

# THE ATLANTIC DIVISION EXPRESS



SPRING 1980  
TRAIN COLLECTORS  
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6304 Park Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19141

N E X T   A T L A N T I C   D I V I S I O N   M E E T

Sunday, July 20, 1980

Westover Country Club - Norristown, Pennsylvania

C H A N G E   O F   A D D R E S S

Members are reminded to promptly notify Secretary Richard Heineman of address changes so as to insure timely receipt of all National and Division mailings.

C R E D I T S

Front Cover - 6464-450 G.N. boxcar in new Factory Error Contest on page 3.  
From the Charles Weber collection.

Pages 4 to 7 - Fred Henckel layout article from The Star-Democrat Weekend Magazine, Easton, Maryland.  
Reprinted with permission.

## A R E B U T T A L

By Dan Montgomery

Editor's Note: In the Autumn, 1979 issue, President Bob Robinson gave his views regarding reproduction of "old" trains by contemporary manufacturers. In the Winter, 1980 issue, Richard Cowan expressed his thoughts on the same subject. We received many responses to the pair of articles, both pro and con. The first of these, a rebuttal by member Dan Montgomery, is presented here.

Your Autumn Atlantic Division output was very disturbing. Disturbing in the sense that President Robinson appears to be exercising a fiduciary responsibility to protect some "illusory" investment.

His comments about fraud and/or misrepresentation are commendable. But had I known his position on the "sanctity" of existing pieces to make their value grow or be preserved, I would not have voted for him.

I thought our association and the TCA was for comradeship, interchange of ideas, the joys of a hobby, etc., and not some investment club. If such, I protest at not having received dividends, bank statements, quarterly reports, etc.

We are discussing toys and (as I thought) my avocation. It is ridiculous, to say the least, as at your 1/20/80 meet for

an Ives 1696 baggage car to have an asking price of \$500.00. What is the President's position on the current dealers who solicit huge sums and hold them for ungodly periods and don't deliver products (or shoddy ones at best) or publishers who sell books at official meets to "establish" some imagined value?

I, for one, started train collecting late, and thank God for the reproductions or I would never have access to some items. Let those consumed by greed and avarice deal among themselves and let the hobbyist have fun.

If a tenet of the Atlantic Division or TCA is to ensure a steadily upward growth of some "portfolio" then I have been grossly misled and shall return to my vocation as an electrical engineer.

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## F A C T O R Y E R R O R C O N T E S T

The error in the 6464-450 Great Northern car shown on the cover may appear deceptively easy to spot -- but look it over carefully! Free AD Meet Passes will go to five members picked at random from

among those who correctly identify the error. Send your answer to the Editor and please include your TCA number.

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# Trains chug through miniature landscape

By ANNE STINSON

Rail service may be in a decline over most of Delmarva, but the shed attached to Fred Henckel's house on the Denton Road is no indication of it. The sound of chugging locomotives, the clack of wheels on track and the mournful whistle of a train across the next ridge re-creates the era when most of America moved on wheels.

Henckel has just completed his miniature rail line, a job that has occupied his free time from last mid-January to the first week in November. The result is three regularly scheduled runs on a 40 by 10 foot track through farms, suburbs, a carnival, a splendid terminal and a freight yard.

His ambitious project combines the classic period of Lionel standard gauge equipment with a complement of small lead figures, the collection of Henckel's wife Louise.

"There are no cowboys and Indians, no soldiers," said Henckel. "Those are the lead figures most collectors concentrate on. All the ones we have here - 300 of them on this display - are workmen at their trades. Carpenters, brakemen, laborers and ordinary families and office workers who might be making a train trip.

"There's no way to estimate how many hours are involved in this thing," Henckel said last week as

he put the finishing touches on the layout. "We've been collecting for about six years and there's no end to it. Last year we had the train go past a Western town, but this year there's no room for it. I'm always on the lookout for more classic Lionel trains and accessories and Louise always keeps an eye out for new lead figures. The collection changes as it grows and I try to work it into the big plan."

