



# GRAND CANYON MODEL RAILROADERS

## MAIN LINE

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### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by John Draftz

Winter Cactus was a sellout with a waiting list and went well although some numbers were lower than we'd like. The newest train ride raffle prizes seemed well received. Glenn has more details in this issue and at this month's meeting.

The Saturday after the meet, we had the mobile layout on display at the Arizona Railway Museum in Chandler. Although the event was well attended, the unscheduled weather made for a muddy environment. On behalf of the GCMR, thanks to all our members who were there running trains.

The mobile layout is approaching its "annual maintenance time" where we adjust and tweek as needed. We'll probably be able to use the MLS patio for a Saturday morning work party, but I have not yet made contact with the MLS to ensure it's OK. More details next month.

The annual P&P/GCMR/TCA picnic will be at the McCormick RR Park March 30th, thus this may be the only forewarning I can give you. We'll get you details as we know them.

The March meeting theme is A Favorite Holiday Car (you pick the holiday). As a reminder, March has five Saturdays thus our meeting will be the 23rd. Bring a train to run. It doesn't have to be rare or exotic.

See you the 23rd.

### 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.

**March 16** - Phoenix - Adobe Mountain Model Train Show All gauges. Adobe Mountain Railroad Park 22822 N. 43rd Ave

**March 23** - GCMR meet - Our Saviour's Lutheran Church Theme: A Favorite Holiday Car (you pick the holiday)

**March 30** - P&P/GCMR/TCA picnic – McCormick RR Park, Scottsdale

– Stillman Ramada lunch and festivities 11am -1pm

**April 5,6** - Gadsden Pacific Train Show - Tucson  
Info: <http://www.gpdtoytrainmuseum.com/trainmeets.htm>

**April 20** - Paradise Valley United Methodist Church– Easter Saturday, P&P use mobile

**April 27** - GCMR meet - Our Saviour's Lutheran Church Spring mini swap meet & regular meeting

**May 25** - GCMR meet - Our Saviour's Lutheran Church - Memorial Day - Space/Military trains/hardware

### UPDATE FROM JOHN

I had not planned on spending Valentine's Day evening in the ER and several days later having quadruple by-pass surgery (the medical people call it CABG - coronary artery bypass graft). No matter what you call it, I don't recommend it if possible. Would rather have been at Winter

Cactus. One could argue that this could be thought of as a way of getting things "off your chest".

I'm home starting the recovery process. It will take time and limit what I can do which means I'll probably be asking you - the members = to help out as needed. My thanks to those who "stepped up" at Winter Cactus in my absence.

## **CACTUS MEET REPORT**

by Glenn Saber

A great round of applause for all the GCMR members that aided in the successful running of our Club's 2019 Cactus Winter Swap Meet at the North Phoenix Baptist Church on Saturday, February 16th. As many of you know by now, our Club president and swap meet co-chairperson, John Draftz, had a major heart attack on the Thursday night just prior to the meet, obviously was not able to attend and had corrective surgery on the following Monday, February 18th. All our prayers are for his speedy recovery.

This Cactus swap was a complete sell-out and our second most profitable Cactus swap on record with a net clear profit of \$3,840.39, only bested by the 2017 winter swap that netted \$4,507.19. In comparison, the 2018 winter swap netted \$3,655.55. Fantastic.

Raffle ticket sales were not overwhelming, grossing only \$357.00 even though hosting six excursion train rides and, in many's opinion, the best group of prizes ever offered. The End-O-Swap auction was not well participated netting only \$2.70 for the club. We will give this auction one last gasp at the upcoming summer swap in July with a few new twists thrown in. If still not a performer, it will be axed.

Operating train layouts will no longer be featured at our swaps nor included in any advertising; as the Cactus meets seem no longer to cater to families or children. It is a well-done, no-holds-barred train swap and draws only enthusiasts wanting to buy and sell. But the door saw two children under the age of 12 and scant few in their 20's. We fielded zero

request or questions regarding an operating layout, however, many buyers used the test track with one wanting to know if it supports DCC, which it does not.

Member participation is still a MAJOR problem. A club hosting 48 members is another reason not to bring any train layout. Nobody is available to operate it! Several of your Club members worked the entire event without reprieve, including your's truly, manning the admissions door solid from 5:45 AM vendor check-in through to the 2:00 PM close of auction.

A special thanks is extended to non-member Larry Messing who was at my side through the entire vendor check-in, then doing multiple tasks until 1:00 PM.

At the close of the swap, I asked many vendors how it went. All stated it was an excellent event and two vendors said they sold-out and cleared their tables! Once again, much was learned and some new ideas will be implemented at the summer swap that should make these, already popular, Cactus swaps the best ever.

