

# Keeping Track Newsletter



If you have a better email to use or would like to be removed from these emailings, please send an update to [membership@traincollectors.org](mailto:membership@traincollectors.org).

In addition, if you have a story and pictures you would like to share with the rest of the teen train world, please submit them to the same email address.

Volume 15: Issue 1 SPRING 2018

## Essay Contest WINNERS!

We asked and you answered! We picked the top 3 essays as winners and you can read each one below!

### My Life Is Trains

By John Welch

My name is John, I have autism and I love trains. Here is my story of trains in my life. Thomas and friends got me into trains. I loved watching them pass by and the colors of the freight cars. My favorite Thomas and Friends characters are Skarloey, Rheneas, and Thomas and I spent years watching them. What I did not know until I got older was that most of the characters from Thomas that I loved are based on real trains in England and Wales. I saw and rode on 4 of these heritage railways on a trip to England this summer. There were so many I could not see them all. We also went to The British National Railway Museum, the world's biggest train museum, in York where I saw the World's fastest steam engine, The A4 Mallard. Spencer, a character from Thomas and friends, is based on him.



My first Lionel train was a Alaska dockside switcher set that my grandfather gave me. He loves trains too. He even built me a huge train layout (pictured) at his house and helped me with a smaller layout at my house. It has a mountain and a tunnel on it that my trains run through. It also has a waterfall, a river at the bottom of the mountain, a farm, trees, bushes, town a station. Stores, a factory, a school, a lake, and of course a big railyard.

I have a huge collection of Lionel model trains a very small collection of 009 scale British trains. My friends love the layout and always ask me about my trains. I love talking to them about them and showing them to them.

I like to spend time riding and watching trains. Sometimes my parents' take me to New York City on NJ Transit and sometimes I go to my aunt has a house that's right near a NJ transit track and just watch them pass by. Whenever I am doing anything that involves trains I feel peaceful.

### My Favorite Railroad

By Cody Booker

My favorite railroad is Conrail. Without Conrail, railroads would be worse than ever! Conrail merged with many different railroads such as Lehigh Valley, Reading, and Penn Central just to name a few. Even though Conrail was split in the late 1990's with Norfolk Southern (NS) and Chessie Seaboard Xpress (CSX), they are still around today as a Conrail Shared Asset program (CSAO). They only own trackage and train cars. Conrail sold their engines during the late 90's.

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Conrail has trackage in Michigan, Pennsylvania and Central and Northern New Jersey. You can find most of the trackage in and around Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Camden, New Jersey. The "Conrail Lehigh Line" is the Conrail trackage remaining in central New Jersey. It has Norfolk Southern and CSX trains running on it along with Conrail local trains.

I like Conrail because without them, the rail industry would be failing because they merged and took over the bankrupt railroads. I can see them running locally. Also, the crew on the trains are friendly!

## My First York

By Nikhil Jamalamadaka

Friday, April 15, 2016, turned out to be a stupendous railroading day for me! My parents made one of my long-awaited dreams come true. I got a chance to attend York for the first time ever and had to pinch myself to make sure it was all really happening!



On the morning of April 15, we headed to the show from Baltimore, MD. We reached the York Fairgrounds by 11am and rushed to the Silver Hall. Between the Silver and Blue Halls, I took a close look at the Kids Korner. A big "thank you" to the TCA club officers who were very helpful in getting us registered, since I am just a youth member and my father was merely accompanying me as my caregiver.

After registration, our first stop was the Orange Hall, where we saw the manufacturer booths, magazine booths, and some dealer booths. We visited the Lionel booth, where I was hoping to meet Mr. Howard Hitchcock, the president of Lionel, but he was in Europe on a business trip. At the Orange Hall, we were introduced to Lionel's artist, Ms. Angela Trotta Thomas, whose paintings have always fascinated me. We met Mr. Clarke Dunham from Dunham Studios and he showed us how he builds spectacular custom model railroads with amazing murals and backdrops. We also met Mr. Lou Palumbo, who runs the Underground Railroad Shoppe and is best-known for his Classic Toy Trains column, "Views from the Underground." His sense of humor was quite evident even without his ventriloquist dummy, Vinny Boombatz! At the TM Books & Video booth, we met Mr. Bob Phillips who is the instructor in TM's "Modern O Gauge Remote Control" series. Unfortunately, the founder and CEO, Mr. Tom McComas, was not there because he and his son, Mr. Jeff, were back home working on a documentary about Ford trucks. Next, we went to the MTH booth, where I met Mr. Mike Wolf, with whom I discussed his new designs. He told me about their new DCS app that lets you control your trains with your smartphone. Finally, we went over to the O-Gauge Railroading Magazine booth, where we met Mr. Rich Melvin, the engineer of the Nickel Plate Road 2-8-4 Berkshire #765. I was on cloud nine meeting all these "celebrities" of the model railroading world!

