

OZARK DIVISION NEWSLETTER

“Celebrating the Magic of Toy Trains”

www.ozarkdivision-TCA.org

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Great St. Louis Christmas Train Show
- Focus on Our Members
- Hy-Rail Adventure
- Welcome Aboard

The Great St. Louis Christmas Train Show and Food Drive has been the premier event hosted by the Ozark Division for over 30 years and a major fund raiser for the co-hosting organization. It is with great sadness I must report that this years show scheduled for Saturday, December 5, 2020 was postponed. A new tentative date of December 4, 2021 has been selected. More information for that show will be forth coming. In all the 30 years not even ice or a snowstorm has forced the show to be canceled or postponed.

I am pleased to report last years show was another great success with a good turnout of vendors, lookers and buyers. I saw many people leaving with packages and some coming back in for more buying. The staff and Immanuel Lutheran school, 8th grade students and most importantly the volunteer parents deserve a big THANK YOU.

Focus on Our Members: This Newsletter features a conversation with TCA 50 year member William H. Pixton. The conversation was conducted earlier this year by Ozark Division President Don Miller. Can you imagine the shock and fear that young Bill Pixton felt as he saw the Lionel 238 Pennsylvania Torpedo, flying through the air, landing on their living room carpet? It seems that Bill’s dad gave trains to the boys and his older brother loved to create a ramp out of anything available. He would have enough track behind the ramp so he could have the Torpedo at full speed by the time it reached the ramp. His brother would adjust the height of the

ramp to see what would produce the longest “flights” of the Torpedo. In fact, these events produced such strong memories, that Bill kept that Torpedo. He restored it to like new condition and he still has it today.

Bill’s dad continued to buy the boys trains and other “stuff”. Two of the trains he remembers are the Standard Gauge 252 electric and a Standard Gauge 261 steam engine. No more reports of “flying” trains as it seems that Bill’s dad, and sometimes his brother, were cultivating Bill’s interest in trains. All through Bill’s youth he would find other boys in the schools he attended that also shared an interest in trains.

Bill has always enjoyed the Lionel catalogs, especially the “pretty” ones. One catalog that is a particular favorite of his is the 1953 catalog. He comments that the catalog was full of “things I wanted but couldn’t get”. If you remember this catalog, its cover featured four engines, the first and third headed to the right and second and fourth engines headed to the left. These engines from top to bottom were a 2046 New York Central Hudson, a 2353 Santa Fe A-A F3, a 624 C & O NWS Switch Engine and a 681 Pennsylvania Turbine. This catalog featured several new models for Lionel. This included a 6417 Porthole Caboose, a large 6415 Tank Car and the first three of the venerable 6464 box cars. Designed to excite the young, the pages were filled with bigger than life sets featuring the Santa Fe and NYC F3s. Among the 4 Alco’s offered were the engines that Bill calls his “mainstay”, the yellow Alco Union Pacific 2023. He loved this engine as it always ran well and looked great. (Yes, he still has it).

In 1968 Bill was introduced to TCA by Jack Windt. Jack, a lawyer in Sarasota, FL, had joined the TCA in

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1965. Jack is a nationally recognized collector of tinsplate trains. In 2005, Jack was featured in an article in *Tinsplate Times*. The article showcased an impressive collection of tinsplate toys and trains. According to the TCA database, Jack still lives in Sarasota.

The first hobby shop Bill can remember was Corr's Hobby Shop in Washington, DC. This well known hobby shop was located on 9th and H Streets. It was a full service hobby shop with trains, boats and planes. A picture of Corr's that I found, shows that in 1949 the shop was in a long narrow building with one aisle down the center, and showcases on either side. Planes and boats hung from the ceiling. Corr's was popular through the 1960's, but when urban renewal called for a new subway line to be built where their store was located, they had to move to the suburbs. The shop only lasted a few years into the 1970's.

When I asked Bill when he visited Corr's, it reminded him of his time in the Navy as a pilot. It was in August 1960, when he was flying T-28 single engine trainer out of Brewton, AL, seems as if he was flying at a low altitude when the plane caught fire. He was intent on getting the plane down as soon as possible. He did not want to be in the plane when its magnesium fuselage caught fire. He crash landed in a field and fortunately was thrown clear of the wreckage. Vertebrae in his back were fractured in 3 places. That ended his flying career.

