



# The Villager

The official newsletter of the Plasticville Collectors Association

Volume 5

November 2006

Number 4

## Constitution and Bylaw Changes Adopted

The proposed constitution and bylaw changes proposed in the August, 2006 edition of *The Villager* have been adopted. The Executive Committee voted to adopt the

proposed changes as published as there were no comments regarding the proposed changes either pro or con. The changes are effective as of May 15, 2006.

## 2007 Dues to be \$8.00 for Fifth Consecutive Year!

The Executive Committee is pleased to announce that the dues for calendar year 2007 will be \$8.00. This will be the fifth consecutive year that the dues has remained at eight dollars.

This is due in great part to those members who opt for the on line (ePCA) version of the newsletter. Their viewing the on line version and opting to not receive the hard copy saves quite a bit of money in both printing costs and postage. Plus those members are viewing the

newsletter in color!

If you have Internet access and have not viewed the newsletters on line the Executive Committee urges you to give it a try. You may just find that viewing it in color and printing it on your color printer at home is for you.

If you decide to switch to the on line version only, send a message to [secretary@plasticvilleusa.org](mailto:secretary@plasticvilleusa.org) and let her know. She will even send you PCA pen as a "thank you" for helping us to keep the dues as low as they are.

## New Payment Process for 2007 Dues

The executive committee has devised a new method of notifying members that it was time to pay their dues for the forthcoming year. It is felt that the new process will make it simpler for members to ensure their dues are paid in a timely manner.

Stapled to this issue of the newsletter is an envelope with a label addressed to the PCA. All you need to do is enclose your dues payment in the envelope, put a return address label and a stamp on it, and drop it in the mailbox. Be sure to first check the mailing label on the package in

which you received this newsletter to determine if you are already paid for 2007, though.

If you are an ePCA member you will receive an envelope in a separate mailing.

It is also asked that you include your member number on your check or on the envelope under your return address label to ensure proper credit. We are over 300 active members so it is now more important than before to include your member number when communicating with the secretary/treasurer.

## Call for Nominations

The current bylaws specify that a call for nominations is to be published in the August edition of *The Villager*. As the bylaws were not approved until after the publication of that issue of *The Villager*, the Executive Committee has agreed to open nominations with the publication of this issue.

Nominations are open for the offices of President, Vice President, and Secretary-Treasurer and may be sent to the President through December 15 at: [president@plasticvilleusa.org](mailto:president@plasticvilleusa.org) or mailed to him at: PCA Nominations, Attn: Joe Kutza, 13301 Pepper Ct, Germantown, MD 20874

### **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

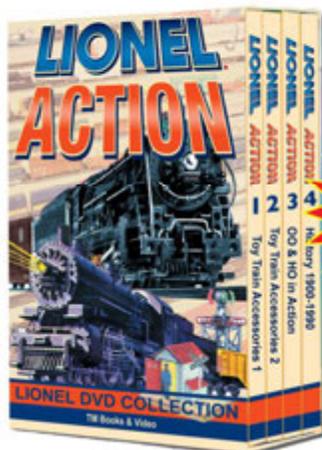
**Newsletter editor:** John Niehaus

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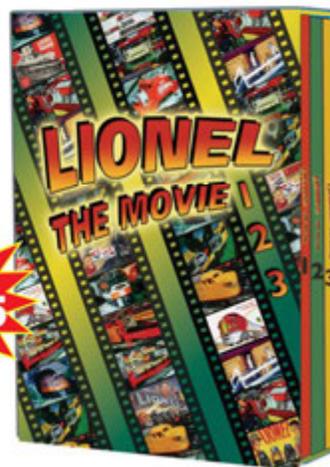
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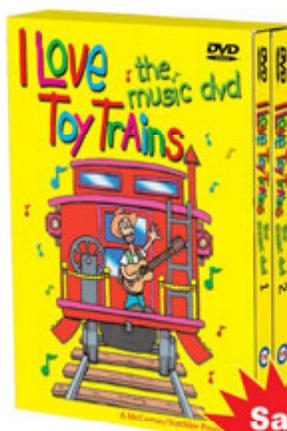
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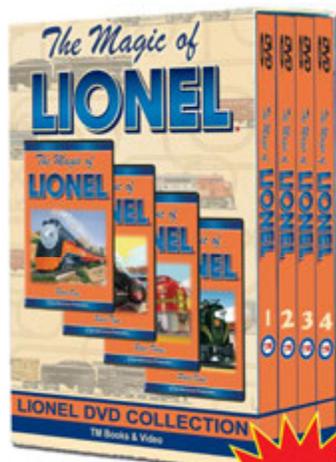
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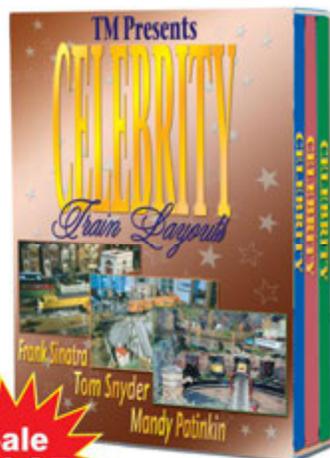
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## From the President's Desk/York Report



Hello fellow PCA Members. It's time again for another York Report. Let me start with the traditional praising of York week for the wonderful bacchanalia of trains and Plasticville that it is! This time around I was able to attend the bandit meets on Wednesday, and the main Eastern Division meet on Friday. Back in April I reported that there was a big decrease in dealers at the Holidome. Things were better this fall, but still well short of what I am used to seeing at this once premier bandit meet. Nonetheless, it turned out to be a great source of plastic village items (at least for me!). One dealer had a bag of 1200 shrubs! Now, I love the shrubs, but I just couldn't justify buying that many. This person also had about 50 cellophane bags of shrubs (\$5 each) and told me that he had at least that many more still at home. Then he said that all 1200 came from the cellophane bags. I was stunned.

The normally austere inside of the Holidome also yielded a few good buys for me. I found two cattle loading pens, both complete in great boxes, one with no broken pins and one with a few pins broken for just \$35 each.

