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# INSIDE THE OC&E

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## Special CMRM Guests

During the last week of August, The Colorado Model Railroad Museum hosted numerous visitors who were attending the Narrow Gauge Convention in Denver. Our museum volunteers conducted a special operations session on Tuesday, August 29th while CMRM Director Michelle Kempema hosted Master Model Railroader Tony Koester (right) from the editorial staff of Kalmbach Publications Inc. and Model Railroader Magazine.

In the photo below, Narrow Gauge and Short Line Gazette Editor Bob Brown (left) and National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) President Charlie Getz (second from left) were greeted by Jerry Hutchison (second from right) and Michelle on September 1st. Getz, who resides in California has visited CMRM twice since last October.



Don Phillips, the publisher of the NMRA Magazine made his initial visit to CMRM on Saturday, September 2nd. CMRM volunteer Bill Botkin authored an article on the construction and operations of the CMRM that was featured as the cover story in the May 2017 *NMRA Magazine*.

CMRM Board President Tim McMahon arranged and coordinated the NMRA visits citing the importance of building a strong and active relationship between CMRM and the NMRA. Tim highlights CMRM's evolving Youth Activities Program as a key example of the many benefits of this relationship.

# American Flyer Trains

By Bill Kepner

When a group of model railroaders get together, there is occasionally a discussion on what got them interested in the hobby. Perhaps a relative worked for a railroad or as a child there was large railroad present in the town they grew up. Sometimes there's a comment, "we always had an American Flyer (or Lionel) train set around the Christmas tree when I was growing up."

In the 1950's and 60's, large scale trains were common play items for children between the ages of 6 and 14. Lionel and American Flyer trains were very visible in larger toy and department stores. Larger stores might even have an operating display layout to attract shoppers during the Christmas season.

There was a friendly rivalry between owners of Lionel, which was O scale, and those with American Flyer, which was S scale. Since the equipment wasn't compatible, you either had one or the other, and you always thought what you had was the best. Lionel did seem to have more market and mind-share, but American Flyer, being two-rail and slightly smaller, promoted their line as being more realistic. S scale was 1:64 (one scale inch equaled 64 inches of the prototype), while O scale is commonly 1:48.

Post war American Flyer trains were made by the A.C. Gilbert Company of New Haven, Connecticut. Gilbert also produced the Erector Set metal construction toys and other "educational items." It was quite common to offer models of brightly painted streamliners of the era, such as the Santa Fe "War Bonnet" diesels or Pennsylvania GG1s. A railroad that was present in the more populated parts of the country was more likely to have models produced than one that was obscure.

By the 50's the use of plastics was common, simplifying the manufacturing of rolling stock. The locomotive mechanisms



**The museum's American Flyer exhibit simulates the type of layout possible in a 4' x 8' space. With two loops of track, this could keep a child entertained for hours.**

however, were produced completely inhouse and were probably rather costly to manufacture. Locomotives ran on 18 volt Alternating Current power as economical ways to rectify convert ordinary house current to Direct Current were just becoming available. The use of AC however, necessitated the inclusion of complex "reverser mechanisms" to allow the trains to go in both directions.

Track was made from formed sheet-metal, with three large metal "ties" in each 12" section. Curved track was always 20" radius, which accommodated the largest models offered. Rubber roadbed sections were offered that slipped over the metal that probably appeased households with hardwood floors when the trains were run right on the floor.

Both Lionel and American produced a number of "action accessories" to attract attention. Examples included operating Stock Pens, light towers, and operating crossing gates. Catalogs were distributed by dealers, and kids would spend long hours making lists from them for what they wanted for Christmas.

A family might set up the train around the Christmas Tree as Christmas approached. It was also common for lumber yards to offer 4'x8' "train boards" with one side of the plywood already painted green to simulate grass. In the parts of the country where winters were too cold or snowy to be outside much during the Winter, the train set served as entertainment in the era when watching television was a special activity. As Spring came, the trains would be put away until next year.

