

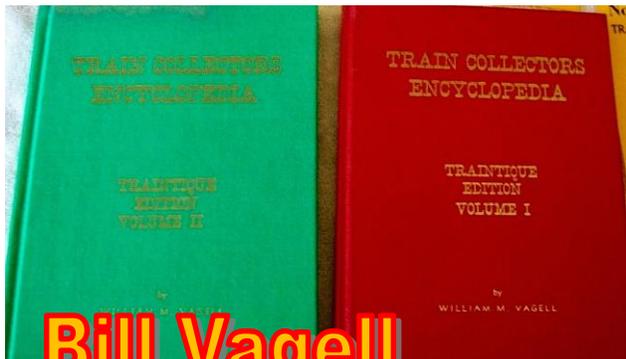
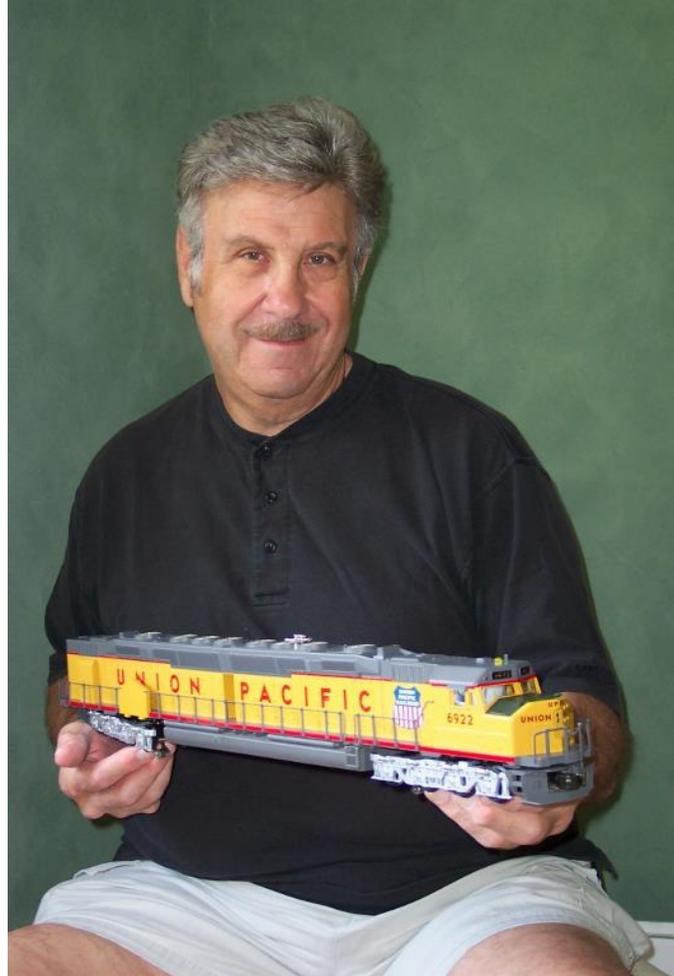
Apr-Jun.
2013

METCA WAYBILL

Vol. 34
Iss. 6

Metropolitan Division – Train Collectors Association

Donald M. Brill 1939-2013



**Bill Vagell
Remembered**



**Night at the
Museum**

Metropolitan Division Waybill Train Collector's Association Vol. 34 Issue 6



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TCA MISSION STATEMENT

To develop an appreciation of and to preserve an important segment of history~ Tinplate Toy Trains~ through research, education, community outreach, fellowship, establishment of collecting standards, and to promote the growth and enjoyment of collecting and operating toy, model, and scale trains.

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METCA Kid's Club

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Talk to me directly

Stu Rankin, President, 917-593-3990

Train Collector's Association Application

www.tcamembers.org/membership/application.pdf

Metropolitan Division (METCA) Application

www.metca.org/join_metca_membership.shtml

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The views expressed by the contributors to this publication are their own and not necessarily those of the Waybill editor or of the Train Collectors Association

Inside This Issue:

We remember Donald M Brill , director at METCA and Chairman of the 2015 TCA convention who was taken from us on April 11th 2013, much too soon. Les Mathis remembers his 45th anniversary as a TCA member and shares with us his recollections of Bill Vagell and the Treasure House, an important part of our hobby then. Happy Anniversary Les!. The kids and their parents had a great day at RMLI and METCA's Night at the Museum event. Make your plans to be there in 2014. Long Island Sounds updates you on the Long Island Train clubs. So... grab a cup of coffee, thumb through and enjoy!

