



# GRAND CANYON MODEL RAILROADERS

## MAIN LINE

**JANUARY, 2012**

**Volume 21 Number 1**

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### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

by John Draftz

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a great holiday time. We ended 2011 busy and will begin 2012 busy.

First, let me state a philosophy I have when it comes to our hobby. Our hobby is supposed to be fun and not a drag or burden. I never expect anyone to “sell their soul” to a club whether as a leader or regular member but I do expect each member to help the club as they are able. The GCMR has and will have many opportunities for members to be involved. As 2012 evolves, I ask that each member simply look at what we’re doing or planning to do and ask him or herself, “How can I help?” Helping may be as simple as making a few phone calls.

Our first meeting of 2012 will be Saturday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, at Our Savior’s Lutheran Church where we’ve been meeting. Doors open at 9 (or before) with the meeting beginning at 10. We have a number of issues to discuss and vote on so I would encourage each member to set aside time to be there. This is also the meeting where members are invited to bring whatever “toy” they got in their stocking (or where ever it appeared) and show it to the club.

February’s meeting is replaced by our annual swap meet (February 25<sup>th</sup>). And while John Pryor is coordinating the meet, he isn’t expected to do

everything by himself. There are numerous tasks to be done before, during, and after the meet that require the membership’s support and involvement. These details will be presented the 28<sup>th</sup>.

Last fall we initiated a program of running trains on the mobile layout at the Sahuaro Central Museum at Adobe on the first and third Sunday afternoons. The display has been well received and has generated donations. If we continue to display (and I hope we do), we’ll need members willing to staff the layout and answer questions. Besides whatever money we get, it’s an excellent opportunity to invite members of the general public to join the GCMR. An increase in our membership, especially younger people, is what we need to grow.

In our earlier incarnation, we were an operating society. We have a mobile layout, a set of S-gauge modules, a set of O-gauge modules, and a kid’s layout thus our focus is still operating. I ask each member to reflect on that and present suggestions on what else we might do to further the operation of toy trains.

In closing, a little thumbnail of me might be appropriate. I grew up a stone’s throw from the Detroit, Toledo & Ironton RR in southeast Michigan where they were still running steam engines. According to my mother’s entry in my baby book, my first words were “choo choo” so my love of

trains comes somewhat naturally. My first electric train was an American Flyer standard gauge passenger train. Later a Lionel O-27 freight set was added. That gave way temporarily to an HO set. After moving to Phoenix, an American Flyer S-gauge was added along with an N-gauge and Z-gauge set. While all that was going on, I became involved in 7½" gauge and 14½" gauge trains. In simple terms, trains are a major part of my life but not the only part. I'm semi-retired and teach math courses at two local colleges. I'm looking forward to working with each of you during 2012.

## CALENDAR

*GCMR meets are held at 9:00am in the Parish Hall of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church at 1212 E Glendale Avenue in Phoenix, located on the north side of Glendale, just east of the traffic light at 12th St. It is easily reached off the Glendale Exit of either I-17 or SR 51. Go east from I-17 or west from SR 51 to 12th Street.*

**January 28** - GCMR meeting - Our Saviour's Lutheran Church

**February 25** - GCMR Mid Winter Swap Meet - Phoenix National Guard Armory

**March 24** - GCMR meeting - Our Saviour's Lutheran Church

## OTHER TRAIN EVENTS

**March 2-4** - Spring Nor Cal meet - Santa Clara Convention Center. Info: [www.norcaltca.com](http://www.norcaltca.com)

## NEIL YOUNG

*Following is a fascinating post by Earl Gurcan on the O Gauge chat line concerning a brief story by Neil Young on his involvement with Lionel - Ed*

What I thought was most interesting was that Neil stated that he still was a minority owner of Lionel. Ever since Lionel emerged from Chapter 11 bankruptcy in May 2008, there has been speculation, but no definitive information, that Neil no longer owned part of the company (he was a 20% owner before they filed for bankruptcy in November 2004 - following the jury verdict in favor of MTH in June 2004). I also liked that fact that he agreed with me that competition between MTH and Lionel was good for the hobby and that MTH is the present day American Flyer.

Rather than attempt to summarize all of Neil's statements, I have posted them in their entirety below. Hope you enjoy it.

November 28, 2011 - I started in 1976. I had a Marx set in the fifties that my dad set up for me in my bedroom. One day I was buying Christmas presents and I saw an old Lionel set. I bought it. I set up a layout in my house that I shared with my son Zeke. I started collecting everything postwar and got a huge collection going. I was the proud owner of a 773 and a 5344 700E Hudson! Then I got all the postwar F3's that had porthole windows. I drew the line there. Didn't want the ones without windows. Got the 2333 versions too.

