to come forward.

Thank you, Jack Hornor email: [jwhornor@sonic.net](mailto:jwhornor@sonic.net) Phone 209-744-0626

## **WAYNE SHERIFF STATEMENT**

I am Wayne Sheriff, TCA #99-49818, and I am running for the office of **President-Elect** for the **Train Collectors Association**. My TCA experience and background are on the enclosed resume that reflects my varied past and ongoing experiences.

I believe that we need to take action for recruiting new members, retain members, and keeping the organization financially healthy. We have been blessed with great volunteers and a wonderful staff of employees dedicated to the Mission of the TCA and we should continue to enable them to best apply their individual skills.

On occasion, I see members dropping out of the organization stating their interests have changed. That tells me that we have not done a good enough job in engaging some members at both the division and national levels. We should encourage sponsors of new members to take responsibility to mentor them and help them engage in activities they enjoy. As long as we have a two signature requirement, let's make it beneficial for all.

We need to encourage members and their families to participate in National Conventions, regardless of geography. We should also involve each member in other functions as a good way to cultivate friendships and establish networking for train collecting, history, and trading. There are members of TCA that have an extensive history of trains and train related items and we must work to ensure that information is shared and preserved.

We need to also develop and refine a list of reasons why TCA is a "must join" organization. By increasing our participation in train related shows such as "The World's Greatest Hobby," we can get our message out more readily to the general public about TCA and our Mission.

I believe that an outstanding organization like TCA has a \$2,000,000 annual budget needs to be operated within a business mode. But we must also provide our members with a convenient venue for collecting and operating trains. Recent costs such as lawsuits and the sewer upgrade have slowed our ability to channel funds to members' needs. We need to take steps to correct that and yet still operate within our means for the long run, or there will not be a TCA as we know it today.

I believe that whatever actions are taken by the Officers and Board of Directors of TCA should be in the best interest of the organization. We should always remember it is all about trains, collecting, and fellowship.

# SOME ITEMS SEEN AT NOR-CAL MEETINGS

Seen at the July meet



Mark Boyd brought in these variations on the #154 crossing signal.



Richard Zanotti brought in this French clockwork CLAIR set, circa 1935, which came complete with tunnel, station and signal.



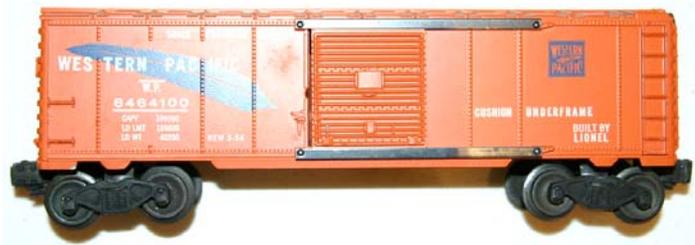
Mark Boyd also brought in this custom-decorated American Flyer S-gauge crane car, "American Flyer Circus" #465



Paul Guaraglia brought in this Pride Lines trolley of 1983, featuring Minnie Mouse, the Three Little Pigs, a Dalmation, and on the front platform, a small Donald Duck.



Don Johnson is the owner of this Lionel ST-350 press. This was the essential tool for Lionel Service Stations. The press was used to press drive wheels onto axles, do riveting, and a host of other operations. His press was made 1950-52.

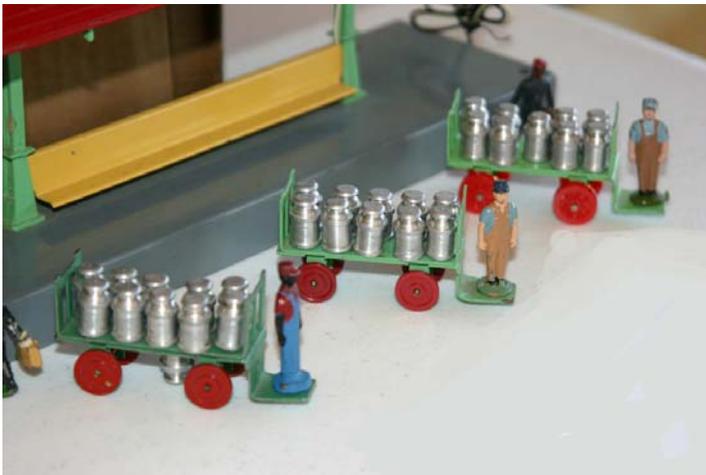


This very rare Lionel WP 6464-100 boxcar, with the "New 3-54" marking was referred to in the Adair Roberts memorial article on page 2. This is owned by Michael Andrews.

