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**PLEASE VOTE FOR THE
NOR-CAL OFFICERS FOR 2008-09**

Please show your appreciation for your fellow Nor-Cal members who are donating their time and energy to run **YOUR** club! The **BALLOT** is on page 6.

**Minutes of Nor-Cal TCA Board Meeting on
Feb. 9, 2008, Lafayette. 11AM**

Attendees: Cliff Jarrard, Pete Goodier, Michael Andrews, Richard White, Rick Renfro

Following a general discussion on advertising policy for the *Nor-Cal Express* newsletter, a motion was made by Richard White and seconded by Pete Goodier to publish only ads from legitimate hobby shops, repair services and restoration services and only for Nor-Cal TCA members. All other advertising would be relegated to the classified ad section. This motion was passed by the board.

Cliff Jarrard made a motion to authorize Michael Andrews to use his personal credit card to satisfy a contractual requirement for a deposit for food for the Cal-Stewart banquet with assurance that he would be reimbursed for any out of pocket expenses. Motion was seconded by Richard White and passed by the Board.

Motion was made by Michael Andrews to accept all food contracts for the Cal Stewart meet except the Java City contract. Seconded by Pete Goodier and passed by the Board.

Motion was made by Richard White to appoint Rick Renfro and Mark Boyd to the Membership Committee. Both had been previously recommended by Cliff Jarrard and approved by President Bob Nichelini in accordance with Nor-Cal by-laws. Seconded by Pete Goodier and passed by the Board.

Richard White moved to adjourn. Seconded by Pete Goodier and passed by the Board.

Cliff Jarrard, Secretary
Rick Renfro, Recording

FUTURE MEETS

- June 14 (L)
- July 12 (L)
- August 9 (L)
- September 13 (L)
- October 11 (L)
- November 8 (L)
- Nov.21-23 Cal-Stewart Meet, Pasadena
- December 13 –Christmas Meet (L)

L=Lafayette Veterans Memorial Hall, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette
Bus. Mtg: 9:30 AM
Trading: 10-11:30 AM

**PRESIDENT'S
MESSAGE**

by Bob Nichelini # 81-16938



Based on member input, we have locked in the Lafayette Veterans' Building for future meets. The only complaint that I have received is the perceived lack of parking when we have a large turnout. There should be plenty of additional street parking directly across from the Veterans' Building so I think we can accommodate everyone.

I want to specially recognize Mark Boyd. While his duties as Editor of the TCA Quarterly (note that he often sneaks in some local photographs) have precluded him from continuing as a Nor-Cal officer, he still contributes a substantial amount of time to our Division. Without him, the email system would collapse and our records system would quickly be out of date. Even though it appears to me that mark spends more than his entire annual income on train purchases, his wife still puts up with him and we greatly appreciate his work. Thanks Mark!!!

Recently I overheard one of our members say "why vote, it's the same old people running for (Nor-Cal) office". I want to assure everyone that we continually and constantly look for new "blood" to take over running the organization. But, few ever volunteer and there has been little interest in running for office. Please be assured these positions are not "locked up" and we welcome anyone who has the time and interest to become a Division officer. Please let us know. But, remember there is a lot more to it than just opening a meet once a month. Fortunately, this year we actually have someone new running for Secretary and while I will miss Cliff (who like Mark has been a hard worker for many years); I look forward to a new face and new ideas.

As we move into the summer months, interest in toy train generally starts to wane as outdoor hobbies start to fill available "fun" time. So, if you're taking the summer off from train collecting we will miss you. But the meets will still go on and, you never know, something might just turn up that you have been looking for.

-Bob Nichelini

THE WEEDEN DART –and other Weedens

By Jim Hartney
TCA #01-53108



Photo 1—Dart set (transition loco), with wood sleepers, instructions, rails, fuel filler, original wood outer box, and cardboard interior boxes.

Many consider the Weeden Dart to be the most successful early American toy train, selling tens of thousands from 1890 to 1912. Today, a fair number of these sets survive and, due mainly to their unique design and handsome proportion, they are eagerly sought by toy and toy train collectors.

Mr. William Nye Weeden's "Weeden Manufacturing Company" patented its first item, a "Luminous Match Safe", in 1882. This was an embossed, decorative, tin-like metal container for storing "good" and "burnt" matches – apparently a necessary accessory at the time. This was followed by a "Musical Watch" and several other non-steam toy items. Later, Mr. Weeden was approached by *Youth's Companion*, a popular publication for boys and girls, to design and manufacture a toy steam engine to be used as a subscription sales premium and to be advertised for retail sales. Previously, in the 1870's and early 80's, the magazine had offered steam engines made by the Buckman Company of New York for these same purposes.