In '82 I married and we had a wonderful son with CP. He was a quadriplegic. When he was in a bassinet I took him to a building I was using for my new train layout. I called it the train barn. I would put him on the train table and built the layout all around him. When he got old enough to run the trains, we devised a switch for him to turn the power on and off and trigger the E unit. He would use a button on his chair to start and stop the trains. We then added a "holding voltage" to keep the trains from cycling into neutral and reverse when he hit is switch. That way, he just stopped them and started them and the action was smooth. Ben would be stationed at a big reversing loop which he controlled

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with his switch. Three separate lines fed into this common reversing loop, so Ben would have the ability to control each of three new trains as it arrived, providing him with more variety.

That was a lot of fun. In the early nineties I read about a company, QSI, that had a control system for 3 rail trains. I reached out to them and worked with them for a while, and they made a great electronic E unit that made it possible to select a specific engine to run, while the others were not active. Ben used this system on the layout, adding even more possibilities.

I met Richard Kughn who owned Lionel at the time, and we started a company, Liontech. We developed Railsounds working with a northern California company RDL. Then we developed TMCC, working with another Northern California company, ADL in Grass Valley. TMCC and Railsounds added a lot to Ben's train experience, with the great sounds of real trains and the ability to control them through his switch. A port in the top of Cab 1 was used to plug in his switch and allow him to perform all the TMCC commands.

When Richard Kughn, a real train lover and wonderful friend, sold the company, I used my share of Liontech to become an owner of Lionel. Several CEOs came and went under the new ownership, some more interested in technology than others. Dick Maddox was the most helpful of these, bringing lower speed operation to Lionel through gearing down locomotives. TMCC was dormant for a few years with no new features.

Finally, Jerry Calabrese became the CEO the company was looking for. He was aware of technology as a way forward. Working with Lou Kovach and new company we formed together, CTT, we developed Legacy Command Control for Lionel. Lou's genius and love of trains was very important to getting us to the next level, speed control and greatly enhanced control of sound. Many revolutionary control features are built into the Legacy system and the biggest one is still unopened.

Dr ZW, Jon Zahornacky, heads up the Lionel tech team now, and work has been progressing on this new feature for three years. We have a prototype that works well but is still not able to be

manufactured, due to its complex nature, but we are getting there. In the end, there will be a simple and elegant solution. That is the way of development. Then electric trains will enter a new dimension.

Today is Ben's 33rd birthday. He is having breakfast with his new USRA Yard Goat sitting on the table in front of him. His home layout in his room is still TMCC but will be upgraded to Legacy this Christmas when the new Legacy system arrives at the hobby shop.

MTH and Mike Wolf have been great competitors and a wonderful addition to the hobby. Mike's dedication is well known and appreciated by serious hobbyists. Lionel has benefited from the competition. Mike is the new American Flyer.

I am still a minority owner of Lionel and very interested in the further development of Legacy Command. As a train enthusiast for almost 50 years now, I give the company a lot of input so you can rest assured that there is a constant representation of your operator/collector interests. Jerry Calabrese is a creative visionary and an excellent partner to work with, shepherding Lionel through these tough economic times. The future looks bright to me.

Enjoy your trains: ny

## **GCMR AT ADOBE MOUNTAIN**

By Wayne Ross

Sunday morning, November 6, 2011, 11 A.M. found Jim Begero, Bill Lazenby and yours truly at the Sahuaro Central manning the trailer layout. After some problems setting up the layout (thanks George, for helping out while on your way to the Cardinal's game) we had trains running on all but the S Gauge track.

Next door is the RR Museum; it contains a lot of railroad items. In back of our trailer location is a building what has real nice operating G Gauge layout.





The staff was helpful and seemed to appreciate our being here. There was a good turnout considering it was a bit chilly when the sun was behind the clouds. We had lots for compliments from the visitors, both young and old.

The day went by very quickly and a good time was had by all. I encourage all GCMR members to sign up and man our trailer on a Sunday. It's well worth the trip. Contact John Draftz to sign up.



Lots of ways to have fun



## CAL STEWART

by Peter Atonna

The GCMR team was in all their glory again at this past fall's Cal Stewart meet in Pasadena. The gang arrived with the trailer and drew a crowd both days of the meet. As Dave Brown noted, "Our display drew the kids as it was the only one low enough they could actually see!" Here are a few shots of it and a couple of the others at the show.







## THE SELIGMAN AND PAULDEN GOES TRANSCONTINENTAL

by Peter Atonna

I thought I would give you a peek at some big changes here in Paulden. But as usual, there is a story behind them.

Last summer TW Trainworks had an ad for a new station they were offering, a model of Chicago Union Station. These are the folks who do the Lionel displays and custom layouts. They also made the Grand Central Terminal that they offered through Lionel a couple of years ago.