The Best Western continues to be a strong show, and the Fire Department, while always packed with vendors, seemed to have a better showing of plastic village items than it has in the past. I did not go to the Billy Budd Holiday Inn this time around. It's consistently the weakest of the bandit meets and given that I found some good



The number of PCA members and guests attending the informal lunch get-togethers at the York train meets continues to grow. Pictured, left to right are John Niehaus, Ron Dise, Tom Friesner, Joe Kutza (rear), Anatol Vasiliev, Jim Dawes, Glenn Bowman, Warren Plummer, Dan Gills, Ken Landry, David Niehaus, and Mike Dailey. Other members stopped by but could not stay for lunch due to other commitments. The large white box belongs to Anatol. The reason for its rather large size will be evident from reading the accompanying article. Thanks to Kris Bowman for taking the picture.

items at the other meets I decided that it wasn't worth the effort.

Now, on to the main meet. After suppressing the typical "kid in a candy store" euphoria that strikes me every time I reach the York Fairgrounds, I headed for the Blue Hall to meet up with John Niehaus and his son David, who made the trip all the way from the great state of Iowa. After going through a few aisles, I decided that the blue and silver halls were just too crowded and decided to see if the Red hall had any more room to move around in. It didn't. The White hall was a little better, but that's probably because the aisles are a little wider to begin with.



Anatol Vasiliev brought half dozen different HO master units. Pictured here is the box lid to his *All HO Assortment* set along with the near mint contents.

Before I knew it, it was time for the biannual PCA luncheon and show and share at the cafeteria. Once again we had a very strong turnout. Thanks to all who attended!

Our Friday lunch is really turning into a lively event. After eating lunch and talking about the days finds, we began our "Show and Share" session where Members bring a few items of interest for the group to see. There was so much going on that I don't have good notes on everything, but I'll try to recall as much as possible.

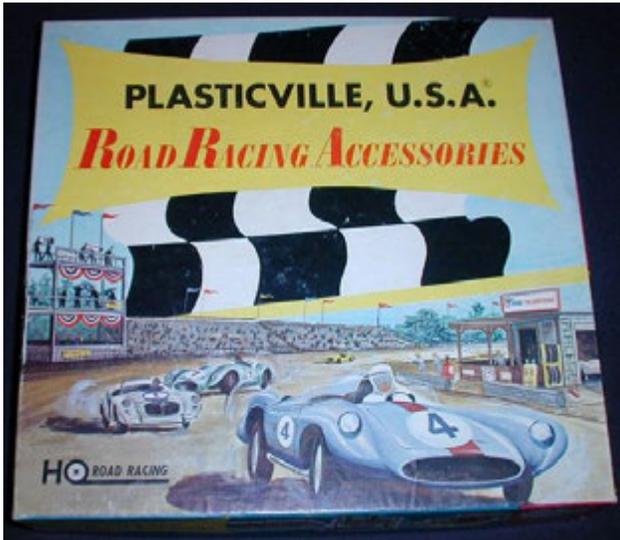
I brought several boxes of Citizens. There was nothing special about the contents, but each of the 10 or so boxes that I brought were different, including three versions of the 1619-100 Citizens, and several versions of the 1915 and 1915-200 Citizens.

You may remember from the May 2006 issue of the Villager that I had found a Footbridge with a "Made in Hong Kong" marking on it. It was slightly lighter and not quite the same quality as a vintage Plasticville Footbridge. This time I brought another Hong Kong version of the Footbridge that I received from Glenn Bowman. This one was dead on in terms of color and quality. The only difference was the mark.

Continuing in the Hong Kong line of items were two pools, without inserts, in cellophane-type bags that were clearly from the same mold(s) used for the Plasticville version, but they were of slightly different colors, sort of a fluorescent yellow and included three bathing beauty

citizens that I had not seen before. These also came from Glenn Bowman, and had the "Made in Hong Kong" mark.

We then took a look at some large picket fence pieces. We reviewed that there are two basic types, one gate piece has a smaller latch and hinges and the other a smaller latch and hinges. The larger version seems to be from a later production date as that is also the version



Another one of Anatol's HO sets. The contents of this "HO Road Racing Accessories" set were as pristine as the box holding them.

seen in the recent re-issues. But now we looked at some fence that was of a slightly different color. It was sort of a light pink, maybe. That was interesting enough, but it also had a "Rosedale" mark and a "Made in England" mark! Talk about confusing. I have an advertisement here in my office from the Saturday Evening Post dated 11/46 that shows the large picket fence, so it's hard to think that Bachmann bought the mold from Rosedale, but I guess it's possible. They couldn't have sold the mold to Rosedale because Bachmann just re-issued the fence within the last few years. Several Bachmann items come from multiple molds (cars, benches, for example). Perhaps Bachmann sold one or more fence molds to Rosedale? What's your theory?

Anatol Vasiliev brought a great series of HO items that would make any collector sigh. The items included a boxed set of HO Racing items, a Freight Yard set from the 1980's, a Railroad Buildings set that was only sold by Target in the late 70's, an "All HO Assortment", a Railroad Center, the #4604 Make and Play Set that was absolutely beautiful and included a coloring book titled "Tommy and Tess Take a Train Trip".

He also had a box of interesting non-Plasticville items from Bachmann such as birthday candleholders, including the large birds (a variation of which was used on a few birdbaths), and some numbers that would go on a birthday cake. These were all from a former Bachmann employee.

Anatol also showed us his reproductions of the 1954 Littletown catalog, and the 1958 Storytown catalog. Although they provide a great amount of information to collectors, there was some discussion on the fact that they are so closely reproduced in terms of colors and paper stock, and they not marked as reproductions, that some people may think that they are genuine. One way to know for sure is to look for the hole punches. The reproductions do not have these. I'll leave it up to individual members to decide on the utility of these reproductions, however for those of you who have seen neither the originals, nor the reproductions, scans of several pages from the originals are available on the PCA web site, and have been for a couple of years. We even have pictures of the ultra-rare 1956/57 Littletown catalog!

Next, John Niehaus showed us a #3880 Marx Railroad Station almost all in red with just the doors, windows, and signs in yellow. Very nice.

Tom Friesner showed us a # HU-6 House Unit box that was "Made in Canada by Frank Martin Co. Ltd." The label states that this consists of two ranch houses, two cape cods, three evergreen trees, four telephone poles, two street signs, and eleven pieces of fence and one gate.

