

# Ozark Division Newsletter

[www.ozarkdivision-tca.org](http://www.ozarkdivision-tca.org)

## Special points of interest:

- Accessories and Charles Bowdish Homestead
- HOA Spring Layout Tor
- N & W 611 Update
- TCA National Election Results

I have just finished going through the book by Roger Carp *Accessories* (Kalmbach Publishing Co. 2014) for the sixth or seventh time. Each time I go through it I find something of interest. That got me thinking, I will write a story about my adventures with accessories. More about the Charles Bowdish Homestead later.

I have always been fascinated with accessories although I haven't spent a lot of time collecting them. I am in awe of layouts that include operating accessories with switches around so visitors can "play", takes the layout to another dimension.

On my last O gauge layout, I installed several operating accessories which could be activated from around the layout. After watching the train go around a couple of times that gets a little boring. Having those activation buttons around the perimeter gives viewers something to do or you can have switching challenges when you are playing trains by yourself. My layout was a dog bone approximately 5' wide at one end and 7' at the other end and about 16' long; it had one continuous loop with a single direction reverse loop and two sidings.

Since access to my layout was limited, against two walls the accessories would have to be located on the front portion of the layout close to activation buttons. Switches also need to be within arms reach as derailments always happen in the worst places.

I wanted all the accessories to operate flawlessly so I wired them using fixed voltage set at 12—14 volts. I would like to say they all worked flawlessly but that wasn't always the case. I wired in the following; 415 Diesel Fueling Station, 3662 Operating Milk Car, 2306 Operating Ice House, 2305 Operating Oil Derrick, 12722 Smoking Diner, 197 Radar Antenna and 384 Rotary Beacon.

The rotary beacon and fueling station work without any attention while the others needed special handling. Take the operating milk car for instance it either worked or needed gentle persuasion. The refrigerator car had to be lined up just right in front of the ice house or it would send the ice blocks flying across the room. Then the oil derrick, the bubbling fluid worked flawlessly but the pumping action worked when it felt like it. My smoking diner worked very well when new, it smoked up the rathskeller real well and if there was a smoke detector in the room it would have set it off. I think I may have burned out the smoke unit by not keeping smoke fluid in it all the time. And finally the radar antenna was another accessory that worked when it wanted to, when no one was around it worked fine. But when came time to show off it took the day off.

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The Charles Bowdish Homestead (6-24140) is an accessory that was introduced in the 2003 Volume 1 Lionel Catalog. The Homestead is to replicate the western Pennsylvania farmhouse of Charles Bowdish of Brookville, PA. The accessory features a detailed interior, a second floor nursery with crib and dresser, rocking chair animation on the front porch, interior lighting, animation of mother and child in second floor nursery, along with several other features.. Legend has it that Charles is being walked to sleep by his pacing mother and his brother Sean is being rocked by his grandmother on the front porch.

Charles Bowdish was the founder of the Miniature Railroad & Village which now occupies space in the Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh. Charles Bowdish (1896—1988) of Brookville, Pennsylvania was a soldier during WW I who was honorably discharged after doctors discovered a heart problem. After returning home he started building models of the structures around Brookville. Every Christmas in his home on Creek Street the buildings were displayed complete with Lionel trains running through them.

On Christmas Eve 1920, Charles hosted his brother's wedding and reception, and entertained guests by running his train display. A guest, Alfred Truman, asked he could bring some friends over to see it; word spread quickly and nearly 600 people showed. Because of this Christmas Eve 1920 is considered the birth of the exhibit.

A tradition began with Bowdish setting up and exhibiting his railroad yearly at Christmas time in his house. He would change the theme yearly, one year it featured a White Christmas or Indian Summer. The railroad took over the entire second floor. Thousands of people saw the display over the years some traveled from other countries to see the free exhibit. There was never admission fee charged.

A combination of a flood nearly destroying the stored models and the reluctance of the insurance company to cover the crowds forced Mr. Bowsdish to start looking for a new home for his work. He first offered it to Brookville, but the town declined. Eventually he offered it to the Buhl Planetarium and Institute of Popular Science in Pittsburgh, PA. The Buhl offered him space, opening there on December 1, 1954, and ran through December 31th. During that period the display was viewed by nearly 24,000 visitors. The original display was 14" x 14" and was called *The Great Christmastown Railroad*. In 1957 it was renamed *The Miniature Railroad & Village*. The exhibit was an instant hit and today is still one of the major holiday attractions in Pittsburgh.

The Buhl Planetarium and Institute became a part of the Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh on January 1, 1987. The Buhl was looking to expand the science center and by joining the Carnegie allowed them to have the resources to do it. A whole new building allowed the museum to dedicate a room to the MRRV. The new and expanded Miniature Railroad & Village opened in the fall of 1992.

Today the current display is 83' x 30' which is 60% larger than the original. The display features five independent loops of Lionel trains and one Bowser trolley traveling through the town; these lines operate continuously.

The display tells the story of life around the Pittsburgh area as some call it an animated history book. The period depicted shows how people worked, lived and played during the years 1880—1930. This was an exciting time in American history; it was the American Industrial Revolution, the Victorian and Edwardian eras, the Gilded Age, World War I, the Roaring 20s, and the beginning of the Great Depression. All of the models on the display are handcrafted by both paid and volunteers and replicated real structures from around Western Pennsylvania. The display boasts the largest steel mill in O-Scale: the Sharon Steel Mill from Farrell, PA. The model was constructed from the mill's actual blueprints.

