



# The Villager

The official newsletter of the Plasticville Collectors Association

Volume 5

August 2006

Number 3

## Proposed PCA Constitution and By-Law Changes

The Executive Committee met in early May to discuss changes to the current Constitution and By-Laws. These meetings were held with the intent of recommending revisions that more accurately defined the current purpose and processes of the Plasticville Collectors Association.

### **Proposed Constitution change**

**Article II** Change the title to read "Mission Statement" instead of the current "Purpose". Replace the current "Purpose" statement with the current Mission Statement.

### **Proposed By-Law changes**

#### **Article I, Dues**

**Number 2** Change the due date for dues for the forthcoming year from the current date of September 1 to November 1.

**Number 3** Add the table below to define the prorated dues structure in a more concise manner.

January, February, March: \$8.00 and to include the February newsletter

April, May, June: \$6.00 and to include the May newsletter

July, August, September: \$4.00 and to include the August newsletter

October, November, December: \$10 and to include the November newsletter and entered in the member database as paid for the next year.

#### **Article II, Membership**

**Number 4** Change the wording to reflect that proposed members' names are published in the next newsletter following receipt of their application rather than the previous practice of sending emails to all active members each time a membership application was received.

**Number 6** Change to extend the days in which members may vote to override the decision of the Executive Committee to expel a member from 7 days to 30 days.

#### **Article III, Elections**

**Number 2** Change the receipt date by the President of nominations from November 15 to October 15 and add that nominations are to be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer by October 31.

**Number 3** Change by adding a notation that a candidate for the office of Secretary/Treasurer must be bondable.

**Number 4** Change to stipulate that the Secretary/Treasurer will enclose a ballot in with the November newsletter or mail it to ePCA members. Add to state that if single nominations for open offices are received that the Executive Committee may accept the slate of candidates and waive the election process.

**Number 6** Change to state that the President will announce the results of the election in November edition of *The Villager*.

**Number 7** Add, which states that the Executive Committee has the right to suspend the voting process if the sole nominees for all offices are incumbent officers.

**Number 8** Renumber the current **Number 7** to allow for the addition of the proposed Number 7.

It is the recommendation of the Executive Committee that you review the both the current and the proposed changes documents. Both the current and the proposed Constitution and By-Laws can be found on the PCA website. You may contact the Secretary/Treasurer for printed copies if you do not have Internet access at the address in the box at the bottom of this page.

### **The Villager**

Published quarterly by the Plasticville Collectors Association.

**President:** Joe Kutza

**Vice President:** Doug Gilliatt

<http://www.plasticvilleusa.org>

**Secretary/Treasurer:** Christine Niehaus

**Webmaster:** Joe Kutza

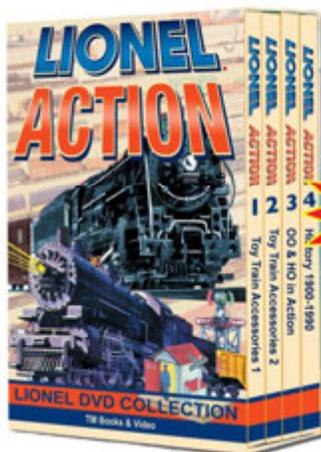
**Newsletter editor:** John Niehaus

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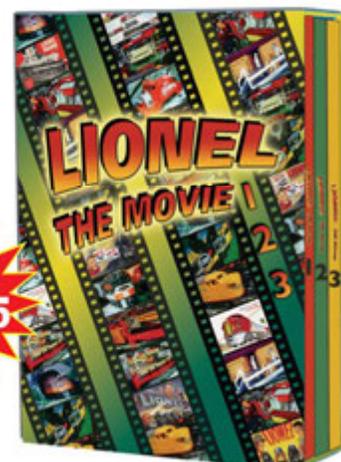
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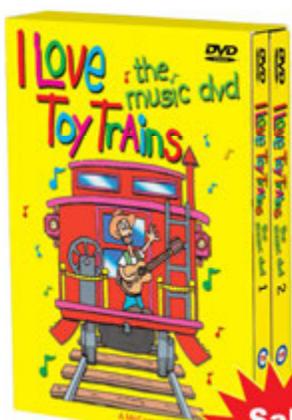
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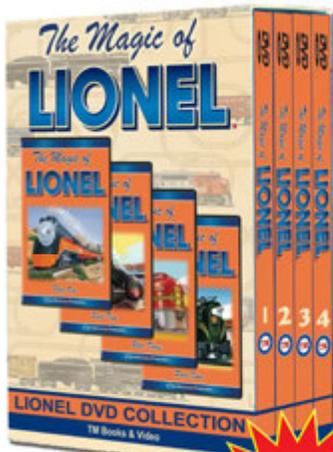
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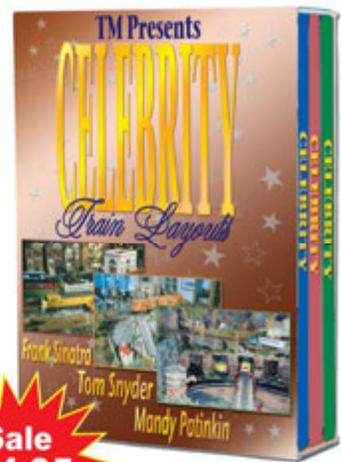
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## From the President's Desk

Joe Kutza



The big news this time around is, of course, the special issue Plasticville 2-Story House for the PCA. The blue color of the walls was a special order to exactly match our official logo color. We did our best to find trim colors that match the PCA theme and look good at the same time. The box will feature a special label, complete with the PCA logo. To make these all the more special, we are limiting the sales to one per PCA member. For the true collector, the dilemma then becomes one of keeping it truly mint by not opening the kit, or do we go for it and set it up on the layout? Although when the given this type of option I usually keep it mint, in this particular case I will definitely be opening the 2-story house and putting it on display. I enjoy the details of units like the 2-story house, and the split level house. Weathervanes, antennae, a side porch, gutters, it's the little things really help these pieces to stand out.

The special issue house is provided mainly as a service to our loyal members, particularly the ones who have stayed with us year after year. By occasionally providing special offers, and continuing to provide high quality

content in our newsletter, and on our web site, we hope that our members will stick with us and enjoy being part of the PCA.

The sooner you send in your order form, the sooner you will receive your special piece. If you lost your order form, check on the Information and Stories page of the PCA web site, or contact the chairman of the PCA 5th Anniversary Celebration committee: John Niehaus.

One last item, please remember to visit the PCA Trader page on the PCA web site. Recently, there were FREE items listed. They went quickly! The Trader is a free place to list "for sale" and "wanted ads". We delete ads that have been there more than 6 months to keep things fresh. To list items, just send an e-mail to [trader@plasticvilleusa.org](mailto:trader@plasticvilleusa.org) with as much detailed information as possible, but not to exceed 125 words per listing (1 for sale and 1 wanted at a time). The Trader page, along with your FREE classified ad listings in each issue of *The Villager* ensures that your requests are viewed by a dedicated plastic village fan base, all at no cost to you.

Keep cool this summer, and let me know about any interesting yard sale finds!

## Vice Presidential Insights

Doug Gilliatt

Well another summer here in the Valley of the Sun has begun. I hope that all the members have a great summer of collecting and Model Railroading.

It is really great that our organization has now grown to over 300 members and still growing. Remember that you can contact us for information packets that you can pass out or leave on your table at meets to help promote the PCA. It is a great way to get the word out about our organization.