## **SNOW IN THE SIERRAS**

by Peter Atonna

Many of us in Arizona have been enjoying (?) a rare wet and snowy winter. It will be great for the spring water supplies and to reduce the impact of the drought. But, it is in California that the impacts have really been felt. Both the freeways and rail lines over Donner Pass in the Sierras have been closed off and on all this season. Amtrak has had to either cancel the California Zephyr or begin its trip east from Reno, NV.

But for railfans, this means a golden opportunity to get shots of a rare occurrence of the UP which is operating its rotary snowplow to try to keep the tracks open. Here is a shot of it in operation this last week taken by Boiling Man and posted on TrainOrders.



So, I figured I also had better get busy clearing the snow from the line through the mountains on then Seligman and Paulden lines. I got out my trusty Lionel snowplow, but unfortunately, it turns out that the warm temperatures had already melted the 18" of Paulden snow!



## DAVE BROWN'S ARIZONA RAILROAD MUSEUM TRAIN DAY PHOTOS





## CHEAP TRAINS

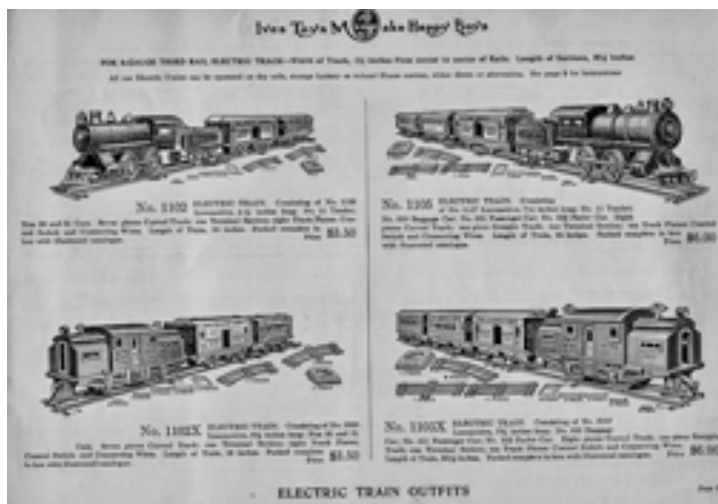
by Peter Atonna

Yes they were, but the manufacturers didn't label them that way. So how about "Starter Sets". That is much better! It implies that the purchaser will be planning to continue to buy more trains, cars and accessories. But yes, compared to the top of the line sets, they were "cheap".

How did manufacturers do this. Simply by cutting out extras, offering less cars, locos and cars without "features", and even cheaper to produce locos.

Why? From the beginning, toy manufacturers realized that the market for toys was very stratified. That is people of many different incomes may be interested in their toys. They could offer their finest products to those who could afford them, but others could afford only the most basic set. And they hoped, as these customers rose in income, the toys they bought became a part of their recreation time for life!

This marketing principle has been going on from the beginning. For example, my oldest train set, an Ives from 1916, turns out to be the cheapest electric train in the catalog (Ives was then still making many wind up trains that were even cheaper!)



My set is in the upper left corner and has fewer cars than two of the others and fewer pieces of

track. But the most fascinating thing was that the gearing on the driving wheels from the motor was only to one of the two driving wheels. The second just rotated when rolling down the track. Cost saving was in a separate set of gears to power the other driver wheels!

Moving on to Lionel, as you probably know, when Ives went bankrupt, Lionel and American Flyer bought out their production rights. So, Lionel (other than the Ives reverse unit, which it is told, was the real reason Lionel wanted the Ives patents), ran basic Ives sets in their catalog as their new "starter sets"



Here is the 1933 Lionel catalog with their starter sets- each is right out of the most recent Ives catalog, just renamed Lionel. But Lionel didn't want customers to think this was typical of



Lionel quality, so as you can see, in 1934, above, they are labeled "Lionel Jr" sets!

Moving on, by the next couple of years, the Lionel Jr. line had been relabeled, Lionel 027 - yes, that is the beginning of the 027 line! Here is the 1939 catalog with the starter sets. As you can see, the Ives cars are still there, but as Lionel had introduced die cast steam locos, their lowest cost ones now head the starter sets.



In 1948 it happened! A specially produced cheap set - Scout sets! Lionel had created a set significantly cheaper than the regular line. How did they do it? Here is how:

- + the first plastic body steam loco
  - + plastic side frames on trucks
  - + a new series of boxcars with molded in doors
    - no sliding doors
  - + a manual, not electric uncoupler and uncoupling "device".
  - + and a cheap (and very unreliable) motor without the three position reverse unit (forward and reverse, no neutral, meaning never any operating cars)
- To add variety you could buy the four car set for just a little more!

