

2-41 8/61

N C A

Bulletin

Southern California Chapter

JCA Bulletin
2317 GLEN CANYON RD.
ALTADENA, CALIF.



John G. Parker Jr.
510 Vine Place
Oxnard, Calif.

Vol 2 No 4
Published Bi-Monthly
Western Division

August 1961
Southern Calif Chapter
Train Collectors Assoc.

Officers

President-H. Bemis Secty - R. Wheeler
Vice Pres-J. Kurten Publicity & Editor-W.Frye

-PRESIDENTS-S REPORT-

We can now settle back after a successful convention which even netted \$5.15 on the plus side after all bills were paid. This is rather amazing when we realize what the expenses amounted to and all that was received for the \$2.00 registration fee. We can attribute this success to the wonderful support from local as well as out of town TCA members.

We are indebted to the Buena Park Center for making a most wonderful hall available to us and to Evan Middleton for making the arrangements and reserving it.

This convention was a team effort and every participant must feel good that he was on the winning side.

We must make an even greater effort to support the Northern California Division, which is the host for the 1962 National Meet in the Bay area next summer.

-July Business Meeting-

The genial Ralph Schisler was host for the last meeting. He opened up his beautiful Balboa Beach home on Monday nite, July 10th where we held our first business meeting since our successful West Coast Convention. Ralph has assembled a wonderful collection in his short span as a train collector. On display were such beauties as a short cab 3245, Lionel trolleys, Ives, American Flyer, Lionel, and Dorfan sets, both passenger and freight, and such other items as a Lionel 54 and a 256. His collection is beautifully displayed in two rooms built into his "home like" garage.

(turn to page 9)

(3)
THE LIONEL 400E

The 400E, the largest and most impressive steam type locomotive in the Lionel standard gauge roundhouse was a fine engine indeed. The green lanterns and big headlight blazing in front and the firebox glowing red, this giant thundered down the track to thrill many a person, young and old alike. Truly this was a beautiful 4-4-4 specimen of tinplate with its four big drivers, four wheel leading and trailing trucks and giant Vanderbilt tender. The 1931 catalog was the first in which the 400E was pictured and described and it appeared in every catalog thereafter thru 1939 when the last locos of the standard gauge line were advertised.

In telling about this collectors item, color variation will be described first as it is the most prominent distinction. We will then describe trim combinations, motor variations and on down the line to the minute details that make up differences.

Lionel probably manufactured more black versions of this fine locomotive than any other color as more seem to show up. However, one of the most sought after variations is the crackle black finish which is a rare 400E indeed. Both loco and tender have this unusual finish. Only one crackle black is known to exist in the Southern California area and that is the one in the possession of Doctor Matt in Bakersfield.

The blue version, which is particularly attractive to the ladies and to some of us men, was introduced the same time as the black one. It is a two tone light and dark blue. There are two distinct light blue shades used for the boiler and the body of the tender. The early version was several shades darker and was probably used only for the first year or two. The dark blue color stayed pretty constant in shade. A few of the early models had a cream stripe along the side of the frame similar to the early 390's. The blue 400E was sold in a passenger set with three blue cars and was called the Blue Comet. Altho not shown or so stated in the catalogs, this blue version was available as an engine and tender separately. George Boone from

Chicago, reports to us that he has an original 400E which has a dark blue boiler and tender tank as well as frame. It is a single blue rather than two tone, which would make this a rare colored 400E.

The grey locomotive is an interesting version. This was an irridescent or metallic color created by the addition of silver pigment to the paint. This addition to make irridescence has a tendency to shade the color; thus a varying amount of additive varies the shade. Possibly, this is why few of the grey engines are matching in color. This does not account for the two distinct color variations of the grey trains, however. The early version produced in the first couple of years of 400Es was definitely a dark steel tone, while those later were somewhat lighter in color.

The wheels, both drivers and pilots were painted red in the early years of production, but after 1934 came in a black satin oxide finish.