I hope everyone is as excited as I about the 5th anniversary house from Bachmann that will be coming out soon. I for one am looking forward to putting it on my layout. Hopefully everyone will order one and help support the PCA and get a great new structure for their layout.

If you would like to contribute articles, stories or pictures that make *The Villager* the great publication that it is please do so. It is always with great interest that we all await the next issue

### **Where is your free *For Sale, For Trade, or Wanted* classified ad?**

Why not take advantage of more of your membership privileges? All members are allowed one free classified ad in each of the three classified ad categories per issue. The ad is free for up to 50 words. Your email address, membership number, name and address are not counted in the free 50 words either! Only the body of the ad is counted.

Download the ad form from the PCA website or contact the PCA Secretary for a copy if you don't have Internet access.

## Attaching Curtains in the New Split Level House

By John Niehaus

Some time back the below post was on the Yahoo Plasticville groups bulletin board. "The current-production Plasticville O Scale Two-Story Split Level House comes with decals for "curtains" behind the windows. The decals come on what appears to be a cardboard backing. There is a separate piece of clear acetate the same size as the cardboard backing that sits loosely on top of the decals. The instructions state and show to apply the curtain decals to the insides of the windows. However, they do not explain or show HOW to apply the decals. Do the decals come off the cardboard backing? If so, how? What is the clear acetate for? Do the decals transfer somehow to the acetate? If so, how? How do the decals adhere to the insides of the windows? One thing I know is that the decals are not stickers, i.e., like those that come with Plasticville's Roadside Stand."

In response to this request I contacted Bachmann's Marketing Manager in the hope that he could shed some light on this issue. His response is below.

"..... I just opened a current production sample of the O scale Split-Level House, and no curtains/decals whatsoever are included. According to *our production manager*, curtains are no longer packed with the house. However, *he* did tell me that the decals that this collector speaks of were sort of like double-sided tape—more sticker than decal. The back side is protected by the cardboard backing, while the side that adheres to the model was protected by removable clear plastic (I assume this is the acetate that's mentioned). Hope this helps!" *(Italicized text added by the editor to protect the name of the production manager.)*

From the comments of the production manager it seems that we may have two collectible varieties of the current production split level house. Unfortunately the only way I am aware of that would verify which variety one has is to open the shrink wrap.

## What Members Are Saying

Thanks, John. I received the issue and have read and reread it with nostalgic interest and involvement. You are providing a wonderful service for many early boomers. I also appreciate the hard copy, and as noted before, will be glad to pay extra for it. We have to make it easier for you to keep doing it! Phil McKnight

I appreciate the invitation to meet with the group at the York Show. It was very educational seeing items that were never released for sale.

The 2 story house looks great. Hope you can start a tradition and release a building each year. Ron Dise

Just a quick note to thank you for the fine job you and the others have done on this issue of the Villager. It's always an enjoyment to read. Reg Henry

Thanks for the packet and my membership card. I have read all of the information and the news letter and have enjoyed the articles in the *The Villager*. Looking for the future articles in *The Villager*. Thanks, Dick Meiser

Jim Smoldt here in Oakland, CA. Just a note to say I received my PCA membership card and the February

newsletter. I see my name made it into the "new members" column. I have accessed the "members only" portion of the website and learned a few new things already. Thanks a lot! Jim

Good morning, John. WI is a long way to go from MA, even for a train show! But I wanted to take this excuse to send you a note of thanks for the latest issue of the PCA newsletter, which arrived yesterday. I only got as far into it this morning as the Katrina survivor story, and decided I would give you the strongest possible positive feedback as soon as I had a chance. Your note gave me that chance. Nice job - I look forward to finishing the newsletter this evening. Have fun at that train show with your son (now there's a superfluous comment if there ever was one)! Douglas R. Wynne

Here is my business card ad I would like to insert in the Villager. And I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for making this all happen. It is good for the hobby in general and for Plasticville in particular. Cheers :- ) Roy Inman

## Whose Newsletter Is It Anyway?

By John Niehaus

*The Villager* belongs to you, the members of the PCA. Your comments and contributions will make *The Villager* better for all members.

What would you like to see in future newsletters? How can you enhance the content of *The Villager*?

Please feel free to contact me at villagereditor@plasticvilleusa.com or by mail at Editor, *The Villager*, 601 SE Second Street, Ankeny, Iowa 50021 if you have suggestions or wish to contribute an article.

## Lionel 956 Stockyard Set in Brown Box

By John Niehaus

Robert Drake, member #05-383, has what may be a unique or even rare Lionel 956 stockyard set. The contents of the set are the usual colors. What is unusual is that the box is not the usual Lionel orange and blue but a common brown cardboard box. Bob sent three pictures of his set. Two of those pictures clearly show the number 956 on the end of the box that seems to have been made with a rubber stamp.

His piece brings up a few questions. Did Bachmann package some Lionel 956 stockyard sets in plain brown cardboard boxes? If the answer to this question is “yes” then how did Lionel market them? Were they included in the more inexpensive sets? Were they included in department store sets? Are they leftover sets that were possible repackaged and sold by Madison Hardware in New York City or by another retailer?

If anyone has information regarding the unusual manner in which this piece was packaged please let us know. Contact me at [villagereditor@plasticvilleusa.org](mailto:villagereditor@plasticvilleusa.org) and I will share your comments in a future newsletter.



Member Robert Drake asks the following about the item shown in the picture above, “Is this a rare set, possibly worthy of a news article? Is there anyone in the club that has any background on it?”



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# Plasticville Pond With Simulated Water Insert

By John Niehaus

PCA member Joe Mania asked me quite some time ago why the O scale Plasticville pond he owned had a cardboard insert with simulated water printed on it. I had never heard of a water insert for the pond so I asked the members of the Yahoo Plasticville group.

It seems that if a pond has the cardboard insert it is not an O scale pond but rather an HO scale pond. Another identifying feature of the HO ponds, at least the one illustrated with this article is that it is not a solid green but a mottled green, yellow, and red. To the best of my knowledge O scale ponds were made only in three different shades of solid green.

In looking at Joe's piece, it also seems that the bridge was never permanently affixed to the pond as with the O scale ponds. A review of the box seems to substantiate



The pond and bridge marketed as HO scale is the same size as its O scale counterpart but with the addition of a cardboard insert for the bottom of the pond with simulated water printed on it.

this as it does not look deep enough to hold a fully assembled piece.

One question does go begging, though. If Bachmann did nothing more than repackage the O scale pond as an HO piece why did they not call it a lake as it would now have four times the scale surface area!



It is interesting that Bachmann felt it necessary to add a cardboard insert simulating water to the HO version of the Bridge & Pond. It also seems that the bridge was not attached to the pond at the factory.

## Railfan Antics

### Or How NOT to be a Good Railfan

By Gordon C Kelley

I started my career with the Milwaukee Road in May of 1959. My first exposure to FRN's was seeing them along the right of way, and other places snapping photos. I questioned older employees about the trespassers regarding their safety as well as if their picture taking was legal. I soon found out that the railroad police would arrest them and the older employees were sick of trying to work with a camera stuck in their face every day. I also found out that it was not legal to photograph railroad equipment or operations due to a law passed in the early 1940s. I watched as these trespassers, lawbreakers, and general pests "did their thing" while risking life and limb.

