



# Western Division Newsletter



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March 2013

## Meet Notices

Western Division's next train meet will take place on **Saturday, March 23, 2013** in 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 hall doors open at 10AM for setup and trading. Please visit the Western Division website, at <http://www.tcawestern.org> for more information and a map.

The display theme for March will be '**Flatcars**'. Show off an item, share a story, and facilitate the transfer of knowledge on collecting toy trains with your fellow members.

Western Division's 2013 schedule of meets and display themes is as follows: March 23<sup>rd</sup> - Flatcars, April 27<sup>th</sup> - Wrecks & Unusual Trains, June 1<sup>st</sup> - Pennsylvania RR, July 27<sup>th</sup> - Red White & Blue & Military Trains, August 24<sup>th</sup> - Passenger Trains, September 28<sup>th</sup> - Trolleys (No Cable Cars!), October 26<sup>th</sup> - Halloween, and December 14<sup>th</sup> - Holiday Accessories.

This year's special raffle prize is an 'O' gauge 1990 version of the Lionel #700E Scale Hudson engine and tender with its display case and matching articulated tinplate Rail Chief cars. Tickets will be on sale at the monthly meets for \$20. Only 100 tickets are available, and the regular \$100 bill monthly giveaway is facilitated through the sale of these tickets.

In addition to publishing 6 newsletters each year, Western Division will be sending out alternating monthly meet reminders on colorful postcards containing illustrations depicting famous railroads. Watch for yours in next month's mail!

WD members should begin to consider candidates for nominations for the officers and board of director's positions. Per WD By-laws, nominations for officers must be filed with the Recording Secretary no later than May 1 of each year, therefore, nominations will be accepted up until the April 27<sup>th</sup> meet. Elections will be held prior to the July membership meeting.



'O' Gauge Layout Built by Steve Eastman for the January Meet

## President's Message

*By Manny Gonzalez, WD President*

"Things That Aren't Here Anymore" – that was the title of a very popular retrospective produced by Ralph Story about Los Angeles and some of the surrounding areas in Southern California. Made for PBS in 1995, it was so successful that "More Things That Aren't Here Anymore" (1996) soon followed. Not long after he himself was gone, a third installment "Things That Aren't Here Anymore-3" would be made.

As you might imagine it deals with places long since gone. There were amusement venues such as Pacific Ocean Park, Marineland, Jungleland, Busch Gardens, and the pier at Venice Beach. Icons uniquely L.A. like the famed Angel's Flight, The Brown Derby, drive-in restaurants, and the Helm's Bakery home-delivery trucks. But for many a rail fan, perhaps one of the most significant losses would be the passing of the Pacific Electric's "Big Red Cars" trolley system.

Watching it you're continually reminded of things that were at one time a regular part of many people's everyday life. While some may have gone kicking and screaming, most slipped gradually from the scene as their roles were no longer meaningful. With precious little (if any) fanfare, while some slipped quietly from view, the truly unlucky ones would endure the stinging glare that comes with the harsh realities of neglect and eventual abandonment (for in life there is no crueler fate than being forgotten).

But how do things cease being relevant? Here are some brief thoughts:

- Life-cycles – they play themselves out (no longer necessary).
- Overtaken By Events – changing needs, technology, tastes.
- Neglect – failure to feed and nourish (ongoing investment).
- Piecemeal – continuously bad decisions kill it off bit-by-bit.
- Bad Idea – it was a non-starter to begin with.
- People – lose interest, stop caring, move on, no new blood.

What they all seem to share is that no one was paying attention until it was too late. It happened when nobody was looking.

So why should we care? Perhaps because people, places and things all have their own stories; it's the memory of these that serve to anchor us, and give our lives meaning. So much is lost on a regular basis that we constantly need to look for things to hold on to. If anything, it should remind us not to take anything for granted. We don't know when it won't be around anymore.

Ironically, this is at the very soul of so much of our hobby. We collect toy trains that are no longer made. We model places that no longer exist. And we celebrate railroads that are no longer around (except, of course, in our hearts and memories). We then join clubs and form associations where we can share and exchange and interact on whatever levels we find comfortable and satisfying. But just like other things relegated to the scrap-bin of history, we need to remind ourselves that there are no guarantees – that if we take things like this club for granted, and fail to do what we can to keep it vibrant and alive - it too will become "something that isn't here anymore".