Coming in the next Waybill:

Look for reports on your summer time railroad adventures. Also updates on coming METCA events. Its election time again and we will have complete information for all candidates for METCA officer and BOD positions. If you are interested in running, send your bio and info to Scot Kienzlen, our election chairman. Articles from MIGS? Oh Yes!

Asking for your help!

...This is your Waybill Folks! We want to hear from our MIGS about what they are doing in this hobby. Send us news, a photo(s), or a story. I want to see your name in the byline! Send your info to laskowsl@optonline.net

On The Cover:

Donald M Brill had a lifelong passion with Toy Trains. If you were involved with TCA, METCA or frequented the Northwest Jersey Train-o-Rama in Dover NJ High School, you likely crossed paths in this hobby with Don. We will miss him dearly.

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~ Stu Rankin



Picture this ... a 12 year old boy attending one of his first train shows, eyes as big as saucers, mouth agape. Well, that boy was me in 1980 and the train show was the Dover NJ Train-O-Rama. Fast forward a few years and through a chain of events, I found myself working for a train dealer by the name of Mel Price. Mel always had multiple tables at the Dover Show. For years and years, I worked for Mel. Through this, I became more than just acquaintances with Don Brill. Initially, we were on a first name basis. Then, we discovered that we were both interested in a few similar collecting categories (a couple of which were Mint Cars and TOFC's). We would often alert each other when we found a new item being offered. For a time, after Mel's passing, I'd get a table or two of my own at Don's show. It was one of the best shows in New Jersey. After a few shows, I had sold all I had for sale so I stopped getting tables. It was always special to get a Dover show flyer in the mail with a personal handwritten note inviting me to get tables once again.



Don and I had many conversations about trains (and we reminisced about the good times with Mel), METCA, and TCA Conventions. Invariably, I would mention that I didn't have the time to do one thing or another. As I mentioned why (it usually involved putting family first with the associated kids' activities), Don would always mention how much I reminded him of his son, Mike. Apparently, Mike and I are cut from the same cloth and we're both extremely involved with our kids. I had the pleasure to meet Mike at Don's wake.

Don was a big fan of TCA Conventions. I know I'll be at the one this year and I'll pause and take a moment to think about my departed friend. If you'd like to experience this too, there's a little time left to experience a part of what Don loved so much. Registration is still open for this year's TCA National Convention in St. Louis. Please join me there and get first hand insight into what we can expect when WE host the convention in 2015, plus have a great time. Don would like that. Register online at: <http://www.tca59.org/>



From The Editor's Desk

~ Larry Laskowski

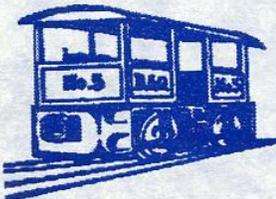
Welcome to the summer 2013 Waybill. We fondly remember Don Brill, long time METCA and BOD member and Chairman of the 2015 TCA National convention. Don was very involved with the toy train hobby, having promoted the Northwest Jersey Train -O-Rama for almost 40 years as well as the recent METCA Clinton Diner outdoor meets. We will miss him. We have a report on the Kid's club adventures at their "Night at the Museum" event. TCA member, Les Mathis reminisces about his 45 years as a TCA member, Bill Vagell's Treasure House and early METCA days. Check out his layout in the photo section. Don Fisher briefs us on the long association with Toy Trains at the Railroad Museum of Long Island. See what is happening at Long Island Clubs in the Long Island Sounds column. Make your plans to attend the 2013 Banquet. The next Waybill will feature **Layout building so** let's have some stories and photos of what our readers are doing on their layouts. Are you inspired? In the meantime, enjoy this edition of the Waybill. I hope you like it.



It's Election Time!!

~ Scot Kienzlen

We are approaching another METCA BOD election; per our bylaws, this happens every two years. We ask that you submit your intention to seek a BOD position at this time; candidate applications will close on July 30, 2013. This is an exciting time in METCA history. The division has made great strides in the past few years, and we need your help for it to continue. Successful candidates will be on the METCA BOD as we host the TCA's 2015 National Convention, championed by the late BOD member, Don Brill. Consider becoming a member of the METCA BOD; contact Scot Kienzlen~ 973-945-1401 or email friendlytm@hotmail.com.



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METCA Has Lost an Icon in the Toy Train Hobby.