The trim, which included the piping, domes, handrails, headlite rim, etc., was copper and brass on the early versions. The hand rails were of course fastened with nickle plated stanchions, the type with the tabs, which must be bent to hold them in the slot, and which we call "snivvies". In 1934, nickle trim appeared on all colors. At this same time, the hand rails along the sides of the boiler were being fastened with beautiful lathe turned stanchions with small nuts that held them firmly in place. Apparently these stanchions were developed because the locos were often lifted with one hand by grasping the boiler sides and thus loosening the handrails by pulling out the "snivvies". Very late, about 1937, some locos of each color appeared with chrome trim. The Lionel insignia which appeared on the cabsides under the windows and on the rear of the tender in almost every case was brass in color with the design painted in the usual red and blue. Apparently in only a few cases were they nickle or chrome plated, even on the engines which had silver trim. On the early models, the celluloid name and number plates that were near the front of the boiler on both sides, were opaque

with red letters and numerals and in later years were black with white letters and numerals.

The cylinders were an interesting component. At first they were an aluminum casting, but later were changed to pot metal. Often the zymac castings became distorted or were broken, so one is lucky indeed to have the aluminum casting.

The motors were all of the build-a-loco type, but were of three variations. The earliest model had the cylindrical commutator with the small armature and the field laminations to match, measuring about one half inch wide (the number of laminations could vary, but the total equaled one half inch). The second or intermediate style had the wide armature with a cylindrical commutator and had a field measuring five eighths of an inch wide. The third style had the disc type commutator and the same wide armature and field as the second. These last two were known as heavy duty motors. The two early versions had nickle plated sideplates while those on the last style were finished with black oxide or nickle. The pickups were all similar. However, they came in nickle or brass and the plates on the bottom had three or four types of lettering. Toward the close of the Standard gauge era, the Lionel Company had an austerity program to conserve money. The build-a-loco pickups were affected. The spring loaded contact for electrical connection to the motor was eliminated. In its place a wire was soldered. This wire took the place of the bus bar on the brush holder. Also the terminal for the pickup and the terminal for the field were eliminated from the brush holder, thereby reducing the cost and in our opinion the quality of the motor.

The reversing "E" unit varied, depending on which motor was used. Both early motors had the two position relay that reversed the direction of rotation each time the motor was stopped and restarted. The disc type commut-

ator motor, the last version, had the three position "E" unit incorporating a neutral. This unit was mounted on the motor two different ways. One placed it in an inaccessable position which necessitated removing the loco from the track to manually lock it in forward, neutral, or reverse position. The second and last version had the "E" unit on a bracket attached to the side plate of the motor and the manual lever extended thru a slot in the top of the boiler just ahead of the cab. Because of the reversing method last described, the mentioned slot was provided for the lever. This with the slot inside the cab, constituted the only differences in the stamped boiler assembly. The boilers were manufactured with either or both holes or of course without either one.

The chugger appeared about the same time as the nickle trim in 1934. This unit was mounted on the frame just in front of the motor and operated from a two lobe cam on the rear driver axel or by a lever that was actuated by a crosshead.

The front and rear pilot trucks of this mogul were identical, four wheeled versions. A similar unit was used as the leading truck on the Lionel 392E. They came with long or short flanged spoked wheels with full nickle rims or with only the tire band which did not cover the face of the wheel. This band was another measure for conserving money. Some of the very early models had disc wheels on the front truck only.

The pilot, or cow catcher, was identical to the predecessor of the grand 400E, the 390 and the 390E. This pilot, the trucks, drive wheels, motors, valve gear, and short side rods are about the only items of this beautiful loco that are found in any other Lionel engine. Even the "snivvies" holding the hand rails on the tenders and early locomotives were larger and thus special items. This engine and tender are "special" alright.