# January Meet Recap

By Robert Nord, WD Vice-President



Western Division welcomed new member Peter Matthews. There were several tables full of nice trains for sale, including a Lionel Hell's Gate Bridge and Standard Gauge electric outline loco on Jim Kenney's table, and a Pre-War Lionel 'O' gauge streamliner set on John Parker's table. The first meet for 2013 included a display theme of 'Newest Purchases'. Herb Mayer showed an MTH Lehigh Valley dining car customized by Jack Pierce. The interior was fully detailed including the table settings and illuminated candles on the tables.

Wayne Sheriff shared a custom G gauge maintenance work car built from a Bachmann flat car, and he also showed off his 2012 TCA Hawaii Cruise car, one of only 60 made. Dave Gabay presented his Lionel TMCC NYC #125 switcher that he received for Christmas. Jim Kenney brought a boxed #302 Rainy Day Downtown Express trolley car pair. He needs more information about this interesting set.



*Jim Kenney's Unusual Rainy Day Trolley*

Steve Eastman shared his new LCCA 'O' gauge #265E Commodore Vanderbilt loco with tinplate NYC passenger cars. He also brought two 'O' gauge Hornby clockwork sets purchased at the recent Great Train Expo, one of which was a boxed #45 Tank Goods set. Calvin Smith displayed his wife's new Lionel Christmas Coke box car and Peanuts Halloween car. Myron Moore shared his new custom painted Lionel Ringling Brothers Circus stock car.

John Abbe displayed his "Remember the Alamo Car" which was the registration car for the LCCA Dallas Convention. Bob Spellmire brought his latest purchase which was a Lionel #9U

standard gauge locomotive. This loco was originally available only in kit form in 1928-1929. Les Cochran presented a new Lionel SP Merger set which he didn't receive in time for Christmas.



Bob Trimble shared his latest street car acquisitions. He had three versions of the General Models trolley, an original GMC version, a Kroll Kar version, originally available in kit form and a later EMCO version with a Dinkeyville label. He also had a repro Paya trolley with a Marx motor, a 1940 Pittman trolley and a plastic trolley with a Wagner power truck. Last but not least, he shared a Holiday Express Candy Tin train with the original box and candy inside which he received as an Xmas gift from his granddaughter.

Jeff Meyer ran his (wife Denise's) new Lionel Conventional Classics #2129WS Berkshire Freight Set originally issued in 1947.



Harvey Tafel brought a Bing 28mm scale locomotive custom labeled for a "Herman C. Tafel". Harvey explained that Herman C. Tafel was a steel supplier to Bing in the 1800's and Harvey speculates that this was originally a business gift from the Bing Company. Harvey's mother brought this train to his attention when she saw it in a 1985 TCA Atlantic Division newsletter and he was able to acquire it many years later.



*Door Prize Winners Howard Bishop Bill Shepard, Bob Trimble and Steve Waller (\$100 Raffle Winner)*

## February Meet Recap

By Jim Kenney, WD Treasurer

A welcome to new member Roger Hill, and a big welcome back to David Mabee. The display theme for the February meet was 'Trains I Love', in conjunction with Valentine's Day. Joanne Albers displayed her 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Special Rail car named "Tioga Pass" that was created to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary trip that she took with her husband Fred to San Diego.



Les Cochran brought his Southern Pacific Daylight locomotive by K-Line. David Gabay shared a wide nose American Flyer Zephyr locomotive. On behalf of Dave



Mabee, Harvey Tafel presented a Lionel rubber stamped black #2800 series hopper and #814R Reefer with late colors that was produced in 1940. Harvey then shared his 1937 Lionel #1688 six driver locomotive with three freight cars which was his very first Christmas present.



Alvin Costa

Larry Pearson

Bob Spellmire

Robert Verre presented a fine example of a #154 Lionel Electric locomotive. Alvin Costa brought a complete Post War Lionel Jersey Central Switcher set from 1957. John Abbe displayed a Lionel Santa Fe F3 locomotive, MTH Amtrak locomotive and a MTH Searchlight car. Bob Spellmire showed us his Standard Gauge #3236 Ives (made by Lionel) passenger set with a #8 shell and Ives frame. Mario Liberatore presented his 'O' gauge scale BNSF SD type diesel. Larry Pearson loves his Pre War Blue Streak Passenger Set with three matching blue cars. Harold Shapiro displayed his Lionel #2322 FM Trainmaster given to him as a birthday present by his loving wife Cheryl many years ago.

