



TRAIN COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION WESTERN DIVISION NEWSLETTER



VOL 64, NO.2

MAY 2018

2018

MEET SCHEDULE

MARK YOUR
CALENDERS

May-19 Military trains and toys

Jul-28 Red, White & Blue

Aug-25 Hand made & custom

Sep-22 Union Pacific

Oct-27 Orange and Black

Dec-15 Holliday trains and toys

2018 GRAND PRIZE RAFFLE

TCA 50th Anniversary Golden Express
Freight Set



No. 5404W Southern
Pacific Diesel Locomotive
and Caboose from the set

**NEXT MEET MAY 19, 10AM
ARCADIA SENIOR CENTER**

We are going home!

SHOW AND TELL THEME IS "MILITARY TRAINS & TOYS"

TCA Western Division's train meets take place at 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 and trading. Show and Tell starts at noon.

Please visit the Western Division website, at <http://www.tcawestern.org> for more information and a map.

FREE DONUTS AND COFFEE GENEROUSLY PROVIDED BY BOB CAPLAN

From the President's Desk, May 2018

I really want to encourage as many of you as possible to show up for the May 19th meet. Joe Fanara, the TCA National President plans on being in attendance to present a special award to John Parker. We will be meeting back at the Arcadia Parks Center this month, so back to our normal home.

The United Methodist Church has been a nice standby location and we are greatly appreciative to the Church for allowing us to use their facility and great kitchen.

As most of you know, long time member Kay Lang passed away and services were last week. A nice lady we will truly miss. Also, Bob Carlson's wife Wendy passed away Thursday evening, 5/10. The family could use all the prayers we can send her way.

Those at the April meet received their ballots for new officers. The rest of you will receive and e-mail and those that do not do e-mails should get them in the mail. I want to thank all of those who agreed to have their names on the ballot for the upcoming 2 year term.

President's Desk Continued

I especially want to thank those that have been willing to help guide the club for a number of years. Make sure you thank all the existing board members for the years of service they have provided to the club.

We have been selling raffle tickets for a very nice Pride Lines trolley that will be given away at this month's meet. Make sure you buy a few tickets. The trolley was donated to the club, so all proceeds go to help the club.

As usual, we will not meet in June, hope to see some of you at the National Convention. In July, we will meet again at the Arcadia Center. This will be our annual Hot Dog Social, be prepared to bring a side dish. The club will provide the hot dogs, buns and condiments.

The show and tell theme for May will be Military and Patriotic Trains and Toys. Please come out and enjoy the comradery.

Steve Eastman

President, TCA Western Division

2018 GRAND PRIZE RAFFLE **THE TCA 50TH ANNIVERSARY GOLDEN EXPRESS FREIGHT SET**



THE WINNER OF THE SET WILL BE DRAWN AT THE DECEMBER HOLIDAY PARTY.

THERE IS A \$50 CONSOLATION PRIZE DRAWING AT EVERY MEET!

A limited number of tickets are available at \$20 each. See Treasurer Jon Lang at our monthly meet for tickets.

Email Addresses Available

If you would like your very own TCA Western Division email address, something like:

ogaugegeek@TCASWestern.org, then contact Harold Shapiro at hshapi@hotmail.com. 25 addresses are available free from our web site provider.

TCASWestern.org is online 24/7

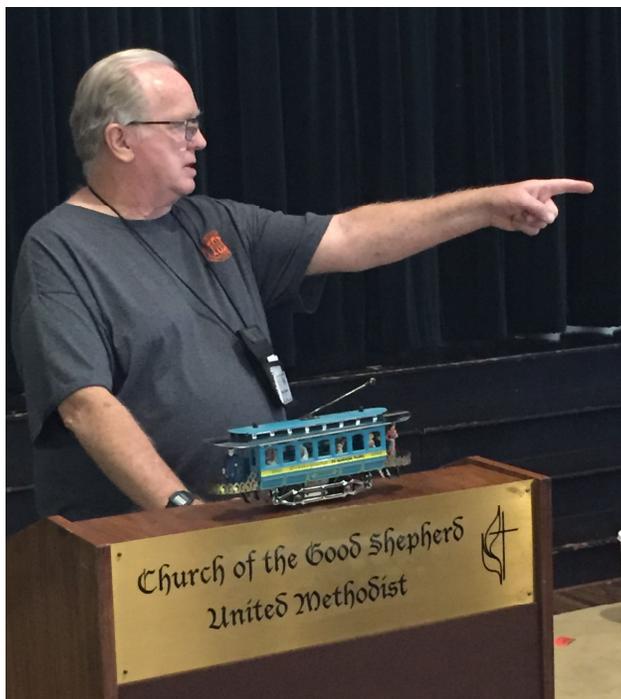
If you haven't gone to our website lately it will be worth your while to check it out. We have a first-class web site with tons of toy train information and fascinating club history.



