



GRAND CANYON MODEL RAILROADERS

MAIN LINE

OCTOBER, 2023

Volume 32

Number 10

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by John Draftz

The Sahuaro Central swap meet is the 28th which is our normal meeting day. To avoid the conflict, we've moved the meeting date a week earlier to the 21st. Unfortunately, the Our Savior's hall isn't available that day thus we've moved the location to the **Church of the Master hall at 2340 W Cactus just off the I-17**. We've been there before. Same time – different place.

The October meeting is our pizza meeting. The theme is beverage cars (beer, wine, soda pop, etc) so dig into your collection and find a favorite beverage car. It's also our last club meeting of the year and thus our annual raffle drawing. Tickets are still available if you want in.

The meeting will feature the race track. The categories planned are: the fastest stock unit, the fastest modified unit, and the slowest. The winner in each category will get three white annual raffle tickets.

Our first ever Fall Cactus swap meet is history. In simple terms it was a success. We were 100% sold out with a waiting list. The farmer's market was going full force since it was harvest time thus there was some confusion in the unloading area but it all worked out. Our Cactus meets are a major source of club income and the meet raffle is usually a success. Visit our www.gcmrr.org web site for

READ THIS FIRST!

This month's meeting will be a week early, THIS Saturday, October 21st. Same time, different place

the 2024 Winter Cactus vendor form. Remember, tables are limited.

We took the mobile layout to Scottsdale's Railfair Sep 30 & Oct 1 where it was popular with the public as usual. A special thanks to Dave Brown, John Draftz, Rod Johnson, Glenn Saber and John Zaval who were there running the trains that entertained people both young and old.

The next Saturday, Oct 7, the mobile layout was in operation at the Brookdale Desert Ridge retirement facility. A special thanks to Dave Brown, John Draftz, Janet & Terry Mattern and John Zaval who were there running trains that brought back memories for many of the residents

Our next planned public exhibit is a Sunday afternoon event, October 29th, from 5-7 pm where we'll bring the small 2-loop 4x6 kid's O-gauge layout to the Life in Christ Lutheran Church in Peoria/NW Phoenix. Following that we'll have the mobile layout operating at the ARM fall festival in Chandler on November 11th.

CALENDAR

GCMR meets are held at 9:00am in the Parish Hall of Our Saviors Lutheran Church at 1212 East 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.

October 21 - GCMR meet - Our Saviors Lutheran Church – individual layouts – annual raffle drawing Theme: pizza meet - beverage cars (beer, wine, soda pop, etc

October 29 - we'll take the kid's layout to the Life in Christ church at 14802 N 75th Av in NW Phoenix from 5-7pm.

November 4 - Desert Division Turkey Meet. See the flyer this issue

November 11 - Desert Division fall auction. To see the catalog, go to: tcadd.org

November 11 - Arizona Railway Museum Fall Railway Day, GCMR trailer to be there

December we will have the layout in operation at the AMRS open house

TIN TOY TRAINS

By Ken Withers

Do you remember the little, lightweight tinplate toy train with a wind-up mechanism you might have gotten for Christmas, instead of the expensive Lionel set you really wanted? And have you recently visited an antique shop where that same toy, in passably good condition, is being sold for hundreds of dollars? Well, let's take a fresh look at the lowly tinplate train.

Tinplate is a thin sheet of malleable steel coated with a layer of tin to prevent rusting. The process of forging tinplate dates to the 17th century in Germany and England – or more accurately in my ancestral country of Wales. Iron and coal from the Welsh hills were used to make steel, and tin from the mines of Cornwall, right across the Bristol Channel, was available for the coating. For many years, tinplate was

used primarily for ceiling tiles, cookware, tin cans, and other sealed storage containers.

The invention of sheet metal stamping machines in the early 19th century made toymaking with tinplate practical and much faster and easier than traditional carved wood or cast iron. Toys could be assembled easily and painted by hand. The installation of small wind-up mechanisms was also possible and required far less skill in manufacture and assembly than wooden clockwork automata. The golden age of the tin toy began in the 1880's when offset lithography began to replace hand painting. Intricate, realistic designs in vivid colors could be printed on the tinplate, which could then be machine cut and stamped over a mold to create a 3-D effect.

Mass production of small wind-up toys drove the price down to the point that by 1900 they were sold by street vendors in England for a penny and were popularly called "penny toys." In the United States, J. Chein and Co. produced a line of tin toys packed as prizes into Cracker Jack boxes. Mechanical tin toys came in all incarnations: people, animals, carousels, wagons, boats, cars, and later spaceships and robots. But the tin toy became popular during the age of steam railroading, so naturally tin toy trains were very popular.



German tin toy train circa 1900. Photo credit: Alfvan Beem, reprinted under Creative Commons Universal Public Domain Dedication."