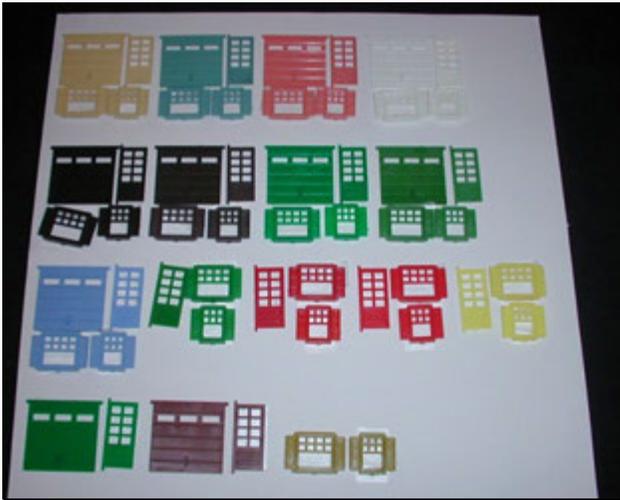


It is not often that one gets to see Canadian Plasticville even if it is just an empty box. The illustrated box is part of Tom Friesner's collection.

Glenn Bowman also showed us a second swimming pool from Hong Kong, with a slightly different color from the fluorescent yellow mentioned earlier. Glenn also had an interesting light blue Plasticville car that was really quite translucent when held up to the light.

He also brought a copy of a "Model R.R. Equipment Corp" manual and catalog of all gauges, specifically, the 4<sup>th</sup> printing of this catalog from 1950. It's a great reference with articles from all the big buys in the business including Joshua Cowan, A.C. Gilbert, and Willie Williams. However, the most interesting part of the catalog is found on page 138 where there is an advertisement for five Plasticville items from Bachmann including the Cape Cod House, the Log Cabin, the Country Church, the very rare JC-3 Build A Fence Unit,

and the somewhat rare RA-5 Railway Accessory Unit. The ad serves to confirm that these items were available in 1950 and probably earlier.



This custom designed color guide shows the subtle differences in the colors used on the various buildings. Glenn Bowman has donated this guide to the PCA. It will be published as a full page in a future issue of *The Villager*. It will also be available for viewing on line in the Members Only section of the PCA website.

The last item from Glenn was a custom designed guide to the color variations found in the windows and doors of the New England Ranch House, the 2-story house, the split level house, and the factory. Glenn donated the display to the PCA and I intend to bring it to future PCA luncheons and gatherings for others to see in person.

I hope I didn't forget anything else from the show and share. I was too busy looking at everything to take good notes!

## **Vice Presidential Insights**

Fall is here in the Valley of the Sun and the weather is just right for going out on Saturdays to do a little Plasticville/Train hunting at the local garage sales. Really do not expect to find much, but one never knows what the next garage sale holds. The one thing about living in AZ is that way to many gave or sold their train sets when they moved out here and downsized from the homes they had in the North.

I hope that all the members had a safe and great summer of collecting and Model Railroading. And I also hope that for the lucky members that made it to York, I hope they came back with at least one treasure. If you did so why not write a short article and maybe a picture or two for publication in the Villager on your find?

I am looking forward to receiving my 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary house from PCA and still have that cleared a spot on my layout for it to reside. By now hopefully everyone has ordered one and if not please do so. This does help

I'll keep the list of prices to a minimum to save some space here, but I do want to continue my Gold Factor assessment. I started this in the spring to give a very personal and subjective judgment of the prices for plastic village items at York. The gold factor will be stated by using a scale with 0-5 units of "gold bars". No gold bars meaning that I personally believe that prices on the plastic village items were generally fair and 5 gold bars meaning that I felt the prices were generally ridiculous. I am happy to report a gold factor of two bars for fall York 2006 (down from three bars in the spring).



I did not have time to grade each item according to the PCA standards, and, don't forget, almost everyone is willing to deal at York. And the more you buy, the cheaper it gets. Here are some prices: 1957 coaling station in sealed box \$8; White CT-6 \$10; 1606 barnyard animals in Ex box, \$15; 1617 farm buildings and animals in Ex box, \$20; complete set of K-Line Christmas buildings in original boxes, \$48; 1953 catalog in Ex condition, \$50; AD-4 in poor box, \$65; complete windmill in Ex box, \$50; gray bus, \$20; yellow pick-up truck, \$3; complete boxed PD-3 dark gray, \$25; 1607 fire house in VG box, \$12; BBQ, \$4; 2921 Independence Hall, \$45; Fireman's Helmet pencil sharpener, \$75; Littleton Ranch House or Railroad Station, no boxes, \$8 each; Post Office or CC-9 Church, no boxes, \$5 each; 1952 catalog, VG, \$85.

That's it for this combined "York Report" and "From the President's Desk" we would love to find a volunteer willing to do a "Cal-Stewart Report". Let us know if you're interested. Happy Holidays to you, and please forward some pictures of your year-round or Christmas layouts!

support the PCA and you get a great new structure for the layout. Speaking of layouts how many members put up a special Holiday display of your structures and trains? If you do why not send pictures of your display for publication?

As I have said many times before in the Villager, it is the hope of all of us that our organization continues to grow and attract new members which will allow us to be as vibrant and interesting as it is today into the future. While new membership is essential to the continuation and expansion of our organization we must all continue to be a source of interest/learning to our existing membership.

And as always, I want to remind everyone please remember to patronize our advertisers that support the PCA

PCA Vice-President, Doug Gilliatt

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## 5th Anniversary Houses are Shipping

By John Niehaus

The special color limited edition Plasticville Collectors Houses are shipping. After a delay due to the initial run being molded in the production color, the correct color houses are on their way. You should have received your house by now if you had previously placed an order. All orders were filled and shipped via Priority Mail on November 2.

The houses are the culmination of an idea first proposed to Bachmann in late 2004. Various communications were passed back and forth and in May of 2005 Bachmann's marketing manager informed me that Bachmann would make a special color run of any of their current production pieces.

Various buildings were discussed by the Executive Committee. Among these were the 2 story house, split level house, union station, frosty bar, and town hall. Three preferred pieces were proposed to Bachmann. These were the 2 story house, the split level house, and the union station in that order.

It was necessary to give Bachmann a list of preferences so that they could work one of the three into their production schedule while still getting the pieces to us during 2006. This letter went to Bachmann in early June of 2005.

As history now reveals, Bachmann agreed to create a special color 2 story house. It was now necessary for the Executive Committee to specify the color combination for the building along with an order quantity.

It was unanimous that the houses have the PCA blue as one of their colors. The Committee agreed to make the walls PCA blue. It also agreed that white trim with a light gray roof would be a nice accent to the blue walls. The next step was to give Bachmann a specific color blue.