HOME LAYOUT PHOTOS WANTED

Your editor would like to publish photos of TCA member's home layouts and special holiday layouts in upcoming issues. If you have some nice digital photos from previous years, email them to: TheReverendBob@Verizon.net

Photos from the March Meet



GREEN TRAINS



UPCOMING TOY TRAIN EVENTS

TTOS Southern Pacific Division	May 27 2018 - Open House Meet June 24, 2018	Brookhurst Community Center 2271 W. Crescent Ave. Anaheim, CA 92801
TTOS Southwestern	June 3 - Open House Meet July 8	Masonic Lodge, 50 W. Duarte Rd. in Arcadia, California, 91007
TCA National Convention	June 23 - July 1	Warwick, RI
TTOS National Convention	July 31-Aug 4	Tyson's Corner, VA
Cal-Stewart Meet	November 16 th thru the 18 th	TBD

WEAR YOUR TCA WESTERN DIVISION BADGE TO EVERY MEET!

Honestly, isn't there someone you see and greet at almost every meet and you don't know what their name is? It's gracious to introduce yourself to people you haven't seen before, but it's kinda embarrassing after a couple of years have passed. **That's what your badge is for.**

To encourage members to wear their badges, starting in the near future **you will only be eligible for the free door prize raffle if you are wearing your badge.** Temporary badges will be available at the sign in desk (and don't forget to sign in).

Photos from the April Meet

CABOOSES



From the archives of TCASWestern.Org

American Model Toys/Auburn Model Trains



History

AMT was formally established in 1948 in Fort Wayne, Indiana by tool and die maker Jack Ferris. The company is famous for producing a large line of the most realistic 'O' gauge streamlined passenger cars made during the immediate postwar era. AMT also created and marketed a line of highly detailed near-scale models of eye-catching boxcars that were decorated with authentic road names and paint schemes. The company was perhaps one of the most overlooked train makers of the late 1940's and early 1950's. Its legacy, however, ties into virtually every major producer of 'O' gauge trains in business today. While almost everyone has heard of manufacturers from this era such as [American Flyer](#), [Lionel](#), and [Marx](#), American Model Toys was a fourth maker of toy trains in the late 1940's and early 1950's that while much smaller and unknown, was very innovative, and built quality products.



AMT American Model Toys 'O' gauge Southern Railway Catawba River



AMT #4170 'O' gauge Pennsylvania Baggage car

he took up tinplate as a hobby.

Jack Ferris cut his teeth in model railroading early on. He started Scale Model Railways in 1929, a company dedicated to 1/4" to the foot scale. They sold kits and custom-built models. In 1940, the company was purchased by the Megow Corporation, a company that created kits for airplanes and ships. Then Jack changed careers and became the head of a plastic-rubber research group of a large rubber company, but

Tinplate railroading was a great way for Jack to bond with his son, Jack Jr., and they built a huge home layout together. One day Jack Jr. asked his dad why there were no streamlined model train passenger cars made like the real ones that ran on the prototypical railroads of the era. During the post WWII era, railroads were desperate to retain passenger traffic so they updated their fleets with gleaming streamlined coaches, diners, and observation cars. Jack Sr. decided he would manufacture models of this equipment to fill the niche. Little did Jack know that the resulting series of 'O' gauge streamliner cars would become very popular with hobbyists in a short period of time, and bring Jack back into the toy train manufacturing business.



AMT Reading Indian Arrow 'O' gauge Observation car

AMT offered nine different cataloged versions of the Santa Fe passenger cars with smooth roofs.



