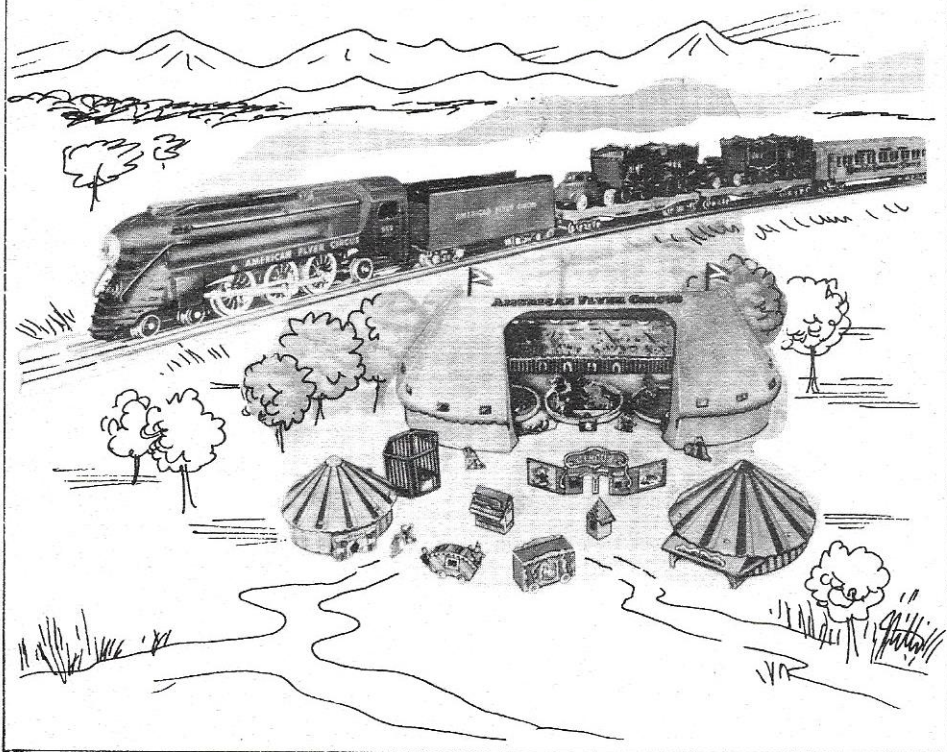


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Southern Division

BULLETIN

American Flyer CIRCUS TRAIN!?



Sept. 1963

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Western Division

September 1963
Southern Calif Chapter
Train Collectors Assoc.

President - Wes Frye
Vice Pres - Al Shadler

Sect.- R. Wheeler
Publicity - G. Nesbitt

Gordon Nesbitt - Editor

--- President's Report ---

Nine years ago this coming September about a dozen men assembled at the home of Dick Wheeler and organized the Western Division, thereby becoming charter members of the Train Collectors Association. Out of this small group there has emerged to date seven National officers- two presidents, one vice president, and four directors. In addition to this, six of these men have served as divisional presidents and three as divisional secretaries. Under this able leadership the Western Division has grown and prospered.

Over the years many problems have arisen and been resolved, however now, due to our large membership we face a serious situation. Up to the present time our monthly meetings have been held for the most part in the members' homes but of late most of these homes are proving inadequate to handle the large crowds. Consequently, drastic steps must be taken and we have at least two alternatives. A large hall or meeting place can be rented, or, the Division can be separated into several chapters. There are disadvantages in either plan. A central meeting hall means no personal collection to study and admire as well as an added cost to each member. If we have two or three groups meeting separately, rivalry could develop to a point that would spoil the unity of the Western Division and ultimately spell its downfall.

So - we are asking for ideas. Please write us a letter setting forth your thoughts on the subject and for the best letter we will offer a worthwhile prize for your collection. Our Board of Directors will do the judging and this will automatically eliminate each member of the Board from competition. All letters are to become the property of the Western Division and may be printed in the Bulletin.

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The contest is open to members of other divisions as well as our own and will close October 31, 1963. Address all mail to Gordon Nesbitt, Editor, 3006 Maxson Road, El Monte, California.

Wes Frye

The next club meeting will be Sept. 6, 1963 and will be held at Gerry Brown's. This will no doubt be a most interesting meeting in as much as Jerry and his son Dick operate their trains on an outdoor layout.

Our October meeting will be at Ward Kimball's in San Gabriel. This is where we ride the rails of the narrow gage Grizzly Flats RR.

There is a nice and interesting publication that some of you perhaps don't know about coming from Munhall, Penna. called the TINPLATE REVIEW. The editor is Allen Short 3564 Wayne Rd. \$2 for 7 issues Try it.

It is most interesting to read the publication "The Midwest TCAer" from the boys in and around the Chicago area. Notice they have crowds of 40 or more at their meetings. How do they do it? Meeting halls or private homes? Some of us seem to think the Western div. has problems along these lines. Who are the ones that don't enjoy our meetings because they are so crowded that they cannot breathe? Speak up, and bring your answer to the attention of us all during the meeting.

OPERATING GROUF PROGRESS REPORT

by Jerry Brown

One aspect of collecting tinsplate trains that is often discussed but seldom put into practice is the actual operation of the collection items. Various reasons are put forth, such as, not wanting to risk damaging a mint condition item, or a set of cars in fair condition but the loco is not in operating condition, etc. However, there are usually loco's and cars in the collectors possession that he would have no qualms about running if he had the layout to do so.

Permanent operating layouts seem to be few and far between. When we do get the urge to operate, it is usually quite a project to set up the track, connect wires, etc. to get it functioning and then comes the tear down operation when the wife has "had it". All in all it is not always a satisfying experience. Especially when that AF steam engine keeps jumping off the track going thru a Lionel switch or a Lionel engine third rail collector drops down into the AF switch.

