

and he brought a whole train set we gave away as prizes and we actually gave away some pretty nice stuff for the fact there were so few of us at the time. Really the first Annual Convention was really very very good, we had tours of the Rock Island yards and I have a movie of the first Annual Convention. It's a nice color movie of the first Annual Convention which shows the old cars, man it's amazing how the cars back then look against what they look like today. I even have pictures, movies, of the Lionel representatives, who don't work for them anymore but we really had a nice first Annual Convention. I say I was really worried but when all those guys came, then I knew it was OK.

And then, of course, we had problems like Stockdale and we had some other problems along the way here and there. It took about three, or four, or five years and then, boy, finally the membership started to really grow. I think Chuck Seddon is really responsible for getting the Club rolling because he was President three straight years and then after that, he served in other positions. There were a lot of guys that helped out, I just mentioned some of the guys that helped me to really get the Club going at first like Jim Greytak who was a colonel in the Army at the time. He printed all my literature and propaganda in the first few months I was starting the Club, I just didn't have money to send out propaganda I needed so he helped me by being able to run copies of stuff for me, like the first Constitution and questionnaires. I used to send out questionnaires to ask the members what they wanted what they wanted to talk about all kinds of trains or whether they just wanted strictly Lionel. I got the first constitution established by asking a lot of questions and sending out constant questionnaires, about ten. I still have all them at home. And all the records I have I intend to turn over to the Club some day.

By the way, I got that name propaganda from the last Charter Member who ever joined, number 83, whose name is Lou Sinclair and he wrote me one time and mentioned my propaganda. I thought that was a good word so from then on I used it, the word propaganda.

*DD: Why did the Charter Members stopped at number 83? Was there a reason?*

**JG:** That's a good question. I figured the first guys should have some kind of an honor and how long do you allow fellows to join and be Charter Members. I just had to guess at a date so I just one day put out some propaganda and I said that anybody who joined before June 25, or I forget what day it was would be a Charter Member and anybody after that would become a Regular Member. I just had to make my own deadline and I think I allowed like five or six months, I don't remember, but it was made up. I had to make up some stuff as I went along, because there was nobody but me and I had to make all the decisions.

*DD: Getting back to your first attempt, do you think you would have started the club if you had other contacts in town and, if you had other people to talk to, would you have started a national club?*

**JG:** I think so, like I say, there were two main reasons for trying to start a club. First off, there were no magazines except *Model Railroader* and *Railroad Model Craftsman* and they never put anything about Lionel in print. Now, I think it's ironic how all of a sudden they came out with the magazine *Classic Toy Trains*. It took them more than twenty years to wake up to how many members are in our Club. It took Dick Christianson, who use to be Editor of *Toy Trains Magazine*, to get a magazine out that had a lot of Lionel information in it. By the way, *Toy Trains Magazine* was very successful, it was always sold out, every time you tried to get one thirty years ago, boy you better be the first one at the stand or you didn't get one. But when *Model Railroader* bought them out, right away they stopped making *Toy Trains Magazine*. So I knew from reading *Model Railroader* magazine and from the fact there was a magazine called *Toy Trains*, a magazine many, many years ago that there was a lot of Lionel collectors around and also the fact that the local club I started became very successful in like a month or so, then I just wasn't satisfied.

The second reason was you used to hear a lot of people knock Lionel, especially HO'ers. So, I would say the other main reason was to put together a group of people who felt pride in the name Lionel. The funny part of all that, I always thought, was darn if every time I knew a few guys who had HO, every time I was around them, their cars

were always on the side of the track, derailling, they were monkeying with them, the couplers were breaking, they were constantly having trouble with their stuff and my little old trains, what few I had, I never had any trouble so, that is just a combination of different things, just me seeing things and reading the magazines, I just felt there was a real need and I used to really get peeved when I used to hear people knock Lionel - so -

*DD: When I go back into my early days of collecting, I always had three or four guys I used to talk to. While it wasn't a formal club we at least had people to share interests with and I never felt the need for me to start a club - maybe it was because I had friends there. I wonder if your early history might have lead you to the need to have a club.*

**JG:** Well see, another thing that really made me realize how important is was needed to have a Lionel Club was that day when they brought that American Flyer collector over and he says we ought to change the name to American Flyer Club. The thing that really got me more than anything about that so much was that these other collectors agreed with him and his point was that there were other guys there besides Lionel and maybe we should call it a neutral name, like Toy Train Club. What really got me was the fact that there was not any pride in the Lionel name, not even among Lionel collectors. That was the thing that really got me going.

*DD: How long was your older club in existence?*

**JG:** You mean the first club, the local club?

*DD: Yes, The Lionel Collectors Club ....*

**JG:** Oh that club, the first time, I can't remember exactly but I would guess the first club, the one I called the Lionel Collectors Club, it might have been a year, to a year and a half. And, remember, it was just a local club, which by the way every time I mention to the local club let's try to get somebody from Omaha or Minneapolis or someplace - "Oh no! we don't want to get too big because when and where are we going to meet?" You see, they always had negative stuff. It worked great as long as

*(Continued on Page 22.)*