Donald M Brill.....TCA 73-5930

Don Brill, METCA BOD, 2015 TCA Convention Chairman, and Promoter of the Northwest Jersey Train-O-Rama (The Dover Show) for almost 40 years; passed away on April 11 after a short illness. Don was part of METCA's family for a long time and was the driving force in bringing the TCA National Convention to our METCA Division. METCA's BOD extends our deepest sympathy to Don's Family. Donations may be



made to: The Donald Brill — Dover High School Memorial Scholarship, 100 Grace Street, Dover, NJ 07801.



2015 National Convention News

~ Stu Rankin & Scot Kienzlen

Planning for the 2015 Convention continues. We announce that the Convention will be Co-Chaired by METCA President Stu Rankin and METCA Immediate Past President Scot Kienzlen. Stu and Scot will need your continued support to make this Convention a success. So far, all committees have reported with emphasis on Trips and Tours. That report, focusing on (20) different venues was given by Committee Chair Fred Hunt. The effort put forth by committee will guarantee our visitors a large selection of choices. These choices encompass throughout of Tri-State ares. Our next committee meeting will be announced shortly Please remember that there is still more spaces available to serve on the various committees. In Don's words.....



“Remember, this is a BIG DEAL, a really BIG DEAL. Be a part of it! Don Brill,”



METCA LI Show Updates

~ Larry Laskowski

Updates on Long Island METCA shows-----The Freeport Recreation Center, the location of our METCA show in September 2012 is still unavailable due to Hurricane Sandy restoration activity. Recently we did receive good news for a possible Howard Beach Show at St Helens on December 7th. Alas, however, the good news was short lived; the parish decided not to host the show. Back to square one. We need a location available with about 100 tables, with grade level access, a kitchen/food service for coffee etc., convenient off street parking and nearby highway access in Queens or Western Nassau. If you know of a venue that meets these requirements and can contact the venue and find out the cost and its availability, please contact me at laskowsl@optonline.net with the details . With your help we can get this show in the schedule. We could also use some MIGS help to run these shows. Use the Email if you can help!

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I realized this morning that I joined TCA 45 years ago this year. It got me thinking about the individual who convinced me to join, Bill Vagell. Bill owned the Treasure House train shop in Garfield, NJ and was quite a character. I first met Bill in 1963 when I serendipitously passed his store. He had a huge sign in the window extolling the benefits of joining the TCA. "Who needs it"????? I thought. I knew my trains pretty well; at least I thought I did. I stopped in and was absolutely awestruck with the amount of "non post-war"????? trains. Bill asked if I was interested in anything and I said I was just looking. "Well I'm having lunch so if you don't want anything don't bother me"?????. That put me off a little and I left. The next time I had occasion to stop in was several years later. In the interim I had no time for trains, getting married, buying a house, and starting a family. My best friend had in the meantime connected with Bill, had become very friendly with him and on Bill's advice joined TCA. By 1968 I was beginning to get back in to building a layout. My 752 power car had a broken pickup assembly. I brought it to Bill to be repaired on my friend's recommendation. Bill gruffly said he didn't have time to fix such a trivial item and that he would sell me the pick-up assembly and I could do it myself. He then spent 20 minutes showing me how to put the assembly on. Cost for an original 752 pickup and lesson \$2.50. During the lesson he talked about the advantages of belonging to TCA, gave me an application which he signed and told me to get my friend to sign it and send it in to TCA. The rest is history as they say. I got to know Bill fairly well and there are several anecdotes about him I would like to share with this group.