Around the turn of the last century, German immigrant Ferdinand Strauss came to the United States and opened a toy shop in New York, where he sold imported German mechanical toys. His business grew to four toy shops and by 1918 he was manufacturing his own toys. In the 1920's, Strauss sold a line of train-themed toys, including Twin Trolleys, Railway Express cars, the "All-aboard Limited" set and an unusual operating boxcar called "The TravelChiks". According to Wikipedia, when the boxcar was wound, chickens on top of the car would peck in a tin food pan. As of this writing in October 2023, a TravelChik boxcar in "as is" condition was selling on eBay for \$749.99.



Strauss TravelChiks boxcar, circa 1925. Photo by PA Toys of Times Past.

Strauss' manufacturing plant manager Louis Marx was fired by the Board in 1919 in a disagreement over sales strategy. By 1927, Strauss was out of business and Marx had picked up his plant, designs, and trademarks to launch Louis Marx and Company, which not only became a market leader in tin toys, but by 1955 was the largest toy manufacturer in the

world, with Louis Marx appearing on the cover of Time magazine as the "Toy King."

Unlike most other American businesses, Louis Marx and Company actually grew during the Great Depression. In 1934, Marx acquired the Girard Model Works in Pennsylvania, known for producing the "Joy Line," a series of 4-inch tinplate trains. Girard went bankrupt, and the court sold the assets to Marx, who was already selling Joy Line trains under the Marx brand through the Sears Roebuck catalog. This was now the electric era, and while mechanical trains were still strong sellers, the better-off could afford to go electric. The train bodies and accessories were still tinplate, however. While writing this article, I found an original Girard "Power House" for sale on eBay for a mere \$2,500.00. Plus \$29.35 shipping, of course.



Girard Power House, circa 1932. Photo by Ken's Antiques on eBay (no relation).

Shortly after acquiring Girard, Marx began marketing a newly designed line of trains, starting with the streamlined Union Pacific M-10000, followed by the 6-inch tinplate Commodore Vanderbilt and the Canadian Pacific 3000. These set the standard for other manufacturers, who adopted the size, gauge, and style. Marx was still manufacturing tinplate trains as late as 1972, when Louis Marx himself retired and sold his company to Quaker Oats,

which closed down toy production in 1976. Today, the Nacelle Company licenses “Marx” designs and molds to boutique manufacturers. But the modern reproductions probably don’t fetch the prices of the originals.



Marx Union Pacific M-10000, circa 1935. These can be found online today for \$50 - \$250, depending on condition. Photo by Tammies Hobbies.

IN REAL LIFE

by Dave Brown

As part of the train hobby, I also get pictures of real trains. In July I got a picture of a real Schnabel car. For those MTH people, they have come out with several Schnabel over the past years. This was taken along US60 just south of Bell road in Surprise.



NO, I REALLY DON'T COLLECT THEM

by Peter Atonna

In the “good old days” of the toy train hobby, many folks decided to collect special things - all 6464's, variations of 6464's, all the sets in the entire 1948 catalog, and on and on.

Fortunately, I never caught that bug, well almost never. I confess that when the military and space themed cars, trains and accessories started coming out, in the 1990's, I caught the “bug” and collected a lot of them. Not all, as I was too “frugal” to pay the going price for many. But in Phoenix, my postwar layout featured the rocket launcher and many space/military trains and accessories. That was repeated here in an original Paulden layout.

But I digress. Over the years, many nice locos and cars have knocked at my door and said “can I come live there?” Of course I never say “no”. So, when it comes to locomotives, on the shelves are many of the F-3's, SW's, and steamers - up to the cheapening of the line that began in the mid '50's. So, other than a few early post-war locos and a recently acquired 520 0-4-2 electric that I decided was too cute to pass on during our latest auction, there are no low end four wheel drive locos making their home here.

As far as the top of the line steamers, a smoke bulb Berkshire and Turbine and several of their later brethren are here. But, as to turbines, I never got a 1954 edition where Lionel tried to spice it up by adding a lubrication linkage to the side rods and a white stripe on the running boards. It has always brought big bucks and was never that appealing to me to get into a hunt for one.

Until this happened.

Several months ago a local person contacted me about buying his and his brother's parents and grandparents trains. A note, when making an offer on a collection, I don't just give a dollar amount, planning to dicker on it. Rather, I do a written inventory of each piece and the price I can offer to it. I then give the list to the seller

and they can decide whether is a fair price or not.

As I was going through these items to inventory, I pulled out a steam turbine loco - a 682, the rare 1954 one! Wow. Then I looked closer, The entire back end of the frame had crumbled from zinc pest. (I had never seen that on a postwar loco) What other damage inside, I could not tell, but could offer him no value on the loco. Still, it was thrown in with the other items.