Enter now the Milwaukee Road police. They would

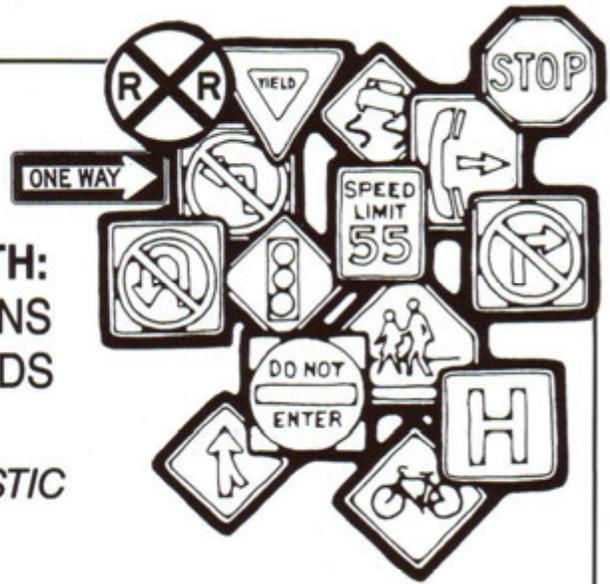
scoop the FRNs of the right of way, out of the yards, even off the viaducts over the Menominee River Valley in Milwaukee. The FRNs would be booked under Federal trespass laws and their cameras seized. Rather than keeping the cameras, the railroad police would remove the film and return the camera to its owner. They would then take the film and roll it out – onto the floor – under the light in front of the FRN.

It is my understanding that the president of the LS&I railroad in upper Michigan put up tall fences around his locomotive shop area to stop FRN photo shoots. I also understand that the LS&I railroad police were worse than the Milwaukee Road police.

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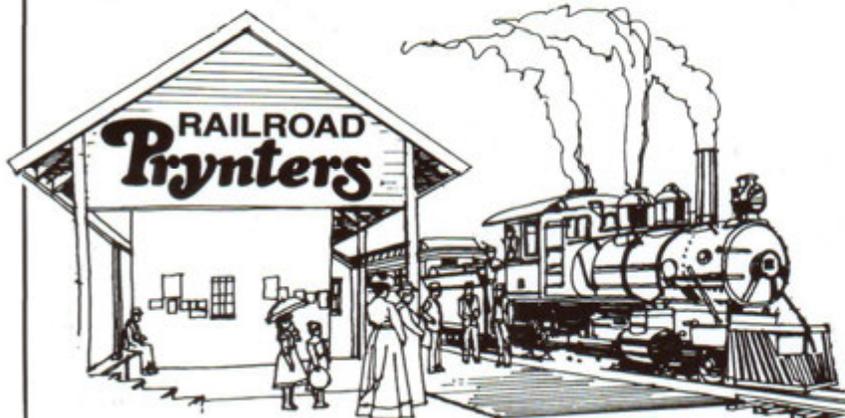


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## **Beige Ranch House**

By John Niehaus and Charles Wilber

I recently received an email from Charles Wilber stating that he had what seemed to him to be a beige color version of the Ranch House. I believe that what he has is a white Ranch House that has discolored over time. My basis for this theory is on the fact that I have one or two beige barns in my collection. As there is no mention in any reference books of beige barns I presume that my barns suffered the same fate as Charles' Ranch House. Is it possible that exposure to sunlight caused this change? If anyone can shed some light on how these white pieces turn beige please contact me to share that information with the members in a future newsletter.

Here is the text of Charles' message:

"I purchased this ranch house recently on eBay. It was missing one of the side walls, but what intrigued me was the fact that BEIGE is not a known color for this house in any of the literature that I have.

While the doors may have been



Charles Wilber recently found this beige Ranch House. Is this a new color or is it a white version that has discolored?

substituted, and the roof looks to be about the same color as the common WHITE walled w/LIGHT BLUE roofed version, the color of the walls could not have been changed. The wall joints are very tight which indicates that there was very little use of this piece.

And this BEIGE color has not been recorded. Upon asking the seller, I received the following information:

This item was purchased in an estate sale that occurred this past winter in Mansfield, Ohio. It was contained in a "plain doll box" along with a "back yard set" (probably the No. 1406 Playground Equipment), "frosty set" (probably the Frosty Bar) with no box, and a "Covered Bridge" in the box.

I recently posted this information in the Plasticville

yahoo group looking for additional verification of this variation. If you know of anyone who has information regarding this color variation of the Ranch House please let me know."

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# Plasticville on the Board

## Collectors and Users

By John Gottcent

First, thanks to reader Tom Fritsch, who noticed two glitches in our May 2006 column.

Here's Tom's message: "I read your "Plasticville on the Board" article in the May Villager. There are 2 things that I disagree with:

1. Your discussion about the birdbath states that it is 7 feet tall "perhaps that's to accommodate the original Plasticville birds." I always thought that it was the other way around. The birdbath came first because they simply turned the Christmas Tree/Maple Tree bases upside down and added another small base and put in holes for the birds. They needed large birds to fit the scale of the newly created birdbath.

2. You say "tiny Bachman cars are the only ones with a chance of fitting into the service bays on the small gas station." I don't know what a "tiny Bachman car" is. The two styles of cars are almost the same size and neither fit into the bays of the small gas station. These cars had to wait until the creation of the large gas station in order to be serviced. – Tom Fritsch, PCA Member # 01-4"

Tom's right about the order of events regarding the birds and birdbaths—or I should say birdbaths and birds. And while Plasticville autos do fit into the small gas station width wise, they do not, as Tom observes, fit in length wise. My point in both cases was to watch out for such things as inconsistencies in scale, but it is good to keep the record straight, as Tom has done.

Second, let me recommend three interesting articles in



the July 2006 issue of *Classic Toy Trains*, a magazine that has been paying quite a bit of attention to Plasticville this year. These recent articles describe ways of sharpening up hobo shacks, Cape Cod houses, and telephone poles to make them more realistic. There's also a great photo of a train layout bedecked with Plasticville on the back cover of the special paper cover included with subscription copies.

Now on to our own theme. In the toy train hobby, a distinction is often made between collectors and operators. The former are more interested in gathering rare items in the best possible condition, while the latter are more interested in using their items on working layouts. Of course, many hobbyists are both.

While it's difficult to talk of Plasticville "operators," since most PV items don't do anything but sit there, we might be able to make a useful distinction in our branch of the hobby between collectors and users. Again, the former are generally more interested in finding rare items and variations, while the latter are more interested in displaying their items to best effect. And again, many of



us are probably a bit of both.

Still, it might be interesting to explore some differences between the two groups. So I'm going to ask you readers to respond to two related questions. First, do you think there is a significant difference between being a Plasticville collector and a Plasticville user? And second, if so, what are the major distinctions you would note?

Send your ideas to me at the e-mail address listed at the end of this column and I'll share some of them in future issues. Meanwhile, for starters, here are some thoughts of my own.

First, I do see a notable difference between the two groups. While I suspect most *Villager* readers—including myself—would describe themselves as a bit of both, I'm betting that in practice they lean more in one direction than the other.

Second, here are some questions that, in my view, might help you decide which way you lean.

1. Are you concerned about whether your Plasticville items are found in original boxes? And are you concerned about the condition of those boxes? Collectors certainly are; users are less so.

