Sitting here at my desk, all I have to do is look past the monitor and what I see is one of my train cabinets full of engines. Every one of those engines has a story, and they all have been played with, some more than others. But the most important thing, is that I can tell you what train show that particular engine came from and who I bought it from. That to me is the best thing about collecting. It is nice to add to your collection and get that piece you have been looking for, but the interaction that you get when making the deal can get you a new friend forever. That is one of the biggest benefits of the TCA and the group of fellow collectors that comes along with it. So go buy some trains and make a few friends.

The recently past Spring Cal-Stewart in Santa Clara was a smash hit party. It started out on Friday with trains, lots of trains. As sellers got there in the early afternoon, the 54,000 square foot hall soon became full of cars, trucks, vans, and trailers full of trains. There were more trains than the eye could see. Then the guys started showing up with layouts. We had HO layouts, we had O Scale and S Scale, we had G and Standard Gauge, there were switching layouts and Erectors sets, and even a Lego layout. On Saturday the doors opened early for more set up and at nine o’clock sharp the party began. There was over 350 tables of trains for sale, the layouts were all up and running, Lionel and K-line had tables of new products to show and it was happening. At one o’clock the clinics started and at two the auction began. There also were many raffle prizes and as usual lots of trading.

Now on Saturday night if you were not there you missed it. We had the first annual Karen Rodgers Banquet. It started out with an hour of socializing, cocktails, and an impressive silent auction. (Many thanks to all the manufacturers for their generous donations) Then it was on to dinner at the Westin hotel with entertainment. The entertainment was the

(cont’d on page 6)
Pete White #93-37314 (below) had this rarely seen Wham-O (the sling-shot company) monorail from the 50’s at the March meeting. The cars are plastic, and are powered from on-board batteries. Note that this is a “suspended” type monorail as opposed to the “straddle-beam” type monorail seen at Disneyland, Disney World, Seattle and Las Vegas.
Shown here are some of the fantastic Lionel pre-production samples from the Cecil Yother collection. Cecil has a special interest in factory prototypes and has managed to obtain these from various sources. Some of these are featured in the McComas and Tuohy book “The Archives.”

Prototype #1656 switcher (one of four), with prewar motor and steel rim drive wheels.

Alaska RR prototype #614 switcher.

Prototype for an Alco FA diesel in Kansas City Southern paint scheme. This is numbered “0000” and was never produced. Note that this locomotive is NOT shown in the Archives book.

Prototype of a double-ended diesel, made of plaster; trucks and various parts are from the Alco FA models. Note the resemblance to the Baldwin shark-nose diesels.

At right: Prototype for the #65 handcar. The lower photo shows the factory tag, reading “THIS IS A MOCKUP NOT A PRODUCTION LINE ITEM.” This item is not shown in the Archives book.
Shown in the two photos at the right is Fred Albers’ “Doggie Diner” (a.k.a. the Bulldog Café), in G-scale (1/24 scale).

Disney Studios called this the Bulldog Café when they created it for MGM for the 1991 movie “The Rocketeer.” It was inspired by two real-life buildings in Los Angeles in the 1920’s. The film, set in 1938 Los Angeles, is full of comic-book evildoers, a rocket-backpack-wearing hero, a beautiful heroine (a 20-year old Jennifer Connelly, later to be seen in “A Beautiful Mind”), Nazis, period airplanes, a dirigible, an autogyro, and even Howard Hughes!

The café was constructed for the film as a 3/4-size, forced-perspective prop, as shown in the photo to the right. Owing to the prop’s compressed nature, it would be almost impossible for anyone to actually fit through the front door! In any case, several scenes in the film were set in the interior of the café. The rear haunches were designed so that they could roll open to provide the camera crew greater access. The Topp’s “Rocketeer Official Movie Souvenir Magazine” has several pages on the construction of the Bulldog Café, including several photos of the marvelously detailed, and realistic, interior. The Bulldog Café may still be seen on the MGM backlot tour in Los Angeles.

Additionally, there is another, smaller mockup of the Café at the Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles (see photo on the next page with Alvin Costa, TCA 84-21636). Note that the head is proportionally smaller than on the MGM prop. It may not be obvious from the photos, but the bulldog in each case is
smoking a pipe!

Fred purchased his model from Nor Cal member Bill Corsello at the Pasadena Cal Stewart Meet several years ago. It was the prototype for a projected kit for the garden railway (G-scale) market, which never came to fruition. The designer for the kit was Jim LoGiudici, who had been a friend of the original movie prop designer.

The model is made up of about a dozen glued-together cast resin segments. The model, including the base, is 11-1/2 inches wide, 14-1/2 inches deep and 13 inches in height. The windows are transparent plastic, but no interior was provided (Fred has now added an interior). The manufacturers ("Model Geeks") found that the pieces did not fit together very well, and therefore any attempt to sell the model as a kit did not seem feasible. However, eight or so models were made up, and painted, and sold. The other owners are unknown at this point. An advertising flyer is reproduced at the right.

Fred has had some fun with the model on his layout, as attested by the photos on these pages.
In the December 2003 issue of the Express I wrote an article pointing out the differences in the placement of the smoke stacks on my two 436 Power Stations. It was a variation that had never been pointed out in any of the collector's guides I'd read. I asked readers to let me know whether they had a "leftie" or a "rightie" to determine any rarities. Here are the results of my mini-survey, plus some new knowledge that I gained.