Steve Eastman provided a modular 'O' gauge layout with cookie tin town and vintage Marx tinsplate trains running on the oval.



Raffle prize winners were Herb Mayer (display raffle prize), Ken Chan (\$100 Raffle Winner), John Abbe and David Gabay

## Flatcars, The First Freight Train Car

Research by Jon M. Lang

If you pay any attention to railroading today you have likely noticed all types of railroad freight cars moving within any given train, from the standard hopper cars and boxcars, to the more specialized well-cars and spine cars (used for ship container and truck trailer transport). Have you ever wondered about the history of these railroad cars and what brought about the different types and designs? The history of railroad cars moving lading (another term for freight) can be traced back to the earliest days of the industry using simple flatcar designs.



Flatcars, the very type of car which the entire railroad industry was founded upon. Indeed, it sounds rather outlandish but it basically is very much the truth. The flatcar was the original freight car used by the railroads. Believe it or not, railroad freight cars, also known as rolling stock, actually preceded America's railroads themselves, first being used to haul large stones in New England quarries and coal mines as early as the 1820s. And, as perhaps might be expected, the very first freight car designs were simple planks on axles, or the standard flatcar and covered gondolas (a shorter version in height of a boxcar). These first freight cars were used to carry almost all types of merchandise the railroads handled except coal and other bulk loads which used "jimmies," or the predecessor of today's common open-top hopper cars. As the years progressed, designs became larger, heavier, and more sophisticated to handle larger loads and specific cargo.

The definition of the flatcar is rather self-explanatory, a basic railroad freight car design consisting of a flat, horizontal surface usually equipped with standard two two-axle trucks to transport any type of cargo, which can withstand the open elements of Mother Nature during its journey to its destination. The basic flatcar can haul anything from farm equipment and containers to industrial parts and even rails. The flexibility of the car makes it highly desirable.

It's sort of hard to give a history of the flatcar as their basic shape and design has changed little since it was first developed in the 19th century. While the car does allow for railroads to haul many types of differing loads, the exposure of goods to the weather (especially those products which could not handle outdoor exposure for long periods of time) is ultimately what resulted in new freight car development, such as boxcars. The most significant change to the flatcar has been its increased length, the addition of standard two-axle trucks (which occurred around the middle of the 19th century), and the various types now available to haul specific loads. Cars now come equipped with optional loading gear such as chains, straps, or temporary slats which help to hold differing goods in place during transport. Today the "off-spring" from the standard flatcar includes all types from well cars, spine cars and depressed-center to the center beam flat. The latter, car is just that, it contains a center beam on the car and tall bulkheads on each end. Usually coming equipped with standard two-axle trucks the car is typically used to haul paper, lumber, prefabricated RR switches set on end, or some other type of bulky construction material, such as insulation. Similar to the center beam flat is the bulkhead flatcar, which lacks the center beam but includes end bulkheads to haul heavy loads while not allowing them to shift horizontally (lumber or wood products are also an example of what these cars sometimes carry).

Another type of flatcar, while a bit more "advanced," are today's well cars, previous mentioned that were developed over the past twenty years to haul international containers in loads of one or two

(typically two if railroad tunnel and bridge clearances will allow) from port to market and vice-versa. While the car has been embraced by the railroads for the efficiencies it allows, it is actually nothing more than a glorified flat car. The well car was also just another step in the evolution of COFC service (said "Coffee"), or Container On Flat Car.

As the 1950s gave way to the 1960s the TOFC service, also known as "piggyback" revolution that began in the 1950s, was a service of transporting large numbers of truck trailers by freight train. This service, began to gain momentum with many Class I railroads using the service in one form or another and building hubs and centers to load and unload trailers. Railroads began blocking entire trains of trailers and they were usually given top priority over the particular route they operated and known as "hotshots." Names like TrailerJet, Apollo, Razorback, Thunderhawk, and Flexi-Van services began popping up on many railroads. Today, instead of using traditional flatcars to haul truck trailers, which would take a lot of time to load, a new type of car known as a spine-car was developed. Essentially a center beam on trucks the car is specially equipped to haul trailers and to also quickly load and unload them.

One final type of flatcar includes the depressed-center flat, which is still used today to haul extremely heavy or tall loads. The car's very low center of gravity coupled with its extra two axles, giving it six in total, allows it the ability to haul these types of loads. Usually you can find the car carrying some type of heavy or bulky industrial equipment. Keep on the lookout and on almost any mixed freight train you can spot some type of flatcar in transit, from the utilitarian common flat to a coil car, which transports loads of rolled steel.