Getting it home, I looked to see what parts would be salvageable. Fortunately the shell was in good shape, the smoke unit was too rusted to be used and the pin holding the lube linkage on the shell had sheered off. I then striped it all apart and put it into a box for the useable parts.



A couple of months later, I said, "I wonder if I can get a good frame and actually put it back together?" So I started looking on the source for everything in the world, Ebay. Turns out. there was a listing for a 682 frame, complete with wheels. It is critical to get a 682 as the boss on the rear driver had the setting for the valve linkage. But he wanted \$75 for it. A couple of rejected offers later, I saw another frame listed. This one was missing all the



wheels but was for \$9! Turns out the shipping was more than the part.

And now for the pins for the linkage on the shell and a new smoke unit. And as usual, the Train Tender had both.

Then the "not so fun" part began: putting the wheels and side rods back on. That is not as simple as it sounds. The first wheel contains a pressed on gear in its middle to be driven by the motor's worm. So it does not come off with my wheel puller. But I did manage to get the gear off the shaft. Getting it back on to the new frame was even less easy.

I don't know of anybody who makes a wheel "press" so I had to modify a C clamp to get the wheels and gear back on. But wait, that is only a small part of getting the wheels on. Each axle has a pair of bushings and in addition there is a metal plate that goes along each side to carry the magnetism to each driving wheel. And don't forget to "quarter" each wheel.

It was time to press on the remaining three sets of wheels/axles, each properly quartered and riding free when connecting to the earlier wheels and side rods. To get all properly together took two weeks. (Early on, I decided it had been a mistake to be too cheap to buy the \$75 frame with the wheels).

The side rods were wire brushed to remove as much as possible of the 70 year old grime. After a good month of getting the wheels on, it was time to mount the motor and E unit. Both were in perfect condition. Putting power to the motor, it struggled to turn the wheels. It took several passes at filing the side rod screw holes to

remove the binding spots. Lubricating the bearings and running the motor at full speed, forward and backward slowly burned in the side rods and it runs.

Finally, the smoke unit, bellows, cam, and linkage were installed. And when the shell was attached, the loco was complete.

The tender is in excellent shape, so with the whistle serviced, it was ready to go.

I've put the 1954 set back together for its honorary first run before the Turbine, that I was not looking for, takes its place on the shelf near the rest of the steamers.



Railfare
by John Draftz



GCMR EVENT PHOTOS

Brookdale Retirement Center





Fall Cactus Meet
by Chris Allen





**TCA DESERT DIVISION ANNUAL
TOY TRAIN SWAP MEET
SATURDAY NOVEMBER 4, 2023
9:00 AM - 12:00 Noon
Formerly known as the Turkey Meet
The oldest train meet in Phoenix**



**EL ZARIBAH SHRINERS AUDITORIUM
552 N. 40th St. Phoenix, AZ 85008
40th St. and Fillmore St.**

Exit 2 Loop 202 or McDowell Rd via Hohokam Expressway 143

Featuring

- **YES We still have 8' tables**
- FREE Parking and easy access from Loop 202 - or- Hohokam Expressway 143
- Multi gauge Test Track will be available on site
- **Vendor drawing for \$100 at 12 noon** - If you are setup when your ticket is called, you win \$100 on the spot! One ticket for each table purchased

TRAIN MEET HOURS

Saturday, November 4, 2023

9:00 AM - 12:00 Noon

Admission \$5

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Table Top Auction

VENDOR SETUP:

Saturday 7:00 AM - 9:00 AM

TABLE REGISTRTION – PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY

NAME _____

TCA# _____ **PHONE** _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ **STATE** _____ **ZIP** _____

Email for table confirmation _____

I hereby agree to be bound by the rules of the TCA & the Desert Division Train Meet in regards to buying, selling, ethics, and behavior. I further agree that in the case of a dispute, the meet chairman, or an impartial referee appointed by the Meet Chairman shall arbitrate the matter and render a binding decision. I shall upon the direction of the Meet Chairman, in the case of a disputed sale, refund a buyer's money.

Signed X _____ **Date** _____

Make check payable to: Desert Division TCA

Mail Table Registration to: TCA Desert Division, 1119 W. Plata Ave. Mesa, AZ 85210

More info: Chris Allen Meet Chairman 480-820-9559 or email tcadesertdivision@gmail.com

\$30 per 8' table

(Bring your own table cover if desired)

Tables @ \$30 each _____

Requests? _____

**YOUR TABLE REGISTRATION
INCLUDES ONE FREE HELPER
NAME BADGE PER TABLE IF NEEDED**

Helper Name _____

Extra Table Helper Badges are \$5 each

Special Requests? - Contact Meet Chairman

NO MAIL REGISTRATIONS OR CANCELLATIONS ACCEPTED AFTER OCTOBER 27, 2023