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President's Message



Winterfest 2006

Well, its right around the corner, WINTERFEST 2006. I hope that everyone will have fun this year, for those who do not have fun. The beatings will commence, until you are having fun! There are a few changes this year. We will have to pay for parking. But, the fun will be worth it. I hope everyone will enter there best work into the contests. The competition should be great. Please read the welcome letter that Bob Pawlak has written and volunteer to help out with the layout.

The one thing that I have noticed in the last few years is that the manufacturers are starting to listen to us. Back in 1994 Life Like turned the company around 180 degrees and started making better looking and running engines. Now it seems like all the companies are getting on the band wagon. But there are still locomotives that are not yet produced in N scale. And when there is a new locomotive, too many companies are making them. Life Like and Kato made PA's and E-8's, Con Cor and Atlas have the MP-15's. I would like to see one company make a superior locomotive (not in BRASS) at a reasonable price.

At the banquet we should let the manufactures know how

we feel about there new items coming out. Hey if we don't let them know what we want, how will they know what will sell. Bachmann has gotten on the bandwagon with the ACELA in N-scale finally. The cars are pricy, but they look great. They are DCC equipped and will run on DC. Atlas has retooled the RS-11's to be DCC ready, but what about the GP-7's and 9's? Life like has to start making there locomotives DCC ready. If manufacturers made there locomotive DCC ready it would make conversion over to DCC easier. Digitrax and NCE make drop in boards. So at Winterfest, ask the manufacturers questions. it's the only way they can know what we want.



LIVINGSTON, MT RAILYARD Photos & as told by Jeff Pawling

A few years ago, while my family was visiting in Montana, we went to the town of Livingston to see the trains there. I took these pictures with a use-once camera at the edge of the railyard. I looked left and right - there were 15 or 20 locomotives lined up, some in Montana Rail Link blue, others were orange or red. One photo shows a railroad name blanked out and "MRL" painted on. Other engines were marked the same way. We looked up Livingston on a RR Atlas. The RR was Northern Pacific before it became Rail Link. There is a general office, a turning facility, and the yard. There is also a rebuild center there which may explain why those engines were there. If anyone has more information, please let me know.



Show Schedule for 2005 – 2006

January 27 to 29 WINTERFEST 2006 Big "E" Exposition Center,
W.Springfield, MA
Set-up Fri noon to 5pm and Sat 7am
Show Sat & Sun 10am to 5pm
Coordinator: John Dunne - 508-697-7635

February 18 & 19 Museum of Our National Heritage, Lexington, MA
Set-up Sat 8am Show 10am to 5pm
Sun noon to 5pm
Coordinator: Bob Pawlak - 781-862-2485

February 26 Mystic Valley Show, Christina's Function Facility, Rte 1,
Foxboro, MA
Set-up 8am Show 10am to 4pm
Coordinator: Ron Wood - 603-889-0741

April 1 & 2 Greenberg Show, Shriners Auditorium, Wilmington, MA
Set up Sat 7:30AM Show Sat 10AM to 4PM
Sun 10PM to 4PM
Coordinator: Dan Pawling - 617-244-5261

April 23 Hooksett Lyons Club, Hooksett Memorial School, Hooksett, NH
Set-up 8am Show 10am to 4pm
Coordinator: ?????

May 11 Children's Hospital, 300 Longwood Dr, Boston, MA
Set-up 7am Show 9am to 3pm
Coordinator: Bob Pawlak - 781-862-2485

Model Train Repairs **by John Consigli**

It began with the expression; Friends do not let Friends buy Bachmann. I would have to say, this is no longer the case. Once we damaged our N scale 0-4-0 Dock Switcher; it was apparent that the drive wheels had lost their quartering or synchronization. The locomotive had turned itself into a paperweight. Upon reviewing the instructions accompanying this loco, they stated for service and repair contact Bachmann. I was instructed to place a check for \$10 into the box along with the locomotive and it would be repaired since it was no longer under warranty.