2. Are you concerned about acquiring as many color variations of a given item as you can find? Collectors find variations—especially rare ones—extremely important. They would be delighted, for example, to find a Post Office with a real red roof. Users are more interested in whether an item's color scheme fits into their layout. They would much prefer a grey-roofed Post Office because it's likely to appear more realistic.

3. Speaking of realism, are you willing to modify a piece to enhance its realism? For example, would you paint the attic vent on a Cape Cod house a metallic color, as in the attached photo? Collectors tend to think this diminishes the value of an item; users think it actually improves the value by making the item more usable.

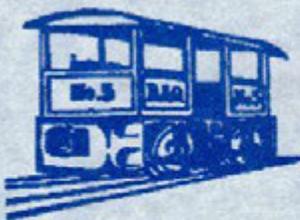
4. If you came across a mint item sealed in its original package, would you open it? Serious collectors would likely not do so; users would think it silly to own a box and not know for sure what's inside.

5. When searching for Plasticville on E-bay or at a flea

market, are you more excited when you find a piece that "completes" one branch of your collection (for example, that gives you all the known variations of ranch houses), or are you more excited when you find a piece that will fit perfectly into the railroad yard you're putting together? The implications of your answer are obvious.

For the record, I'd describe myself as—surprise!—more of a user than a collector. Still, I do find myself drawn to items in good condition boxes, and I do keep a record of the variations of each item that I own. So maybe the bottom line is: collector or user, we're all in this together.

OK. Your turn. Send me your thoughts on this, or on other items you'd like to see explored in the column, at [jandjgott@juno.com](mailto:jandjgott@juno.com). And happy villaging!

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# Illuminated Plasticville Church

By Anthony J Rudgers

Recently, I acquired an interesting Plasticville building from among the Christmas decorations being sold at a garage sale in my neighborhood. Prior to its acquisition, this Plasticville item was certainly unknown to me, and it may also be new to many other Plastic Village collectors. For that reason, I would like to describe this building to readers of *The Villager* and to try to put it in a proper context with other related items. The building in question is an assembled (i.e., glued-together) CC-9 Parish Church with an illuminated interior. My new church has the usual white sides, light grey main-roof and steeple-roof pieces, and a glued-on red paper door with black detail. The glued-on "stained-glass" window "inserts" are the common kind with the rather thick tan felted-paper backing.

From the uniformity and economy of the glue joints found on this church, it appears that the assembly of the plastic pieces of the church was done in a commercial setting and was not left to the consumer. The steeple roof, with a glued-in white cross, is, however, a separate piece. This steeple roof probably was intended by the maker of the church to be put on by the purchaser at home, in order that packaging for the church could be more compact than if the steeple roof had been affixed before sale. On my church, the cross is glued into the hole in the steeple roof slightly askew, so that the plane of the cross cannot be made parallel to the front wall of the church.

Fastened inside the rear wall of the assembled church, by means of a single plated-brass eyelet, is a sheet-steel angle bracket, approximately 1-1/16 in. wide and about 0.0375 in. thick. This bracket holds upright a brown phenolic (i.e., Bakelite-type) plastic lamp holder, such as is to be found in old-style parallel-wired Christmas-tree light strings. The lamp, itself, with a candelabra-size screw base, has a tapered clear-glass envelope. (The original lamp appears to be still functional.) It can be described as one of those old-fashioned Christmas-tree bulbs that you can still buy for your tree if you haven't switched over to the more modern strings of tiny Xmas lights. (The kind of lamp found in the church is also commonly used in plug-in night-light sockets.) The (estimated) 4-Watt lamp is powered with household 120 Volts AC by way of an ivory colored 3-ft.-long lightweight lamp cord, attached to a small brown molded-phenolic two-prong plug. The original round green cardboard Underwriters Laboratories tag is still in place on the lamp cord. Among the data on this tag is the description, "TIMCO/ XMAS TREE/ LIGHT OUTLETS." The rectangular notch found at the bottom of the rear wall of the CC-9 church nicely accommodates the lamp cord. The angle bracket holding the lamp fixture obscures the circled "BB., logo on the church rear wall, but the words "PLASTICVILLE, U.S.A." below its lower

edge are partially visible. Below this is the word "REGISTERED."

Since this assembled CC-9 Plasticville church has long been separated from its original box, it is impossible to say whether Bachmann Bros., Inc. assembled this item, wired it for illumination, and marketed the church under its own name, or whether Bachmann Bros. instead, supplied the unassembled CC-9 parts to another firm that produced and sold the building in question. In any case, this illuminated church was obviously intended for the Christmas market. It is easy to be of the opinion that my assembled church is a true Bachmann Bros. product, perhaps developed to compete with the Skyline Plastics Manufacturing Co., which was, it is to be noted, also located in Philadelphia, PA. We know that Skyline produced an assembled plastic church incorporating a Swiss music box that was said to play a Christmas carol. (The musical Skyline church in my collection plays what I believe to be a hymn. I do not recognize the music-box tune as any familiar Christmas carol or Christmas song.) The Skyline musical church was advertised as early as 1953. Skyline is also known to have produced a similar assembled church, without a music box, but which was illuminated. This makes one wonder if Bachmann Bros., a formidable competitor in the Christmas putz market at that time, might also have produced a church incorporating a music box as a companion piece to the illuminated CC-9 described above. I might add that, in addition to the Skyline musical church and this newly-acquired Plasticville church, I have in my collection a third, somewhat similar, fully-assembled "Christmas" church made of hard, shiny polystyrene plastic, which is of unknown manufacture. Apparently, a number of firms must have produced plastic Christmas churches in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

One detail I have long puzzled over about Plasticville CC-9 and 1600 Parish Churches has been clarified by my examination of this newly acquired building. If one examines the lower inside edges of the side walls of any CC-9 or 1600 church, he or she typically finds a 1/16-in.-wide molded ridge projecting 5/64 in. from the inside surface of each wall. This ridge runs almost the full length of the wall, stopping 7/16 in. from the front and rear edges of the side wall. At the center of each side wall, about 1/32 in. above this ridge and parallel to it, is a second projection from the wall. This projection, which has the shape of a segment of a circle, is approximately 1-7/8 in. long and sticks out from the wall surface about 1/4 inch in at its center. On some of the Parish Churches in my collection, I observe that the lower long ridge no longer remains on one of the church's side walls. Instead, there are only two small molded bumps, one at each end, to mark where once the lower ridge was part of the wall.

(Although I can see no observable difference between the "left" and the "right" side walls of a Parish Church, I have found no example in my collection where the lower ridge is missing from both walls of a complete (e.g., a boxed) Parish Church. At least one wall of each CC-9 or 1600 church in my collection has a fully-molded lower ridge. Also, in no case have I found an example with the upper molded circular segment-shaped projection absent.)

The purpose of the molded ridge and the circular segment-shaped projections on the inner walls of Plasticville Parish Churches is now clear, owing to the existence of such assembled churches as the one being described. Without question, the molded side-wall projections were designed to hold a thin cardboard bottom in these churches when they were sold as assembled buildings. These molded projections remained part of the CC-9 side walls from then on, even though only unassembled churches, without cardboard bottom pieces, were subsequently offered in Plasticville kits. In this connection, I note that my Skyline musical church has just such a cardboard bottom still intact. (The Skyline cardboard bottom piece has a shiny white finish on the side visible when the church is turned upside down.) Moreover, I find exactly the kind of molded ridges and projections on the lower inside edges of the side walls of

my Skyline musical church that are present on Plasticville Parish Churches. Only, on my Skyline church, the upper circular-segment-shaped projections are noticeably smaller in size. I also note that my other Christmas church--the one of unknown manufacture--must have also had a cardboard bottom at one time. The way in which the cardboard bottom was held in place on this piece, however, is completely different from that used by both Bachmann Bros. and Skyline Manufacturing in the assembled churches that these companies produced.

