

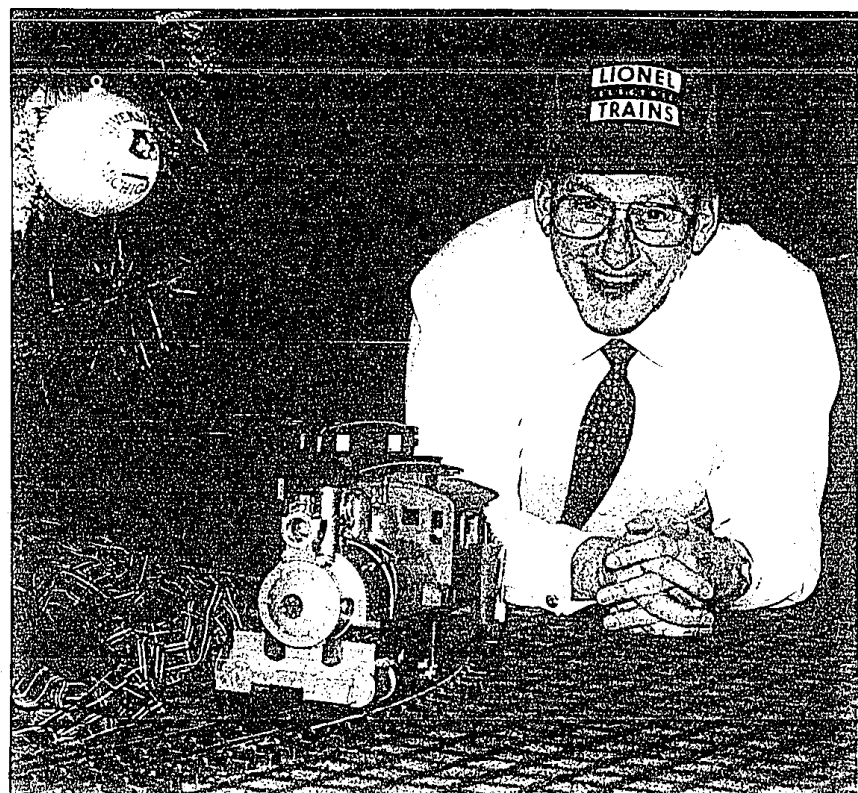
Must be Karma

Talking about karma may have brought them together, but it's been their talent that has landed Jugglers and Thieves honors like "Next Local Band Most Likely to Make It Big" and "Best Record by a Local Band." And their debut LP, "Jugglers and Thieves" made the charts on several college radio stations in New York, Virginia and Louisiana. Find out more about the band on Page 3D.

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ART EMAHUE/staff photographer

Dick Kughn, owner and chairman of the board of Lionel, shows off the firm's Christmas train, the North Pole Express. The train, made specifically to circle a Christmas tree, has Santa as the engineer and sells for about \$150.

Christmas gift a train

By Sue Mason
staff writer

Chugga, chugga, chugga . . . toot, toot. Nope, you won't find those sound effects on a "Super Mario" or "Link Zelda II" cartridge. And don't bother checking out the CDs. Anyone with an ear for trains, knows the sound of a Lionel as it comes speeding down the tracks. Maybe things like Nintendo cartridges and Game Boy are hot this holiday season, but when it comes to word association, there's Christmas, Santa Claus and Lionel. It's a tradition that dates back to 1900, when Joshua Lionel Cowen, owner of an electric shop, decided to put wheels on a box and have it go around and around in his shop window to draw attention to the batteries he made. The battery shop was the forerunner of the Eveready Battery Co. and the Cowen's window display drew so much attention that people wanted to buy it. That was the start of the Lionel Train Co.

Lionel has seen good times — when it comes to electric trains, it has a 60 percent market share — and bad times — General Mills' ill-fated decision to move the manufacturing operations to Mexico. But today, it's coming back, much to the delight of train collectors, including Dick Kughn of Dearborn, who is probably the epitome of collectors. He found his first Lionel train in a garbage can at the age of seven. Five decades later, he bought the company. "Every train collector has a fantasy to own Lionel and I did too," Kughn said. "At first, it was an emotional experience, a dream come true, but after I got past that I realized it was a good business venture. I'm having a lot of fun with it." KUGHN'S LIFE LONG hobby started in Bay Village, a suburb of Cleveland. That's where he found the train in the trash. He took it home and cleaned it and it worked. Two years later he got a Lionel set for Christmas and before long the attic of the family home was his train yard. But by high school, his interest in his trains