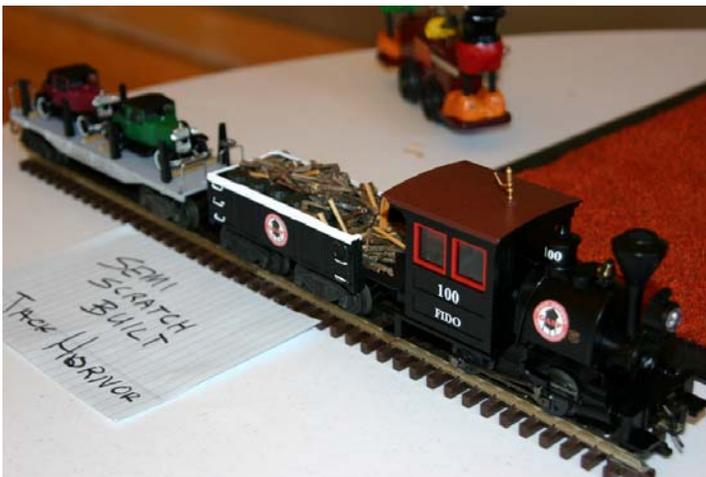


Bruce Kubik found this Madison Hardware M-53 relay, for use with Lionel trains, complete with wiring diagrams and instructions. It could be used to "program" the operation of several trains on the same layout. There aren't any electronics here!

Seen at the August meet



Mark Boyd brought in three variations on the American Flyer baggage wagon (L to R): Black operator (earliest), regular version with red-painted brass wheels, and the (latest) version with red plastic wheels.



Jack Horner added a home-built tender to this K-Line train.



Chuck Brasher owns this lovely Lionel Standard Gauge Hell Gate bridge, in the late colors of cream and red.



Joaquin Murphy recently found this pristine original Lionel clockwork handcar in a second-hand shop! It is only missing Mickey and Minnie's tails



The owner of these Buddy-L toys is unknown.



This is Rod Cornell's Marklin One-gauge set



Rod Cornell owns this early Ives No. 25 loco, in O-gauge, circa 1906-09

It is not a toy! The Lionel Geiger counter is a real world instrument that was used, and still today can be used, to detect the presence of radiation. Unlike the A.C. Gilbert Company of New Haven, Connecticut, that developed a toy Geiger counter, Lionel had a "real" Geiger counter in its product line in the 1960s.

The Gilbert Hall of Science toy Geiger counter was both a separate purchase item as well as a part of their Atomic Energy Laboratory set. It is not the purpose of this article to discuss the Gilbert Geiger counter, and the mention of it is only to ensure that toy train enthusiasts are aware that Gilbert produced this item in the 1950s.

When General John Medaris became President of The Lionel Corporation in 1960, the company was embarking on a plan to diversify into other industries and not rely so much on the company's once popular toy train products. Anton Electronic Laboratories must have appeared to be an attractive target for diversification.

The Lionel Corporation purchased Anton Electronic Laboratories in 1960. One of Anton Electronic's products was a "real" Geiger counter. The Anton name soon disappeared, as in March of 1961 the corporate name was changed to Lionel Electronic Laboratories Inc.

As background information, the German physicist Hans Geiger (1882 - 1945) invented the first radiation detecting device. It was later refined with help from Walther Müller. The device is a gas-filled metal tube with a wire through its axis. A high voltage is applied to the wire. As particles enter the tube, they create a large avalanche of ionization in the gas, which then discharges, creating a brief electric pulse. This pulse is counted by the electronics and displayed on the meter. These pulses are directly proportional to the quantity of radiation so that the meter can be calibrated directly in milli-roentgens per hour.

The main customer (and probably the only customer) of the Lionel Geiger counter was the federal Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization (OCDM). OCDM was part of the Executive Office of the President. (In 1961 it was renamed the Office of Civil Defense and moved to the Department of Defense by executive order of President John F. Kennedy. One of the successor agencies is the current Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).) The units were shipped to civil defense units in all of the states.