The tenders had only relatively minor differences. A few late tank castings, which are

in two pieces, were zymac or pot metal. Generally tho, both castings were aluminum altho in some cases combinations of the two are found. There were three versions of the "Lionel" side plate on the tender. They came brass with black letters, or nickle or chrome with red background. On one plate the background was raised and on the other type the letters were raised. The trucks were of the six wheel variety and are the same as those on the "State", "Blue Comet", and "Stephan Gerard" type cars. The journals on these trucks came in three styles, diecase, polished brass, and nickled. When a whistle was used, it was housed in the tender and the number of the big Vanderbilt was changed from 400T to 400WT. This made the addition of a pickup unit to each truck necessary for the operation of the whistle.

This about covers the variations in the 400E. It is not a rare type locomotive, but is sought after by most all of the collectors. If you have one in your collection, you can be justly proud that you have the largest and certainly one of the most beautiful locomotives that Lionel ever built.

Harrison Bemis

-Who am I?-

I was born May 1, 1915 in Rensselaer, Indiana. As a youth I wasn't particularly interested in toy trains but after I married and had a son of my own, the picture changed. On December 25, 1960, I gave my boys (I now have two) a train set for Christmas and from that time on I began to haunt the second hand stores and salvage shops. My wife became interested and has become an ardent partner in this fascinating hobby. At one of my visits to a salvage store, the man in charge gave me one of Wes Frye's cards and said to see him if I wanted to find out about old trains. I did so and that is how I became acquainted with the TCA. Who am I?

(see bottom of page 9)

-----TCA PRESIDENT MORLEY-----

As you all know by now, our own Herb Morley has been elected President of the National Train Collectors Association. We are honored and very proud to have a member of our local Southern California chapter as the head man; and deserving he is, as we all know.

Herb, while not new at collecting, is not one of the old school either. But in his eight years of collecting, he has made such strides in building up his fabulous personal collection and in learning much about all types and makes of trains. He has built a reputation which rates him among the leading authorities on toy trains. His collection is always open for inspection to the local members as well as those visiting from other locals - in fact, to anyone interested in this fascinating hobby. Herb is a source for answers on most any problem pertaining to almost any make of train. If he doesn't have the answer, he will make every effort to come up with a valid solution.

Herb has been active nationally on a personal basis as well as for the TCA. His lists and many personal contacts, dealing and exchanging information about certain pieces have made his name well known where ever collectors assemble.

TCA President Morley continued-

Herb is a "doer". He not only contributes to our local TCA Bulletin and to the National Quarterly, but he is the person responsible for the picture publication coming out, under the sponsorship of the TCA, on Lionel trolleys. This promises to be a cataloged sequence of toy train trolleys no collector can afford to be without. Even if he hasn't a trolley, this picture book will take the place of a collection - at least until a trolley comes along that he can latch onto.

Those of us that know Herb well, are especially gratified that his work and enthusiasm have not gone unnoticed. We are proud to have him leading our National hobby club. Congratulations, Herb.

July Business Meeting continued -

Mel Roberts, who attended the National this summer, presented us with a very complete report of the happenings there. Herb Morley was congratulated by one and all as our new president of the National Train Collectors Association.

Ralph's lovely wife served refreshments on the patio overlooking the bay which put a finishing touch on a very wonderful evening.

— *Trading Post* —

Bill Harris needs 3 #225E boiler fronts, Lionel solid rail track, and some 2900 series freights.

If you have a spare 390 or 400E pilot, contact Harrison Bemis. He would also like to have the piping on the left side of a 400E boiler, and a cupola roof that will fit the top of an AF#3020.

Wes Frye would like to pick up some AF S Gauge pass cars, #652, #653, and #654 in green.

FLASH

This came to the Bulletin straight from Rey Galbraith, the editor of the Quarterly -

"We have a real scoop-erino to show you in the October issue of the Quarterly — real droolin' stuff, I'd say, and a mystery at that."

Documentary Articles -

The reception to the documentary articles which have been published recently in the Bulletin, has been gratifying. These have been the factual and informative "Lionel #10 Interurban", "American Flyer Standard Gauge Freights", and now the "Lionel 400E" which appears in this issue. Should you desire to be on the mailing list, all you have to do is to write the editor, Wes Frye, and send stamps to cover mailing.