



The Semaphore

May 2019 – Celebrating 25

Official Newsletter of the

Chicagoland Lionel Railroad Club

The CLRC Celebrates It's 25th Anniversary

Eighty members of the Chicagoland Lionel Railroad Club enjoyed celebrating our first twenty-five years. We started out as members with a dream and became the best Regional Lionel Train Club in the country. Our banquet shared many moments of our history as presented by a [VIDEO](#) made by Ken Jaeger. Highlights of our history include: 1. Our beginnings by making modules and setting them up monthly for members to run. 2. Doing a train hobby short with Bozo the Clown and his show. 3. Working with Lionel to develop our 30 plus car series. 4. Finding and purchasing our CLRC Train House in New Lenox, IL. 5. Working with Louis Kovach and Neil Young on the Legacy program. 6. Using our facility to demonstrate the Legacy system to the Midwest with Lionel's Mike Braga and J. Don Reece. 7. Becoming the first Lionel Ambassador Club Winner in its inauguration year and every year thereafter. 8. Visits by Lionel's President Howard Hitchcock, and Our Ambassador Coordinator Lauren Morris, twice and the second time with Mike Philips Vice-President and Ryan Kunkle. 9. Running the annual Boy Scout Railroading Merit Badge Day Program. 10. Participating at many train shows including LCCA, LOTS, TCA, TTOS, WGH, and Amtrak conventions/shows. 11. Our annual celebration parties. 12. The first Train Club to become a Lionel Service Station. 13. Super Website. 14. Facebook interaction.

We are a club of many members with enthusiasm and talent to take our dreams to our current reality and much, much more!



Link to CLRC Twenty-fifth Anniversary Videos, go to: www.clrctrains.com



Beth, Bill and Tom



Wayne, Linda, Tom and Tom

The CLRC's 25th Anniversary Celebration Continues

Below is the speak Herb made at the banquet.

I enjoy so much being part of our Railroad Club. In association with all of you, I have and continue to make friends with everyone here and those who did not have a chance to come today. Our club started with a casual gathering at Union Station. We had our first meeting at Berwyn Toy Trains when it was on Harlem Avenue, March 19, 1994. We threw out our wishes and incorporated our realities to start the club.

Corners were made by the club and members made the straights, incorporating our own personalities. Many road names and scenery strategies were incorporated. We began running at Klas Restaurant in Cicero, IL. We were even on Tracks Ahead, a PBS program highlighting nationwide layouts. It was part of a tribute to Jerry Brettschneider who inspired the forming of our club. We ran trains monthly on Fridays in various parts of Cook and DuPage Counties. We unified all the modules and purchased a trailer to store the layout. Word got out and local malls wanted us to share our layout with its guests for a significant fee. Life was good.

One of our dreams was to have a building. We knew we would have to earn it. We contacted Lionel to sell CLRC club cars, produced by us, built by Lionel and reached an agreement to do just that. We were the first regional club Lionel went into business with. With all the cars we purchased and sold, it was literally a million-dollar deal.

In the process of selling the cars, we advertised in Classic Toy Trains and O-Gauge Rail-Roading magazines. We became recognized nationwide. We were displaying our modular layout at LCCA, LOTS, TTOS, and TCA conventions. When Lionel had its 100th Anniversary Party combining the LCCA and LOTS conventions into one, of all the layouts available in the country, only the Chicagoland Lionel Railroad Club's modular railroad was allowed. Our national recognition continued

helping us make good on our dream to get our own building.

We began a building search in DuPage County and Cook County, where most of our members were. We found many buildings, but none did the job until we found our New Lenox home. The building was so big, we had provisions to store the trailer, have a meeting room, and yes, a big layout. To start running trains, we set up the module layout. We also found out that we needed space to congregate. We were a club of members with a common interest in trains and wanted to talk about it. As things go, members began enjoying each other's company. Once reality hit, we gave up the in-house trailer storage and meeting room. A conversation area was established by the diner. Eventually Television, DVD, and other enhancements were made to support conversation and informal gathering. The mezzanine level was built right away for additional room where we now have a sitting area and the Thomas Layout.

Our next hurdle was to rezone our building to accommodate the number of people going into the building. We also needed a rear door installed. We are the only condominium in our complex with a rear door. The zoning for having many people is official with Will County. Actually, we bought two condominiums, each with its own bathroom. We decided to cap the southside bathroom and make an additional bathroom on the north side. This allowed us to have a full flowing layout on the south wall. The Beltline RR Division is now there surrounded with a 120' background picture.

