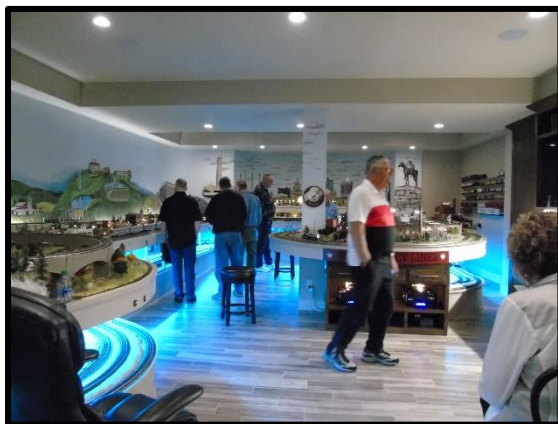




OZARK DIVISION NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2023

ASK NOT.....

(As our President has the main article in this Newsletter, I thought it would be a suitable time for me to write an Editorial Comment). A few months ago, the HOA chapter held a layout tour at the home of a new member. It was a beautiful layout, built with all the latest track and control



systems, expertly constructed with several beautiful trains running. As I was watching the people view the trains it dawned on me that this group would never have gotten together if it had not been for a TCA chapter that was formed back in 2008. Two guys after attending a TCA convention in Denver decided to start a TCA chapter in Kansas City. The response was unbelievable, at one point the chapter had over 100 members! Out of the group came many lifelong train friends, just as leaders and friendships have come from both the Gateway and Central Missouri Chapters.

My point is all those life changing connections might not have happened if it had not been for those that belonged to a TCA chapter. By belonging to the TCA, you not only get personal benefits, but you contribute to the development of our hobby. My pet peeve is listening to members who complain about the \$50 dues as they are standing next to their \$2,000. Engine. Your membership gives you benefits but it also contributes to the development of our hobby. So, to paraphrase a President most of us remember. **ASK NOT WHAT THE TCA CAN DO FOR YOU, BUT WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR THE TCA.**

Don Miller 06-59842, Ozark Division Newsletter Editor

This Newsletter features two articles. One by Ozark Division President, Rob English and the second is a TCA Convention report. Also included are chapter reports and a train-related activities list. By the way, the odd-looking transformer in Dean Williams article in the last newsletter is an Antique Cauterizing machine from the 1920's. I had my nose cauterized when I was a kid. Not a pleasant memory!



Tubular to Hi-Rail to Tubular rail...

By Rob English 96-43303 President, Ozark Division of the TCA

I had trains as a young fella starting in the early MPC era, 1970 and forward. Like many of my contemporaries, it all started Christmas morning with the smell of smoke fluid, hot Lionel lube and ozone. I ran my Pacemaker set until New Years Day and then was forced to put it away. I received more track and cars for Christmas 1971 and permission to put a plywood pacific type layout in the basement of our home in Atlanta, GA.



I ran trains on that layout until we moved to St Louis in 1976. I converted the ping pong table there into the second layout complete with Plasticville buildings, with Corgi and Matchbox King Size cars and trucks. The poor little Pacemaker loco was joined by a B&M Geep which became my favorite locomotive.

Then... life struck. Friends, sports, girls, cars, college... you know, life.

Fast forward to 1993, just arriving back in St Louis after a work assignment in downstate Illinois, a colleague took me into a hobby shop called Kirkwood Hobby. It was there that the train bug bit again. The loco that got me was 6-18040 N&W J Class. The sound, the smoke, the ozone took me back to the 70's.

I built my first bespoke layout out of leftover job site plywood and other materials. It was cobbled together, but I had a 24-foot-long run of Gargraves track and loved the ability to run long trains. I enjoyed that layout for 6 years.