I believe there are many varieties of assembled plastic Christmas churches out there, waiting to be discovered and added to our Plastic Village collections. I know finding the illuminated Plasticville Parish Church that I have discussed here caused me to take a whole new view of this class of collectable buildings. Today, I wish I had paid a little more attention to some of the items I just glanced at and then bypassed in my collecting ventures. I hope Plastic Village enthusiasts will come to look with a bit more practiced eye at all those buildings that appear, at first glance, to have been "glued together" and thereby spoiled as items of "collector interest." It was my second look at such a "glued together" building that let me add what I think is an unusual Plasticville piece to my Plastic Village collection.

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## Plasticville Desktop Pictures (wallpaper)

By Charles Wilber

It takes no great insight to realize that our plastic village is inextricably linked with the most popular electric trains of the Post War era, whether these were Lionel O scale, or American Flyer S Scale.

This is why I've kept the Plasticville pictures that I've done as computer wallpaper in the realm of those that include some reference to the trains that were pictured on the cover of the Plasticville boxes. These boxes are mainly of the art work of one particular artist who began illustrating these boxes in about 1959 for Bachmann. I'm sure that all of you are very familiar with this artist's remarkable work.

The main problem in digitizing these for the computer is finding a quality box that has a minimal amount of dirt and filth that has accumulated on it over the years. This is where most of the time is spent in cleaning up these

pictures, and at 300 dpi (dots per inch) resolution the dirt really shows up.

A box with a lot of dirt on it can cause quite a few problems because not all of the time am I assured that I get the color exactly right as I replace the dirt with colored pixels. What usually happens is that I try to reach what I call a "consistency of filth" in these pictures.

Then, there is the problem of formatting the picture to fit the size of the computer monitor. Bachmann didn't size their boxes for the computer in exactly 4:3 ratio, so on all of these pictures, some pixels will have to be added or subtracted to accommodate the picture on the computer without distortion.

The most extreme of these cases involved the picture of the 1959 Railroad Center Master Unit box that was sent to me by Sheldon Wotring. Thanks Sheldon!

Sheldon sent this box cover art in four individual scans that had to be pieced together. Once this was done the hue, brightness, and contrast were matched as closely as possible and they were merged into one picture. The resulting picture was then cleaned (again, this is what takes a lot of time).

Shown at left are two pictures of this box. The first one shows the completed picture of the box with the writing on it.

The second one has the writing removed and 708 lines of pixels have been added to the right side. This was done so that none of the top area of the painting would be eliminated in sizing this picture for the computer. I then drew in the graphical objects like the additional cars behind the locomotive and extended the station platforms to the right side of the picture.

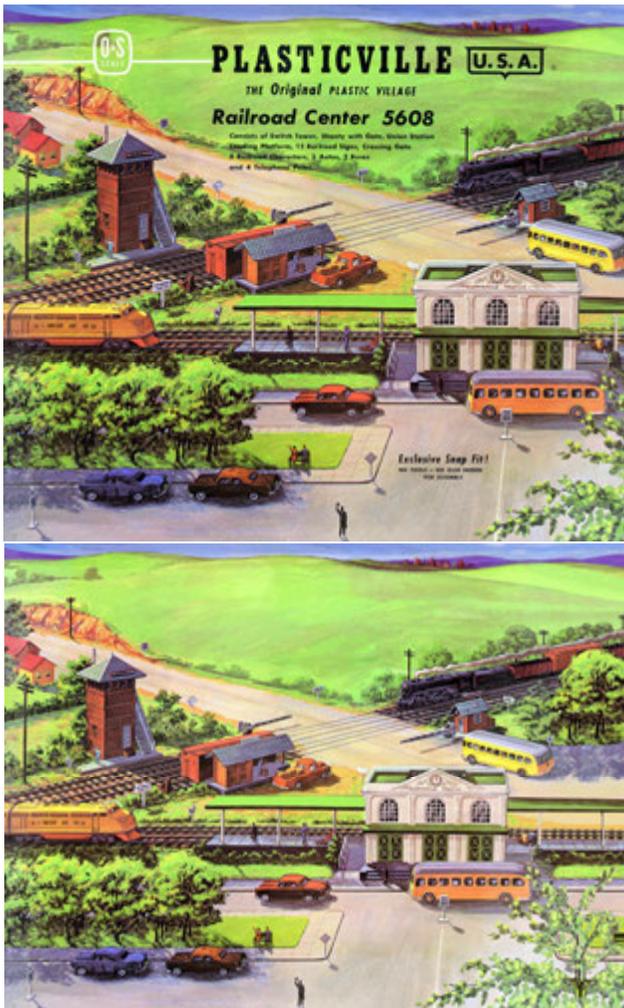
My overriding concern in working with these pictures is to maximize the quality and at the same time preserve the original intent of the artwork. To that end, I have corrected most of the printing faults that were on the original boxes and also to enhance many of the features in the artwork that were not visible to the naked on these boxes.

To see the desktop pictures we are offering now, go to: [http://www.tandem-associates.com/plasticville/plasticville\\_desktop.htm](http://www.tandem-associates.com/plasticville/plasticville_desktop.htm)

If you have a particular favorite picture let me know and I'll try to get around to working on it in the near future.

Charles, Tandem Associates, PCA #04-307,  
tandem@tandem-associates.com

*Editor's note: Does anyone have information as to who the illustrator may have been for the boxes of this time period?*



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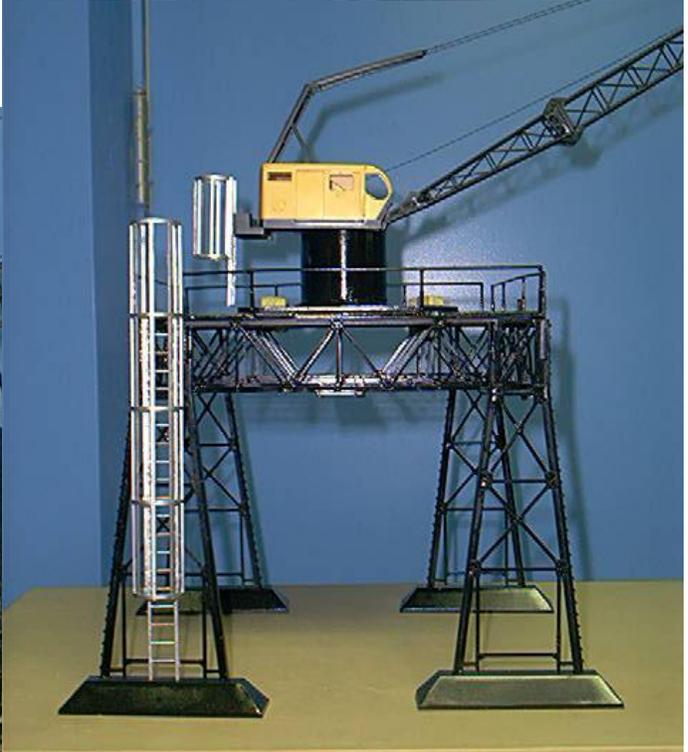
## Creative Uses of Damaged Parts

By James Hehn

You may have noticed that the author of this column is not Edward J Johnson. Shortly after publication of the May newsletter I received an email from James Hehn asking if he could contribute pictures and information on buildings he had created from scrap pieces of Plasticville and other brands of buildings. I already had additional pictures and descriptions from Edward to continue a series of articles but thought it might be fun for both if they shared the column on a rotational basis.