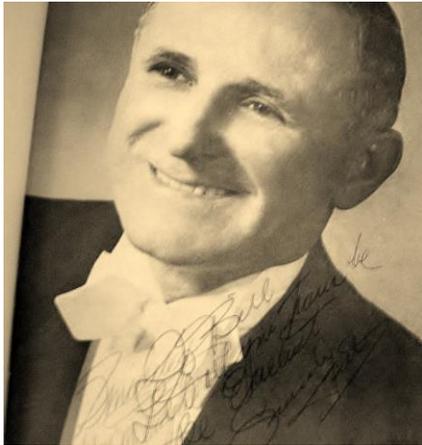


As many of you know Bill Vagell was the go to? guy for parts in the 60's and early 70's. The METCA meets were then being held in the Kenilworth, NJ VFW Hall. The street it is on is narrow and the small parking lot across the street always filled long before the start of the meet. This meant you generally had to park on the next block which was inconvenient to say the least. So here we were all waiting for Bill to show up with his parts. I had my usual list and about an hour into the meet everyone who needed parts were becoming antsy. Then Bill shows up in his station wagon and double parks in front of the Hall to unload. Along comes a Kenilworth Police Officer and tells Bill he can't double park and unload. We're all standing there offering to help bring his boxes inside. Instead Bill assails the Officer with a few four and seven letter words including one questioning the officer's parents' marital status. Before the Officer can respond Bill gets in the car and drives off... Never to attend another METCA meet in Kenilworth. While it may have absolutely nothing to do with Bill boycotting the Kenilworth meet the venue seemed to go downhill rapidly after that. I personally started attending Joe Ranker's Meets in Wayne, NJ as well as the few that Bill held in Hasbrouck Heights, NJ, preferring them over Kenilworth. Perhaps the real reason was that the building became too small to handle the dealers and buyers and parking really, really was terrible.

At the 1978 National Convention near Boston Bill was holding court one evening at the Holiday Inn. Among his stories was that late one Christmas Eve a customer calls him at home and says the locomotive he just bought at Treasure House doesn't smoke. In typical persona Bill tells him to put a cough drop in the smoke stack and call him after Christmas. Sure enough the customer calls the day after Christmas and angrily tells Bill that the cough drop didn't help and that it has gummed up the smoke unit big time. Bill said he had to replace the entire smoke unit as well as clean up the loco where the molten sugary mass and spilled over the top of the smoke stack. Bill grinned and related that he never used that line again.

Bill Vagell was indeed a magician for 30 years. A bio of him appears in the Lionel house organ All Aboard at Lionel. (March 1954). I believe it was reproduced in the Q a few years ago. Bill did attend the METCA meets in Garfield but never went back to Kenilworth after his encounter with the law. Toward the end of the time he ran the Treasure House Bill had a fire in the basement of 27 Passaic Street. I've forgotten exactly when but my best friend bought several items from Bill. Some were salvageable but most of the items were a total loss. I remember the items being standard gauge. I restored a fire damaged 1767 Baggage car I bought at York many years ago that was said to be out of the basement fire. The fire did not destroy the name and number badges but turned them from a medium blue to black in color.

If Bill liked you he would offer things a discount. After he closed the Treasure House he worked out of his garage at home. I was there one day to buy a wheel puller. He asked if I was interested in a 128 Lionel Terrace with Station (115 Station/128 Terrace combo), 940 Power station and a 94 High Tension tower, all for \$150. The items were in excellent condition. The terrace had replacement lamps. I didn't have \$15 no less \$150. End of story. I told my best friend, who

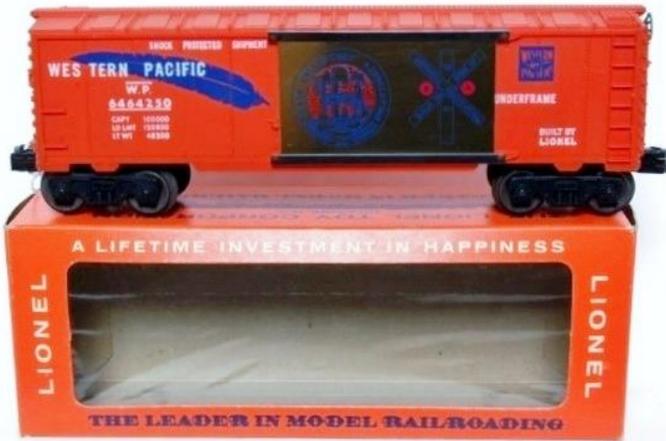


was friendly with Bill and he bought them. His wife had a screaming fit but when they sold the items several years later to help finance their retirement home she changed her tune. One day at Bill's garage I noticed a string of 500 series standard gauge freight cars that had been shortened, riding on single trucks. Were they for sale? No. He told me who made them but I can't remember. They always fascinated me and I wonder who ended up with them. They were beautiful.