A big plan it is. In a shed built especially for the semi-permanent layout, Henckel has put 1,400 feet of wiring under the long platform that holds the display. Tiny lights glow from passenger cars as they whiz along the tracks. They pass houses with faint light in the kitchens where tiny lead mothers fix supper and lead fathers read the evening paper under a lamp. Street lamps along the tracks spill pools of light on highways where cars and trucks bustle in traffic. The street lamps, like the houses and lawns and all the accessories, are genuine Lionels from 1921-1936.

The visitor's first view is of the busy freight yard. Farther along the tracks are the central station with its flurry of incoming traffic and crowds on the steps and terraces. Suburban streets and houses are next, complete with backyard patios, a new house under con-

struction and a bicycle race.

Farther into the country, a carnival has set up operation, straddling a three-lane highway. A miniature zoo exhibits elephants spraying water into a pool; an Indian village with a canoe gliding across a lake; an Alpine winter scene with skaters circling a pond while a skier pauses before schussing down a mountain and sledgers tackle a small hill. These give way to countryside where lead cattle graze in a field near a farmers' market.

At the far end of the platform, construction workers labor on an overpass which leads to an upper level. A row of tin toys from the early 1920's traverse the upper concourse; delivery vans, horse-drawn wagons and Model-T's share the road with a Conestoga wagon.

When Henckel turns on the sound system, the toy panorama comes to life. One tape recording is the actual reproduction of a freight train rounding the

horseshoe curve at Altoona, Penna. Henckel activates the dimmer light on the shed ceiling and the scene takes on magic. At first glance, only the trains appear to be moving, each set to its own rhythm of rounding curves, pulling into stations and starting again.

Closer examination reveals small moving figures that add to the enchantment. A backhoe works beside the tracks, actually shoveling a trench. A hiker waves his butterfly net at an invisible insect. A sign painter reaches from a ladder and pastes up a message on a billboard. Skaters glide on the ice, a clown totters on the top of a pole, a carpenter's hammer strikes a nail into a board, a house painter strokes his brush on a window frame. Even the non-moving figures seem frozen at their chores. Porters pause with their arms full of bags, a driver loads bags of fertilizer into his wagon. A foxhunting group gallops across the tracks, riders and hounds in pursuit of a tiny lead fox.

Part of the charm is in the realization that all the parts are not made to the same scale. Different years and models account for the diversity, although all are made to fit the standard gauge that was replaced with O-gauge in 1937.

Henckel finds his retirement hobby engrossing.

"We had about five train sets when our kids were little in the early '50's," he said. "When I started to



Fred Henckel steadies a locomotive at a curve in the elaborate layout that requires 1,400 feet of wiring.



**Photos by  
T. Gregory Lynch**

A closeup view of the activity at the freight yard shows some of the 300 figures that go about the business of the railroad and its town. (Photo by T. Gregory Lynch)

collect seriously, we gave them all away."

As he engaged in conversation, one of the trains picked up speed and went around a curve out of control. Henckel turned off the current and brought the rig to a stop. He reached across the tracks and straightened up the runaway.

"It's like Amtrak," he grinned. "We have a wreck once in a while."

Weekends find the husband and wife team haunting auctions and flea markets in hopes of adding to their rolling stock and lead figures.

"A lot of collectors' wives frown on spending money for this stuff - and these things don't come cheap," Henckel said. "Louise never hesitates; she's as interested in it as I