How expensive were these trains when new? The 1960 catalog lists prices for the entire product line. An entry level





3-car train set with a 0-8-0 steam engine might list for \$44.95 which seems like a bargain. Until you realize that in 2017 dollars that was \$372.84! A 5-car Santa Fe passenger train with an A-B-A set of ALCO locomotives was \$84.50, which is now \$700.89! Granted families of that era didn't have monthly cell phone payments and \$2000/month house payments, but clearly to have model trains, the family spent a good part of their disposable income on this hobby.

By 1960, with the advent of jet airplanes and space rockets, kids started to lose interest in trains as they weren't as "cool" as they might have been 10 years earlier. American Flyer sales suffered drastically, and they tried to cut costs by sacrificing quality. A.C. Gilbert, the company founder passed away in 1961, and the new owners of the company branched out into race cars and other games. The American Flyer train line was discontinued in 1966, and the company declared bankruptcy the following year.

We often hear that "Toy Trains are valuable collectables." And indeed if you look at eBay or speciality collector services, there are always a number of items that are fetching high dollar amounts. They are items that are pristine and show little usage. But if you look at the mundane items like track or common freight cars, those items are selling for very low prices, if they sell at all. And items showing wear or need attention can't be given away.



The author, in a photo dated December 1963, is clearly proud of his trains and has supplemented them with a number of Plasticville U.S.A. structures and other accessories.

Occasionally an older museum guest has asked if we have Lionel or American Flyer trains. We also have the Lionel exhibit on the wall behind Gearhead Mountain that has many examples of Lionel product offerings from the 1950's and 60's. Someday it might be fun to have an operating exhibit, even if temporary, to show off these trains. Then we can have the public tell us which was better. American Flyer or Lionel?

**8½ Feet of Magnificent Streamlined Diesel Train!**

NO. 20083  
\$84.50  
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**✓ REMOTE CONTROL**  
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Haul 40 or more cars, climb grades  
no other train can attempt!

**✓ DIESEL ROAR**  
Duplicates all the idling and running  
sounds of a real diesel motor!

**LOCOMOTIVE \$55.00 IF PURCHASED SEPARATELY**

**Santa Fe Chief includes:**

<p>No. 21902 Santa Fe 3-unit (A-B-A) Locomotive with two Motors, Diesel Roar, Electronic Horn, Pull-Mor Power</p> <p>No. 24773 Baggage &amp; Club-Car, Illuminated</p> <p>2 No. 24813 Illuminated Vista Dome Cars</p> <p>No. 24792 Illuminated Coach</p>	<p>No. 24833 Illuminated Observation Car</p> <p>No. 26708 Electronic Horn Control</p> <p>No. 26750 Remote Control Electric Uncoupler</p> <p>12 sections of 26720 Curved Track</p> <p>8 sections of 26700 straight Track</p> <p>20 No. 26693 Track Locks</p> <p>No. 26690 Track Terminal</p> <p>Illuminated Train Book</p>
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**No. 21902 LOCOMOTIVE**

You can couple on almost as many cars as you want behind this giant Diesel workhorse that contains two worm-drive motors and is equipped with Pull-Mor Power. In tests she's hauled as many as 60 freight cars at high speed! With the built-in Electronic Horn and extraordinary Diesel "Roar" it's the greatest Diesel locomotive ever manufactured, by any standards. Measures 36¼" long. May be bought separately.

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# Hobo Stew Fundraiser Event

On September 27, the museum hosted the second annual *Hobo Stew* event. This was a fun time for all, bringing museum supporters together for a good meal, lively music, and great company.

The Blue Grass band, Rusty 44, came back this year and entertained all for most of the evening.

The pizza-layouts from the Youth programs were on



display to show museum supporters the achievement made this summer. The weather was a bit hobo-like, so the burn-barrels were available for those who felt a chill.

The event was very successful. With the meal being sponsored by several generous supporters, all the revenues from ticket sales will go to expand the museum's programs.

We hope to see all of you back next year!





## Showcasing the Youth Program

While at first glance, these pizza-sized packages looked like an exotic food, they were actually the Pizza-layouts constructed by participants of the museum's youth program earlier this summer. They were invited to bring them by to show the museum supporters at Hobo Stew how well they did.

A "pizza layout" is a model railway laid out as a circle of the smallest workable radius of curve as if it would fit into a pizza box. It is not intended to develop prototypical skills; rather it is intended to engage youth in the hobby.