Upon contacting Ed here is what I received as a reply. " I like your idea. I will contact James and we can submit different articles. I assume you will want more than a photo and a short description. I'm sure there are other fellow travelers through the world of Plasticville junk. Perhaps we will elicit more contributors. From the wisdom of my late Father: "Anyone can build a model. But to take junk and turn it into something useful - that requires ingenuity" That's all folks! Eddie J"

With that reply here is the second of what will be a continuing column in the newsletter.



I was lucky enough to win an auction on eBay for thirteen signal bridges (dirt cheap). Don't ask me why I did it as I didn't have a clue. When I received them I said to myself, "What the heck am I going to do with all of these bridges?". I knew then I would have to re-sell them on eBay. That was the wrong answer. The wheels started turning and the vision came. The pictures will show with what I did with those thirteen signal bridges. This was a time consuming project. Yes the crane rotates 360 degrees!!!!

# What would happen if...



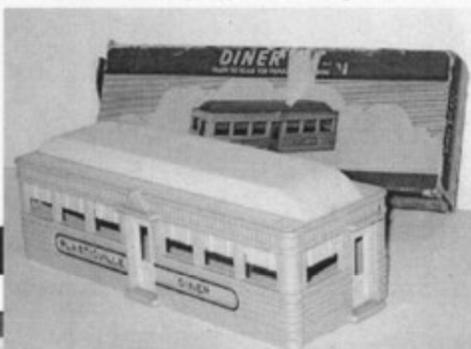
Thousands of fine people lost their lifetime hobbies in the recent hurricane season. Collectibles ranging from all kinds of plastic collectibles to basement model railroad layouts and paper ephemera were sadly destroyed. Did insurance help many of these victims? In too many cases, the answer was, "NO."

I've been a collector all of my life—even before I became the owner of a firm that specializes in providing insurance for thousands of collectibles. I know what it's like to lose the treasures of a lifetime hobby. Here's a lesson I learned that I'd like to pass along to you: Homeowners insurance is rarely, if ever, adequate for your cut glass collectibles. Take a minute now and call, write or e-mail us for brochures that can help your peace of mind.

*Dan Walker*

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## Shipping of 5th Anniversary 2 Story House to be Delayed

by John Niehaus

Due to circumstances beyond our control the shipping of the 5th anniversary 2 story house will be later than late September as noted on the order form.

It was discovered by Bachmann that the run of our special color houses did not happen in May as anticipated.

There is another production run of 2 story houses scheduled for early August. Our special color houses are to be made after the completion of that production run.

The PCA has a database of all who have ordered a house and we will keep you informed as to when we ship your house.

You still have time – even more now – to order a house if you have not done so already. The order form may be downloaded from the Members Only page of the PCA website.

If you do not have Internet access you may send a request to: “5th Anniversary House Order Form” at the address listed in the box at the bottom of the first page.

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### The PCA Corner Store Items for sale by the PCA

Visit the PCA website to view all of the items offered.

Send payment and the description of item desired to Plasticville Collectors Association, Christine A Niehaus, 601 SE Second Street, Ankeny, IA 50021-3207 unless noted otherwise noted.

#### **Personalized address labels**

A sheet of 30, personalized, high-quality color labels are available from the PCA. The labels will include the PCA logo in color and up to four lines of address. Each label is a generous 1 x 2 5/8 inches. \$1.00 per sheet plus 50 Cents P&H regardless of the number of sheets ordered.

#### **PCA T-shirt**

Navy blue 100% cotton, short sleeve shirt T-shirt with the PCA logo printed on the front in white. Sizes available are Small, Medium, Large, X-Large, XX-Large, and XXX-Large. The prices are \$18 for small through X-Large, \$19 for XX-Large and \$20 for XXX-Large, shipping included, for each shirt. Please order the next larger size if you are concerned with fit. An order form is available on the PCA website, or request a form from the Secretary at the address listed above.

#### **Back Issues of *The Villager* on CD**

Each CD contains all four newsletters for the specified year. The newsletters on the CD are in PDF format. The cost for each year is \$12, postpaid. A link and instructions on how to download Acrobat Reader is also included on each CD

#### **Additional items with the PCA logo**

Do you have an idea for an item? Contact Christine Niehaus at [secretary@plasticvilleusa.org](mailto:secretary@plasticvilleusa.org) or mail your suggestions to her at the address noted above.

We are currently looking at a cloisonné pin, baseball caps, and embroidered patches.

## Software Publisher Requests PCA Assistance

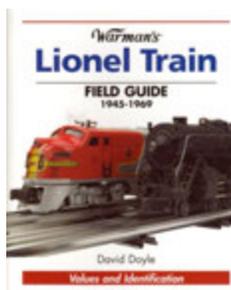
By John Niehaus

David Jamison of Evan Designs has asked me if the members of the PCA would be so kind as to supply him with photocopies of the walls of Plasticville buildings. David is the publisher of a PC program that allows one to print window details on transparent film for attaching to buildings.

He has templates for many manufacturers but none for Plasticville. He is asking if the PCA could supply him with either photocopies at 100% of Plasticville buildings so that he may create templates for them also.

He may be contacted at [traindetail@gmail.com](mailto:traindetail@gmail.com) or Evan Designs, PO Box 2055, Broomfield, CO. His website is: <http://modeltrainsoftware.com>

## Product Reviews



**Warman's Lionel Train Field Guide 1945-1969**, by David Doyle, published by kp books of Iola, Wisconsin. \$12.99 (U.S.), \$17.99 (Can.), 512 pages, perfect bound.

The first thing that struck me about this book was its size. At only 4 X 5 X 1-1/4 thick it is the smallest format guide book I have

ever seen. The second feature of this book that caught my attention was that all illustrations are in full color on slick paper. As can be expected not only does this guide contain a comprehensive list of pieces but the author's opinion as to value.

Although the book does not have distinct chapters there are acknowledgements, a how to use the guide section, a short condition and rarity discussion, and a lengthy section relating to aids to dating trains that includes information on freight car trucks and the various Lionel boxes.

Once you have gotten past these pages, then the real meat of the book is found. Values are listed for the conditions very good (VG) excellent (EX), and like new (LN) for locomotives, rolling stock and accessories. An additional column for each piece in these categories lists the scarcity of the item from 1 through 8 with 1 being a very common item and 8 being an extremely difficult piece to find.

Not only does this guide list all of the larger size Lionel pieces but it also lists catalogued outfits with a value stated for excellent and like new conditions. There is also

an additional column listing the scarcity rating of each set.

As if this isn't enough the author has included a listing of all major catalogues and some additional pieces of paper items such as the 1948 3-D glasses and train sheet. Values for excellent and new are listed for these items along with a scarcity rating.

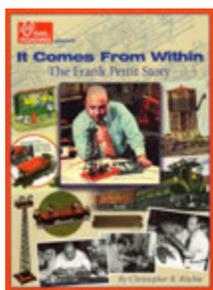
This guide is the only guide that I have ever seen that also includes Lionel HO! Values are listed for very good, excellent, and like new condition. A preface to this section notes that the author had insufficient information available to provide scarcity ratings.