It wasn't long after I sent it out, that I received a personal phone call from a very nice customer service representative at Bachmann Industries. She informed me that the locomotive was no longer in production and that since it could not be repaired, offered us one of several locomotives as a replacement. I had just finished reading reviews on the Bachmann Spectrum high quality locomotive line introduced by the company. The Bachmann Spectrum 2-8-0 Consolidation had won numerous design awards. I cautiously asked if she would consider sending me that locomotive as a replacement. After checking with her manager, she said that if I sent in an additional \$10., they would be more than happy to do so. It may have cost me \$20, but the high quality Spectrum locomotive that I received as a replacement was well worth it. Bachmann's Customer Service Department went well beyond what was expected to make a customer happy.

A similar experience was had with KATO USA. The front coupler was not functioning on our F3A N scale locomotive. Since the engine was still new, I contacted KATO Customer Service for repair. I was instructed to ship it back insured, which I did. Several weeks passed by. I phoned KATO to see how they were making out and if my locomotive would take a while. To my surprise, the locomotive arrived about five weeks later to my address with the repair ticket stating the locomotive had been repaired. Upon taking it out of the box, it was obvious that the front coupler was still not functioning. I immediately phoned up Kato USA to find out why the locomotive had not been fixed. In fact, as I was talking to Kato Service on the phone, I spotted part of the coupler piece in the box. The Service Rep was very apologetic and claimed he was having trouble with the coupler but sent it back to me anyway. He said, if I didn't mind, mail it back again with insurance and he would take care of it right away.

At the end of two months since this problem started, I contacted Kato by phone and they said they did receive the locomotive and that it would take some time. Several more weeks went by and I phoned them a couple of more times, only to be told the same thing. All along the Service Department was very polite and said these things take time. By the end of the third month since having this problem, I finally received the F3A from Kato. My initial reaction was that even though I mailed this unit back twice and had spent money on numerous phone calls, I was happy they fixed it and all was forgotten, or so I thought.

To my dismay, upon taking the engine out of the box, the coupler was still broken and the piece was floating in the box again. My first reaction was to forget the whole thing and look into a Kadee coupler replacement. After a few days, I thought that I

should at least email them to see why this engine was having such a problem with the front coupler falling apart in shipping.

After about one week, I received a very nice phone call from a Service Technician. He explained that he didn't know why I was having this problem. He said that he was mailing a new F3A to me immediately and upon receipt, I should package up the defective locomotive and he would arrange to have it picked up at Kato's expense. It took over three months, but Kato USA resolved the issue in a satisfactory manner to make this customer happy.

Kato produces some of the best high quality locomotives and since their service Department is willing to go well beyond servicing their products, I will continue to purchase their products and would recommend others do so as well.

One of my best repair stories was in having my 1656 0-4-0 1948 Lionel Switcher serviced by David Laughridge, other wise know as Doctor Tinker. David is a former Lionel Product/Design engineer whom now specializes in the repair of both old and new Lionel products.

My 1656 had a warped frame and was not functioning all that well. Even though the condition of the locomotive and tender was near mint, the frame had twisted with time. As Doctor Tinker inspected the locomotive, he immediately realized what the problem was. David has a large inventory of original as well as reproduction hard to find Lionel Parts, which he markets to the public, both on the Internet and at train shows. He has also written several Lionel repair books for the do-it yourselfer.

He told me he could rebuild my engine using an original frame and all my original parts. Since this engine was old and somewhat rare and being in such nice condition, I trusted Dave with the repair. Less than one month later, the engine arrived at my house, well packaged and ready to run. David had done a fine job. He also saved this fine engine from the display shelf as it is now in good working order.

To those of you that have any Lionel Products, especially those that you have been saving since your youth, Doctor Tinker is the one person that will do a spectacular job in getting them running again. He is located in Lexington, MA although he can be found at many model train shows.

He is a trusted name in the repair of Lionel Trains.

Have fun and keep those model trains running.

Our Condolence to Ernie Poole who lost his father, Erine Poole, Sr. over the Holidays. He was a modeler and a big circus fan as well. Our thoughts and prayers are with Ernie and his family.