My wife and I visited a local print shop with a color sample of the PCA logo. After searching through the Pantone color book we chose two very similar dark blue samples. The Pantone numbers were communicated to the other committee members and one color was agreed upon. The Pantone colors as given to Bachmann were: Pantone Blue #294C and Pantone Cool Gray #4U.

The next project for the Executive Committee was to determine how many pieces to order. Consideration was given as to whether to order a very small number based on current membership or order a larger number in anticipation of membership growth. Fortunately it was decided to order enough to allow every 2006 member the opportunity to order one piece and to ensure we had additional pieces for new members joining in 2006. An order was placed with Bachmann for 350 pieces on November 11, 2005.

As the pieces are packaged in shipping cartons of 12 pieces it is my understanding that only 348 pieces were actually made. The PCA received 336 of these with the



A total of 348 special color limited edition Plasticville Collectors Association 2 story houses were produced making it probably the rarest of all 2 story houses. (Photo courtesy of Charles Wilber)

remaining shipping carton being reserved by Bachmann for publicity purposes. (If you see any publicity for this building please let me. Editor)

During one of my discussions with Bachmann's marketing manager I asked how the pieces would be packaged. I felt this was necessary as I had remembered that one of the divisions of the TCA had a special color Union Station created and they were delivered without packaging. I was pleasantly surprised when he stated that they would be packaged in the current production boxes.

My next question was to what type of label would be on the box or if the PCA could add a label upon receipt of the boxes. I had another pleasant surprise as he stated that Bachmann would create a special label and attach it to the boxes before they were shrinkwrapped. All I needed to supply was a good copy of our association's logo.

The first shipment of houses arrived at my home in late June of this year. Upon receipt, my wife and I diligently started packing them into the Priority Mail boxes for shipment. They looked so great in the production boxes with the special label.

We had a total of 50 pieces in boxes, labeled, and with postage attached when I decided to take a look at the piece. Imagine my surprise and chagrin when I discovered the pieces were the production colors and not our special colors! I am forever thankful that I decided to check the color before sending out those 50 pieces in the wrong color.

I opened a building from two more cartons on the outside chance that there was a mix of production and special color buildings. Unfortunately all the buildings I inspected were the production color.

The following Monday I called the marketing manager with the bad news. He assured me that he would determine what happened and get back with me. Two

days later I received a call informing me that communication between the home office in Philadelphia and their production facility overseas.

The incorrect color houses were removed from the Priority Mail boxes and packed back into their original shipping cartons. They were returned to Bachmann in early August with a promise from Bachmann that they would have the special color houses to me in about six weeks.

The correct color houses arrived at my home the end of October. Over the first weekend in November my wife and I packaged and shipped the houses to all members who had placed an order.

Questions have been asked as to whether members may purchase an additional piece. It is the intent of the Executive Committee to wait until the end of this year and see how many pieces remain. The Committee will then decide how to most equitably dispose of the remaining – if any – houses.

Mention was made earlier in this article that Bachmann retained one shipping carton of 12 pieces for publicity purposes. I received an approval copy of a press release Bachmann intends to send along with one of those 12 houses to various model train and toy publications.

Please let me know if you see a mention of the house in any of these publications as I would like to obtain a copy for historical purposes.



The first shipment of houses totaled over 170. Here they are in their Priority Mail boxes ready to be delivered to the Post Office. That part of the operation took four trips.

## Loss of Yahoo Plasticville Groups Moderator & New Yahoo Plasticvillage Discussion group

By Joe Kutza

If you haven't already heard, our dedicated and helpful moderator of this group, Lou Lauderbaugh, passed away a few months ago. We will miss him, and the watchful eye he kept over this group.

Lou was the sole moderator of this group and Yahoo has absolutely no way of assigning a new moderator to the group. I had a few communications with Yahoo and found them to be completely unhelpful. Although Lou's wife was willing to help us with the transfer, she did not know his password and that has left us without a moderator. We can continue to use this group for years, but it will not be moderated. This is not a good situation as the group would be unable to control who joins, and would be unable to remove members who abuse the group.

The only thing we can do is to create a new group and have any and all members from this group join the new group. I have started a new group for us called "plasticvillage". Obviously we couldn't use "Plasticville" again, and the new name fits our interest in all plastic village items. To join the new group, please go to:

[http://groups.yahoo.com /group/plasticvillage/join](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plasticvillage/join) and join as you would for any other group. I will initially keep the settings of the new group such that anyone can join. Once most members have joined, I will change the settings to "must get moderator approval before joining".

There is no way to easily transfer messages, files, or polls from this group to the new group. As I mentioned above, we will still be able to access this site and all of the archived messages, pictures, files, and polls. If members who have uploaded pictures or files could upload them to the new group, it would be greatly appreciated.

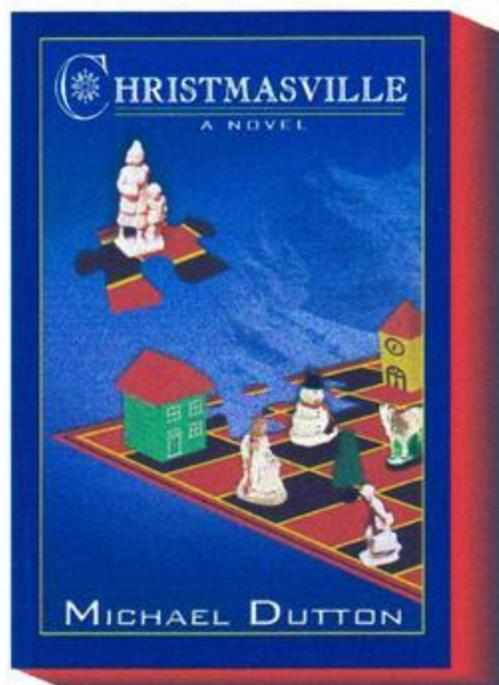
To ensure that the new group does not suffer the same fate as this one has, I will share my username and password with the Officers of the Plasticville Collectors Association (PCA). As President and webmaster of the PCA, I have already shared web site administration information with the other officers, and this falls in nicely with that current plan.

I look forward to "seeing" you in the new Plastic Village group!