Additionally, we checked out some amazing layouts in the Black Hall, Purple Hall, and White Hall. In the Black Hall, the Lower Susquehanna Valley Modular Railroaders displayed their O gauge hi-rail modular layout and the North Penn S Gaugers showcased their impressive S gauge layout. Both layouts had highly detailed modules. In the Purple Hall, the Lebanon Valley Railroad Club had N, HO, O, and Standard gauge trains – all running on a single layout. In the White Hall, we saw Kids Run Trains' Lionel FasTrack modular layout and the S gauge layout of the Washington & Old Dominion Division of the Atlantic Coast S Gaugers. Finally, I enjoyed touring various halls where people were buying and selling trains. It was quite like our local train shows, except over ten times bigger!



York was awesome, but little did I know that my parents had more in store for me! The next day, they took me to the B&O Railroad Museum in downtown Baltimore and the Fire Museum of Maryland in Lutherville. Interestingly, the fire museum has an annual O gauge display they set up for the holidays called the Holiday Train Garden. When they heard about my interest in trains, they took me into their warehouse and allowed me to see the layout. This 3-day travel was power packed with extraordinary train attractions and I can hardly wait to experience it all again!

# THANK YOU ESSAY WRITERS!

# Renovations in The National Toy Train Museum

After each Christmas season, the National Toy Train Museum closes until Easter weekend.

This is when they clean and work on the trains, layouts and displays.

Take a look at some of the volunteer handiwork!



# 64th TCA NATIONAL CONVENTION in Warwick, RI June 23 to July 1, 2018

## Kids Club Schedule

**Thursday & Friday 10:00 am – 5:00 pm**

### Area A / Kids Area

Brio Trains  
Craft, Coloring and Activity sheets  
Movies  
Hourly Raffles / Giveaways

### Area B / Teen Area

Metca Operating layout  
Selfie Station

**Saturday 9:00 am – 2:00 pm**

### Area A / Kids Area

Brio Trains  
Craft, Coloring and Activity sheets  
Movies  
Hourly Raffles / Giveaways

### Area B / Teen Area

Metca operating layout  
Selfie Station

### Area C / Kids & Teen Area

Hourly Raffles / Giveaways

9:00 – 10:00 Cleaning & lubricating Lionel engines / maintaining rolling stock  
Identify rolling stock and rail names (tank cars, boxcars, operating cars etc....)

10:00 – 11:00 Scenery - making trees, build a building

11:00 – 12:00 How steam and diesel engines work / Brief history of American railroad  
Famous engines / Railroad folklore

12:00 – 1:00 Cleaning & lubricating Lionel engines / maintaining rolling stock  
Identify rolling stock and rail names (tank cars, boxcars, operating cars etc....)

1:00 – 2:00 Scenery - making trees, build a building

**6:00 pm – 9:00 pm Kids Club Banquet**



# NATIONAL TEEN CLUB CUSTOM CAR CONTEST

Build, repaint or customize any type of toy train car, engine or building however you want.  
You can have your project operate or light up. The choice is yours. See example below.



Submit your project to your Divisional Youth Club representative or ship it the the National Business Office by September 15th.  
Divisional members will bring contest submissions to the October York Meeting for judging, where winners will be picked.  
Winning projects will be on display at NTTM and featured in the TCA Teen Newsletter.  
One submission per person, please.

