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# The *Lion Roars*



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# Great Site, Great Layout, Great Idea



by Bob Carter RM 6620

## A Texas Riddle

What's 12x28 feet in size, has 400 feet of track, controls six trains including a subway, operates in TMCC, Legacy, (or TIU), or conventional mode, and runs automatically and unattended? Tip: when in Texas, you shouldn't miss it; no train hobbyist would want to. For the answer, read on.

Situated in the spacious atrium of the Gaylord Texan Hotel, one of the largest and most prestigious hotels in the Dallas / Fort Worth area, the spectacular Lionel® Fastrack™ modular layout designed and built by The Lone Star Hi-Railers Club draws lots of attention for most of the year. The impressive operating display rests in a fully-decked-out-for-the-holidays environment.

## The Idea Captures the Imagination

Several years ago, the Gaylord Texan sought a train exhibit as an operating display for their annual Lone Star Christmas event. They installed a G-gauge train layout, which proved to be quite successful; so successful that they installed it permanently in an area of the huge open atrium.

Mike McLintock (RM 27393) is now the engineer for the trains. He's better known at Gaylord as "The Train Guy."



*The members shown in the photo are: Front row, L to R: George Watson, Kedar Shenoy, Patty Gilbert, David Jarinko, Dave MacGregor, Wade Hulcy. Back row, L to R: Mark Coleman, Larry Gilbert, Mike McLintock, Steve Yatsko. Members not shown: Roger Farkash, Eric Haist, Butch Wilson, Darlyn Hamblin, Dave Buchanan, Drew Wilson, Rick Birchler, Roy McClellan, Tom Campbell.*

The hotel asked Mike if the train club would be interested in providing a three-rail layout as an attraction for the hotel's annual SummerFest event. The festivities would begin on Memorial Day and continue through Labor Day with trains running from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Club members would be expected to operate the layout on Thursday evenings, talk to visitors of all ages about the trains, and answer questions about the hobby. The members could bring their own trains to run on the layout.





meant decorating the layout for the Christmas holiday, changing out the buildings, adding snow, and installing several new Christmas accessories, the club's answer was a definite YES.

### A Relatively New Club

The Lone Star Hi-Railers Club began in 2007 and now has 20 members. The club includes a family with three generations of participation in the train hobby. Members come from around north Texas, and the group includes one member far to the northwest in Amarillo.

These men and women are excited about having their layout on display and in daily use at a prestigious location. Larry Gilbert said, "It's indoors, climate controlled, and

The members would also agree to attend a hotel orientation program and absorb the corporate culture of the hotel; thus they would be able to answer questions about the facility and be ambassadors for the hobby and the hotel.

As club president, Mike presented the hotel's inquiry to the members, several of whom are also LCCA members. They agreed to set up their modular layout in the spacious atrium and asked Lionel for assistance. The layout proved to be a very popular attraction. Well before the contract ran out in September, The Gaylord Texan asked the club if it would extend the display time frame through Christmas. That was like asking a kid if he would like more candy. Although it



they let us smoke - the trains, that is. We can drop in and operate our own trains whenever we want. It just doesn't get any better than that."

Dave MacGregor added, "It's the best thing that's happened to the club since it was organized." Wade Hulcy decorated a Lionel #2025 steam locomotive in Dallas Cowboy colors to commemorate the fact that "da boys" spend their pre-home-game nights at this hotel. The Cowboys may not always win, but the train certainly is a winner.




## A Win-Win Outcome

The Gaylord Texan Hotel is pleased to provide space for the layout. Families can now come in and watch trains run year round in the atrium. There are only a few public places in the Dallas / Fort Worth area where trains are in action. The club runs the trains for eight months of the year.

According to Martha Neibling, Director of Public Relations at the Gaylord, "We have received positive responses

from visitors who are dazzled by the train displays. We hope to become known as the place to enjoy them."

I know the club feels that way too. In the next issue of *TLR*, we'll see how the layout was decorated for Christmas and show the G-gauge train that started it all. 

*Photographs by Bob Carter*



## Toy Trunk Railroad

by Erik Sansom