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(PCA MEMBER #03-236)

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*ForeWord Clarion Review*

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## Railfan Antics

### Or How NOT to be a Good Railfan

By Gordon C Kelley

I was working on a switch engine on the east lead in front of the yard office in Green Bay, Wisconsin. This was an afternoon assignment on the Fox River Valley Railroad. It was a hot August day and as I pulled the cut of cars off a yard track I noticed a young man videotaping the switch movements. He was skinny, about 5'8" tall and was wearing a T-shirt, shorts, tennis shoes, and a "railroad cap" laden with about 150 pounds of buttons, pins, flashing lights, and an assortment of other "woofers and tweeters". He was definitely not dressed to be anywhere near a railroad yard or near moving equipment. He was attracted to this place as we were using old red GB&W Alcos as switch engines. He nearly died there!!!

I noticed him getting nearer and nearer to the lead as the day wore on. He was videotaping us as we switched. On one specific movement, he was running along the fireman's (left) side of the engine. I lost sight of him and he did not cross over in front of the engine.

I got a sick feeling in my stomach, set the independent brake on the engine, dumped the air, and screeched to a stop. I could hear people yelling and saw FRNs in the

parking lot jumping up and down while waving their arms. I was sick to my stomach as I thought I had cut him in half. I ran out the front door and onto the walkway on the nose of the engine. I had stopped 5-1/2 feet away from this fool! He was lying on the crown of the rail with the crown along his belt line.

He had turned to run in front of the engine but slipped and fell on top of the rail. He could not get his footing and get up and his only thought was to retrieve his hat with the 150 pounds of buttons, etc while still hanging onto his camera.

The parking lot railfans claimed it was my fault as I did not watch them. The Green Bay police felt it was the trespasser's fault and hauled him away.

Additional term

Lead – yard main line that leads to a number of multiple storage tracks

*Editor's note: The February, 2006, issue of The Villager contained Gordon's first offering which was a listing of various railroad terms. Additional terms will be defined in each of his articles as necessary.*

## No More Grandstands from Bachman

By John Niehaus

Many PCA members have suggested that Bachmann again produce the number 1876 Grandstand. Enough members have made that suggestion that I contacted the Marketing Manager at Bachmann with that suggestion.

I mentioned to him that no only did it seem like an item desired by PCA members but by others also. I suggested that in addition to Plasticville collectors and model railroaders that there is a fair amount of road race modelers along with those who model circuses who would probably consider purchasing the grandstand.

My comments spurred him to investigate whether it was feasible to again make this item. Unfortunately, his reply below puts an end to speculation that it will be reproduced.

He wrote: "I found out the grandstand mold was sold to an unknown party about 25 years ago. .... and all we know is that we no longer have the molds. This same scenario played out with other molds as well. Thanks for the idea anyway!"



Become an ePCA member and a pen like the one shown will be on its way to you. The pen has the new "soft grip", comes in fine point with black ink and gold-tone accents and three lines of gold engraving. Send a note to [secretary@plasticvilleusa.org](mailto:secretary@plasticvilleusa.org) indicating that you wish to get your newsletters from the PCA website instead of printed copies through the mail. She will send you the pen along with your user name and password for access to the Members Only section of the website as soon she gets your message. (Please note that the light stripe along the blue area is from camera flash. It is not on the actual pen.)

# Plasticville on the Board

## Home Made Details

By John Gottcent

In a recent column, we talked about God—or the devil—being in the details. I was reminded of this recently when I omitted an important detail from our August 2006 column. The result was a photo that seemed unconnected to the article.

The photo showed a relatively rare Plasticville large supermarket with red roof and lettering. In the column, I was talking about distinguishing plastic village collectors from “users.” I noted that the former would be delighted to find a Post Office with a red roof, leaving out the idea that they would be almost as delighted to find the unusual supermarket shown in the photo. So if you found yourself wondering what that picture was doing with that column, now you have (as Paul Harvey likes to say) “the rest of the story.”

While it’s true that details make the difference between a good layout and a great one, it’s not true that they’re limited to things you can buy ready-made from your hobby store. There are lots of small details you can provide that involve less than an evening’s work and virtually no expense. And they’re fun.

A while back, for example, I came across an Artista figure of a woman hanging a piece of blue clothing on a clothesline. I knew I wanted it for my layout—but where was the clothesline? I decided to make my own.



Figure 1: When thread and twine did not produce a reasonable looking clothesline due to excessive sag, I used a piece of thin gauge wire to simulate the metal clotheslines I remembered from my childhood.

of brown piping from an old plastic kit. (Rule of Thumb # 1: NEVER throw ANYTHING away!). They were in the desired T shape and had just the right diameter to fit into the bases. (If you’re drilling holes, of course, you have more options for diameter, as long as you have a drill bit to match.) I trimmed the pipes, inserted them into the bases, and placed them a reasonable distance apart in one of my Cape Cod back yards.

After some experimentation, I found two old plumbing washers I could use as bases.

(Alternatively, the clothesline poles could be inserted into holes drilled in your layout board, but I like the flexibility that free-standing details allow.)

For the poles themselves, I found two pieces

Now, what about the clothesline itself? Thread, right? or twine? Actually, neither worked for me, for both produced too much sag. Then I remembered the real lines we had in our back yard at the time—made of wire, not



Figure 2: A basketball goal can be made from some very simple pieces. I used a washer, a short piece of pipe, cardboard for the backboard, and a piece of thin wire for the hoop.

rope. So I tried pieces of narrow gauge wire, and — voila! — the clothesline was ready. (See Figure 1.)

My wife was kind enough to find blue cloth matching that already in the hands of my Artista figure, and she cut out small pieces of “linen” for me. I hung them on the line, placed the completed unit (and its patient laundry

lady) on my layout, and I was ready to roll.

Later, I decided I needed a basketball goal for my split-level home’s driveway. Another washer served as the base (painted gray this time, to suggest a concrete foundation). Another piece of piping (painted silver, to suggest metal) fit nicely as the pole.



Figure 3: A piece of cardboard cut to the size of the inside of a peanut jar lid and then painted with Testor’s Sea Blue paint makes a plausible swimming pool, especially when accompanied by added details.

I formed the backboard from a piece of cardboard, and the hoop from a twisted piece of thin wire. I found a small copper ball in my collection of odds and ends (remember Rule # 1), and two figures in appropriate poses, and the result was the practice session you see in Figure 2.

When summer came, it was time for some backyard swimming pools. After finishing a jar of peanuts one evening, it dawned on me that the jar’s cover was the perfect size and shape for what I wanted.

