

Second Half of the LCCA's First Decade, 1976-80

1976 - More Growth

With the momentum of growing membership from the 1973-75 time period continuing, a new Membership Application Form was printed. During the year, the Club's active membership ranks grew dramatically once again and before year's end, member number 3000 was assigned. To acknowledge meritorious service to the Club, a Certificate of Appreciation was instituted. Coupled with our Registration in the State of Illinois (put in place during 1975), an important administrative procedure was to have the LCCA classified by the Internal Revenue Service as non-profit, tax-exempt, corporation. Also at this meeting, a copyright © was placed on the Club's name to prevent unauthorized use. Robert Hazlett was appointed Editor of *The Lion Roars* to succeed Jim Hunt who had handled the publication for the first five years.

During 1976, the number of locally held, Club sponsored meets doubled from 1975's total and for the first time, an LCCA meet was held in California. To provide members who attended these meets with a unique piece for their collection, and enhance our treasury, the offering of a Meet Special Car continued with a specially stamped 027 tender for 1976-77 to go along with the 6014 Frisco boxcar first available in late, 1975.

The Convention in Atlanta drew members and their families from the 4 corners of the nation as over 800 people attended. At the Business Meeting, the election results were announced with David Stonecipher, President; John Ourso, Vice-President; Larry Black, Secretary; Al Otten, Assistant Secretary; Curtis Fischbach, Treasurer; and Thornton Dartt, Ernie Davis, Robert Hügill, Stan Orr and Glen Uhl as Directors. Several items regarding the unique 1976 Convention Car created a bit of controversy since the Georgia Highway Express trailers were not produced by Lionel and the car bodies were only marked on one side.

1977 - More Appointments

With the increased amount of work associated with necessary services to its growing number of members, several new positions were created. Mel Price became the Club's first Librarian to handle distribution of publications, Bruce Cox was assigned the responsibilities of publishing the *Annual Roster* and Frank Harig the duties of distributing the Convention Cars.

At the Annual Convention labeled "Lucky 7 in Cincinnati" over 400 members and their families were in attendance. Election results for 1977 had Ernie Davis elected President; with Ourso, Black and Otten reelected to their same Officer positions and Larry Keller elected as Treasurer (from his "interim" position assumed in February). For Directors, Frank Harig, Jim Hunt and Chuck Seddon were newly elected with Dartt and Orr reelected. In addition, a Constitutional change was adopted to allow the Immediate Past President a seat on the Board. As a result, Dave Stonecipher had a vote on all issues and when combined with the 6 votes of the Directors and President created a simple majority rule based on the odd-number of total votes.

Although the Club had ended the year of 1976 in a strong financial position, the effects of the previous Treasurer had left us with a zero dollars balance on February 15, 1977. During the remainder of 1977, the Club's financial position stabilized so that at the end of the year revenues of \$75,762.50 were offset by expenses of \$68,288.34 to leave a balance of \$7,474.16 in the treasury. Throughout the last ten months of 1977, the LCCA was operating on a day-to-day basis. Perhaps due in part to the uncertainty of our financial position, many members failed to renew their dues and by May, nearly 500 had dropped from the Club's rolls. To prevent a total crisis and stem the exit, a letter was issued to all members who had not renewed their dues and a very positive reinstatement resulted as most came back to the LCCA. This positive practice of issuing a letter soliciting a member to update their dues and be reinstated remains an active responsibility of the Assistant Secretary today. Even with all these negative events, there was still an influx of new members so that by year's end, member number 4539 was on board.

1978 - Movement West

This year saw some positive financial progress for the Club even with annual dues still at \$5 for Charter Members, \$7 for Regular Members and \$2 for Family Members. Coupling the low dues structure with movement to the Western portion of the nation created the atmosphere for additional growth in the membership ranks as during the year member number 5000 was assigned.

Several events to illustrate the LCCA's movement West were Los Angeles having the first ever LCCA meet in Southern California during November, and close to 500 members coming to Denver to partake in the festivities at the Convention in July. Like preceding ones, this year's Convention offered a little something for everyone with its seminars, tours, auction, raffle, door prizes and the fun of visiting old friends and meeting new ones. At the Business Meeting, election results created a virtually new slate as Davis was reelect as President along with newly elected Officers of: Bill Hourigan, Vice-President; Bruce Cox, Secretary; Art Broshears, Assistant Secretary; and Don Lunsford, Treasurer. For Directors, Hunt and Orr were reelected to go along with newly elected Black, Otten and Keller moving over from their previous Officer positions to become Board members. Because of much controversy over the specially decorated cars produced by the Host which initially were only available to members who attended the Annual Convention, the practice was stopped. As a result, the 9771 Norfolk and Western boxcar in 1977 as well as 9739 Denver and Rio Grande Western boxcar in 1978 with their special Convention notations are the only two allowed by the Club.

Beginning with the August, 1978 issue, *The Lion Roars* had its first "team" with co-editors Bernard Puralewski and Frank Kloss. Also, when Dick Cowan was assigned, the *Interchange Track* had its first ever "Appointed" Editor. The responsibility for editing the *IT* had been with the Assistant Secretary up until this assignment.