And that was the beginning of the postwar version of cheap trains. Every catalog since has had a series of starter sets, minus many features of the regular line - no smoke and plastic bodies in steamers, starter sets with diesels which are cheaper to make than steamers in any case. No headlight, no uncoupling track, etc. On the next page is an example from the 1957 catalog.

Following World War II, starter sets still were first in the catalog. The first year of full production was 1946 and the lowest cost sets were still there. However, at this time, Lionel did not have specially produced cars and engines for their starter sets. So, the first set you see is simply a postwar loco carryover made from a prewar engine, upgraded with the new trucks and couplers and with the same freight cars you will see later in sets.



Following that, I have a table of all the postwar starter sets so you can see what was offered and what features were deleted to keep the price down. It is interesting that Lionel seems to have had a maximum price of \$25 for the basic sets as every catalog had one or more sets in





that price range. I have also included a column showing the current price for each set, based on the CPI tables for each year.

Here are the footnotes on the table:

- (1) L means the loco had a headlight
- (2) S,D means steam vs. diesel
- (3) In the late '50s Lionel ran catalogs without set descriptions. Supposedly the dealers could put together whatever set the customer wanted. The prices shown are for the "suggested" sets
- (4) Op/Play means the number of operating and play value cars in the set. Play value means whether the car had a load that could be put in or taken out.
- (5) Manual uncoupler for Scout style trains

## CACTUS MEET PHOTOS

by Glenn Saber



Dinner at Denny's - workers (and a pair of visitors) enjoying a respite before the big day.



Tables ready to go and Terry is checking to see if Glenn has given him a winning ticket



Janet and Glenn working the front desk

Year	Price	Current Price (\$2019)	Set No.	Loco Type (2)	L(1)	Plastic/Metal	Cars	Op/Play Cars (4)	U/C track
1946	\$24.95	\$321.86	1401	S	X	M	3	0	X
1947	\$22.50	\$254.25	1431	S	X	M	3	0	X
1948	\$15.95	\$165.88	1111	S	X	P	3	0	(5)
1948	\$18.95	\$197.08	1112	S	X	P	4	0	(5)
1949	\$15.95	\$167.48	1115	S	X	M	3	0	(5)
1949	\$19.95	\$198.98	1117	S	X	M	4	0	(5)
1950	\$14.95	\$155.48	1113	S	X	M	3	0	(5)
1951	\$17.95	\$174.12	1119	S	X	M	3	0	(5)
1952	\$17.95	\$170.00	1119	S	X	M	3	0	(5)
1953	\$19.95	\$187.53	1520	S	X	M	3	0	X
1954	\$19.95	\$185.54	1500	S	X	M	3	0	X
1955 (3)	\$19.95	\$187.53	1525	D		P	3	0	X
1955 (3)	\$22.50	\$211.50	1001D	D		P	4	0	X
1956 (3)	\$19.95	\$185.54	1542	D		P	3	0	X
1956 (3)	\$25.00	\$232.50	1543	D		P	3	2	X
1957 (3)	\$25.00	\$222.50	1569	D		P	4	2	X
1958	\$25.00	\$217.50	1590	S		P	4	2	X
1959	\$19.95	\$171.57	1609	S	X	P	3	1	X
1960	\$19.95	\$169.58	1609	S	X	P	3	1	X
1961	\$25.00	\$210.00	1641	S	X	P	3	2	X
1961	\$29.95	\$251.58	1642	S	X	P	3	2	X
1962	\$19.95	\$165.59	11201	S	X	P	3	2	
1962	\$25.00	\$210.00	11212	D	X	P	3	2	X
1963	\$14.95	\$122.59	11311	S	X	P	3	1	
1963	\$16.95	\$138.99	11321	D		P	4	2	
1964	\$11.95	\$96.80	11420	S		P	2	0	
1964	\$14.95	\$121.10	11430	S	X	P	3	0	X
1964	\$17.95	\$145.40	11440	D		P	4	1	X
1965	\$20.00	\$160.00	11520	S	X	P	4	2	X
1965	\$25.00	\$200.00	11530	D	X	P	4	1	X
1966	\$22.50	\$173.25	11520	S	X	P	4	2	X
1966	\$25.00	\$192.50	11530	D	X	P	4	2	X
1969	(4)		11710	S		P	3	2	
1969	(4)		11720	D		P	4	2	

## **THE MAIN LINE**

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**Who says people are not interested in model and toy trains? Here is the great crowd at the 2019 Winter Cactus meet courtesy of a Glenn Saber photo**