To finish off the book the author has included an appendix covering the usual "care and feeding" of electric trains along with a two page glossary. Finally you will find an index of item numbers and the page upon which that piece can be found.

This guide is probably the most comprehensive publication regarding Lionel trains made between 1945 and 1969 in such a small format. The fact that it not only contains the usual O gauge engines and rolling stock but all of the additional items makes it a valuable reference book regardless of format. These features along with the over 800 color photos make this a book that I highly recommend.

**Warman's Lionel Train Field Guide 1945-1969** may be purchased directly from kp books. The mailing address is 700 East State Street, Iola, WI 549990-0001, 800 726-9966. The price is \$12.99 plus shipping.

It may also be ordered on line at [www.krause.com](http://www.krause.com). You may also be able to purchase it from your favorite hobby shop or bookstore.



**It Comes From Within, The Frank Pettit Story**, by Christopher B Ritchie, published by OGR Publishing Inc, Poland, Ohio. \$16.95, 88 pages, perfect bound.

I had heard of Frank Pettit but had read very little about his work at Lionel. This book greatly increased my knowledge of this innovative person. The book not only covers the thirty five years that Frank spent at Lionel but also the years before and after his tenure there.

The book contains ten very easy to read chapters on slick paper. Each chapter includes many black and white photos, patent drawings, and even some original sketches made by Mr. Pettit.

It is interesting to note that even though he is credited with being the actual inventor of certain pieces, in many instances his name is not to be found on the patent

drawings. Instead, one finds the name of the chief engineer of that time, Joseph Bonanno. Chapter eight discusses some of the issues that existed between Pettit and Bonanno.

Chapter seven details the work that he and Lionel's chemist performed in inventing the first viable smoke unit for Lionel that used nontoxic pellets. This probably was one of the greatest irritations for Bonanno as he was credited with invention of the first Lionel smoke unit. His unit melted pellets placed on a special dished lamp. Although his invention created smoke it was impractical as the pellets proved very corrosive upon melting and caused damage to many a child's steam engine.

The second last chapter discusses the companies for which Pettit worked after leaving Lionel along with his inventions for those companies. It is interesting to note that he worked for NOMA, the holiday novelty and Christmas tree lights manufacturer, where he is credited

with inventing the bubbling Christmas tree lights. He also worked for Mantua Metal Products, TYCO, and MTH Trains among others. The most personally interesting piece of information in this chapter was that he worked with Dr. Lee Salk, the brother of Dr. Jonas Salk, to develop an electronic device that simulated the sound of the in-womb heartbeat of a pregnant woman.

The last chapter is a listing of inventions that can be definitely attributed to Frank through his original drawings and notes or through patents. It is a long and

impressive list with well over 100 items listed for Lionel alone.

I enjoyed reading this book over the span of a couple of evenings and would recommend it to anyone who wishes to know more about this innovative and inventive person.

**It Comes From Within, The Frank Pettit Story** may be purchased directly from OGR Publishing, 33 Sheridan Rd., Poland, Ohio 44514-1680. The customer service number is 800-980-6477. It is also available in their on line bookstore at [ogagerr.com](http://ogagerr.com).



**Manage My Model Train Collection**, Version 10 on CD. Published by Hill Country Productions LLC, E9273 East Ridge Rd, Westby, Wisconsin 54667. \$15.95 plus shipping. There seems to be many model train inventory management programs on the market today. They range in price for a few dollars into the hundreds. This one is on the low end as far as price but seems to be on the high end when it comes to versatility.

Upon starting the program you are presented with six menu options including an owner registration screen. This screen is unique in that it does not actually register you as a licensee of the program as most programs do but is ultimately used to personalize some of the reports you generate in the program.

The main menu item on this screen is the Inventory Entry menu. This is where you enter information on the pieces of trains in your collection. This screen contains twenty-five fields of which only one, the record number self-populates. You can enter whatever you wish in the remaining fields. (The illustration with this review is of the inventory entry screen.) Over half of these screens have drop down menus that are populated by you through the other menu items on this screen. Two of the fields on this screen are for a description and operating features. I doubt that you will ever even come near to filling these fields as they both allow over 65,000 characters. The program also allows the addition of two pictures to each record. I was able to add records in JPG, BMP and WMF formats. I am guessing that you could probably also add

pictures in JIF, GIF, and TIFF although I did not attempt those formats. One thing one must keep in mind with this and most inventory programs is that they only add a pointer to the location of your pictures – not a copy of the picture. You will lose the pictures “attached” to a record if you move the picture from the directory they were in when you “added” them to the record.

The next menu option is the Train Date Entry menu. Clicking on this option leads you to another menu containing seven additional menu selections where you can enter information on prototypes.

Option four is the Model Data Entry menu. Here one can enter information on distributor, manufacturer, series, material, condition, and where a specific piece is located.

If that isn't enough the next option leads you to thirty different reports. I found this a bit interesting in that if you wanted to know how many red pieces you had in your collection there is a report that will tell you that!

We all have certain pieces that we wish we had in our collections. The last option allows one to create their own personal wish list including item number, retailer – which could be used to list a manufacturer instead, cost, and remarks.

Any additions made through the Train Data and, Model Data menus are then available in the many dropdown selection boxes on the Inventory Entry screen.

I found this program easy to install and very easy to use. If you are looking for a toy train inventory program that is powerful yet simple to use I suggest you investigate **Manage My Model Train Collection**. I intend to use it.

If you are looking for a plastic village inventory program, one is in the design stages per the publisher. It will be a collaboration of the publisher and members of the PCA.

**Manage My Model Train Collection** is available on CD from Hill Country Productions, LLC, E9273 East Ridge Rd US - 54667 Westby, WI. Phone Telephone: 608-237-2307, Fax: 608-237-2313, [www://hillcountryprod.com](http://www://hillcountryprod.com) The price is \$15.95 plus shipping.

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## Welcome New Members

The following individuals' names have been added to the Plasticville Collectors Association membership roster

William F Gough, Baltimore, MD  
Michael A Lech, Johnstown, PA  
Linda Mazzoni, Vineland, NJ  
David R Smukowski, West Bend, WI  
Carol V Dawes, Syracuse, NY  
Richard P Wade, Kenosha, WI  
Fred R Faist, Woodstock, GA  
Robert R Crampton Jr, Baltimore, MD

as of July 1, 2006. Their names are now listed in the on line roster.

Robert Heine, Washington, DC  
R.B. (Rocky) Naff, Tulsa, OK  
Joseph Orobello, Bayshore, NY  
Gary Neuhardt, Arlington Heights, IL  
Wayne R Rothsching, Philadelphia, PA  
Richard J Meiser Sr, Louisville, KY  
George J Schmid, Arlington Heights, IL  
Kenneth Landry, Walton, NY

## Proposed Members

The following have applied for membership in the Plasticville Collectors Association. The names of all proposed members must be published for the review of the general membership before being accepted as

Robert J Ludwig, Schnecksville, Pa  
Sandra F Rothsching, Philadelphia, PA  
Kenneth Olszewski, Fallston, MD  
Christopher Conway, New Haven, CT  
Joseph A Herman, Cogan Station, PA  
Joseph K Dundon, South Bend, IN

members in accordance with the bylaws of the PCA. All names listed below will be added to the Plasticville Collectors Association rolls if no objection to such action is received prior to October 1, 2006.