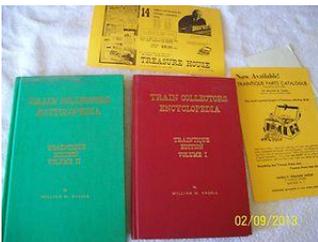
One of my last encounters with Bill before he passed was at York. I had over 200 E-units I had taken out of the Dumpster at 28 Sager Place. I wrote an article on it in the Q several years ago. I'll have to look up when I did it. Anyway Bill looks at the e-units and starts to laugh. What's so funny asks I? Well says Bill "Lionel put them in the trash because they were the ones made in Japan and malfunctioned". Seems the cross-piece that held the ratchet and pall assembly was cut a wee bit short and it would fall out of the guide locking up the e-

unit. Obviously this made the piece useless. OOPS. I stopped selling the units. No one ever complained about the ones I sold and I did keep one each of the various types which I still have in a cigar box.

Despite his gruffness on occasion, I always enjoyed visiting and talking with Bill. Once I asked him about his involvement with the Black 2332 GG1's. He wouldn't give me a straight answer and just grinned.



He did enjoy talking about how he got the last of the 6464 box cars out of Hillside that TCA used to make up the 1967 Convention cars. When I saw him at the house his wife Marie would always come out and say hello. She was a most gracious lady. Bill and Marie had two sons, Craig and Robert. I never met them in person only speaking to one on the telephone after Bill's passing.



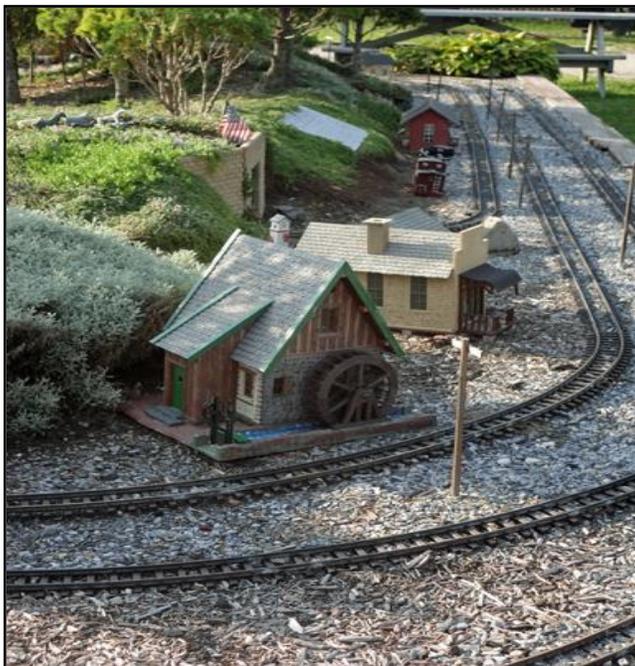
Bill was an extremely talented man, heavily involved in the field of making and selling reproduction parts. All of them excellent. He also put out a couple of pamphlets and the "Train Collectors Encyclopedia" a 125 page or so hard covered tract which had many photos of contemporary collectors and their collections as well as wiring diagrams and bulletins on variations and fakes, and a complete price list of repro parts available.

Thanks for taking these few moments in reading about Bill. He was truly one of a kind. ~ Les Mathis



~ by Don Fisher

Since 1993 there has been a place for toy trains and scale model trains at the Railroad Museum of Long Island (RMLI). Following our 1990 opening in the LIRR Greenport Freight Station, members of the Long Island Model Railroad Engineers of Medford, NY offered to create a HO scale layout of the LIRR Greenport Yard (GY), circa 1955. This sixteen feet long operating display has served us well for twenty years and is a great teaching tool for our Museum docents! In 2012, volunteers extending the layout another sixteen feet to include renderings of the Riverhead RMLI and geographic features of the trip from Riverhead to Greenport. With all the track work and Riverhead Yard (LD) nearing completion, scenery for Arshamomaque pond and inlet are now being added on Wednesday evenings



G scale model railroading came to the RMLI at Riverhead beginning in 1998. Our late Trustees, Mr. Ron Freeman and Mr. Don Bender were avid Garden Railroaders and with the help of the Long Island Garden Railway Society (LIGRS) built a beautiful three-track, raised, outdoor layout at the Museum. A real, honest to goodness, original LIRR gateman's shanty serves to house the transformers, controls and rolling stock for this garden railroad. The LIGRS continues to care for this layout in memory of Ron and Don and to this day it stimulates the imagination of the many youngsters and their families who visit the Museum

In 2005, TCA member and RMLI Vice President George Faeth brought O gauge railroading into the RMLI. With the guidance of TCA member and RMLI Trustee Bob Mintz, (now our National TCA Treasurer!), we received a sixteen feet by seven feet layout from the Manorville Chamber of Commerce. Museum volunteers tore the layout down and rebuilt it to allow the running of three train sets, a bump and go trolley and a bump and go MOW car. This layout continues to excite visitors to our gift shop at the Museum.