The result was "Weeden's Upright Steam Engine No.1," which first appeared in the October 1884 issue of *Youth's Companion*. This was a stationary steam engine with an upright boiler. Offered for \$1.00, it is reported, but probably overstated, to have sold 100,000 to 200,000 units over the years! In 1888 the "Dart" came into manufacture and was advertised in the *Youth's Companion* in two different sets – loco with track, and loco with tender, passenger car, and track. In 1890 a third set was offered which featured colored paper lithographs of a train station, stage coach, baggage cart, workers, and passengers, which could be cut out and mounted on wood or cardboard.



The gauge was 2-3/16". The tops of the rails were rounded, not flat edged as in the Carlisle and Fitch and early Lionel "banded" track. The depth of the cuts on the sleepers made the outside rails sit higher, resulting in a slight superelevation. The rail ends were connected using a traditional (but at the time new) pin and socket system. In 1904 a nine-section "special track system" was offered, which made the same circle using the same rails/sleepers permanently mounted on wooden boards which could be locked together with hinged metal clasps.



Photo 2—the "transition" loco and tender



Photo 3—showing the brass boiler backhead

The Dart was a "live-steam" locomotive. Water was placed into the boiler through the filler cap. Alcohol fuel was placed into the reservoir in the burner unit, and then the wicks were lit. This heated the water in the boiler, forming steam, which entered the cylinders to drive the wheels. Perhaps the only reason there were no more house fires from derailed and overturned locos was that the woolen carpets common in houses of the era were less prone to igniting than modern carpets!

The Dart loco boiler was polished brass or black-enameled steel. The cab was steel, finished in black enamel or chemically blued, with the roof painted in maroon or red enamel. The boiler running boards/side skirts were brass, imprinted with the Weeden logo and the number 1887 (year of patent?). The drive wheels were cast iron finished in black or red enamel and the pilot wheels were dummy sheet metal outlines (the loco represented a 2-4-0) painted either red or black. The cowcatcher was steel, finished in black enamel or chemically blued. The cylinders were single or double piston drive and instead of being fixed, moved with the angle of the drivers as the wheels turned – this aligned holes on the inside face of the cylinders with steam "supply" holes for power stroke, and uncovered holes to allow exhaust to atmosphere. The cylinders on each side were opposed on supply and exhaust cycle which allowed for a steady motion. The "main rods" were attached to the front drive wheels– with no connecting rods between drivers.

There are generally considered to be 2 different types of Dart Locos – *early* and *late*. This chart adds the features for a "*transition*" loco (described on the next page):

	<u>Early</u>	<u>Late</u>	<u>Transition</u>
Burner wicks	3	4	4
Fill Cap/Safety Valve	Black Paint	Nickel Plate	Black Paint
Steam Cylinder	Gold Paint	Nickel Plate	Gold Paint
Boiler Front	Internal Cap	External Cap	Internal Cap
Boiler Rear (in cab)	Black	Natural Brass	Natural Brass

The tender was black with a red frame and had "I. & A.R.R." embossed on its sides. The only real variation on tenders was that they came in a fixed four-wheel model (black wheels) and an eight-wheeled moveable truck version (red wheels).

The passenger car was steel finished in red enamel with a black roof. It was embossed with obscure lettering above the windows "BARBARY EXPRESS I.A. & R.R.", and below, more plainly, "CITY OF NEW BEDFORD". One variation on these cars relates to the car floor – early cars were lightened by cutting a large rectangular area from the floor. Later cars had a large 8-sided piece cut out, similar in size to the earlier rectangle but with diagonals at the corners instead of square corners. The change might have been to add strength to the floor. Additionally, the trucks were either outside frame (normally) or inside frame.



Photo by Noel Barrett Auctions

Photo 4—note the inside frame trucks on the cars and loco

Two of these passenger cars were used in a 4-4-0 loco set that was advertised by Wards in 1903 – 1909 as the “Weeden No. 3 Steam Train”. These sets didn’t sell well and are scarce. **Photo 4** shows a set offered a few years ago in a Noel Barrett Auction.

I recently acquired a complete boxed set from the original owner’s family. Shown in the photos, it came in a wooden outer box with fragile cardboard inner boxes. The set has instructions, rails and sleepers, alcohol fuel filling cup, and original hook wire couplers. I have seen wooden outer boxes with glued-on warning labels

which mine lacks – but I find this same label glued on an inner box and assume this to be of later manufacture. This is the only set I’ve seen that still had these inner cardboard boxes. Also, compared to Early and Late versions above, you may notice that mine is neither, but is actually a sort of transition version (see **Photo 5**) differing from the Late loco by its gold painted steam cylinders and internal cap on its boiler front! [Also see the chart on the previous page]. It seems things are rarely as clear cut as one would hope.