waned. Eventually, the set was boxed up and sold for \$56. "I wish I had that now," said Kughn. It wasn't until he was married and with a family on the way that he started his serious toy train collecting. Today, his collection encompasses "hundreds and thousands and thousands" of toy trains and accessories, housed in a non-descript brown building on Grand River in Detroit. The building is known as Carail, although you won't find a sign anywhere on the building announcing that fact. Its 30,000 square feet of space is packed with the collectables that are near and dear to Kughn's heart — his Lionel collection and a portion of his 206 antique cars. At one time, the building was a neighborhood tavern, sporting goods store and bowling alley. In fact, four bowling lanes remain, although the wooden floor boards are covered with tables full of train sets and assorted memorabilia.

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All aboard the 'Star' for dinner

By Loraine McClish
staff writer

MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS early for a trip on the Michigan Star Clipper Dinner Train. The passengers are willing to travel from a radius of about 150 miles to get to Paw Paw where the Clipper takes off for a three-hour vacation on the rails of the Kalamazoo, Lake Shore & Chicago Railway. Billed as "the dining adventure of your life," the Clipper is Michigan's answer to the Orient Express, with first-class travel and a four-course "silver service" lunch or dinner menu. The first course the day we rode the Clipper was Shrimp Voleauite, a dish any reasonable person could have made a meal. The bread likewise could have made an entire meal. All that followed lived up to its four-star billing. You could tell the size of the portions by the number of passengers who left with their swan-shaped aluminum foil doggie bags. Dining consumed the full three hours and before the passengers detrained, the chef was called out to take a bow, a practice, we were told, that happens after every meal he serves. A few youngsters waved to the train from their front lawns, but the scenery for the most part was the heart of Michigan's wine country, interspersed with the shores of several lakes, apple, cherry and peach orchards, Christmas tree strands, some marshes, some wetlands, an occasional pumpkin patch and a few horse farms. "IT'S PARTY time for everybody," said our waitress. "On one ride this week, I served a just-engaged couple and another couple who were married 60 years and the whole car celebrated. "Birthdays are common. We had one family reunion take place on the train. It's fun for us all." The Keen-agers, a group of seniors from the Assembly of God in Holland, were riding the train because some of them hadn't been on a train for a long while and some hadn't ever been on a train.

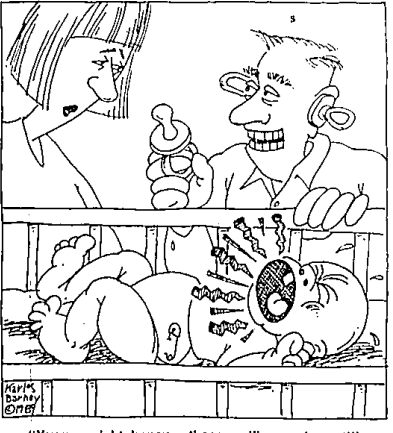
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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Rick Simian, who grew up in Franklin Village and graduated from Birmingham Groves High School, is director of marketing for the Michigan Star Clipper. A student at Western Michigan University, he sometimes doubles as a waiter on the train.

Warp Factor Karlos Barney



Ding-dong Yuletide travel to escape the craziness

By Iris Sanderson Jones
contributing travel editor

Have the yuletide bells been ringing longer than usual this year or is this just the normal craziness of Christmas? People I meet have that look on their face, the kind you get when you stand inside a big bell when it is ringing. It's a got-me-outta-here look, and it's not even Christmas yet. Just to give you an idea of what I mean, here are some of the questions they ask. "Where can I go and hide after Christmas?" "Can I shop without leaving the house?" "Do they have this Christmas craziness in other countries?" "What if I take all that money and run away from home?" Let us explore the last possibility. This is the era of the adventure tour isn't it? Climbing mountains, buying exotic trinkets from a Nepalese bazaar?



MICKY JONES

One way to chase the holiday crazies away is ice skating at Rockefeller Center while on quick trip to the "Big Apple."

WHY DON'T we plan a little adventure of our own, camp out in a room with a champagne-colored carpet, silk walls, elegant mahogany writing tables and a bed big enough for the whole family? We could rumble the car up to the uniformed door man of a high-class city hotel and never set foot on the ground again until our adventure trip was over. At the Ritz-Carlton in Chicago, for example: have a drink in the lobby, watch the sun go down on the John Hancock Building across the street, and eat and drink our way through Water Tower Place, a high-rise shopping center in the classy north Michigan Avenue section of the city. Haven't finished your Christmas shopping? You can buy things in Water Tower Place that are just

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