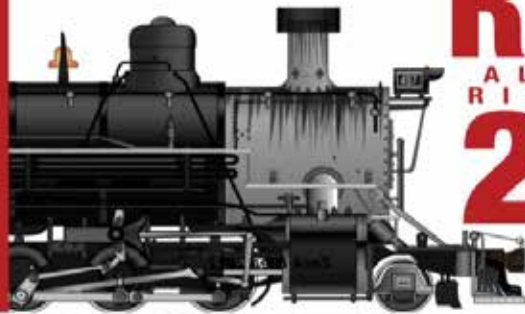
## Hobo Stew Sponsors:

We would like to thank all of our Hobo Stew sponsors who helped make our second annual event successful!

- Leprino Foods \$2000.00
- Richmark Holdings, Inc. \$1000.00
- Great Northern properties, LLLP \$500.00
- Joel and Joyce Rothman \$500.00
- Steve and Ingrid Lundvall \$500.00
- Phil's Pro Auto \$200.00
- Wing Shack \$200.00
- Peter and Barbara Miller \$100.00
- Allen Hovey \$70.00



Rio Grande Div. 6, Rocky Mountain Region, National Model Railroad Association



# RAILS ALONG THE RIO GRANDE 2017



# MODEL TRAIN SHOW

**BIG**  
OPERATING  
**TRAIN**  
LAYOUTS

NEW & USED  
**MODEL**  
**TRAINS**  
& ACCESSORIES

**FREE Parking!**

**Saturday, Nov. 18 | 9am-5pm**  
**Sunday, Nov. 19 | 9am-4pm**

**Balloon Fiesta Park**  
**ALBUQUERQUE**



**Adults \$5 / Kids under 12 FREE!**

**[www.railsalongtheriogrande.org](http://www.railsalongtheriogrande.org)**

Illustrations courtesy Zak Blea/BNSF





# Volunteer Field Trip

On September 11, 2017, a group of volunteers of the Colorado Model Railroad Museum took an end of summer field trip to Denver. The trips started with a visit to the Forney Museum of Transportation where they received a special guided tour from museum Executive Director Christof Kheim. The Forney has a huge collection of automobiles, motorcycles, and other modes of transportation that are representative through the ages. They are also the keeper of one of the eight remaining Big Boys, Union Pacific #4005.

After a delicious lunch at the famous Red Rooster Cafe, the group went to the Cussler Museum in Arvada, Colorado, home of the personal car collection of author Clive Cussler. The Cussler Museum is dedicated to the preservation of astounding rare and vintage automobiles from all over the world. Their extensive collection of over 100 significant automobiles ranges from 1906 to 1965.





# The Greeley Branch

Photos by Bill Kepner

Back in January 2015, *Inside the OC&E* outlined a plan by the Great Western Railway and Union Pacific Railroads to rebuild the Greeley Branch so that all traffic destined for Windsor would be routed via Greeley. Great Western had purchased the line from Burlington Northern more than 20 years ago, and there was little justification for keeping the line open all the way to Greeley.

With the increased business in Windsor, the interchange in Fort Collins became a big problem, especially when full length unit trains of sand or crude oil were exchanged. Great Western would also have hundreds of cars in the Windsor

area waiting to be unloaded and also needed storage space for them. So, the project was expected to benefit both railroads.

The project was completed a year ago, and both railroads are seeing their investment providing the expected efficiencies. However, for the railfan, it seems like there are less trains to watch or photograph as most trains seem to run at night.

But if you do see a train slowly heading north by the museum with many sand and lumber loads, chances are it is headed for the interchange. You might find it interesting to follow it across town.



The UP crew out of La Salle takes cars to the Great Western at least 3 days a week. Here the train has left the main at the Greeley Junction wye and is entering GWR trackage.



Occasionally a unit train of corn is destined for the ethanol plant at Windsor. The train is approaching County Road 23 3/4 on what looks like a high-speed double track main line.



The normal interchange point is now at the GWR's 3-track yard at 35th Avenue and F Street in north Greeley. The UP transfer usually brings in a long cut of cars and leaves them on one track, then runs back to the east end to pick up the outbound cut. Hopefully the third track is empty!