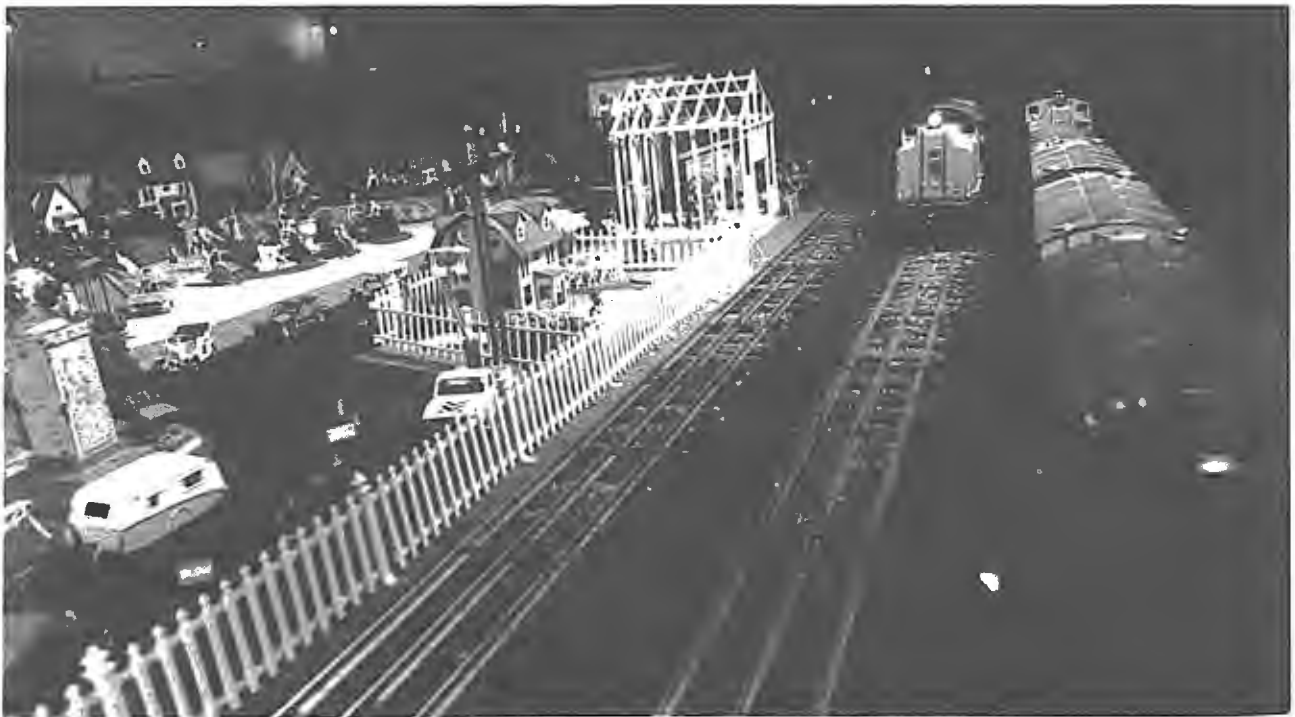
am. It really makes it fun when you can share the enthusiasm with someone."

Henckel opened the display to the public Thanksgiving Day and it will remain open through New Year's Day. He asks visitors to call him in advance to schedule their trips (822-2177) and he's available mornings and afternoons. He doesn't charge a fee for the tour, but donations will be accepted. "There's always something in the shop for repair, and it mounts up," the retiree said.

"I'm just about always home," he said, "and the only reason I ask people to call ahead is so that I don't get jammed up with too many people at the same time. The aisle is narrow and they won't get to see