AMT 'O' gauge Aluminum #2005 Santa Fe Indian Arrow Observation Car



American Model Toys 'O' gauge Aluminum #2003 Santa Fe Diner



AMT 'O' gauge #2006 Aluminum Santa Fe 3160 Day Coach Circa 1949-50



American Model Toys Aluminum #2004 Santa Fe Buena Vista Dome Car



American Model Toys Cat. #2002 Santa Fe Indian Lake Roomette



American Model Toys Catalog #2002 Santa Fe Indian Scout Roomette



AMT Cat. #2001 Santa Fe #3407 U.S. Mail Railway Post Office



AMT Catalog #2007 Santa Fe #5260 Crew Baggage Combination Car



American Model Toys Aluminum #2008 Santa Fe #4170 Baggage Car

The first offerings were sand-cast passenger cars in New York Central and Pennsylvania liveries. Initially selling its products to other companies, Ferris decided to create his own company in 1948. The next year a set of these passenger cars was produced using extruded aluminum. The design change came as a suggestion by Carter Collier, who was in charge of design work for AMT. The switch to aluminum facilitated a mechanism to build greater quantities of a more realistic model, for less cost. These shiny cars could negotiate Lionel track and switches. The design consisted of a single solid piece of extruded aluminum that formed the fluted sides and smooth roof of each car. The ends were cast in aluminum as well. They came complete with interior lighting, realistic trucks and detailed window patterns that matched the prototypes. AMT eventually began producing their famous streamlined extruded aluminum passenger cars, with fluted and smooth roof variations. The AMT passenger cars were available in a variety of body styles, and company liveries, the initial four, in 1949-50, being Baggage, Combine, Coach and Observation, each available in New York Central and Santa Fe paint schemes. Later, a Mail Express car, Vista Dome car, Dining car and Bedroom Roomette were added to the line. Car names were taken from actual prototype streamliners. Prices on these cars started at \$10.50. Road names for the Baltimore & Ohio, Chicago & North Western, Pennsylvania, Reading, Southern and The MKT Texas Special were added. These passenger cars measure about 14" from end to end. AMT tended to take more risks than Lionel, and its cars were slightly larger, slightly closer to scale, and well-made. Their realism and style was unmatched by anything Lionel produced for several years.

AMT New York Central Extruded Aluminum 'O' gauge Passenger Cars



AMT American Model Toys 'O' gauge NYC Observation car



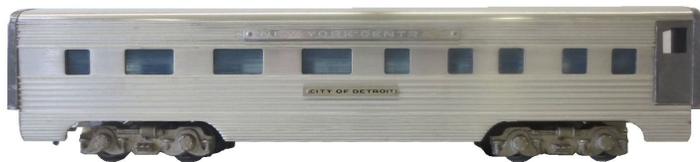
AMT American Model Toys 'O' gauge NYC Indian Lake



American Model Toys #3003 New York Central Diner Car



American Model Toys #3004 NYC Buena Vista Dome Car



American Model Toys New York Central City of Detroit Pullman



American Model Toys #4170 NYC Baggage Car

AMT also made HO gauge streamlined passenger cars. These models were a 4-door Baggage, Combination or Crew Car, Day Coach, Dining Car, Bedroom-Roomette Pullman, and Observation Car. These cars came in kit form or, for a dollar more, already assembled. Like the 'O' gauge products, they had one piece extruded aluminum bodies, however these cars used die-cast ends, floors and trucks. Each car had two metal light sockets cast into the floor. The trucks were insulated from the metal floor by plastic grommets. An 18 inch radius curve was recommended for operation, but the trains could be used on even smaller radii curves.

American Model Toys Extruded Aluminum HO gauge Passenger Cars



AMT Southern Pacific HO gauge Observation Car



American Model Toys HO gauge Passenger Coach

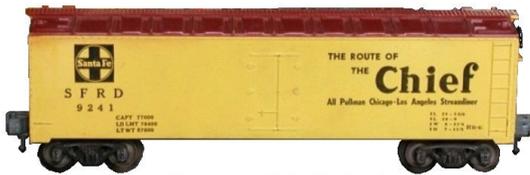
AMT experienced a minor setback in 1950 when the US government placed restrictions on the use of aluminum as a result of the Korean War effort. The company altered its manufacturing materials slightly and weathered the storm successfully. However, eventually Lionel caught up, releasing their first 'O' gauge #2500 series extruded aluminum streamlined passenger equipment in 1952 and displacing AMT extruded aluminum cars as the market leader in sales shortly thereafter. AMT had almost a total monopoly of the 'O' gauge Streamline passenger car market from 1950 until the public embraced the new Lionel models in 1953. AMT survived by finding other weaknesses in Lionel's product line and producing models that filled those weaknesses, contenting itself as an aftermarket producer who would sell its items to Lionel's customers, and take away market share where ever possible. At this point manufacturing was moved to new facilities in Auburn, Indiana.