Based on input from a majority of the membership that an increase in dues was preferred over a decrease in services, dues increased for the first time in six years. Effective November 1st, the new rates were \$10 for Charter Members, \$12 for Regular Members and \$5 for Family Members with initiation fees at \$10.

1979 - Financial Stability Returns

A result of the new dues structure had the Club start the year off financially on a good note as the treasury had a positive balance of \$22,190.27. By August 1, 1979, the Treasurer's report showed income of \$242,698.36 less expenses of \$180,414.06 creating a balance on hand of \$62,284.30. This sound financial basis was the result of hard work on behalf of LCCA's leaders and quieted a lot of the discord which had taken place for the previous two years.

New member applications were once again coming in at a good rate each month and by the middle of the year member number 6000 was assigned. With the ever increasing number of members and to speed up the processing of applications as well as relieve the Secretary and Assistant Secretary of several very time consuming tasks, the Club began to utilize an independent business office to sent out computer generated dues renewal notices as well as collect dues from members and applicants.

To provide LCCA members with distinctive identification to wear at meets and other train related outings, a name badge was designed and offered. It has true Lionel colors of a bright orange background with lettering and outline of the Club's Lion Mascot in blue. A very unique feature of the badge is the ability to add a placard (or a series) to the badge to denote the Convention(s) the member has attended. These colorful and attractive badges are still available today and provide a method to proudly display your LCCA membership and Convention attendance.

Wheeling, West Virginia, was the site of 1979's Annual Convention and a very unique Car was built by Lionel for the occasion. Sometimes referred to as a "two-in-one" piece, the #9733 Airco boxcar with a tank car inside is modeled after the prototype used by Airco to transport liquid gasses. 6,000 of these commemoratives were made (the largest number of Club Convention Cars ever) and it is a special item in anyone's collection.

Election results for 1979 installed as newly elected Officers: Bill Hourigan, President; Bill Stitt, Vice-President and Jim Hunt, Secretary with Don Lundsford, Treasurer and Art Broshears as Assistant Secretary reelected. Director positions were filled by newly elected: Dick Cowan, Bruce Cox and Dave Stonecipher with Black and Otten being reelected.

1980 - 10th Anniversary

With the new procedure in place that did not allow an Officer or Director to succeed themselves in the same position more than once, a virtually new group was elected this year. The newly elected LCCA leadership team for 1980 was: Larry Black, Presi-

dent; Al Otten, Vice-President; Mike Stella, Assistant Secretary; Bruce Cox, Treasurer and Bill Hourigan, Immediate Past President for Officers; with Art Broshears, Ernie Davis, Chuck Seddon and Bill Stitt as Directors. The two leaders reelected to their 1979 positions were: Jim Hunt as Secretary and; Dick Cowan as a Director. Also, Dave Weggeland became fifth Editor of *The Lion Roars* starting with the August, 1980 issue.

As the Club's birthplace, it was only fitting that Des Moines, Iowa, was site for the 10th Anniversary Convention. With 458 pre-registered Members and a nearly equal number of spouses and children, over 800 people attended the celebration. One of the highlights was the banquet held on Saturday evening. This marked the first time that a festive, sit-down meal was part of the Convention agenda and this inaugural event would become a mainstay at many future Conventions.

To "head-up" the first decade set of Club Commemoratives, the 1980 Rock GP-20 diesel was chosen since it was prototypical of the motive power that traveled across the State of Iowa on the Rock Island Line. A total of 2,700 were produced by Lionel and the engine sold for \$75 to those who ordered early, or \$100 to those who placed late orders; or, for \$125 for any orders placed after September 30, 1980. The locomotive attractively leads the nine LCCA Convention Cars around the tracks of any layout.

Local meets were a major activity with 26 meets held this year throughout the nation. Overall, a total of 1,962 members attended these meets and 124 new members were recruited at them. Admission continued to be free of charge for any Charter, Regular or Family Member as well as for their spouses or children who attended. By mid-year member number 7000 was assigned and a plastic LCCA Membership Card was issued to all active Members at the end of the year.

The LCCA's treasury was adjusted to reflect the total costs of any of the commemorative programs. From the Treasurer's report dated November 30, 1980, there was income of \$113,929.94 offset by expenses of \$103,140.78 creating a balance of \$10,789.16 to close out the Club's first decade.

Epilogue 1976 - 80

Overall, membership ranks had grown with member number 7321 the last one assigned in the second half of the Club's first decade. Even with several years of ups-and-downs, the LCCA was on solid ground financially as it began its second decade. Our innovative practices (such as prototypical Convention Cars) set early standards that other clubs would follow in later years.

For the LCCA, family-oriented Annual Conventions are the highlight of each year's schedule of events with many members enjoying the mid-summer festivities as a vacation treat with their family. Just as had been planned from the onset, the Club was established to bring together a large number of Lionel train enthusiasts who would share with others their enjoyment of the hobby!

In the next issue of *TLR* will be Part IV of this six segment article, which will cover the *Start Of The Second Decade* of the LCCA's history, the years 1981 through 1985.