

Ozark Division Newsletter

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Great St. Louis Christmas Train Show 2017
- Don Millers' Story
- Great St. Louis Christmas Train Show & Food Drive 30th Anniversary
- Focus on Members

Another Great St. Louis Christmas Train Show and Food Drive has come and gone. This was the 29th annual event and co-sponsored with Immanuel Lutheran School for the last 11 years. A big thanks to the 8th grade class, the volunteer parents and the staff who made this show another success. Unfortunately the attendance was down from last year but I guess 65 degrees and sunny on December 3rd had something to do with attendance. However, from my vantage point I saw attendees leaving with bags of treasures so I have to assume some vendors had a good day.

The Great St. Louis Christmas Train Show and Food Drive has become a calendar event for the 8th grade class. All students are required to participate along with parents and the funds received are used to help offset some of the 8th grade spring events. Once again the 8th graders did a great job with setup and keeping the refreshments flowing on Saturday. The volunteer parents also did a great job as well as the staff at Immanuel Lutheran School who made the show a breeze to produce. Mark your calendars now to attend the *"Biggest Little Train Show in the Midwest"*, as we have been invited back for Saturday, December 1, 2018. For more information about the show is included with the Newsletter.

Don Miller is the CEO, Chief Engineer, Conductor and Brakeman of the Dakota Southern Railroad a short line of the Great Northern Railway. His layout was featured in the March 2012 edition of Classic Toy Trains in which one of his Great Northern locomotives made the cover.

Here is Dons' story in his own words. I grew up in Davis, South Dakota a small town located in Turner County with a population of about 125 residents. It is located on a branch line of the Great Northern Railway that runs between Sioux Falls and Yankton, South Dakota.

I was about 6 or 7 when I had my first train ride and that was back in the early 1950's. Passenger service on the branch line by then was handled by a doodlebug, a Brill gas-electric rail car with three compartments, engineer up front, baggage section in the middle and the passenger seating in the rear. My memory of that first ride was that it was extremely loud as the un-muffled exhaust noise scared me and made me cry. Scared or not, I have had a lifelong attachment to the Great Northern.

I received my first electric train for Christmas 1955. It was a Lionel 2245 Texas Special freight set. From that point forward, there has never been a time in my life that I didn't have some sort of a train layout. While in High School I did venture off to the "dark side" and built an HO layout. Fortunately, I kept all of my Lionel trains. In my college years my wife, Judy, and I rented the main floor of an old house where a friend and I built a sectional layout out of ply-

Slid under the furniture.

In the intervening years, we moved 6 times and each house had some sort of a layout. Some layouts were more complex than others, but all were pretty much track on bare plywood. In 2003 we decided to purchase our retirement home. Judy wanted the master bedroom to be on the main floor and I wanted a big unfinished basement. We found our new house in Overland Park, KS and moved in in September 2003.

The house did indeed have a big unfinished basement, but Judy made it very clear that I was not going to get it all! The basement needed to be divided between the train room, storage area and rec room. The location of the storage area was easy as there was a natural partition defined by the stairs. However, negotiations on the location of the wall between the train room and the rec room were significant. I used to do right-of-way acquisition for telephone companies, but no negotiations quite compared with those with your wife. After all, I still had to sleep with her after the negotiations were settled.

In the end, I wound up with a train room that was nearly a thousand square feet. I had made up my mind that this time I was going to try my hand at scenery. My goal was to build a layout called the Dakota Southern, that showed off Lionel trains and accessories in an attractive museum quality environment. I used a CAD program, RR Track to design the layout before I started any construction on the train room. Thirteen years later, the layout is pretty much complete and matches the original plans drawn in 2003 quite closely.

The layout is a walk around design, with relatively wide isles to facilitate visitors. It is intentionally laid out so there is no one place in the layout room where you can see the whole layout. The further you walk into the layout the more you see. There are no exposed controls or transformers. All trains, old and new, are run remotely through Lionel's Legacy and LCS Systems.

Early on I had to build the layout in a "U" shape around the furnace and hot water heater. If either failed, they would have to come out through a door and a couple of lift out bridges also built into the layout. As luck would have it, the furnace needed to be replaced shortly after I finished construction. I had not been too generous with space left by the lift bridges as the men that came to replace the furnace told me there was no way the furnace could be removed. I was told I would have to take down part of the layout. Well I had measured ahead of time and after some convincing on my part, they got the old furnace out and the new one in with very little space to spare.