These are not cheap offerings, and although I thought it was a really great “big city” looking station, I was able to pass on their pre-release price offering. Then a month later, they did the offer again. This time it was too tough to pass up, so I showed the picture to Mary Jane. She said “not bad” which from her concerning a train item is high praise! So, I ordered one, mine being #14 out of a 250 production run. It soon arrived, but as all train items arriving at the Atonna household in the fall, they become Christmas/Peter’s Birthday presents. So, it disappeared till Christmas.

In the meantime, I had to decide what to do with this 30” by 18” monster. Fortunately, when given a design challenge on the layout, my mind enjoys coming up with ideas and this one involved finding a home for my Lionel NYC subway and the new station. Make a downtown Chicago scene, complete with a subway.



The theme display was American Flyer Standard Gauge



Fortunately I am quite familiar with the real station as we have done many Amtrak layovers there. It is at street level with the trains below, lying adjacent to the Chicago River. So, my idea was to construct a three level addition - the bottom being the subway, next the train platforms and the upper the street scene with the station and other “city” type buildings.

Where to locate this idea? The only place found was to tear out the small 8 x 8 foot postwar section you saw when entering the basement. So out went the track, accessories and wiring. I now have four tiers there with the street being at eye level so you actually have to look up, rather than down, at the buildings.

There is a long way to go, but I was able to get all the levels done and the station in place in time for an open house we Paulden/Chino Valley fellows hosted for our local Prescott area train club last weekend.

Here are two photos of where I am now, and hopefully they are a teaser for when you come north in August on the Beat the Heat bus trip.



## SAHUARO CENTRAL PROPOSAL

by John Draftz

At the October meeting, the BoD was to address the issue of Sahuaro Central (SC) membership and make a proposal to our membership for a vote at the January meeting. The Board met on Saturday, the 7<sup>th</sup> and adopted the following proposal:

Sahuaro Central is an umbrella organization for train organizations located at the Adobe Dam Recreation Area located on the SW corner of 43<sup>rd</sup> Av & Pinnacle Peak Roads in Phoenix. At present, it doesn't have an organization whose focus is tinplate (toy) trains. We have been asked to consider joining SC thus having a presence at Adobe. The GCMR currently displays our mobile layout the first and third Sunday afternoons for visitors to the railroad museum.

After considering the various aspects of SC membership, the BoD recommends:

1. That the GCMR join SC effective this year.
2. That the \$10 per member per year assessment to SC be paid as follows.
  - a. For 2012, the GCMR will pay the \$10 assessment for all our members.
  - b. For 2013, the \$10 assessment will be split 50-50 between our membership and the GCMR
  - c. At the end of 2013, the issue will be re-evaluated
3. That the \$40 per year dues to become an individual member in SC be left to each GCMR member, i.e. individual membership in SC is optional.

This recommendation will be presented to the membership at the January 28<sup>th</sup> meeting. To be better prepared to decide on this matter, members and families/friends are encouraged to visit the Adobe area on a Sunday afternoon to get firsthand knowledge of what the various train activities are at Adobe and to take a free ride offered by the live steamers. Some of the steamer rides include a brief stop at the museum where our mobile layout is located.



ONE OF ARIZONA'S LARGEST

# MODEL RAILROAD SWAP MEET AND SHOW

## THE ARMORY MEET



(Mid-Winter Train Swap and Show)

**SATURDAY, FEB. 25th, 2012**

**9 AM TO 3 PM**

**AZ ARMY NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY**

**1335 N 52nd Street Phoenix AZ 85008**

(Next to Papago Park)

Aggressive promotion, all scales, great location, how-to demonstrations, trains running all day, train races, train demolition, food services, raffles, free parking



To reserve your space, submit this form by February 1, 2012  
(Please print legibly)

Name	1 <sup>st</sup> table at \$25.00 <b>\$25.00</b>
Address	Additional tables at <b>\$20.00</b> each: _____
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Buying, selling, ethics and behavior. In case of dispute, the Meet Chairperson and/or impartial referee appointed by the Meet Chairperson shall arbitrate the dispute and render a timely decision and I hereby agree to be bound by such decision.	<b>Total</b> _____
Signature _____ Date _____	For official use only Date received: _____
Make checks payable to: "Grand Canyon Model Railroaders" Mail to: John Pryor, 102 N Sierra Circle, Casa Grande, AZ 85222 Information: John Pryor 602-799-8570, Glenn Saber 602-956-6695	Check: _____ Amount: _____

Security personnel are scheduled to unlock the hall for set-up at 6:00 AM  
However their prompt arrival cannot be guaranteed

## **THE MAIN LINE**

**Peter Atonna, Editor**

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**Rod Johnson shot the Cal Stewart gang, all loaded up and ready to hit the road to Pasadena**