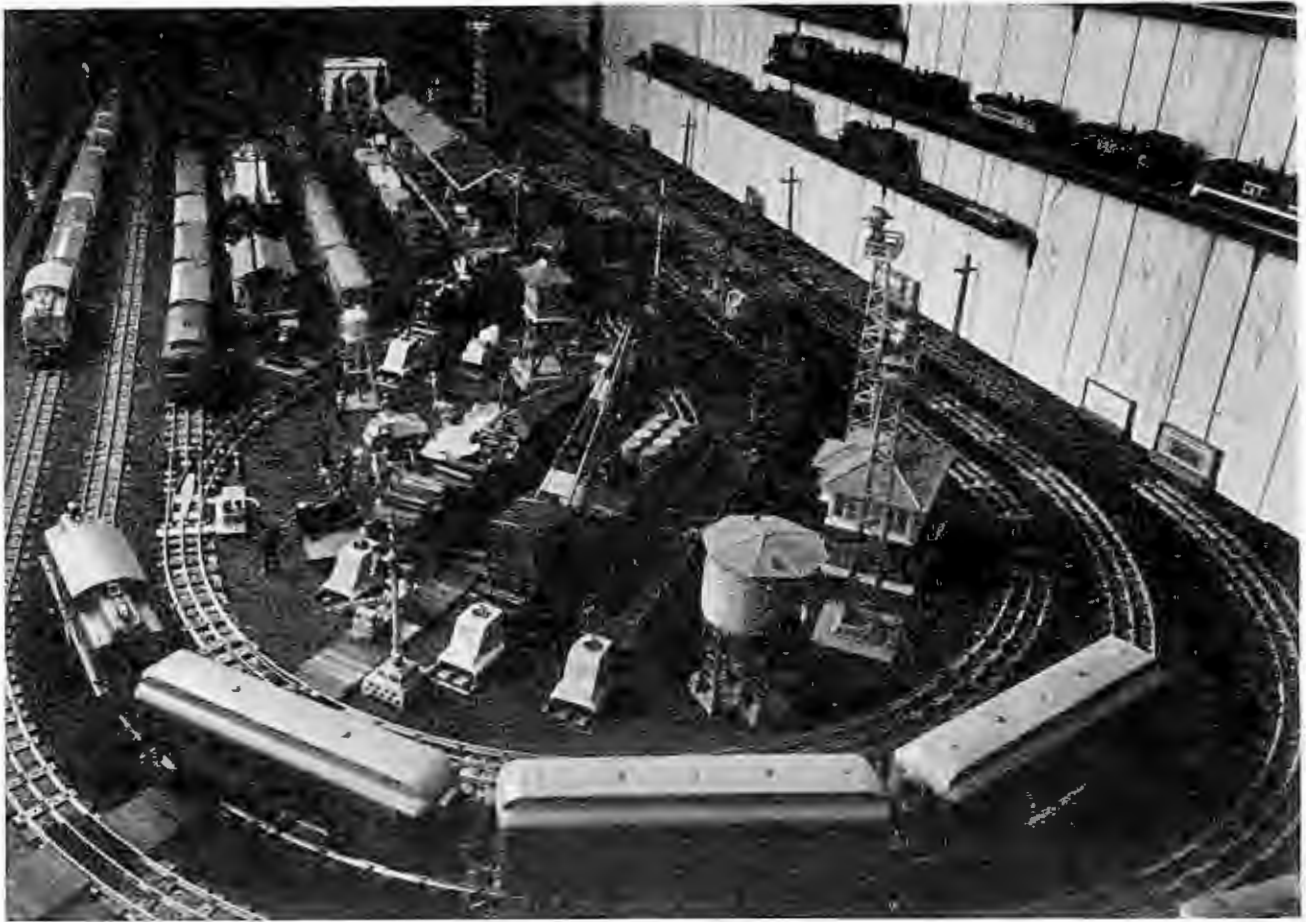


Tiny lead figures are seated passengers on the rear of the platform car



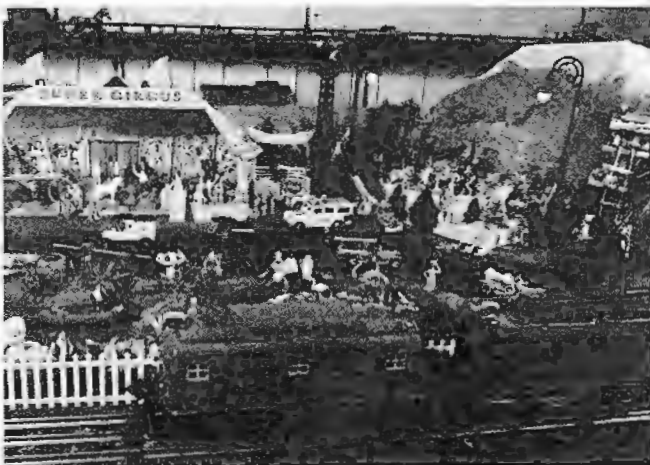
Three parallel tracks skirt the suburbs where the highway divides neatly fenced plots with lawns, patios and houses. Workmen construct a new house in the background. Tiny lead figures from Louise Henckel's

collection add authenticity to the scene. A miniature street on the left boasts a small park. (Photo by T. Gregory Lynch)



The freight yard is a maze of tracks and extra trains loading and unloading goods. The lamps, water towers

and signal towers are all part of Lionel's line of equipment.