Over the years Bill has built several layouts. However, he considers himself a tinkerer, but is also involved in operating and selling O gauge trains. A tip he mentioned is that lighter fluid is a great substance for cleaning motor armatures. (No, he does not set them on fire). One of the projects Bill has recently completed is modifying a '64 era 773 Hudson. Bill commented that the Hudson was horribly manufactured so he wanted to fix it and make it run faster. He found a machine shop that could build a smaller gear for the drive gear. The gear was cut so that it would engage exactly with the Hudson motor's worm gear. Bill had to modify the motor cradle. This was necessary so that the motor worm gear and new drive gear would be positioned exactly. He now calls that 773 "his Hot Rod Hudson".

Bill also modified many of his engines with open pole motors to run on Lionel's TMCC control system. He used conversation kits sold by Digital Dynamics (DD). DD was a company that produced kits to convert conventional engines to TMCC. DD offered these kits from the late 90s to the early 2000s. In the late 2000s Lionel started phasing out TMCC in favor of their new Legacy Control Systems. As Legacy became more prevalent, it was no longer feasible for DD to sell conversation kits. (The author used several of DD's conversation kits and is sorry they are not selling them anymore. The DD conversation kits I installed in the 90s are still working today).

After a 30 year career as an English Professor, Bill retired in 1997 to Hot Springs, AR, a retirement community west of Little Rock, AR. He managed to move a 165 ft. portion of the previous layout to his new home. As well as the TCA, Bill has been active in LCCA and as a past president of the Sooner Division of the TTOS. Bill comments that he has enjoyed the TCA not only for the trains, but also for the camaraderie. He claims that he has never run into an individual at a train meet that acted like a "loan collector".

This year the Ozark Division has four members celebrating 50 years of membership in the Train Collectors Association; 70-2959 Kenneth R. Cooper, HR70-3249 Michael R. Deitz, HR70-3118 Leland Kemp, 70-3115 Robert J. Stubblefield. For 2021 there will be seven Ozark Division members celebrating 50 years of membership in the Train Collectors Association; 71-3554 David M. Dillingham, 71-3558 Martin T. Floyd, 71-3768 Friedrich D. Gastreich, 71-3966 Lane D. Gilmore, 71-3625 John W. Ourso, 71-3771 John W. Reed, 71-3561 Mel Walbridge.

Several years ago the TCA started the above program of recognizing those individuals with 50 or more years of membership. So far the Ozark Division has recognized 10 individuals, but there is another group of individuals that need to be recognized and that is those individuals who can be celebrated 25 years of membership.

The TCA has 353 members living within its borders and 161 of those individuals have been members for 25 years and 2020 welcomes the following new quarter century club members; 95-41203 Allen Pollock, 95-41336 Thomas G. Germann, 95-41337 Dennis Strackejahn, 95-41528 C. George Lynn, 95-41733 Rex Stevens, 95-41819 Bradley W. Marples, 95-41872 Gary Rhodes, 95-41921 Norbert L. Brodersen and 95-42244 John M. Laski. That longevity represents a continued commitment to the hobby and the Train Collectors Association.

Hy-Rail Adventure: Have you ever wondered what it would be like to drive or ride in a railroad Hy-Rail vehicle? You are probably wondering what a Hy-Rail vehicle is? A Hy-Rail vehicle is a vehicle equipped with *Guide Wheel Attachments* that adapt the vehicle for both highway and railway operation. Today's road/rail units are available in a variety of sizes and load capacities and may be equipped for track inspection, crew and material transportation, and specialized track maintenance jobs.

The answer to the first question, you will need to travel to the Northern Nevada Railway Museum in East Ely, NV in order to drive or ride in Fairmont Motor Car #18. Actually Fairmont Motor Car is a fully restored 1956 Pontiac Chieftain 4 dr Station Wagon. The original Fairmont Motor Car was purchased by the railroad in 1956 from Fairmont Railway Motors, it to was a 1956 Pontiac Chieftain 4dr Station Wagon equipped with Guide Wheels as it was delivered in 1956. The use of the retractable guide wheels appears to have been a fairly new innovation for the railroad as all other inspection vehicles were modified for railroad track operations only. Fairmont Railway Motors of Fairmont, MN was founded by Frank E. Wade in 1909 and in 1915 the company was renamed Fairmont Gas Engine and Railway Motor Car Co. They manufactured rail vehicles formed from the Fairmont Machine Company. In 1928 the company acquired Mudge and Company and in 1955 the rail car interests of the Fairbanks-Morse Company which purchased the Sheffield Company in the 1920s. Fairmont merged with Harsco Corporation in 1979 to become part of Harsco Track Technologies. Today Harsco is a major supplier to the railroad industry of Hy-Rail vehicles.

