

METCA makes division history

by Kevin Quinn - 98-47167- President Metropolitan Division

Brief History:

The Year was 2015 and the location was Somerset NJ, the event- TCA 61st National Convention. This is where the Metca Division & the Somerset County 4H Trainmasters would meet and form a great friendship. I was the division's vice president when I first met Jim Wood. He is a TCA member and one of the adult leaders of SC4HT. We talked for a bit while the kids and other adults were putting together their 40x60 modular O gauge layout. As we were talking I am noticing this is not like any of the other layouts. After chatting for a bit, I let him get back to work. When I returned I had Doug Schembs (registration co-chair) & Rem Hunnewell (trading hall chair) in tow. We walked through the trading hall checking out all the trains for sale and then over to the layouts. We stopped at the SC4HT layout and admired its coolness and uniqueness. Not to take away anything from the other layouts they are all great in their own rights but the Trainmasters layout was different. That difference being the layout was made by the kids. The youth members of this club built and made the modular layout under the supervision of the adults. The three of us talked to some of their members and made the introductions. Adult leader Anthony Siniscalco, another TCA member, summarized the club operations to us as we toured the layout. The scenery on the modules ranged from small towns, to dinosaurs, to military airbases and showed the many talents of this club. I knew right away that this club would be a benefit to the hobby and a potential partner of Metca.



[members from METCA, SC4HT & SGMA pose at the 2015 TCA convention](#)

A few months went by and I proposed the idea of SC4HT becoming our kids club up to my Board of Directors. After some discussion I contacted Jim Wood to discuss the proposal. We emailed and had phone conversations discussing the issues and goals of this proposal. I brought Director Doug Schembs with me to a meeting at a Greenberg's show that the club was operating at. This is where Jim & Tony introduced us to the rest of his adult leadership. We sat down and hashed out an agreement that would be beneficial to SC4HT, Metca & the hobby. Doug and I pitched the goal: which is to promote the hobby and expand the memberships of the organizations. Understanding there was no reason to re-invent the wheel, whether with resources or logistics, Metca could never build what 4H already has. SC4HT has already mastered the concept of a kids' club. Issues of equal importance discussed were insurance, finances, commitment, and club autonomy. Our meeting was very straight forward. I made it quite clear that the Metropolitan Division would never interfere with 4H operations, we would always support. I asked in return that all the youth members become TCA & Metca Kid's club members. This was whole heartily agreed upon. The 75 minute meeting ended in positive spirits and handshakes. I was later invited to a meeting with the parents of the kids, where I gave a short presentation and answered questions. They were very happy that a large organization took interest in their club. One parent asked me "what do I get out of this?" I replied: personally, I get the satisfaction that the kids belong to the best train club in the country, professionally, my

organization gets 30 new members and the hope that one of them will replace me one day.” The parents approved of this historic partnership.



Metca President Kevin Quinn(center) & Director Doug Schembs (center right) meet with adult leaders of SC4HT



1976 Metca boxcar, SC4HT box car, 1978 Metca caboose- below 1971 Metca F3 in the lead



THE SC4HT

The Somerset County 4H Trainmasters is a club within the Somerset County 4H. They are one of 80 different clubs in the Somerset 4H. SC4HT is 16 years old. They have 30 youth members and 12 adult members. The 4H has strict rules pertaining to their clubs where youth is involved. The parents also play an active role and attend events. They have the distinction of being 1 of 2 4H train clubs in the country. The club was awarded the Blue Comet award for promoting model railroading to the public. The kids operate a 40x60 "O" Gauge modular layout made up from 66 unique modules. 4 main tracks encircle a 5 track, 55 foot yard and a roundhouse. The kids run all types of equipment on the layout ranging from Prewar to postwar to brand new out of the box. This club just isn't about running trains it's also about learning the hobby. The SC4HT have a curriculum that kids follow:

- First year- build bench work module
- Second year- landscape module
- Third year - custom design a car
- Fourth year - electrical details/ lighting
- Fifth year - scratch build a structure
- Senior- participates in large projects



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Example of one of the SC4HT modules

MEMBERS

Cary Brochinsky, 18, was the clubs president when I spoke to him about the train club. I asked him how he got involved in this club and trains. He told me his grandmother, Jan Lush, got him involved in both trains and 4H. Jan just happens to own the "BIG LITTLE TRAIN SHOP" in Somerville NJ. We talked about the hobby in general and TCA. When I asked him about Metca's involvement, he replied "Metca has a cool Kids Club". Chase Brickman, 17, has 11 years with 4H. He is a senior member and collects prewar trains. Some of his contributions to the trainmasters include working on the "Y" module and building a Ferris wheel with his father. He still has his first trains which was a Lionel Shell set. He told me he found the club by accident. He was looking for a dog show and found trains instead. He joined the club because he always had an interest in trains. Towards the end of our conversation he told me "I am very excited that Metca took an interest in us, where other clubs have overlooked us. I always liked TCA and I am proud to be part of it". Father and son team Joe and Thomas Presley are both TCA members and have 20+ years with SC4HT. When asked how they found the club they told me they attended the 4H fair. They showed interest and here they are all these years later enjoying their trains and club. Their first set was a MTH starter and now run modern Lionel and MTH. We talked about the individual modules of the layout, how different they are. Joe says "they reflect the personality of the member". Tom and Joe feel very positive about the partnership with Metca. They feel it's a great way to expand interest in the hobby. I couldn't agree more.



Metca President Kevin Quinn & SC4HT member Joe Zimmerman at the Metca table. Chase Brinkman with his homemade Ferris wheel.

Joe Zimmerman is a 17 year old senior member of the club. He is an operator of prewar and postwar trains. Joe also attended a 4H fair and showed interest in the club. The family set was a Texas Special 211 and his first set was a prewar American Flyer. Having just completed a 4 x 8 layout Joe enjoys running and fixing trains at home. I asked Joe how he got into TCA he told us Mike Petronella from Eastern Division got him involved. You got a good kid involved Mike. Thank you. Joe also told us that he is "excited that Metca took notice and appreciates us enough to include us in the TCA."



members doing two forms of operating



Proudly showing off his custom made module



planning the next module expansion



Metca officers stand with SC4HT leaders & members at their June 2016 show. The first show the Metca Kids club banner hung with SC4HT.

The Metca's kid club banner hung for the first time at the spring show of the SC4HT. The Metca table was set up and materials about TCA were displayed along with our divisional items. A 1971 Metca F3 pulled Metca cars around the modular layout for the first time at that June show. I want to thank Jim Wood for entertaining that first conversation we had about this venture. From that original conversation, I believe good things for our great hobby will come out of this friendship. The Metropolitan Division is very proud of this historic accomplishment. We are very fortunate to have SC4HT operate as our Kids club. They are a great club with good leadership and talented kids. We are looking forward to a long friendship. After all, one of TCA's basic premises is to promote friendship and fellowship in collecting and operating toy trains. For more info on the Somerset County 4H Trainmasters go to their website: <http://www.trainmasters.sc4h.org/index.shtml>