Then came the big move in 1999 to a new, bigger basement with a house attached. I planned the layout for some 9 months and began construction of the new layout with the help of TCA friends, especially David Aholt. The new Hi Rail empire - dubbed The Charlotte, Atlanta, St Louis and Eastern (CAStI&E or Castle system) - would be 28 x 60 feet and would have over one thousand feet of Gargraves track and Ross switches. A move to TMCC - then Legacy - control allowed me to operate long trains which were near and dear to my operating heart. But, Houston, we have a problem. After 10 years of operating and furnishing the layout, I was tired of the treeless landscape and set to rectify that. I shortly figured out that to landscape 1500 sq feet of layout with all the trees was going to cost thousands of dollars... and my attention was shifting to pre and postwar trains due to the expense of maintenance of the locomotive electronics.

So, I did an about face. Sold most of my modern trains... ripped up the Gargraves... and plunged headlong into standard gauge and tubular rail. I put down 1500 square feet of green carpet and went to work building the Castle Standard empire that I am operating today. I really like the bright colors, hot lube smell and the ozone generated by these big standard gauge trains...and I can still run long trains. I collect, repair, and operate O gauge and Standard Gauge trains made by Lionel, Ives and Flyer. Flyer trains have a unique presence on the layout due in part to their size, and more North American looks. In my opinion, the Flyer Wide gauge motors are made to operate the most smoothly, powerfully, and reliably of the three big manufacturers.



As a researcher and variation collector at heart, I have settled into American Flyer Wide Gauge. I have penned 5 articles for the Quarterly on Lionel O gauge and Flyer Wide Gauge with more in the queue and have worked closely with Bruce Greenberg on the Lionel Standard Gauge and O Gauge reference books. Any visitors are welcome, that can appreciate the history and operations of these American Industrial pieces of Art.... And generate ozone... did I mention ozone?

To view a 2 minute video montage of Rob's layout and collection, click on this [LINK](#).



Convention Report

This year the 69th TCA Convention was held in Burlington, Vermont from Sunday, June 25 through Sunday July 2, 2023. Located on the banks of Lake Champlain, Burlington offered a taste of the New England life style.



Tours are always a highlight of the convention. Judy and I decided to tour Ben & Jerry's ice cream factory. We heard the Ben and Jerry story, plus sampled some of their products. We also toured the Cold Hollow Cider Mill.



Looks like there are risks in the bus driver profession.



One of my favorite places are the trading pits. I was able to snag a Lionel Route 66 flat car loaded with a pair of Edsel station wagons. The picture below is a panoramic view of the hall that held the pits and a few operating layouts.



One of the fun layouts was a reconstruction of Lionel's [Disappearing Train](#). Click on the link to view a video.



Also a requirement of the convention is the Annual Membership Meeting.



Reports from all parts of the national organization are given. Of interest were the membership and financial reports. 17,658 members at the end of 2022, a decrease of 823. Current assets at the end of 2022 were \$1,046,360.00 and total assets at the end of 2022 were \$6,966,288. Total assets include depreciated property, investments and collections.



Another fun activity we enjoyed was a dinner cruise on Lake Champaign. We met up with a group from Minnesota. Had a great time enjoying food, cruise, sunset and visiting with friends.



The highlight of the convention is always the Saturday night banquet. This year we were entertained by an 18-member swing band. They were great! The food was not bad either.

After the dining, visiting and a relatively short program an auction was conducted by Greg Stout. There was quite a variety of trains up for auction, 30 items in all. Prewar to new production. Only one item sold for \$100, all the others sold for \$200 or more. The auction topper was a Lionel postwar 2190W F3 Santa Fe passenger set that sold for \$975. Second place was a Lionel 6-28069 Niagra that went \$675.

The final event of the banquet is always the distribution of the table prizes. Each year the banquet committee develops some arcane method of distributing the prizes stacked in the center of each table. I won a nice Lionel box car and Judy won a very nice set of "Welcome to Vermont" products. Neither of us won the convention car.

Judy and I have come to really enjoy the TCA conventions and try to work them into our vacation plans every year we can. We have attended conventions from California to Rhode Island and many states in between. Almost always we come back with memories to treasure for the rest of our lives. I would encourage you to attend the 2024 convention in Lancaster, PA.

Don Miller 06-59842