



Western Division Newsletter



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<http://www.tcawestern.org>

April - May 2012

Upcoming Meet Notices

Western Division's next train meet will take place on Saturday, May 19, 2012 in the Arcadia Senior Center, located at 405 S. Santa Anita Avenue in Arcadia, California.

To get to the meet, exit the 210 Freeway at Santa Anita Avenue. Drive south about half a mile and turn right into the Arcadia Park Parking lot. The hall is located next to the lawn bowling area. Look for the sign.

The doors open at 10AM for setup, trading, and selling. Please visit the Western Division website, at <http://www.tcawestern.org> for more information and a map.

The display theme for May will be "New York Central Rail Road." Show off an item and facilitate the transfer of knowledge on collecting toy trains with your fellow members.

Our display themes and TCA Meets for 2012 are: July 28th (Convention Cars); August 25th (Streamliners); September 22nd (Trolleys); October 27th (Orange and Black Trains); and December 15th (Holiday Trains).

The regular monthly raffle for the membership will be held. The Board of Directors had ordered that to participate in the monthly prize raffle, each member must wear their membership badge. This year's Grand Raffle Prize is a 1950 Lionel #773 Hudson engine with matching tender. Raffle tickets are only \$20 each.

President's Message

By Manny Gonzalez, WD President

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times ... we had everything before us" and although those words were written in 1859, Charles Dickens could have been commenting about the state of our hobby today. Never has there been as much product available for the enthusiast. Between new castings, classic reissues, and incredible electronics – you have choices in plastic, die-cast, tin, and brass; and of course there are all sorts of scales and gauges. It doesn't matter if you're into trolleys, love steam over diesel, or prefer passenger to freight - there literally is something for every possible interest. And, the quality can actually be quite good! These are all just some of what is 'Best'.

On the other hand, it seems the industry is intent on self-destructing by making the hobby increasingly less accessible - especially at an entry level. In spite of being sourced overseas, ostensibly to contain costs, there seem to be less and less affordable toy trains. While this can affect even the seasoned collector, the real harm this engenders is the exclusion of many potential families who can't afford or simply choose not to expend unrealistic sums of money for what pass as 'starter sets' for their children. Unfortunately, at this level the quality in terms of finish, mechanical reliability, and even value are notoriously suspect, if not simply questionable. This is hardly a winning formula for attracting, and then retaining new converts to the hobby. And while kids will probably always be fascinated and drawn to toy trains, observers seem to be in universal agreement that adults tend to revisit only their most 'beloved childhood toys' as they age.

In practical terms, how does it affect the rest of us and should we even care? This should be of concern to all within the hobby because the hobby cannot sustain itself (let alone thrive) without the continued influx and nurture of new participants. We need to consistently act in ways that promote the hobby positively and not allow our clubs to act as a sort of de facto trade-association, whose prime purpose seemingly is only to exploit the unsuspecting and the unknowing. There is a lot of competition for these people's attention, time and money. We need to make the most of every opportunity - you don't often get a second chance to get it right!

But that brings us back to Dickens' Dilemma. Among the 'best' the hobby has to offer are many of the people you will encounter. The hobby is populated by some of the nicest and smartest people you could ever hope to meet. It's this interaction that sets our hobby apart from others. One can be involved with individuals who, normally, we might never come into contact, at least not in any substantial way. And therein lays the challenge. Just like most any other human endeavor, there will tend to be a scattering of those who will bring less than honor to their involvement.

Whether questionable behavior might seem mildly amusing, perhaps a little irritating, or maybe even patently offensive (if not illegal), we should be aware that we do one another a disservice whenever we tolerate, or even simply minimize, bad behavior that can (and often does) bring the hobby disrepute. To the extent we look away (sometimes with a wink and a nod) we also effectively put at risk this hobby we love so much. Without a doubt, this is why groups such as TCA have strict ethical guidelines and codes of conduct.

There's nothing wrong with being enterprising. This can be a very expensive hobby and we should respect that. However, we do need to be mindful of the challenges that can and will undermine whatever future this hobby has - and not let it succumb to neglect or indifference.

Train Shows

The Big Train Show Ontario Convention Center– June 2nd & 3rd

The Great Train Expo – July 14th & 15th

Volunteers are needed to man the Western Division booth and display– contact Manny Gonzalez or Wayne Sheriff if you can help.