Burlington Northern served Windsor at least 5 days a week, but only occasionally ran all the way east to Greeley. When they did, they usually had just a couple cars. They still used a caboose since the connection trackage in Fort Collins required a backup move across busy streets at the time.

# Upcoming Museum Events

Check the museum's web page for last minute changes

**October 28**

Dia De Los Muertos

**November 10, 11, and 12**

Military Appreciation Weekend/Patriotic Trains

FREE admission for all Veterans

**November 25**

Santa visits the museum

10 AM to 1 PM

**December 15**

Night Trains with Santa

5 PM to 8 PM

*\*Please call the museum to sign up for your guaranteed 5-minute time slot with Santa; we only have 36 available!*

**December 16 and December 23:**

Santa visits 10 AM to 1 PM

**December 12 and 22**

MEMBERS ONLY event with Santa

6 PM to 8 PM

**December 30**

Literacy Day

**EXTENDED hours:**

November 21 and 22

December 15-30

\*December 15th noon-4pm

\*CLOSED Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Years Eve, New Years Day.

## Volunteer Awards

**500 hour club**

Lon Moffitt

Steve Rasmussen

Cody Leuthauser

Bill Nagel

**1000 Hour Club**

Luke Brendsel

Gary Kounkel

Radford Walker

Norm Wolstein

**2000 Hour Volunteers**

Bill Kepner

Richard Rineer

**3000 Hour Volunteers**

Brent Milota

Brian Milota

**4000 Hour Volunteer**

Keith Woolf

## Donations

**Justin Ryan**

\$25.00

**Radford Walker**

- on behalf of

Union Pacific

Corporation

\$25.00

**Lee Marsh**

\$100.00

**Richard and**

**Eleanor Allen**

\$50.00





**Didn't Make the Cut - Appalachian Lines Version**  
*Photos by Kirk Orndorff*

These photos were submitted for the 2018 calendar, but they weren't the proper aspect ratio.



### July Visitor Counts

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Week 1</b>	641	498	538	468	617	564
<b>Week 2</b>	601	483	442	606	540	513
<b>Week 3</b>	555	713	508	834	396	617
<b>Week 4</b>	704	453	709	824	670	652
<b>Week 5</b>	525				985	
<b>Totals</b>	3026	2147	2197	2732	3208	2346
<b>YTD</b>	10908	10395	10332	11976	13893	10017

### August Visitor Counts

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Week 1</b>	456	628	527	700	609	526
<b>Week 2</b>	757	590	491	523	552	494
<b>Week 3</b>	473	518	432	531	446	477
<b>Week 4</b>	337	479	345	390	330	383
<b>Week 5</b>		334	379	378		
<b>Totals</b>	2023	2549	2174	2522	1937	1880
<b>YTD</b>	12931	12944	12506	14498	13957	11897

### September Visitor Counts

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Week 1</b>	378	228	211	384	358	544
<b>Week 2</b>	292	146	212	239	209	234
<b>Week 3</b>	185	192	237	223	218	307
<b>Week 4</b>	206	267	203	204	233	276
<b>Totals</b>	1061	833	863	1050	1018	1361
<b>YTD</b>	13992	13777	13369	15548	16848	13258

### Yearly Totals

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
18084	17775	17275	20111	21330

### Inside the OC&E

Inside the OC&E is the official newsletter of the Colorado Model Railroad Museum. Its purpose is to communicate news and information to museum volunteers and others interested in the museum.

The January issue **PUBLICATION DEADLINE: Wednesday, January 3, 2018 at 5:00 PM.** Send submissions to [drgw0579@comcast.net](mailto:drgw0579@comcast.net).

Bill Kepner, Editor.  
Ed Hurtubis and Bob Owens, Associate Editors

## I Love My Job!

We need to take up a collection and get Michelle a "I Love My Job" tee shirt.



## Newsletter to be Quarterly Publication

Due to changing personal lives, the newsletter staff has found it difficult to produce a regularly scheduled monthly newsletter. Notices of special events and museum schedules will be published via Facebook and e-mail in the future.