In 1952, AMT started producing 40-foot box cars, stock cars and reefers in the latest, most colorful paint schemes they could find in use by real railroads, and made them to more realistic proportions than Lionel ever had. The new line of AMT box cars featured 12 superb models. The majority of these cars were dark brown or boxcar red with white lettering and railroad heralds. Each was based on an actual piece of rolling stock in use on a famous North American railroad. They represented a notable cross-section of lines whose trains could be seen throughout the United States and Canada. They were made of high impact styrene, a newly developed low cost plastic material that was easy to machine and fabricate, but was tough and durable enough to withstand a child's use. The cars also came equipped with operating sliding doors, simulated brake wheels, and patented operating 'Liftomatic' knuckle couplers. AMT marketing literature boasted that these new freights had a low center of gravity so they would "hug the tracks just like their bigger counterparts".



AMT 'O' gauge #466096 B & O Sentinel box car circa 1952

Some cars did vary from the brown paint job. The most beautiful of these 'O' gauge models was the #9003, which came painted blue and silver for the Baltimore & Ohio's Sentinel Service for rush shipping. An 'O' gauge refrigerator car from



AMT Catalog #7252 Santa Fe #9241 Refrigerator Car

AMT captured the look of the 770 cars used by the Santa Fe RR in the 1940's. The #7252 had the yellow and brown paint scheme and accurate herald and slogan of the prototype. Even the decaled #9241 matched one used on a particular Santa Fe reefer. The only details left off were outlined doors with hinges that opened and roof hatches that could be opened. Another finely detailed and painted reefer

was the #7251 Gerber Products Company model introduced in 1953. Inspiration for this car came from AMT's design engineer Carter Collier. The reefer's prototype was a privately owned car that ran the rails in the 1920's and 30's when billboard refrigerator cars were commonplace. Gerber Products had owned a few of these cars that were decorated with joyful graphics displaying whimsical animals marching over a blue hill.



AMT Cat. #7251 Gerber Products Company #1008 Reefer

These box cars and reefers were an immediate success with tinplate collectors all over the US. The next year, Lionel responded with the first of its famous 6464 series boxcars, which were better than anything it had produced before, but still did not match AMT's realism. While AMT had beaten Lionel to the boxcar market with this line of highly detailed cars, they were once again displaced by Lionel's popularity and marketing prowess with consumers.



American Model Toys 'O' Southern Railroad Box Car



AMT Cat. #9002 Pennsylvania #56312 Merchandise Service Boxcar



AMT Cat. #8004 Santa Fe #34922 Super Chief Boxcar



AMT Catalog #7150 Missouri-Kansas-Texas #47150 Stock Car



AMT Catalog #8002 Great Northern Railway #19509 Boxcar



AMT Cat. #7151 Chicago Burlington & Quincy #32066 stock



AMT Cat. #8005 New York, New Haven and Hartford #30565



AMT Cat. #9004 Minneapolis & St Louis #4382 Boxcar



American Model Toys Cat. #8003 Erie #25439 Boxcar



AMT Cat. #8008 Canadian National #523977 Boxcar



AMT Catalog #7152 Atlantic Coast Line #140449 Stock Car

The following year, AMT decided to produce a model of a diesel locomotive, in both powered and dummy unit versions, which also permitted them to sell complete train sets for the first time. As American Model Toys, the firm brought out starter sets in 1953. Sets sold for as low as \$50 and the high end sets were in the \$90 range. AMT's working coupler,

branded 'Liftamatic', closely followed AAR design, and had a simulated air hose which when pushed up permitted uncoupling of the trains. This required an uncoupling track, the first track of any kind made by AMT. Its design was such that it could be mated with Lionel 'O' gauge track. The mechanism was essentially a ramp, that when an activation button was pushed, lifted the ramp, and would push up on the simulated air hose, which was the actual coupler spring pin, opening the knuckle coupler. Other accessories were also designed.