March Meet Recap

By Robert Caplan, WD Recording Secretary



Richard Keppel ran his Brute Set!

The display theme was: 'Share a Caboose'. We had many colorful cabooses displayed. Calvin Smith showed us a very dirty cobbled together caboose. Bob Spellmire presented his collection of Ives cabooses.

Dan Kyle displayed his caboose collection. Dave Gabay showed a Lionel scale die-cast Union Pacific caboose. Harry Chortanian presented his TCA 32nd National Convention Caboose. Harvey Tafel showed a complete collection of Lionel #607 tinplate 'O' gauge cabooses.

Herb Mayer displayed a Great Northern and Union Pacific bay window caboose from 1980 and 1981 Service Station Sets. Jim Kenney shared a newly acquired Ives caboose. John Abbe showed a Lionel scale die-cast Chicago & North Western caboose.



March Display Theme 'Cabooses'

Mario Liberatore presented a very nice detailed Southern Pacific caboose. Robert Cesarone showed us a Marx caboose that he repainted for Seaboard Air Lines. Robert Verre displayed a Marx caboose that took him years to find. Wayne Sheriff showed his only caboose, a New Haven bay window caboose that is reminiscent of his wife's home town.



Herb Mayer

Jim Kenney



Wayne Sheriff

Robert Verre



Harvey Tafel

Harry Chortanian



Robert Spellmire

Robert Cesarone



March Raffle winners: Calvin Smith, Tina Corsello, Steve Eastman (\$100 Hudson Monthly Raffle Winner) and Dave Burkart.

Photographs by Herbert Mayer

April Meet Recap

By Bob Nord, WD Vice-President

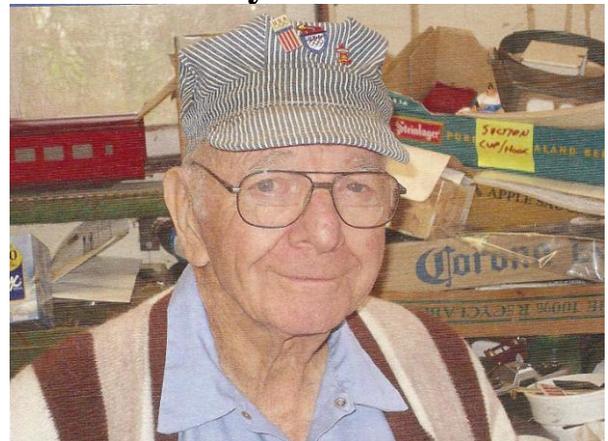
The display theme was: "Accessories". Wayne Sheriff showed off his Ruby's Diner Truck & Union Station sign. Harry C. brought a Lionel #394 green floodlight tower. Mario Liberatore talked about his Lionel wigwag/banjo signal. Jack Whitmeyer shared his Lionel #077 Standard Gauge Crossing Gate. Steve Eastman brought a 1910 German cookie tin. Dave Gabay brought a 1950's Mars light. Jim Kenney brought out his American Flyer Airplane.

Bob Nord had a fascinating collection of prewar Marx and Kramer Products accessories. Bob Spellmire displayed Fleishman and Arnold boats, and two Ives #333 crossing signals. John Abbe displayed various MTH accessories and a Lionel #30 billboard with pictures of his daughters Mary & Michelle plus a custom painted telephone pole.

Raffle Prize Winners were: John Abbe-Lionel #9151 Shell Tank Car, Mark Spears-K-Line Union 76 Tank Car, Bob Nord-K-Line Shell/Santa Fe Tank Car, and Steve Eastman won the monthly \$100 from the Hudson Raffle for the second month in a row!

Butch Alvarado and Larry Pearson presented a tribute to the life of Dick Mayer.

In Memoriam Dick Mayer 1923 - 2012



A long time friend and TCA WD member #82-17352, Dick Mayer passed away April 13, 2012. He was 88 years old and had been suffering from failing health for several years. He died of natural causes at Palomar Hospital. He was a resident of Orange County, having lived in Escondido for many years.

Dick was a master tool and die maker and is well known for manufacturing tinsplate trains and repair parts, both as reproductions of Ives, American Flyer, and Lionel, and as entirely new creations along the lines of the Classic Tinsplate trains. His company was called The Richart Company. Our sincerest condolences go out to his family.