If you come to visit the Dakota Southern, you will immediately notice that a great deal of the rolling stock and engines are Great Northern. At one time I tried to collect everything that Lionel made with the GN Herald, but eventually ran out of room. I also have a modest collection of Post War Lionel, mostly 6464 box cars, 11" flat cars and the larger operating cars.

My layout has received some attention over the years. It was featured in the March 2012 issue of Classic Toy Trains. One of my Great Northern engines even made the cover! Also, the layout was one of three in the Kansas city area toured by the LCCA during their 2016 National Convention. We had 200 train enthusiasts visit one 50 passenger bus at a time.

Judy and I love to have visitors, so if you are ever in Overland Park, KS, give me a call and hopefully we can arrange a time to visit the Dakota Southern. We also host a Christmas Trains open house the weekend between Christmas and New Year's. This is a "kid" oriented presentation with lots of candy and Christmas trains.

Thank you Don, this was a great story about your romance with model railroading, "*the worlds greatest hobby*". Don was kind enough to share some of his bio information and I would like to share it with the membership. Don is retired telephone company executive and college professor, an avid photographer, videographer and author. He

Has contributed photos, videos and articles to Classic Toy Trains as well as a cover photo for the TCA Quarterly. Don is the current Vice President of the Ozark Division and a founding member of the Heart of America Chapter.

Great St. Louis Christmas Train Show and Food Drive: This year we will be celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Great St. Louis Christmas Train Show and Food Drive. The first show was held on Saturday, December 5, 1988 at Lutheran High School South. For the first couple of years the show was a two day show. Then in 2006 we were forced to move the show. We held our first show at Immanuel Lutheran School but for the next couple of years we were like gypsy's holding shows at Concordia Lutheran School and Life Christian Center. For 2010 we returned to Immanuel Lutheran School and have been there ever since.

You are all invited to attend the 30th annual Great St. Louis Christmas Train Show and Food Drive on December 1, 2018 at Immanuel Lutheran School where you can "*celebrate the magic of toy trains*". This is a family and friends friendly event. The annual Ozark Division membership meeting will be held during the show. All members are encouraged to attend as the meeting is called for 12 noon in the School Library.

Focus on Members: I hope you all saw the February 2018 edition of Classic Toy Trains as it featured the layout of Roger Wasson of Springfield, MO. The title of the article was "*Relive Frisco Memories*" and why he named his empire the Solid Rock Railroad. It is a great story of how he built a layout that measures 30' by 46' carved out under his home. There are some great photos of his layout showing off the detailed structures and the impressive scenic effects.

Roger Wasson finds himself in the company of other great operators/collectors who are TCA members living in the Ozark Division such as Dean Bittick, Don Miller, and the late Loran Kemp just to mention a few.

Welcome aboard to the following new TCA members living within the Ozark Division:

18-73249 David Berterotti, 109 Bluff Ave., West Fort, AR 72774, 805-441-2305, elcapitan53@windstream.net

18-73585 Christopher Fisher, 7441 NW 133rd St., Oklahoma City, OK 73142, 405-706-3473, ckfcpa@gmail.com

18-73325 Michael Hamel, 18 Fox Meadows, St. Louis, MO 63127, 314-722-3236, michaelshamel@yahoo.com

18-73349 Richard Meister, 3 Hickory Ct., Newton, KS 67114, 316-587-5885, amflyer1@cox.net

18-73348 Jon Sanders, Jr., 1218 Hwy 49, West Helena, AR, 870-995-2520, jonpaulsanders@hotmail.com

18-73283 Karl Strauch, 16843 Babler View Dr., Wildwood, MO 63011, 636-422-8443, stlmanmen@aol.com

18-73668 Gary Wiles, 2358 Wilma St., Wichita, KS 316-641-3718, candgfun@cox.net

In Memoriam: On behalf of the TCA and Ozark Division I wanted to express our sincere condolences to the family of Carl F. Wilken (06-60581) who passed away recently.

We are looking for individual(s) who would like to host an Ozark Division activity in their area. You can contact me at 314-239-7996 or jonlstrains@netscape.net to discuss the activity.

On behalf of the Officers and Directors of the Ozark Division we would like to wish all of you a happy and safe holiday season.

I can be reached at 314-239-7996 or jonlstrains@netscape.net if you have any questions or comments.

Jon Lundvall, Editor