During various times in 1962, Fauly, Shadler, Wheeler, Geo Smith, Nelson, Frye, Harris, Nesbitt, Applegate, Kurten and other members, and myself discussed the possibility of establishing a permanent layout for TCA members to operate at their convenience. Ambition, desire, and equipment to operate were present but space and location were major stumbling blocks. The idea of renting space was dismissed as the cost would be prohibitive. A permanent meeting place for our expanding membership would provide the space for an operating layout but again agreement as to location, together with the cost of renting space, stagnated this idea.

To get the show on the road the interested members gathered at Geo Smith's on Jan. 18, 1963 for an evening of operation and discussion as to further plans. George devoted many hours

before the meeting setting up the dual track and taking measures to assure faultless operation. The March Bulletin described this event. His curved track utilized 072 curved rail on standard gage ties and pretty well decided us on the radius of curves we desired.

George had available an ex-chicken house that could be renovated and fixed up with some effort, however, it seemed that various city regulations made it a doubtful enterprise and was shelved. Bill Jeffery offered the second floor space of his 4 car garage for the layout. The garage is built in the architectural style of a Dutch barn. The hitch to this was the lack of a second floor; he had never gotten around to putting it in. His offer of providing materials, space and operating power at no charge if we provided the labor to install the floor and layout was picked up by the members. Ralph Pauly was selected to chairman the operating group and keep things rolling. A work party was scheduled for Feb. 2nd, the die was cast, we were on our way to a floor raising party at Jeffery's barn.

The initial work party consisted of Shadler (the only carpenter in the bunch), Jeffery, Pauly, Bemis, Dick Brown & myself. By the end of the afternoon under Shadler's experienced direction & example, we had all the beams and joists into place and felt a real sense of accomplishment. During the intervening time until our next work party, Jeffery was to finalize the work we had accomplished, secure the permanent floor supporting columns and obtain the plywood flooring. In the meanwhile we were to think about the shape of the layout, how extensive it was to be, "0" gage as well as standard gage, track to be utilized, etc.

to be continued ---

A.F. CIRCUS TRAIN

by

Leroy Lowden

One of the least known, but one of the most interesting of the Postwar American Flyer "S" guage two rail train sets was first offered for sale in the early 1950's. This colorful Circus train consisted of the No. 353 Streamlined Die-cast Torpedo Locomotive with metal tender, with the reverse unit located in the locomotive boiler. It was enameled brilliant Circus Red with yellow lettering (American Flyer Circus) on the sides of the locomotive and also on the tender. The 353 did not have smoke, choo-choo or pullmore power. The companion cars consisted of two No. 643 Circus Flat cars of Die-cast chassis enameled yellow with red lettering on each side. Each flat car carried a plastic tractor and two plastic animal cage wagons in red, blue and green. Each cage had a miniture animal inside. The wagons could be unloaded from the flat cars and used in parades etc. The last car making up the train was a No. 649 Circus Pullman. This was a regular New Haven type coach enameled bright yellow with the words (Worlds Greatest Show) in circus red below the windows. The complete train measured 3ft. 11 1/2 in. when assembled. A 27 piece cardboard Circus set, consisting of a main tent, side show tents, animal cages, main portal, ticket booth, Calliope, Hot dog stand, Circus wagons, Clowns, Trainers, Three rings, Spectators, and packet of tickets was included. To sum it up, you got everything to put on a great show. This set was sold only in 1950 & 1951, although the No. 643 Circus flat car was available until 1954. This was a variation, however, as the 1953 & 54 models were of plastic instead of Die Castings. There are very few of these sets found today, and the collector who has one in his collection is considered very fortunate.

One of our most recent new members has had some experience in collecting tinsplate trains that not many of us have had, in that a great percentage of these trains have been obtained by trading with fellows across the country, rather than locally. Also unique with this new member is that these trains he finds are made available to our chapter members, something here-to-fore seldom done within our local chapter. This member is Ed Warner, and we can expect to hear from him on the above subject in the near future.

Our meeting in July was held at Bill Harris's due to the last minute rush workload by Al Shadler who was to have had the meeting, we took advantage of Bill's generosity, (Oh: the joys of being a bachelor)

In August we went to Ralph Schissler's. This meeting, as usual at Ralphs, was enjoyed by everyone, since his collection is most outstanding. We are still amazed how it keeps growing with all the new pieces he has added since we met there the last time. The building, (garage) is literally bulging at the seams. There was a good turnout with 44 members and guests. The auction netted over \$230 over and above the trading and selling that took place before the meeting began. It was good to have Abie Clark with us from Visalia. He brought with him quite a load of trains, and he went home with a few different ones. Come again Abie, we especially enjoy having out of town members.

-- TRADING POST --

Ralph Pauly has a nice 700E with Lobough drive wheels , and minus a tender that he wants to sell or trade. He would like to have a set of AF Lone Scout coaches.

Gordon Nesbitt needs a motor for a Lionel #10. would also like to have a junk #9E Has a Lionel 746 and a green 10 set for trading.

Wes Frye desperately needs a Lionel combine coach #181 in maroon that is in good condition.

Roy Lowden is looking for some coaches to go with his recently acquired gray 392. Could be either 424, 425 & 426 or 309, 310 & 312.

Ray Nelson needs a few things,-- a lead truck for a 384 loco. any litho AF std. gage coaches, Junker AF #4019. A roof for a AF "O" gage caboose #1111, and last but not least, a MARX Hocking Valley gondola 3/16 scale.

Jim Kurten wants to swap a mint condition 400E Blue Comet set for a President Special

Bill Davis wants pre-war Lionel box cars, either scale or tinplate trucks & couplers.