In 2011 RMLI opened the World Famous - Lionel Visitor's Center Layout - from Chesterfield, Michigan at Riverhead. A tip O' the hat to TCA member Al Schwartz! Al was responsible for bringing Lionel and the RMLI together to save from the



dumpster this replica of Lionel's 1949 NYC Showroom Layout. In 2012 volunteers performed maintenance on the exhibit by installing heavy-duty push button switches to activate the sixty-eight accessories on the layout and they remodeled the "tower" where all the Lionel ZW transformers live to operate the twelve train sets on the layout. This winter 2013, volunteers improved the electric distribution system from the "tower" out under the layout and leveled and replaced track on the American Flier line and Lumber line atop the layout.

Not to leave a scale out, a four feet by four feet N gauge layout, donated to the Museum, is being restored by RMLI member Francis Amendola. Look for that train set to be on display in 2014!

The RMLI is not satisfied to stay at home with its trains! We have a very active "outreach" program where volunteers bring their trains to run in public on the Museum's traveling O and HO layouts. Some venues that have enjoyed our Traveling Trains include Western Suffolk BOCES James E. Allen Jr.-Sr. High School, Hallockville Museum Farm and Folk Life Center, the Northport-East Northport Public Library and the Community Action Southold Town Holiday Happening.



A Night at the Museum RMLI

~ by Don Fisher and Steve Musso

RMLI and METCA hosted "A Night at the Museum" event at the Railroad Museum of Long Island on the evening of Saturday April 6th. There were 8 children and their parents participating. Don Fisher, RMLI and Steve Musso, METCA opened the program introducing all including MIGS Gary Taylor and Mike Fiorella who showed how to build the dioramas. Officer John Rattarazzo from the MTA/LIRR Police Tracks Program gave a safety around the railroad presentation which included



numerous photos of what not to do and what the results might be if you do something wrong. Our group went outside to take a ride on the historic LIRR 1964 World's Fair G-16 park train. Don Fisher took the group on a tour of the Historic Lionel Visitors Center Layout and explained how the layout was built by Lionel employees in Michigan and how it came to Riverhead. He also had a sample of different scales of trains to show how they differed. We then went into the work room to start building the dioramas. Each child received a 12" x 12" piece of plywood, several different size and shape pieces of Styrofoam, glue and paint. MIGS Gary

Taylor and Mike Fiorella showed them how to get started and handed out various tools to shape the foam. The parents/grandparents/guardians jumped right in to help. They then added ground foam. The pieces were then put on shelves to dry. Following dinner Don Fisher gave a presentation on layout wiring. He explained how a transformer drops the voltage and how different wire is used for buses and drops and how to color code your wire. He showed them how to wire a layout using a 4 x 8 HO layout letting each of the children take turns at adding a wire. When it was all wired we ran an engine on the layout. Next we went into the work room to finish the dioramas. Gary and Mike showed them how to make trees; we also had various stones and ballast. Bags were given out with some things brought by officer Rattarazzo and the kids went home with their dioramas.





Summer on the Long Island Sound is often about boating and water sportsbut not always when it comes to trains. Steve Scagnelli of the Trainmasters of Babylon club reports that the club had its first meeting in its new location. They have selected and voted on a layout design that they plan to start building in July after some work on the room is completed. Also they have just inherited one of the Sopranos layouts form the NJ HiRailers and hope to have that up and running soon. Their new address is 120 Schmitt Blvd in Farmingdale. NY. It is convenient to the LIE so come out and give a hand.



Central Operating Lines has also relocated, their new home located at 50A Carlough Road in Bohemia NY, near the Long Island MacArthur airport. It is a larger location and yes the new layout will be larger. Work is well underway with a bigger new layout with roadbed, track and bridge construction moving along. Most of the structures from the previous layout have been saved and will be re-used on the layout. New ones are planned as well. They hope to have an Open House this fall, schedule to be announced. Check the fall waybill for details.



Bob Trnka reports that Nassau Lionel Operating Engineers have two major projects in work this year. They have begun the initial construction on what will be an urban city on the south end of the layout. The city will be built above the existing tracks. Estimated completion date is the end of 2014. The scenery in the "Great Gorge" area is in the final stages of completion, next step will be to add more bridges. The harbor and post war Lionel accessory area are in the planning stages.