For water, I trimmed a piece of aluminum foil, used it to cover some cardboard cut into a circle just short of the



Figure 4: Don't throw away the inner liner of a peanut butter jar! It is just the right size to be placed back in the lid after painting the shiny side with a light blue paint to simulate water!

jar lid's diameter, and painted it with a diluted version of Testor's Sea Blue color. (Apply the paint sparingly, for the glisten of the foil should show through to suggest some "waves.")

When the paint dried, I placed the "water" gently inside the inverted cover. Another couple of Arttista figures, and a relaxing chaise lounge,

completed the scene, which you can see in Figure 3.

There are, of course, other ways to simulate water, including commercial products made for this purpose. But I stumbled upon a cheaper and easier alternative when I later finished off a jar of peanut butter. (Yes, I do have a hankering for peanut products!)

The jar's inside seal was coated with a foil-like surface, and of course its diameter was just right. (See Figure 4). So I turned the seal around, applied more Testor's Sea Blue, and had another pool ready to go. I placed this one (with yet another Arttista swimmer) behind my motel, as you'll see in Figure 5.

Yes, the pool is dangerously close to those railroad tracks, and it should have a protective fence around it. But hey—this is make believe!

Try your hand at easy projects like these. All that's needed is desire, a few odds and ends, and a little

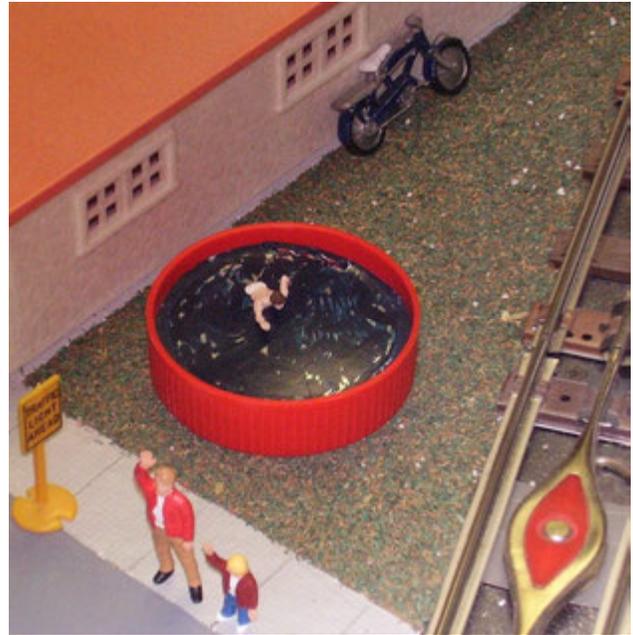


Figure 5: The finished product. The figure 4 peanut butter jar lid and liner as a swimming pool behind my Plasticville motel.

imagination. Your details will mean more than ones ready purchased—and they'll draw better oohs and aahs from your visitors, too!

As always, comments and other suggestions are welcome. Contact me at [jandjgott@juno.com](mailto:jandjgott@juno.com). And happy villaging!



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# Railroad Gauge Explained, Butt with a Twist

Offered by Jim Steed

Does the statement, "We've always done it like that" ring any bells? Read this to the end; this is a new one for me.

The US standard railroad gauge (distance between the rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches. That's an exceedingly odd number. Why was that gauge used?

Because that's the way they built them in England, and English expatriates built the US Railroads.

Why did the English build them like that? Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge they used.

Why did "they" use that gauge then? Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing.

Okay! Why did the wagons have that particular odd wheel spacing? Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon wheels would break on some of the old, long distance roads in England, because that's the spacing of the wheel ruts.

So who built those old rutted roads? Imperial Rome built the first long distance roads in Europe (and England) for their legions. The roads have been used ever since.

And the ruts in the roads? Roman war chariots formed the initial ruts, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagon wheels. Since the chariots were made for Imperial Rome, they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing.

The United States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches is derived from the original specifications for an Imperial Roman war chariot. And bureaucracies live forever.

So the next time you are handed a specification and wonder what horse's ass came up with it, you may be exactly right, because the Imperial Roman army chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the back ends of two war horses.

Now, the twist to the story

When you see a Space Shuttle sitting on its launch pad, there are two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank. These are solid rocket boosters, or SRBs. The SRBs are made by Thiokol at their factory at Utah. The engineers who designed the SRBs would have preferred to make them a bit fatter, but the SRBs had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site.

The railroad line from the factory happens to run through a tunnel in the mountains. The SRBs had to fit through that tunnel. The tunnel is slightly wider than the railroad track, and the railroad track, as you now know, is about as wide as two horses' behinds.

So, a major Space Shuttle design feature of what is arguably the world's most advanced transportation system was determined over two thousand years ago by the width of a horse's ass.

And you thought being a HORSE'S A\_ \_ wasn't important!

## Membership Rosters Available

Have you ever wanted to contact a member of the PCA but were at odds as to how to do that? The PCA publishes a roster that includes all current and proposed members in conjunction with *The Villager* each quarter.

Rosters are available on line in the Members Only section of the PCA website. You will need your user name and password to enter this section of the website. Email [secretary@plasticvilleusa.org](mailto:secretary@plasticvilleusa.org) if you do not have a user name and password.

Click on the Members Only on the left of the screen to log into that section of the web site. Once there, you

should click on *The Villager* link and then the roster link near the top of the page.

The roster is in Adobe Acrobat format so you will need to have the Acrobat Reader installed to view the roster. If you do not have Acrobat Reader use the link at the bottom of the page to install it on your computer. You may even print the entire roster if you wish by simply clicking on the printer icon.

Hard copies of the roster are also available at no cost. Send the secretary a request for a hard copy at the address listed in the box on the front page if you do not have Internet access.



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## Creative Uses of Damaged Parts

### The Wunhung - Lo Noodle Factory

By Edward J Johnson

My plan for this building was to use up a lot of miscellaneous Plasticville parts. Most parts came from the Suburban station, Police Station, Switch Tower and Supermarket - any piece that had the Plasticville stucco finish. When I ran out of Plasticville parts I used printed brick paper on heavy card stock.



The two upper stories are from the Police Station. The first floor is a splice of the Police Station and Suburban Station. Most of the windows were damaged so instead of repairing them I removed the remaining pieces and used Walthers HO industrial windows. The figure is from Omen. The barrel wagon is scratchbuilt.