Traffic splits the attractions at the Super Circus, an area that includes a jungle scene with elephants spraying jets of water into a working fountain.

everything if they can't move around a little. I don't mind if they take an hour to look at it, just so I know there's not going to be another group crowding in on them."

Eventually, he hopes to house the display in larger

quarters so that more "passengers" can come and linger by the tracks, hear the crunch of cinders and experience the lure of railroads, as thrilling in 1979 as it was in the Twenties and Thirties.

END

## COLLECTOR OF THE MONTH

## CHARLIE WEBER

By Nick Ladd

"Small, podgy, and at best middle-aged, he was by appearance one of the meek who does not inherit the earth. His legs were short; his gait anything but agile, his clothes ill fitting. Either the sleeves were too long or his arms were too short. Natural shyness made him from time to time pompous and hopelessly unassertive. The bags beneath his eyes resembled bruises, he smiled seldom, though he was by no means humourless, and there were times when the mere exertion of rising from his chair seemed to leave him winded." The above is John LeCarre's description of his famous spy, George Smiley.

Charlie Weber is one of those people who creeps up on you. Like Smiley he drifts in and out leaving little evidence of his passing except burnt tobacco droppings from his ever-present collection of abused and overused pipes which are pulled from a decrepit attache case that seems chained to his wrist. Waddling by at a meet you sense he is near only because the aisle space is suddenly tight. Hair askew, he usually looks like he just consumed a pound of spare ribs and strained the grease through the little goatee which desperately clings to his face.

Despite his outward appearance, Charles is well educated. The fellow has a real Doctorate in Chemistry from NYU where he majored in, "blowing things up." Unable to be contained in any major university, he eventually settled at Delaware Valley College where his whole objective was to gain tenure befitting his stature. His students know and love his idiosyncrasies. For years they have watched him drive into campus at 80MPH in his beatup old Rambler. They don't even flinch at his penchant for a certain four letter word. And, they don't even bother anymore to watch him bark back at dogs. He

is what he is - Charlie Weber - the George Smiley of the campus.

While President of our Chapter (now the Atlantic Division) Charlie took his lead from Calvin Coolidge and kept cool and caused little controversy. In fact, it is to his credit that the present Division is as harmonious as it is - after all, when nothing happens no one gets too upset.

When his wife speaks of her husband she usually remarks, "Who?" Cheryl, a Registered Nurse, knows someone lives with her - because she notices the level in the candy dish goes down whenever she is not watching. Hidden in the basement, Charles pours over his vast collection of 6464 series boxcars which to the untrained eye all look alike. But they are not and, if you are not careful, Charlie will tell you about each variation and seraph. As this could take years it is better to ask him to tell you the story of how he "stole" a #156 from under Sid Weiss and as we all know, that must have been a ponderous task.

Charlie restores trains too. Painting with a camel hair broom, his style is very interesting. He is the Toulouse Lautrec of the TCA. In fact, there is a rumor going around that Charlie has been asked to restore all the pre-production samples that MPC inherited from the old Lionel Corporation. It's quite an honor when you consider how professionally-made those samples were.

In closing, I should tell you that Charlie and I used to be close friends (prior to publication) and I hope he takes the above in the spirit in which it's intended ... a soft jab at a great guy who is a real credit to our collecting fraternity.

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## MARX REMARKS - PART IV

By Art Bink

Well, here we go again, only this time let's keep in mind that Marx did a lot of crazy things. We can't take them too seriously, and since these are just toys, nothing critical hinges on either their publications (especially now) or mine!