Photo 5—Dart set with “transition” loco—outside frame trucks on the passenger car

The Weeden Manufacturing Company was in business for a long time and made a large variety of stationary toy steam engines over the years. In the 1930’s they produced a second toy train designated “Steam Locomotive No. 1,” which came without a tender or cars. This was “O” gauge, live-steam, and was designed to pull other manufacturers’ cars on 3 rail O gauge track. (see **Photo 6**). Production lasted for about 3 years, but at \$9.98 per, it appears they were not well received. A No. 2 was experimented with that was of the same design but had a center rail pick up for an electric heating element (to replace the alcohol burner for heating the boiler water). This train was briefly advertised but in reality only one is known to have ever been made by Weeden – the 400 watts required to heat the water was considered impractical and the project died.

In 1942 the company was sold to “National Playthings” which halted production of the



Photo 6—the O-gauge loco Photo courtesy of Tim Mikita

(Continued from previous page)

line of steam engines in 1952. The remaining machinery, parts, dies, molds and patents for the steam engines were purchased by "Security Signals Inc." for \$700-\$800 and kept in storage, until finally destroyed years later.

Was anything ever done with these leftover parts and dies? Perhaps the answer is "Yes!" I have had in my collection for several years an unusual Dart loco that appears strikingly different from other Weeden Darts. As shown in the photos, it is interesting to note that the light, bell, sand dome, boiler running board, solid cow-catcher, fixed solid stack, – all appear to have been professionally die cut and all differ from earlier Dart accoutrements. Notably missing are the brass running boards/side skirts with the Weeden logo. Instead there are red-painted steel running boards (see photo). This is almost definitely not a homemade conversion but has all the appearance of an upgraded, newer version of the old classic! I suspect that this is a later re-issue by National Playthings or Security Signals!



Photo 7—National Playthings (?) loco



Photo 8—National Playthings (?) loco with the "late" type four wick burner unit removed

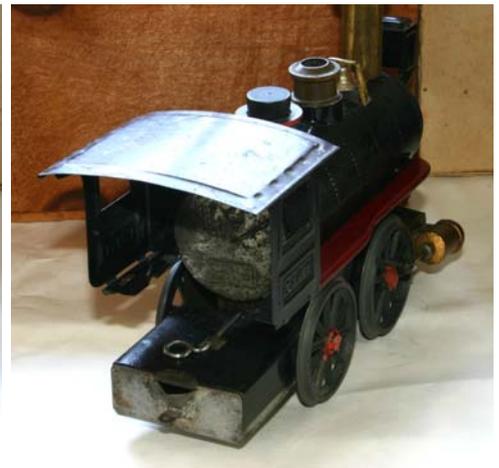


Photo 9 -National Playthings (?) loco showing the unpainted galvanized boiler backhead

Reader's comments and observations would be appreciated. -Jim H.

ADDENDUM

Nor-Cal member Chuck Schaffer has submitted photos of his Weeden Dart, and they are shown below, as **Photos 10 and 11**.



Chuck Schaffer photo



Chuck Schaffer photo

Photos 10 and 11—this loco is identical to the Hartney "transition" loco, except for the black-painted pony wheels and (not shown) a different type of burner unit

BALLOT

FOR OFFICERS TO SERVE FROM JULY 1, 2008 TO JUNE 30, 2009

For your ballot to be counted:

- (1) Vote for no more than one (1) candidate for each office,
- (2) Sign your **name** and write your **TCA membership number XX XXXXX** by the return address on the **envelope** you use to mail the ballot,
- (3) Mail it to:

**Michael Andrews
2461 San Miguel Drive
Walnut Creek, CA 94596**

- (3) I must receive your ballot no later than **Friday, June 30, 2008.**

FOR PRESIDENT:

- Bob Nichelini
- Write In: _____

FOR VICE PRESIDENT:

- Rod Cornell
- Write In: _____

FOR SECRETARY:

- Rick Renfro
- Write In: _____

FOR TREASURER:

- Pete Goodier
- Write In: _____

The results will be reported at the Nor-Cal TCA meet on July 12, 2008



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3

Photo 1: Boucher Pacific, owned by Rene Quihillalt. Can anyone help Rene find a tender for this?
Photo 2: Marx (?) Tinplate knife sharpener man, clockwork, owned by Bob Morris
Photo 3: Lionel "thin-rim" #6, Standard Gauge, 1906-1911.
Photos 4 and 5: A Walt Reach clockwork lithographed floor train, from the Fifties
Photo 6: An Issmayer set, O gauge, German, from about 1898, owned by Rod Cornell.



Photo 4



Photo 6



Photo 5

Want to carpool to the Lafayette meetings? E-mail the editor at toytrain13@hotmail.com

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the **NOR-CAL EXPRESS**

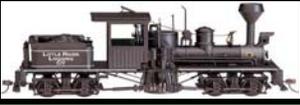
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