Usually I invent a little story to explain a scratchbuilt building. The story of the Wunhung - Lo noodle factory is that many years ago a group of merchants built a three story building for their business of distributing dry produce.

Large sacks and barrels of grain, beans, rice, etc were delivered by rail. The large volume produce was broken down into smaller packaging for sale in local stores. Business went well but as the merchants aged they sold the business to another merchant.

The new owner continued the distribution of dry produce for a while but slowly began to bring in flammable liquids. The building was not adequately ventilated. One day the fumes ignited and the resulting explosion destroyed a good portion of the building.

The building was vacant for a long while, then scheduled for demolition. But a manufacturer of Asian style noodles was looking to relocate.

They purchased the building at a ridiculously low price. Rather than build a new building they reinforced what was left with bricks and started their noodle production.



Side view: Smoke stack is a Plastistruct tube. The cyclone is from a kit. Stairs from the Switch tower. The red banner is the wrapper for chop sticks. The interior of the building is not detailed, but I do put floors between each floor. I'm not fond of looking down into a building and seeing a hollow shell.



Back View: Ground floor is the back of the supermarket. Miscellaneous pieces form the second floor and the top floor is brick work to repair the damage described in the story. The design of the loading platform was determined by how many broken pieces of station platform I had on hand and my desire to use them all up.

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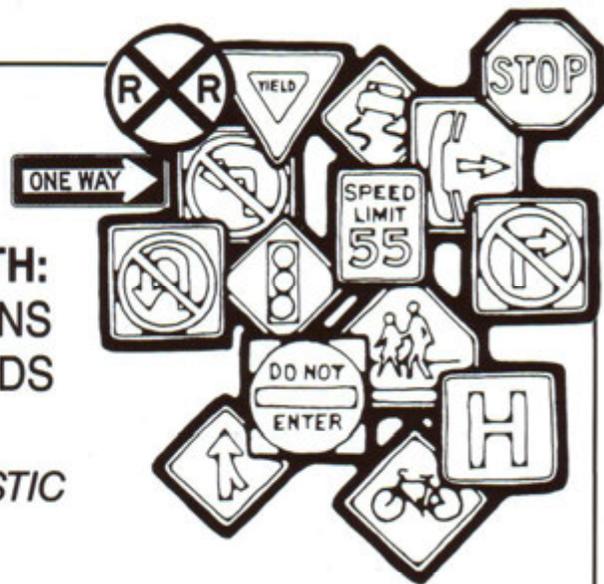
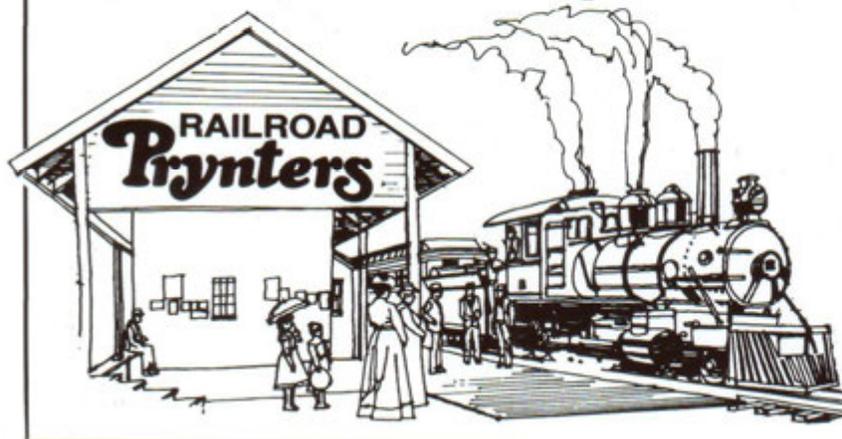
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## What Members are Saying

Please keep up the good work with "us" Plasticville collectors. (Andrew Zola)

RE the 956 plain Lionel box -- Right now some of my stuff is still packed up from the move, but I also have a plain, numbered box with a swimming pool and playground set in it - never thought about it, really, but my guess is if I found the box it would say 954 -- now I may have to start unpacking. (Chris Matthy)

Just looked at the new Villager on-line. Looks great - thanks for the hard work! (Mark Lembersky)

In COLOR --- wow --- I will have to check that out! I did today get my hardcopy. (Geraldine Scott) *Geraldine is referring to checking out the color version of The Villager on the PCA website. editor*

John, I will save the stamps, as I was a collector years ago and as a teenager. Collection never amounted to much dollar value but it was fun. WOW I received the house Saturday super fast shipping. One future possible problem, it seems the contents inside the box that is sealed is super loose (darn-china people). I will leave it for sealed for now. In the future, who knows??

Got my house today Sat Nov 4 great color (Jim Dawes)

Thanks! It arrived safely -- and I will send the stamps. Neat idea! (Philip McKnight)

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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.

## 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.

# 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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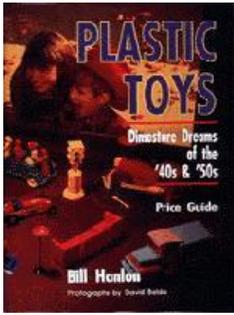
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## Product Reviews



**Plastic Toys, Dimestore Dreams of the '40s & '50s**, Bill Hanlon, Schiffer Publications Ltd, hardbound, 296 pages, \$69.95. 9 X 12 coffee table book format. Sixteen chapters, plus an introduction, bibliography, price guide, manufacturers and distributors listing, and an index. Full color illustrations on slick pages throughout.

As can be expected, the first few chapters of the book contain basic information. The first chapter gives a brief history of plastic and the various forming methods. Chapter two discusses the selling and marketing of plastic to both manufacturers and the public. It is quite interesting to see the various items being made from plastic shown in the illustrated ads. The usual information on value, care, and repair of plastic items is the third chapter along with chapter four dealing with how to perform research on an item. Chapter five is a historical perspective on the person credited with being "The Prince of Plastics", Dr. Isylin Thomas, for his contributions to the development of the injection molding of plastics. The remaining chapters are broken down into chapters based on modes of transportation and include race cars, hot rods and motorcycles, trucks, construction vehicles and buses, boats, airplanes and helicopters, space toys, military toys, trains and trolleys, dollhouse furniture, and miscellaneous items.