Maryann Hill, Andover, OH  
Phil J Fravesi, Carmichael, CA  
David J Connelly, Tuckertown, NJ  
Michael J Drenkhan, Lake Wales, FL  
Andrew Harvey, Bayport, NY

## The Villager Classified Ads

### **Note:**

Member information such as name, address, email address, and member number should not be considered part of the word count. Telephone numbers will be included in the ad only if they are part of the submitted ad.

Classified ads run for four consecutive issues unless a change is made to the ad or notice is given to remove it.

The month and year at the end of each ad notes the last

### **For Sale**

1627 Hobo Shacks, OB, \$90.00; Gingerbread house, chocolate, rhyme, OB \$200.00 OBO; 3 Men in Tub, rhyme, OB, \$150.00 OBO; Gingerbread house, no rhyme, no figures, OB, \$60.00 OBO. chuckaboom@juno.com, #02-183, Charles Swanson, PO Box 33042, Knoxville, TN, 37930, (865) 693-5740 (Aug 06)

Reasonable priced Plasticville for sale. Currently selling lots of 100 clean parts for \$40.00 plus shipping. I also have many complete buildings boxed and not boxed for sale. Call, e-mail, or write for list of boxed items for sale. plastic1@fuse.net, #01-25, Bill Hunter, 1333 Ashford Dr., Florence, KY, 41042, (859) 525-7183 (Feb 07)

0400 Mobile home, cream/blue mint \$25. HS-6 Hospital, complete, missing one tab on steps, tattered box, \$30. AD-4 Air Administration building, incomplete, good for

issue in which that particular ad will appear.

It is suggested that the names of pieces being offered in the classified ads follow the names found in reference material such as price guides or catalogs.

Ads may be edited to conform to both the suggested naming convention and to bring them to fewer than 50 words if payment for the excess words is not included with the ad.

parts, \$10. Above prices plus shipping. factlf@juno.com #02-87, Lawrence Fachler, 6 Bosko Drive, East Brunswick, NJ 08816-4542 (Feb 07)

Qualify for the Indianapolis 500 with your 1890 Road Racing boxed set: \$650. Stay at your 5402 Highway Motel boxed set: \$100. Take the Plasticville Turnpike 5601 Boxed Set: \$160, and take a driving break at the 5200 Roadside Rest boxed set: \$80. 5604 Residential Square: \$125. #02-154, Robert Spivey, Box 33484, Decatur, GA 30033. (404) 633-6777 (Feb 07)

New England Rancher, scenic type, sealed, \$25.00 plus shipping; White maple trees, glued, \$15.00 each plus shipping. #02-93, Gerry Fuglewicz, 11262 Sunrise Dr, East Aurora, NY, 14052, GFuglewicz@aol.com 716-655-0223 (May 07)

## For Trade

Have Storytown Old Woman and Yellow Shoe w/repared chimney need Red shoe. Have Green walled Humpty Dumpty w/broken piece on body back, need Yellow walled Humpty. Have Storytown Old Woman, pogo stick, girl, little boy, boy w/baseball glove (see wants). chuckaboom@juno.com, #02-183, Charles Swanson, PO Box 33042, Knoxville, TN, 37930, (865) 693-5740 (Aug 06)

## Wanted

1701 box, 1614 Police Station box, 2 1/2 story house w/charcoal roof, Make 'N Play items or pieces, Firehouse w/red side/white roof. Storytown figures for Old Woman in the Shoe; girl spilling warer, girl w/doll, boy on rope. chuckaboom@juno.com, #02-183, Charles Swanson, PO Box 33042, Knoxville, TN, 37930, (865) 693-5740 (Aug 06)

Wanted – your unwanted or extra Plasticville Kits, complete or partials, in excellent or better condition. One kit or a truck load, doesn't matter. I will also buy nice clean boxes. glennb@tricounty.net, #03-219, Glenn Bowman, 301 Buffalo Creek Rd, Newport, PA, 17074. (Aug 06)

I'm looking for a Littletown #405 business unit. It contains 2 corner stores, general store, supermarket, gas station, and street accessories, in a decent shape box. Suemark689@msn.com, #05-373, Mark Martini, 14 Beech St, Stanhope, NJ, 07874, (973) 691-6419 (Aug 06)

Spirit of 76 (Commemorative Series) State of Virginia boxcar (Must be new or of limited use). Arnold.douglas@us.army.mil, #02-86, Arnold Douglas, 3 Violante Ct, Eatontown, NJ, 07724, (732) 935-9574 (Aug 06)

SC-4 School, weather vane, light, flagpole. FH-4 Fire House, chimney cap, convex siren. LM-3 Station, , dark gray roof and trim, brown platform, 2 roof signs. 1618

My: WPLA sign for your Switch Tower steps or stovepipe, Water Tower spout for your ladder, Hospital siren or evaporator for your NE Ranch antenna or porch, Fire Truck spotlight or ladder swivel for nozzle, 16 Citizens for 8 fat people. Many Spruce trees for one Maple, Red pickup for yellow. #02-154, Robert Spivey, Box 33484, Decatur, GA 30033. (404) 633-6777 (Feb 07)

TV Station, front doors, red antenna base, white tower. LH-4 2-story Colonial House, red porch supports, TV antenna, red weather vane, white door. #06-396, Lesley Samsell Sr., 511B Helterville Rd, Nescopeck, PA 18635 (Feb 07)

Porch roof and porch floor for red w/dark grey roof LH4 2-story Colonial house. 2 yellow farm implement wagon stakes. K-Line catalogs. Figures and accessories for K-Lineville buildings. Loading dock roof for K-Line factory. Original assembly instructions for signal bridge or any other Plasticville piece. johnln@netins.net #00-3, John Niehaus, 601 SE Second St., Ankeny, IA 50021-3207 (May 07)

Original white rabbits from the Plasticville farm buildings and animals sets. A bearskin sticker for the log cabin door. A copy of the third edition (1993) of the Plasticville Guide. mark290638-rail@yahoo.com #05-359, Mark Lembersky (May 07)

Wanted: Cape Cod House, any color, in EX 1630 box. Switch Tower in EX 1631 box. Switch Tower in Ex 1951 box. Station Platform in EX 1200 box. Watchman's Shanty in EX 1816 box. Signal Bridge in EX 1632 box. Contact Joe Kutza at president@plasticvilleusa.org #99-01 (May 07)

**If all of your plastic village pieces are complete then read no further.**

**BUT**

If you are like most of us and have some incomplete pieces why not place a **FREE** 50 word classified ad in *The Villager*. The member classified ad form may be downloaded from the PCA BASICS page on the PCA website or you can email a request to secretary@plasticvilleusa.org. You may snail mail a request to the address in the box at the bottom of the first page of this newsletter if you do not have Internet access. Why not make use of this part of your membership.

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with Playground Equipment  
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Two-Story House  
Item No. 45305  
\$35.00

Hobo Jungle  
Item No. 45306  
\$35.00

Loading Platform &  
Crossing Shanty  
Item No. 45307  
\$35.00

Country Church  
Item No. 45308  
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with Two Trailers  
& Flag Pole with Flag  
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\$39.00

Bank  
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\$35.00

Hospital with Furniture  
Item No. 45312  
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Cape Cod Houses  
(2 per box)  
Item No. 45313  
\$35.00



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