Figure 1

The Fall/Winter 1934 Sears Catalog shows three Joy Line sets with the standard red enamelled Joy Line stamped steel steam loco (not the early lithographed #350 or Vanderbilt): the two wind-up sets contain 3 freight cars and 3 passenger cars respectively, and the one electric set contains 5 passenger cars (#357 and #458 type). NO round-cornered (Fig. 1) tenders or cars appear yet, as ALL cars are the older, shorter Joy Line type. All tenders shown are of the #351 "KOAL KAR" variety (Fig. 2, left), but painted black



Figure 2

instead of being lithographed (Fig. 2, center); these tenders up until recently were thought to have been phased out by 1931. The earliest round-cornered tenders (and cars) made their debut in late 1934...too late in fact to appear in the 1934 Sears Catalog. The early rounded tenders (and cars) of late 1934 and 1935 had Joy Line couplers. (The Fall/Winter 1936-37 Sears Catalog shows short-wheel-base lithographed frames on the rounded tender and cars, with Joy Line couplers, but hook-&-slot couplers were also used during these years as much, if not more.) The Fall/Winter 1935-36 Sears Catalog shows a wind-up 3-car passenger Joy Line set (a la the 1934 catalog). It also shows the "NEW MARX ELECTRIC VANDERBILT TRAIN" with 5 of the new rounded passenger cars replacing the 5 Joy Line cars of 1934. The tender is shown as a nondescript "box" and the illustration of the whole train is relatively inaccurate as opposed to the more photograph-like picture in the Fall/Winter, 1936-37 Sears Catalog which clearly shows the rounded tender (and cars).

Now, enter the square-cornered black 4-13/16" long bi-level tender (Figs. 4 & 5). This tender is shown on the front



Figure 4

(Continued on next page)

MARX REMARKS - PART IV

(Continued from preceding page)

cover of the 1949 Louis Marx catalog where its 1932 Joy Line set is compared to a modern Santa Fe diesel set. The tender base is a typical older Joy Line frame (like that on a #357 Joy Line coach) but with different cutouts in the floor. The rear coupler is the typical sliding Joy Line coupler, and the front coupler is either a sliding coupler or is riveted in place in the extended position (Fig. 3). This tender is said to



Figure 3

have been made in 1932 and 1933 but here the mystery deepens. The first Commodore Vanderbilt loco came out in late 1934, but the instruction sheet in this article shows a Vanderbilt with this bi-level tender. There is no date on the 4-page instruction sheet, the covers of which are shown with this article. Pages 3 & 4 of the instructions (not included here) show cars of the later long-wheelbase type (rounded) with hook-&-slot couplers, making the brochure no earlier than 1936 or maybe 1937, since illustrated printed matter has a habit of following the production of manufactured goods or their prototypes (except in the case of artist renderings). Also, by the time these instructions came out, the swing-pin Vandy

was gone, since item 2 in the ASSEMBLY INSTRUCTIONS says to "hook the tender coupler OVER the loco rear coupler." This is impossible if the loco has a swing-pin coupler. The loco illustration backs this up by showing not a swing-pin but a standard hook-&-slot coupler.

A wind-up reversible Vanderbilt loco is somewhat hard to find, and even scarcer is the instruction sheet, but here it is with the "surprise" tender. Notice that the coupler in the illustration appears to hinge up; in reality this does not happen. Also in the illustration the tender frame profile appears to be a later Joy Line type (Fig. 1, right) but I doubt the existence of this hybrid due to the incompatibility of body tabs and frame slots. To add to the confusion, we all know that Joy Line couplers do not mate with hook-&-slot couplers (see Fig. 5) because of the difference in height.



Figure 5

Joy Line couplers are too high for hook-&-slot couplers, even on architecturally similar round-cornered cars. Thus, only an early Vanderbilt with swing-pin couplers will combine with this tender, like the reversible electric shown in Fig. 4. BUT I have never seen a wind-up Joy Line Vanderbilt (swing-pin coupler loco) that is reversible; only electric! All the reversible wind-up Vanderbilts I have ever seen have had hook-&-slot couplers, generally making them 1936 mo-

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MARX REMARKS - PART IV

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dels or later. Earlier technology probably had not advanced to the point where the reversing mechanism was involved in 1934 or 1935.