The story began in 2015 when searching the archives images of the original Fairmont Motor Car were discovered. One of the photos shows the vehicle parked in front of the depot. This became the mission of NNRy President Mark Bassett along with Railway Museum's Board to reclaim a piece of history and try to restore another Fairmont Motor Car. After piecing together details from old pictures and an archive of old purchase orders the project began.

The search was on for another 1956 Pontiac and as luck would have the museum received a donated vehicle. The State on Nevada announced a grant program for tourist projects. After applying the museum received a \$20,000 and then went out seeking additional financial assistance from Great Basin Heritage Partnership receiving \$35,000. After raising additional funds from museum members and private donors and getting generous assistance from the E. L. Cord Foundation along with Travel Nevada they were set to make history come alive again.

The 1956 Pontiac was sent off for restoration and in the spring of 2019 it made it's debut at the Nevada Day Parade in Carson City. For more information about Fairmont Motor Car #18 and reserve time to drive or ride in the vehicle contact Northern Nevada Railway Museum, 1100 Avenue A, East Ely, NV 89315, 775-259-2085 or at www.nnry.com.

About the same time Lionel introduced their #68 Executive Inspection Car complete with Guide Wheels although not retractable. The red and cream vehicle has a close resemblance to a 1957 DeSoto Station Wagon. I have never owned one, but by friend Al got one for Christmas back in the day. We played with it on both of our under the Christmas tree layouts. We ran the heck out of the car and as I remember it wouldn't take curves very well at high speed especially o27 curves.

Trains Real and Toy on Social Media: This year has been a tough year as we all have probably experienced train withdrawal. Most train shows have been canceled and some of them may never return. I have turned to social media to help with my withdrawal. I have found that You Tube has a large mixture of real and toy train to entertain my train appetite. There is also Facebook, Instagram and other platforms to get your fix.

I have become an armchair “foamer” thanks to You Tube. I witnessed a Union Pacific train derail thanks to Virtual Railfan on the trestle at Santa Fe Junction in Kansas City. I have been all around the country watching live streaming of trains from in front of my computer. I have also been to many train rooms to watch those magical trains travel around and through the mountains constructed by their hosts. You can visit the layouts of Ozark Division President Don Miller and Vice President Rob English by going to You Tube. Dons’ address is dmiller5261 where you can take a step back in time and take a ride on the Dakota Southern, division of the Great Northern. Robs’ address is friscosteam where you can watch those fabulous prewar trains race around his layout.

Welcome Aboard: The following individuals living in the Ozark Division have joined the Train Collectors Association. When you meet them welcome them aboard; 20-74709 Lawrence Otte, 301 Cuivre Point Dr., Moscow Mills, MO 63362, 314-422-9707, laotte@yahoo.com; 20-74730 Doug Sloss, 11250 Hunter Dr., Bridgeton, MO 63044, 314-716-0533, dsloss@hunter.com; 20-74857 John Huff, P. O. Box 567, Edwardsville, IL 62025, 618-447-0060; 20-74879 Bradley Gollwitzer, 13545 Midland Dr., Shawnee, KS 66216, 913-948-2432, bradgoll00@gmail.com, 20-74931 Charlie Wallgren, 1105 Bella Vista Dr., Jackson, MO 63755, 573-275-0769, charlie@charliewallgren.com; 20-74946 Frank Nigro, 1423 Beechwood Terrace, Manhattan, KS 66502, 785-341-2877, nigro_f@hotmail.com; 20-74957 David Haloftis, 12225 Blackheath Ct., St. Louis, MO 63141, 314-797-2819, dhaloftis@gmail.com; 20-75021 Richard Mason, 9821 Swartz Rd., Edwardsville, KS 66111, 913-638-7895, rmason@kc.rr.com; 20-75044 Jeffrey Peterson, 1119 Piper Ln., Mascoutah, IL 62255, 618-448-0189, jff-peter@yahoo.com; 20-75045 Joshua Peterson, 1119 Piper Ln., Mascoutah, IL 62255, 618-448-0189, petersonjoshua613@yahoo.com

If you are traveling over the river and through the woods this holiday season, please do it safely and make sure you wear your masks and practice social distancing. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from everyone at the Ozark Division.

Jon Lundvall, Editor

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