TCA Teen Contest  
300 Paradise Lane  
Ronks, PA 17572

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## SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

TCA Teen # \_\_\_\_\_ Division: \_\_\_\_\_

City and State: \_\_\_\_\_

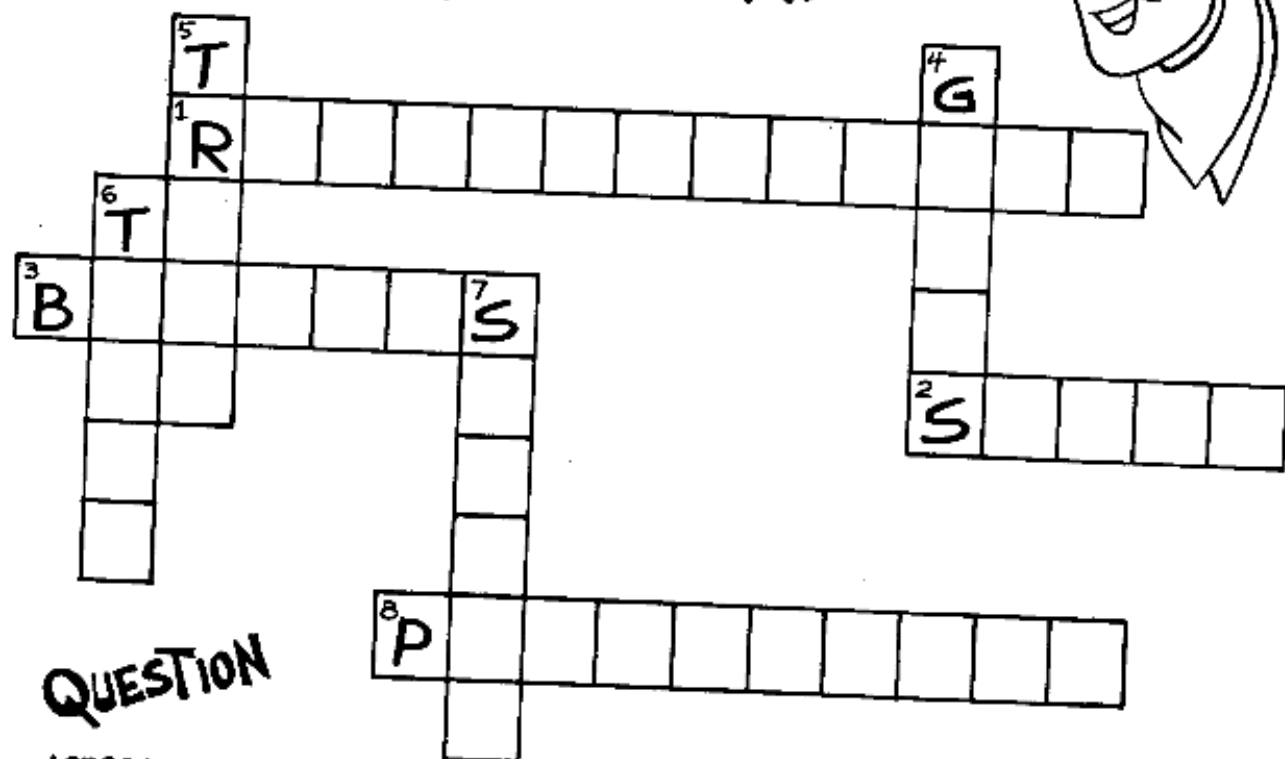
email: \_\_\_\_\_

Submission Title: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Just for fun

# RAILROAD SAFETY CROSSWORD



## QUESTION

### ACROSS

1. WHAT IS IT THAT YOU SHOULD NOT WALK NEAR OR CLIMB ON?
2. WHEN CROSSING RAILROAD TRACKS ON FOOT WHAT SHOULD YOU OBEY?
3. WHAT SHOULD YOU STAY OFF OF THAT ARE NOT WIDE ENOUGH FOR YOU AND A TRAIN?
8. TRAINS CAN'T STOP QUICKLY, SO DON'T USE RAILROAD TRACKS AS A WHAT?

### DOWN

4. WHAT SHOULD YOU NEVER DRIVE OR WALK AROUND?
5. WHAT SHOULD YOU EXPECT ON ANY TRACK AT ANY TIME?
6. NEVER DRIVE OR WALK ON A GRADE CROSSING UNTIL YOU ARE SURE YOU CAN CLEAR THE WHAT?
7. YOU SHOULD GET OUT OF YOUR VEHICLE IF IT'S ON THE TRACK AND IF IT WHAT?