Conclusion: The square-cornered bi-level tender in question could have been made into 1934 Or 1935 to go with remaining swing-pin Joy Line Vanderbilts as a tender contemporary with the round-cornered tender. Interestingly, Lionel ALSO used a square-cornered #261 tender with THEIR Vanderbilt locos contemporary with the round-cornered #265 tender in 1935. I do not believe the tenders in Figs. 1 & 2 were involved in a single line of evolutionary descent, one replacing the other,

but I believe there were transitional overlaps, timewise. This is borne out by the fact that the 1934 Sears Catalog shows the tiny #351 tender (Fig. 2, center), and the 1935 Sears Catalog shows the rounded tender (Fig. 1, right), seemingly leaving no time slot in between for the bi-level tender (Figs. 3, 4 & 5). Most puzzling of all is the use of the later reversible Vandy (1936?) with this tender, tending to widen rather than shrink the age gap between the two. Since this is such a "tender" subject, I'll cool it at this point and sign off 'til another time.

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(See Instruction Sheet on next page)

## WHAT IS IT ?

To date no one has positively identified the tin litho floor train featured in our Winter What Is It? contest although some very interesting (albeit suspicious) responses have been received. It is not too late to enter. Send your answer to the Editor and include your TCA number.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thanks to my fellow Officers, Directors and especially to you, the Membership, for ten years of support and encouragement. Together we have built the best

fraternity of train collectors in the world. No other words need be said or written.

*Bob Robinson*

MARX REMARKS - PART IV

(Continued from preceding page)

... READ CAREFULLY ...

## INSTRUCTIONS

# Commodore Vanderbilt Reversible Mechanical Train Set



### Assembly of Track

1. Assemble the sections of track into a circle or oval by inserting the pins of one section into the ends of the rails of the next section. Push the sections together as far as they will go. Do not squeeze the rails together or spread them, as this may change the gauge of the track. After the track has been set up and taken down a number of times, the sections may not fit together as tightly as when new. If desired, the sections can be held together by a heavy rubber band, looped around the end ties of the adjoining sections.

### Assembly of Train

1. Place the cars on the track, starting with the locomotive and coupling each car separately until the entire train is on the track.

2. For best results, hook the tender coupler, OVER the locomotive rear coupler, and front couplers of the following cars OVER rear couplers of preceding cars. (See diagram below.)

3. Inspect the train carefully to see that all cars and locomotive wheels are in proper position on the rails before starting to operate the train.

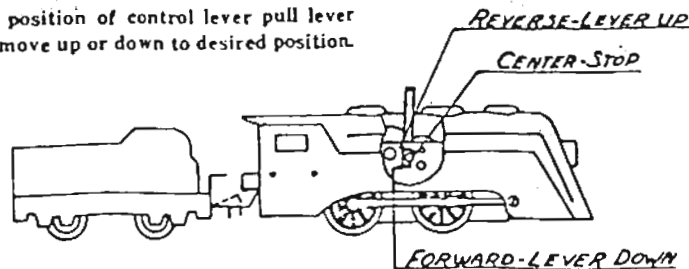
### Operation of Train

1. Insert winder key into the winder bushing through the hole on the right side of the locomotive.

2. Turn key to right to wind locomotive.

3. Locomotive control lever is located on top of the boiler, and has three positions, lower, upper and center. When in lower position, train will run forward, when in upper position train will run in reverse, and when in center position train will stop. (See diagram below.)

4. To change position of control lever pull lever back and then move up or down to desired position.



5. It is best to have control lever in center position when winding locomotive.

6. Train will run faster after locomotive has been broken in by running a few times.

7. If locomotive runs too fast, do not wind up completely.

Marx Instruction Pamphlet, undated, possibly 1936 or 1937. Composite of page 1 and part of page 4.