The Railroad Museum of Long Island has begun their 2013 season with Saturdays at Riverhead since April 6th. The Lionel Visitors Center Layout has been tuned up and is running perfectly for your enjoyment. The layout features operating stations for the youngsters where they can get up close and personal with operating accessories on this layout. Their full schedule at both the Riverhead and Greenport locations begins the Memorial Day weekend. RMLI will have its annual Railfest at its Riverhead Location on the weekend of August 24-25th. METCA will be there with a table and train racing for the youngsters. Look for the Sunrise Trail Hi Railers at the event. They will have their modular layout on display and in operation. You can get there by LIRR so check the schedule.



~ Stuart Rankin 87-25191

2011 was METCA's 50th Anniversary. When I was thinking about what type of car we should issue to honor such a milestone, my mind was continually drawn back to the concept of using a memorable corporate name; one with well known brand recognition in the METCA geographical region. After much consideration, one of the leading candidates was HESS, as in Hess Gasoline. Hess Toy Trucks are popular among train collectors and the majority of Hess' corporate administration is performed in their offices in Woodbridge, NJ and New York, NY (both in the METCA region). Well, after many phone calls, voice mails, and emails (plus my offer of a face to face meeting), I received the "final answer" from Hess Corporate Communications. Unfortunately their answer was No. So, what did become METCA's 50th Anniversary Car? For inspiration, I borrowed a copy of Lionel's 1961 catalog from METCA Past President, Scot Kienzlen. Right there, in full color, was Lionel's announcement of a new style car for 1961. It was the Fort Knox Mint Car in silver. Well, it seemed to be a natural fit, to issue a 50th Anniversary Edition in a gold color. We had the car made



and it was a resounding success. Not only did we honor the 50th Anniversary of the METCA Division, it also honored the 50th Anniversary of the introduction of a landmark product in the history of Lionel.



The METCA Logo – What Old is New Again!!

~ Stuart Rankin 87-25191

Up until a few years ago, the electronic version of the METCA logo was a scanned in image of a Xeroxed copy of a copy of a copy. Needless to say, it was grainier than a field of wheat just before harvest time. Your METCA Officers were quite limited regarding the use and placement of the logo as it was of such poor quality that we couldn't print it larger than approximately 1 inch tall. However, all of that changed with the help of METCA Member Joe Mania and his TCA friend Harry Rado. At a York Meet, I was lamenting to Joe about how displeased I was with the lack of a quality copy of the METCA logo. Joe mentioned that he knew someone with graphics ability and he'd see if that person (Harry Rado) could create a new digital copy. Well, boy did he ever. Shortly after that York Meet, Joe forwarded me an email from Harry which contained a 5 Meg TIF file. Harry had completely redrawn our logo. He didn't change the logo, he just redrew it entirely in the computer, so now we had an electronic copy that we could resize and/or change the color of it. To explore the limits of Harry's file, I attempted to print the logo to a size of 2 feet by 3 feet (I have that capability at my office). I was concerned that at such a large print size that it would appear jagged and grainy. WOW!!! Let's just say that this larger than life printout appeared as smooth as silk. Thanks to Harry Rado, through METCA Member Joe Mania, your

METCA BOD now has a quality graphic image of our logo that we can be proud of. In fact, we recently purchased a large vinyl banner on which we used our digital logo. This never would have been possible without the help of Joe and Harry. Thanks Guys!!!!



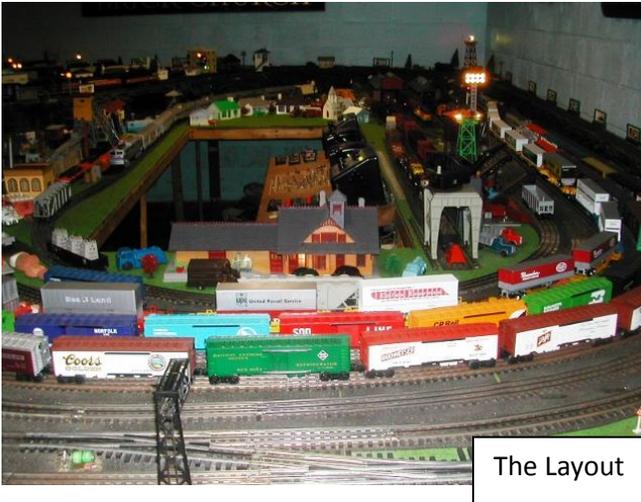
Out with the Old!