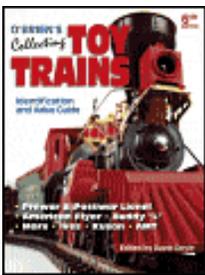
You may have noticed that there is no mention above of

a chapter dedicated to buildings. The author has subtly included buildings in some of the chapters. He has done this by artfully creating scenes including an assortment of vehicles with a building in the background. He has also identified the building's manufacturer, year of manufacture, and color combinations in many instances.

The price guide included in the book is unique. The illustrations throughout the book do not have prices listed with them. Instead, there is a price guide at the back of the book. It is laid out in columnar form listing page, price, and description. The page number has a suffix such as 125cl. The suffix refers to the position of the illustration. In the previous example the illustration would be the Center Left illustration on page 125.

This book is already in the library of some PCA members. It has been the source of information used in identifying some of the mystery pieces featured in previous issues of *The Villager*. I found the book to be one that I would choose to have in my reference library if only for the identification of various plastic vehicles that one finds when buying accumulations of Plasticville buildings. It was interesting to notice that some of the "prototypes" for the Dimestore Dreams and the American Dimestore vehicles are illustrated in this book.

Plastic Toys, Dimestore Dreams of the '40s & '50s, can be purchased from Schiffer Publications Ltd, 77 Lower Valley Rd, Atglen, PA 19310. Phone 610 593-1777. The price is \$69.95 plus \$2.95 postage per a note on the acknowledgements page. The note also states to, "Try your bookstore first".



**O'Brien's Collecting Toy Trains, Identification and Value Guide, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition**, edited by David Doyle, Krause Publications, perfect bound, 400 pages, \$29.99 (\$39.99) Canada. This approximate 8-1/2 X 11 format book is all color on slick paper. There are a total of ten chapters in alphabetical order by manufacturer. It contains chapters

on nine manufacturers of trains and one chapter on Plasticville. Each chapter is prefaced a brief history of that particular manufacturer. The histories prefacing the AMT and Kusan chapters will hopefully dispel some of the hypotheses regarding the history of Kusan per the editor, David Doyle. The first eight pages are the usual introduction, general collecting information, and how to use the guide.

The value guide facet of this book is in a unique format. When there are variations of a specific item the most common is listed in italics while the most desirable is listed in bold. The values for the variations are similarly

listed.

The American Flyer and Ives chapters are subdivided by gauges. The Lionel chapter is broken down into Prewar 2-7/8 and Standard gauge, postwar trains, and HO gauge sections. Two additional sections are included for prewar and postwar accessories. The Marx chapter has sections on Joy Line pieces, locomotives and streamliners, four sections on metal cars, one section on plastic cars, and a final chapter on accessories. Unfortunately the accessory chapter does not have any illustrations of the Marx plastic buildings although they are listed.

For obvious reasons, the Plasticville chapter intrigued me. First because it is the first guide other than the Iron Horse Productions and Bill Noles' books to contain a Plasticville listing and values. The chapter lists to the best of my knowledge all of the individual pieces for both O/S and HO. It does not contain the sets such as the Farm set or Airport set. I did notice, though, that some of the color variations were not listed. The PD-3 and 1614 police departments are both listed as having gray walls but neither list whether the walls are light or dark grey.

Another example of a less than complete listing is the 1627 Hobo Shacks. They are listed as gray with brown, and brown with gray. Unfortunately, the marbled versions are not listed. Other than these two issues I found the chapter to be relatively comprehensive.

The final chapter in the book is dedicated to the twenty pieces of toy trains and accessories made by Unique Art Manufacturing Company. As the pieces do not seem to be highly sought after, it would be interesting to attempt to acquire a complete collection.

I found the book to be quite informative. The fact that

it lists the nine major manufacturers of toy trains and the Bachmann Plasticville line of buildings and is illustrated in full color makes it seem a bargain at the \$29.99 list price. If you are looking for a good guide addressing more than just Plasticville or Lionel this could very easily be the book for you.

O'Brien's Collecting Toy Trains, Identification and Value Guide, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition can be purchased for \$29.99, plus shipping from Krause Publications, 700 E State St., Iola, WI 54990, (800) 258-0929. You may also order it online at [www.collect.com](http://www.collect.com).

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## Welcome New Members

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

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

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

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

Richard A Haisch, Woodbridge, VA  
Ronald G Bageant, Eldersburg, MD  
Charles R Anyan, ST Petersburg, FL  
David L Searfoss, Mohnton, PA  
Michael Laposata, Boston, MA

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 January 1, 2007.

Daniel C Fitzpatrick, Tampa, FL  
Rex A Appel, Valparaiso, IN  
Lee A Pegram Sr, Ripley, MS  
Warren L Plumer, Ashland, VA

## 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**

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](mailto:plastic1@fuse.net), #01-25, Bill Hunter, 1333 Ashford Dr., Florence, KY, 41042, (859) 525-7183 (Feb 07)

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.

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 parts, \$10. Above prices plus shipping. [factlf@juno.com](mailto: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

## For Trade

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

## Wanted

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 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)

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.

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)

Lionel Prewar Trucks, a variety of types with Automatic Box Couplers some also have pickup roller. #06-414 Richard Meiser for description and price: E-mail r.meisersr@insightbb.com (502) 239-0203 (Aug 07)

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)

Contact Joe Kutza at president@plasticvilleusa.org #99-01 (May 07)

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@tricity.net, #03-219, Glenn Bowman, 301 Buffalo Creek Rd, Newport, PA, 17074. (Aug 07)

Original WHITE rabbit(s) from the Plasticville Farm Buildings & Animals sets. A bearskin sticker for the Log Cabin door. A copy of the third edition (1993) Plasticville collectors guide. 05-359 Mark Lembersky Please reply to mark290638-rail@yahoo.com. (Aug 07)

**Lionel Plasticville American Flyer**

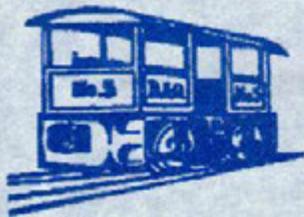
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\$35.00

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  
\$39.00

Signal Bridge  
Item No. 45309  
\$39.00

Trailer Park  
with Two Trailers  
& Flag Pole with Flag  
Item No. 45310  
\$39.00

Bank  
Item No. 45311  
\$35.00

Hospital with Furniture  
Item No. 45312  
\$39.00

Cape Cod Houses  
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Item No. 45313  
\$35.00



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