AMT #8644 'O' gauge Pennsylvania F-7 A-Unit Diesel Loco

AMT catalogues advertised the aluminum passenger cars, the 40' freight cars, and replacement parts. The H-008 four door baggage car, the H-007 combination or crew car, and the H-005 observation car could be ordered for \$6.95 in kit form or \$7.95 finished. A.A.R. type #8000 series boxcars such as the #8001 Southern could be purchased for \$5.95. Additionally, three #9000 series boxcars, the #9001 New York Central, the #9002 Pennsylvania, and the #9003 Baltimore & Ohio could be ordered for \$6.95. Various parts, including HO-19 marker lights, H003-B dining car extrusions, 101 freight trucks, 103 box car floors and a pair of 109 Liftamatic couplers could be purchased for \$.20, \$1.75, \$1.60, \$.80 and \$.90 respectively. AMT's automatic couplers could be retrofitted on the #1000, #2000, #3000, #4000, and #5000 series cars built from 1948 - 1951. AMT suggested that modelers who were interested in purchasing "tail signs" for observation cars should contact Virden Mfg. Co., 4124 W. 69th St., Mission, Kansas.



AMT Uncataloged Silver Flash #1733 F-7 A unit

The firm continued with production of F-3 Diesels and introduced Budd RDC cars as well, but by that time the model train market had shrunk considerably and the company was in financial straits. Demand wasn't as high as expected, and in 1954, AMT reorganized and changed its name to Auburn Model Trains. Although Auburn's offerings are highly regarded today, they were not very popular then, and by the autumn of 1954, the reorganization was deemed to be unsuccessful and Auburn sold out to [Kusan](#), a plastics and toy company based in Nashville, Tennessee, who continued production.



AMT #322 Santa Fe F-type Diesel Locomotive A Unit

Kusan produced train sets from the AMT tooling, as well as from new designs of their own, largely with atomic and military themes. Kusan is also credited with making the first 'O' gauge trains that could run on both 2-rail and 3-rail track (an idea MTH would rehash some 40 years later). But the market had peaked in 1954, and Kusan, dissatisfied with its share in a declining market, ceased production in 1960.



AMT Cat. #C-26 C & O #90079 Caboose



AMT #C-101 C & O RR #4001 Caboose



American Model Toys #X104 ATSF Caboose



American Model Toys #X-1216 NYC Caboose

Kusan then sold its tooling to a hobbyist named Andy Kriswalus in Endicott, New York, who operated as [Kris Model Trains](#), or KMT. Kriswalus only produced rolling stock, not locomotives. In the late 1980's, KMT dissolved and much of

the original tooling was sold to [Williams Electric Trains](#), a small Maryland-based toymaker who had previously created its own tooling and manufactured reproductions of Lionel's prewar tinplate equipment. Williams soon decided to change focus. They sold the Lionel reproduction tinplate tooling to a former employee of theirs named Mike Wolf. Wolf would go on to found [MTH Electric Trains](#). Williams concentrated its efforts on making 1950's-style model electric trains.



AMT Cat. #7651 L&N #51297 Gondola

After, the AMT/Kusan/KMT tooling was purchased by Jerry Williams he used much of it for a brief period and then sold some of it to [K-Line](#), a North Carolina-based toymaker who had bought much of Marx's tooling when Marx dissolved in 1978 and was using it to produce inexpensive trains that competed with Lionel's entry-level offerings. Like Williams, K-Line used the old AMT/Kusan/KMT tooling to produce rolling stock that directly competed with Lionel at higher ends of the marketplace. Williams made the AMT designed, almost scale sized 40 foot boxcar with opening doors. They were



AMT Cat. #1-33 'O' gauge New York Central Rail Diesel Car (RDC)

referred to as the Crown Series models. These cars are recognizable as they have a stamped metal frame with a fishbelly, and a brake cylinder on the under carriage. The sliding doors have the single large square and single small square, just like the AMT designed car. [Bachmann](#) continued to make and sell these boxcars after the acquisition of Williams.

John 'Jack' Ferris' efforts to create quality model trains did not go to waste despite the fact that his AMT brand train making days only covered a brief period between 1948 and 1954. The original designs and tooling lived on in train manufacturing circles for many years, and were used by many companies. Today there is a small but loyal group of hobbyists and collectors that actively seek out any and all items manufactured by AMT in the post war era. It is interesting to note that when the extruded aluminum passenger cars were new, the fluted roof versions were priced below the smooth versions, but today collectors seem to seek out the fluted roof versions, and as a such, the fluted roof versions tend to command higher prices. Streamline passenger cars in good condition usually sell for around \$50. Cars in excellent condition go for \$100 and up. Box cars, stock cars and reefers in good condition can be found for around \$25. These same freight cars in excellent condition can be acquired for around \$60.



The Train Collectors Association

Western Division



[Learn more about toy trains at TCAWestern.org](http://TCAWestern.org)