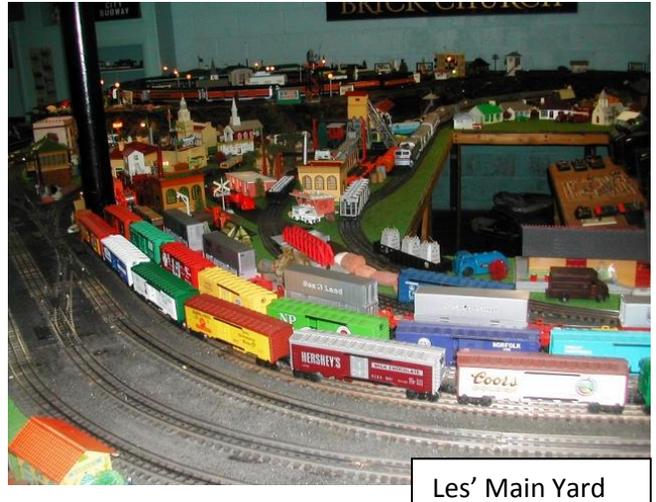
In with the New!



One of the fun things about being in the TCA for 45 years is all the trains you come across and the special ones that you choose to put on your layout and run. Indeed just building and having that layout over that time is fun in itself. I am enjoying every minute of it. I thought it would be nice to share some views of the layout with METCA members so here a few pics for you. I hope that these inspire you to send in some photos of your layout. Regards.....Les



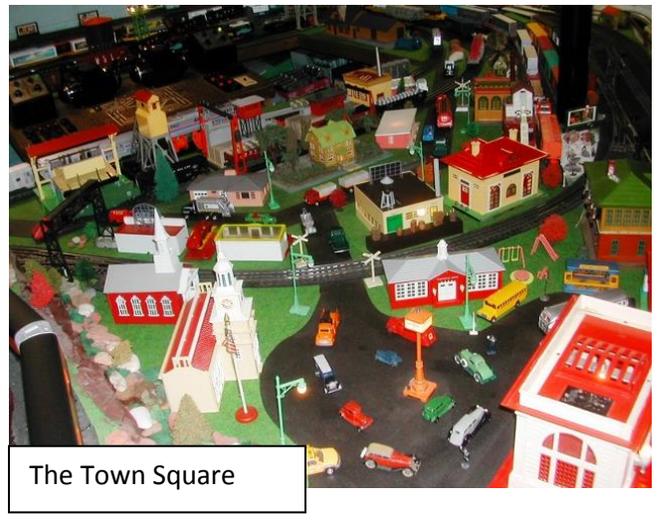
The Layout



Les' Main Yard



Riding the TCA Express



The Town Square

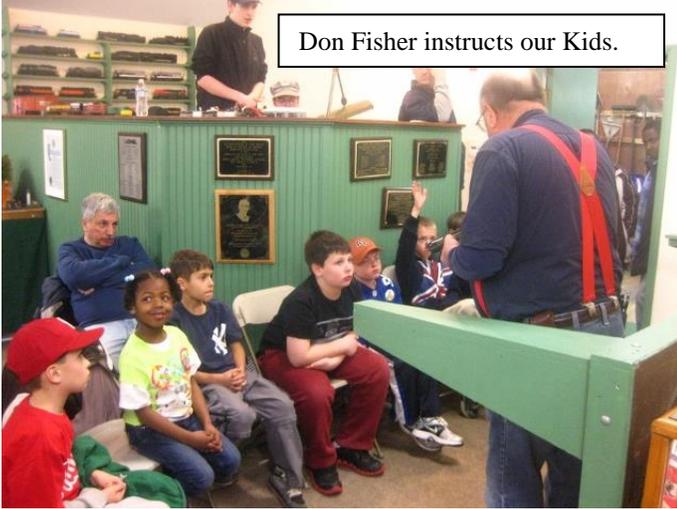


Scene of the Wreck



Subways ready to Roar

Riverhead N.Y.....METCA held its Night at the Museum event at RMLI The kids had a great time as well as parents, RMLI folks and our METCA folks. For those that missed it, here are some photos for you to peruse. Don't miss it the next time. Get in a photo on this page next time.



Don Fisher instructs our Kids.



Kids working on Dioramas



Bobby working on feeders



Jared and Dad



Bobby and Grandpa



Ben and Dad



Mia and Mom



Ben & Steve