Experts consultants were contracted to make the display as lifelike as possible; a Harvard professor designed the lighting system to resemble the movement of the Sun and actual daylight. The computer system that controls the layout was designed and installed by Opto22 the company that supplies NASA and Disney World with control modules. Every year, two months before Thanksgiving, the display is closed for maintenance. The layout is cleaned thoroughly inspected and repairs are made as needed. Some of the scenes are updated, some new animations are installed and tested. The display reopens on the Friday after Thanksgiving.

For more information about the Carnegie Science Center and the MRRV you can go the website at [www.carnegiesciencecenter.org](http://www.carnegiesciencecenter.org). The Carnegie Science Center is located at One Allegheny Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15212, phone 412-237-3400 and hours Sunday—Friday 10 am—5 pm, Saturday 10 am—7pm. Thanks to Lionel, Carnegie Science Center and Wikipedia for the story details.

**HOA Spring Layout Tour:** The Spring Heart of America Chapter Layout was held on Saturday April 11, 2015 from 1 pm to 4 pm. Thanks to Mike Lee, Steve Dickerson and Ed O'Donnell who graciously opened their homes and layouts. The weather was great for the event and it was estimated that nearly 60 members and guests took the tour. All comments were positive about the quality of the layouts and the convenience of their locations.

You can see pictures of the layouts and attendee by going to the Heart of America website at [www.tcahoa.org](http://www.tcahoa.org). From the home page click on Photo Gallery and then click on 2015 Activity to open the album.

Thanks again to Mike Lee Steve Dickerson and Ed O'Donnell for a fantastic tour.

**Update Norfolk & Western 611:** By the time this Newsletter is out N & W 611 will be out running excursions once again. In late March of this year 611 was steamed for the first time since she was retired in December of 1994.

On a cool clear North Carolina morning, Norfolk & Western 611 filled the morning blue skies at the North Carolina Transportation Museum for a test fire after restoration. The big locomotive was pulled out of Bob Julian Roundhouse and placed on a track beside the 1924 structure which was close to a source of coal and compressed air. By about noon the process was going smoothly with no complications, all gauges working and a half glass of water on the gauge. By late in the afternoon the crews had built up 150 pounds of steam pressure in the boiler: halfway to operating pressure.

Restoration for the big 4-8-4 began in June 2014 following its move from Roanoke, VA to the North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer, NC. Thanks to *Trains* for the information.

**TCA National Election Results:** From the pages of the May 2015 edition of the National Headquarters News here are the results of the election. President Elect, Charles R. Anyan; Vice President, Joseph Fanara; Treasurer, Robert I. Mintz; Secretary, Christie M. Wilson

Both of the Bylaw Amendments passed; Amendment 1 changes the wording of Article XI—Committees, Section 2—Standing Committees (see page 9 of the election booklet for discussion of this issue). Amendment 2 changes the wording of Article II—Membership, Section 2 Classes of Membership referring to Honorary Membership (see page 10 of election booklet for discussion of this issue). Amendment 2 also changes to wording of Article II, Section 2 Classes of Membership referring to Junior Membership (see page 11 of election booklet for discussion of this issue).

Nearly 5,000 members cast ballots.

**Great St. Louis Christmas Train Show:** it is time to start planning on attending the Great St. Louis Christmas Train Show and Food Drive on Saturday, December 5, 2015 at Immanuel Lutheran School. Please see the attached Advanced Registration Form for more details.

**In Memoriam:** On behalf of the membership of the TCA and Ozark Division condolences to the families of Dr. James C. Denninghoff (66-1453), Dr. Albert L. Howe (87-24640) and Charles W. Rothweiler (94-40146) who passed away recently.

I am always looking for something of interest to include in the Newsletter. If you have a story to tell about your collection or layout send it to me. That story can be about your favorite train, how you found it and maybe why it's your favorite. I am sure that anyone who has built a layout has a story about it; construction, wiring, scenery or just running trains. Sharing ones experiences is also a part of the "Worlds Greatest Hobby".

Send those stories to me at jonlstrains@netscape.net or the old fashion way by mail; Jon Lundvall, Ozark Division, 810 Windmill Dr., Ballwin, MO 63011.

Jon Lundvall, Editor

jonlstrains@netscape.net

**Postscript:** I am sure that many of you have experienced the same frustrations with operating accessories. When they work they are a lot of fun. Lionel introduced the Charles Bowdish Homestead (6-24140) as the first in a new series of accessories called Historic Layout Series. They were shown in the 2003 Volume 1 catalog. Lionel has had an over 50 year relationship and support of the Miniature Railroad & Village™ layout of the Carnegie Science Center. In addition to the Bowdish Homestead Lionel also introduced Duck Shooting Gallery (6-24139), Mr. Spiff and Puddles (6-24137) and "Playtime" Playground (6-24138) in the Historic Layout Series. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of each of the accessories was to be donated to the Miniature Railroad & Village™. I picked up the Bowdish Homestead brand new off of e-bay and paid very little.

Thanks to Don Miller and Bo Burgess for the photos from the HOA Spring Layout Tour. Also, Bo Burgess' Mid-Atlantic Railway System layout was featured in the January 2015 Classis Toy Trains.

I knew each of the individuals that passed away, each of the individuals were unique in their own ways. Dr. Denninghoff was a founding member of the Ozark Division. Dr. Howe was active in a number of our hobby groups. Chuck Rothweiler was President of the Ozark Division 2006-2008. Chuck passed away from complications following a fall at his home earlier this Spring.