With the first feedbacks I received from my e-Train article, it seemed that left-hand smoke stacks far out numbered the right-hand stacks. But after the article also appeared in The Nor-Cal Express and The Train Collectors Quarterly, the numbers evened out quite a bit with 21 left and 13 right – not enough of a difference to conclude that one is rarer than the other.

Bob Duppstadt, a fellow TCA member, pointed out that my photos of the 436 were backwards because all of the Lionel catalog pictures show the smoke stack in front. And Bob was right. Unfortunately, while researching the 436 in Greenberg's Guide on Lionel accessories, I photographed mine the same way I saw the 436 pictured in the guide (which was also backwards). If only I looked at the back cover of the guide, I would have seen the proper orientation, which is shown below. Bob said that Lionel probably used the same image in all of their catalogs.

So there we have it: a variation, a backward photo and some new information.

I'd like to thank the many members who e-mailed or wrote regarding the placement of their 436 smoke stacks, even the member who e-mailed the headline "Smoke Stack Middle" as a joke. He had me going for a minute. Anyway, thanks to everyone and I hope I've helped expand the knowledge base of this wonderful hobby, even just a little.

Magician Gerald Joseph who put on an incredible show that was both funny and entertaining with much audience participation, including Mark Boyd and Max Mizuhara performing a magic trick while dancing to the Village People. Anyway, you had to be there and you don't want to miss this next year.

Finally and unfortunately Sunday comes along. There is a flurry of activity when the doors open for guys looking for that last deal and then it is open to the public for the balance of the day. The meet usually starts winding down after lunch and officially closed at two o'clock. Next years meet is March 18,19, 20, 2005 at the Santa Clara Convention Center so mark your calendars and plan to be there.

The next regular meet for Nor-Cal will be May 29 at the Scottish Rite Center in Sacramento. This meet is sponsored by the Sacramento-Sierra Chapter of Nor-Cal. It is a great meet with layouts, lots of tables and food for sale. It is one of my personal favorites. I always see lots of good friends...
and I always seem to find that hard to get treasure (knock on wood).

As far as club business is concerned here are a few items to know. The San Ramon Meets will now be held at the Bollinger Canyon School in San Ramon. It is a much cleaner facility, they want us there and we can play basketball too. It is just on the other side of the freeway from Iron Horse School. Directions are in this newsletter. If we are successful in securing a facility, we will be having the September Meet in Sunnyvale. Many of our members live down south and have been requesting a meet. I know some of you from the north can’t travel that far south, but it is the same for these guys coming up to Oakland and San Ramon. We are giving it a shot and will see how it goes. You should plan to attend; you might see some different guys with different trains.

At the April Meet we had nominations for new officers. Pete Goodier accepted the nomination for Treasurer with the stipulation that if someone else was willing to run for treasurer he would decline the nomination. This happened and the new person running for treasurer is Bunk Coleman. If you do not know who Bunk is, he has been volunteering for as long as I can remember at the registration table at Cal-Stewart. Please accept this change and remember to vote.

I hope to see all of you at one of the next meets, or even at the convention in Pittsburgh. The folks in Pittsburgh have been working very hard on the 50th Anniversary Party so plan to be there. See you all soon.

Michael Andrews

Buy/Sell  Send your personal ads to the Editor (or phone)

Wanted:  American Flyer O-gauge 9-1/2 inch prewar freight cars with black frames and trucks, brass name/number plates– #3210 tank car, #3207 gondola car, #3211 caboose, the 1940 style diecast caboose, and the #1625-type streamlined passenger cars in 2-tone green. I need all these in Excellent condition, please.

John April (925) 254-4436

Wanted:  Any French “scale-like” O gauge trains, including Marescot, Fournereau and Munier, incl. kits, parts, catalogs. Six-wheel “Great Western” tender for Hornby (O-gauge) “County of Bedford.” Original boxes for Lionel prewar 264E and 265T in RED (for Red Comet set).

Richard White (925) 376-5821

Wanted:  HO gauge trains by ERTL– boxcars, gondolas, flatcars, buildings.

Richard White (925) 376-5821

Wanted:  Always buying Marklin, Hag, Fleischmann, and other European trains.

Dennis King (530) 877-4392

Wanted:  European toy trains in HO and N gauges– Marklin, Fleischman, Trix, Arnold, Hag, and what have you.

Paul Canton (650) 579-0836

Wanted:  Wooden trains and toys manufactured by the Seaver Toy Company, Burbank, California. The name is usually stamped on the bottom of the toy.

Fred Albers (559) 781-1713
Nor-Cal Express, Richard White, Editor, 7 Francisca Drive, Moraga, CA 94556-1583
Phone: (925) 376-5821
Email: toytrain13@hotmail.com

TIN PLATE JUNCTION

Toy and Model Trains, all gauges; layouts; die cast vehicles; toy train repairs
681-4th Street, Oakland (510) 444-4780
10% Discount on most items with current Nor Cal TCA card.
Website: www.Tinplatejn.com

JUST TRAINS
Largest Selection in the East Bay
“Friendly help for the young and the young at heart”

5650-H Imhoff Drive, Concord
Tues-Fri 10-5:30 PM Joan Bradford, Owner
Thurs. 10-7:00 PM Website: www.just-trains.com
Sat. 10-5:00 PM (925) 685-6566
Sun. 11-4:00 PM FAX: (925) 685-7997
Website: www.just-trains.com

Artwork this page courtesy of www.rrhistorical.com

Submit all address changes to:
Secretary Mark Boyd—norcaltca@spade.net