Through the years Lionel has recognized our club as an asset to their organization more than any other regional train club. We have had Neal Young and Louis Kovach, designers of Lionel's digital control systems, at our location. We were the kickoff demonstration area to the Midwest of their new Legacy control system. Through the new Ambassador program, the President of Lionel, Howard Hitchcock and our Ambassador Coordinator Lauren Morris visited our location and a second time with Vice-President Mike Phillips Ryan Kunkle.

We also have established our Open Houses, Birthday Parties, Boy Scout Railroading Merit Badge Day and the Lionel Ambassador Program at our facility. Each one pays tribute to our guests and gives us income to keep our dues to a minimum.

I want all of the charter members to stand. These are the ones who brought our club to the building. At this time, I want everyone to look at each other as this is the future of our club.

TOAST – I THANK ALL OF YOU FOR BEING MY FRIENDS AND FORMING THE FUTURE OF OUR CLUB.



CLRC LIONEL “WISH LIST”

Hi Members, this is Joe Smolinski the CLRC Facebook and Website guy. I'm emailing you to make you aware of a new Lionel Ambassador Club benefit for 2019. Below are the details direct from Lionel. Please read. I will be the collection point person on this so please send me your “Wish List” by June 23, 2019 so I can put a complete list to send to Lionel before the 07/01/2019 deadline. You can email your “Wish List” at Info@CLRCTrains.com or Josephsmolinski1@comcast.net.

If you're wondering what kinds of things to ask for here as some examples:

Joe Smolinski – Would like Lionel to make E6 and E8A diesel engines with the Lackawanna road name.

Joe Smolinski - Would like Lionel to make more Thomas the Tank engines like Toby, Emily, Salty Henry, Gordon or others.

Jeff Mills – Would like Lionel to make subway and / or elevated cars with the Chicago Transit Authority road name.

Additional benefits of Ambassadors:

We value the opinion and the wants/needs of our club Ambassadors which is why we are giving your club the opportunity to make recommendations of new product they would like to see Lionel released in the future (2020 and beyond). If your recommendation is chosen, we will place an acknowledgement of your clubs choice in the catalog.

1) To clarify, product choices are not guaranteed to be picked for future releases but we want all recommendations/wants. A major factor could be tooling availability etc.

2) Product recommendations must be submitted to me on a word document by July 1, 2019 in order to be submitted for consideration.

May Clubhouse and Layout Update

May was a very busy month around the clubhouse. The scenery crew made progress on many areas of the layout. The area around the logging camp saw some incredible changes. The bridges were installed and a waterfall, with a smile, was added. The area along historic Route 66 received some additional changes. In addition to the great work on the scenery, members cleaned and prepared the clubhouse for the Open House Event and the Boy Scout Merit Badge Clinic.

The May Open House Event occurred on a beautiful Saturday morning. Many of our regular visitors came to see the layout once more before the summer break. The visitors who were new to the layout were amazed by the scenery and the trains in operation.

Thank you to everyone who helped to make it a great month.



Waterfall with a “smile”



Get Your Kicks on Route 66

CLRC 25th Anniversary Club Car Two

Our Anniversary car TWO is Lionel’s modern LionScale 57’ O-Gauge Refer Car, with Rotating Bearing Cap Trucks, separately applied extras, including the ladders and more. This car will enjoy riding with the rest of your CLRC consist on your railroad or enjoyed on your wall of other CLRC trophy cars.

This car is made in the USA at Lionel’s Headquarters, Concord, NC. Over 50 of the 100 cars have been sold. Sales are first come first serve. Get yours before they are gone.



Classified Ads

This space will be used to advertise items for sale by the Club or by members.

Club owned items may be purchased by seeing **Bob Ciolino** at the clubhouse or contacting him via phone at 708-828-2041 or e-mail at robertciolino@att.net. For member owned items, the seller must provide contact information. Member listings are restricted to two specific items, or a general listing identifying the type(s) of items for sale. Listings will continue to appear in the newsletter for two consecutive months, or until sold, whichever is the shorter time. Member listings shall be submitted to **Curt Ward** either via e-mail at cward508@msn.com or via snail mail at 1211 Prairie Creek Trail Joliet IL 60431

Do you have something you want included in the newsletter?

Club member Curt Ward will be creating and distributing the newsletters. If you have material for the newsletter, you can send it to Curt via e-mail at cward508@msn.com. To help Curt please use MS Word to create the information and format it into a two column page.



Coming Down the Tracks

Important upcoming events:

Open House Event – September 21st

Open House Event – October 19th