In a slight departure from the above history, I would like to take it a step further and show you a simple and inexpensive project you can do to give your freight (flat or gondola) cars some extra prototypical character. It's also just a fun project you can complete in one evening.

Often there are loads that cannot be left exposed to the elements, but are also too cumbersome to be loaded in boxcars. In these cases, loads are placed on flatcars or gondolas for shipment and then protected with heavy canvas, or now sometimes plastic tarps. Some of the flat or gondola cars you might have purchased lately might have some type of a load, but if you are like me, purchases from the past usually did not have any type of a load. Not all flats or gondolas should be left empty, so do make your train look like its working like a real railroad you need to put some type of a load on them. This can be several small pieces like I made and show below or a large load covered to look like milled lumber (pic #1) with a tarps and/or computer paper made label wrap.

Fortunately for us, they're also really easy to model!. Follow along as we make a load for a flat car or gondola. The first step in this process is optional, but it will make your load easier to handle and make it possible to remove it and reuse it quickly in other cars of the same dimensions. To make this load removable while still installing prototypical tie downs and details, we need to build a false floor. This floor is nothing more than a piece of styrene plastic cut to fit inside or on the bottom of the car. While some models do feature some rivets detailing on the floor, a plain floor will do as you won't see very much of it when we're done. You could also substitute a piece of cardstock or bass wood. Wood would be an excellent alternative if you are modeling a car with a wood floor.

Once the floor is cut to size, it needs a quick coat of paint. You could try to match the car color, but the floors of most railcars don't stay very clean or shiny for long. For wood floors, simply stain and weather the wood to look like aged planks. For "Steel" floors, a base coat of primer gray, brown or just flat black will often work. Again, this load is going to cover most of the floor, so there is not much point spending a good deal of time on detail. If you are installing a smaller load you may want to add some rivets, patches, weathering, etc.



Before we can build a tarped load, we need something to cover. Nothing that we do here will be seen in the final model, so there is no point spending a lot of money or time on the loads themselves. You can also detail one a little more and partially expose the load for a neat effect. Our goal now is a distinctive shape and nothing more. You can use anything you want for this as long as it fits the car. A great load may be sitting in the trash can or that pile of clutter on your workbench right now. Scraps of wood, old sprues from modeling kits, a broken toy-whatever has a shape you like will work. Do try to avoid sharp edges that can poke through the tarps. I started with scraps of insulating foam left over from the scenic diorama project. I cut and glued small blocks of the foam together to make what might be three "machines." Although they won't be seen, I didn't want to chance the garish pink color of the foam bleeding through the tarps so I painted the loads quickly in flat black paint once the glue dried. Remember to use acrylic or latex paint on the foam!



All that's left is to add the tarps. Again, we're going to use cheap materials – plastic shopping bags. Like the tarps, these bags come in many colors so you should have no problem finding one that works well. If not, you can always paint the tarp. Just take care to position the bags so none of the printing is showing. If your bags look too thin, you can double it. Simply wrap the bag around the load, laying it across the top and pulling it down on all sides. A little white glue around the lower sides of the load will help everything stay put. Trim the excess tarp from the base. The ends can be tucked into the foam blocks for added security. With the tarp in place, cut off all the "excess baggage" just below the base of the load. Leave a little excess which can be tucked up under the load and secure or simply laid on the floor of the car. A bead of white glue around the bottom edge will secure everything.

Simple black thread makes an easy and effective tie down for the tarps. Lastly, we need to secure the tarps with rope. You can use thread, twine or string. Start on the bottom of the load and rap your line around as many times as necessary to achieve the desired look. End the tie down on the bottom as well and secure both ends with glue. With two examples, I used several old Lionel pallets included in a train set several years ago and glued the tie downs inside the bottom of the pallets making it heavier.

You can now glue the loads onto the false floor. For final details, consider some extra wood blocking on the car deck to prevent the load from shifting, a little weathering, and perhaps a shipping label or two on the tarps.

## In Memoriam

Long time Western Division member Lowell Jeans (77-12044) passed away on January 5, 2013. Lowell was born and raised in San Pedro. He spent many years working as a supervisor for the City of Los Angeles. Our sincerest condolences to his family.