The Lionel Geiger counter was one of many similar Geiger counters being sold in the 1960s. Lionel sold their Geiger counters from 1960 to 1964. This was the Cold War era where a nuclear attack was considered to be a distinct possibility. The selling price was reportedly under \$20.

The Lionel Geiger counter's official name is Radiological Survey Meter. It was labeled CD V-700 with different model numbers. In 1960, when The Lionel Corporation bought Anton Electronic Laboratories, model 6 was being produced. Lionel Electronics Laboratories (LEL) introduced model 6b, which had a few modifications from model 6, in 1962. (LEL apparently never made a model 6a.) It was designed as a portable unit to detect radioactivity. It was battery powered and contained transistors. (Transistors were a relatively new invention at that time.) The unit includes a probe, headphone, a radioactive source mounted under the nameplate, and an instruction manual.

In 1963, Lionel Electronics Laboratories was moved from its previous location in Brooklyn to the Lionel toy train manufacturing facility in Hillside, New Jersey. The move was made in an attempt to stem the flow of red ink. The investment made in 1960 turned out to be a bad one, as Lionel Electronics Laboratories never made a profit.

In 1964, The Lionel Corporation phased out the operations of Lionel Electronics Laboratories, and it became a discontinued operation. Lionel's involvement with the production and sales of Geiger counters had come to an end.

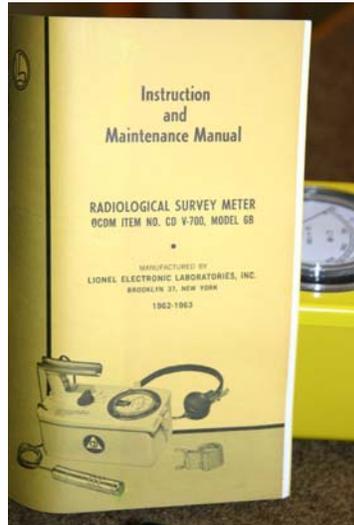
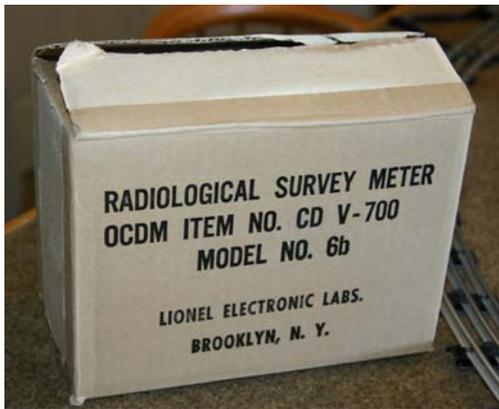
Jack Hornor (92-35076), one of our Nor-Cal members, an ex-nuclear engineer, has a Lionel Geiger counter and uses it to determine the amount of radioactivity coming from the material that he has put through his Lionel Nuclear Reactor (Lionel catalog #6-14065). He uses his Lionel Nuclear Reactor to make simulated radioactive material for medical use. The actual radiation, as shown on the Geiger counter, comes from old Fiesta Ware pottery taped to the bottom of the gondola where the material goes as it comes from the reactor. This makes a very interesting operating accessory for his layout.

In 1960, when Lionel purchased Anton Electronic Laboratories, Jack was the West Coast representative for Anton's nuclear business. When the purchase was completed, Lionel let him go with the reasoning being that they were going to concentrate on Government contracts and would no longer be selling to those in the nuclear business. So one of our own train collectors almost had the opportunity to work for The Lionel Corporation - but it wasn't to be.

For detailed information on the various products manufactured by Lionel Electronics Laboratories, refer to the article written by Joel O. Lubenau (92-35384) and Jack W. Hornor that appeared in the January 2005 issue of The Train Collectors Quarterly.

References:

- "Inside The Lionel Trains Fun Factory: The History of a Manufacturing Icon and The Place Where Childhood Dreams Were Made" by Robert J. Osterhoff
- "Lionel Goes Nuclear", The Train Collectors Quarterly, January 2005, by Joel O. Lubenau and Jack W. Hornor



At left: the calibration source. At right: earphones and other items.



**TRAIN REPAIRS, PARTS AND SALES**  
**Mike Raymond**

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