

Trainfest[®]

America's Largest Operating Model Railroad Show.

Media contacts:

Mercury Communications

Jackie Costa

jackie@mercuryww.com

Office: 262.782.4637; Mobile: 414.628.8897

For Immediate Release

Nov. 15, 2017

Q&A on Display Issue

Situation: After the close of Trainfest 2017 at about **5:15 p.m. Nov. 12**, and during show strike, CBS58 in Milwaukee informed a Trainfest Committee member of an inappropriate scene included on the Lionel Railroad Club of SE Wisconsin layout.

In answer to the reporter's request for comment on the scene, the Committee member, Peter Lakatos, stated that **"Trainfest organizers had not been made aware of the questionable scene until at that moment, and based on the content description provided by the station stated 'This hobby is about fun and creativity and certainly not a place to make any sort of statement. This is a total unfortunate surprise and we will take it back to our committee.'"**

Since Trainfest prides itself on being a family-friendly event and is not – and never has been – a venue for social or political commentary, Trainfest organizing committee leadership released the following statement to CBS58 at about 8 p.m. Nov. 12, 2017:

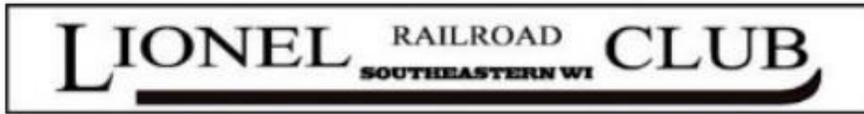
"We are deeply appalled on learning of the Lionel Railroad Club of SE Wisconsin's choice to include absolutely inappropriate social commentary in their layout display. Trainfest prides itself in being a family-friendly event and has never encountered a need in 46 years of staging the event to review the content of the layouts for social or political commentary. That policy will change and we will be implementing stronger reviews of the layouts on display to ensure this never happens again."

Link to the CBS58 10 p.m. coverage on Nov. 12 - <https://cbs58.com/news/exclusive-racist-train-model-sparks-change-in-policy-at-trainfest>

Q: Has Trainfest received a formal apology from the Lionel Railroad Club of SE Wisconsin?

A: Yes. The Club has proactively offered an apology and taken responsibility for the issue. Their statement also indicates that measures are being implemented by the Club to ensure this never happens again.

more



November 13, 2017

TRAINFEST
WISE Division of the NMRA
Milwaukee, WI

To: The Officer and Members

As President of the Lionel Railroad Club of Southeastern Wisconsin, I am writing to you about the incident that occurred at Trainfest, November 12, caused by a display within our layout. The display was totally inappropriate and unacceptable.

When brought to our attention, the display was immediately removed, and the figures were discarded appropriately.

Although this display was not endorsed by our membership, the Lionel Railroad Club of Southeastern Wisconsin, accepts full responsibility; regrets these actions; and apologizes to Trainfest, the Wise Division, our fellow exhibitors and the visiting public.

This incident does not represent the values of our train club or its' members. Hopefully, this incident should not negatively reflect on our twenty-year history of entertaining children and their families at Trainfest.

We have begun an investigation as to how this incident occurred and how we will deal with it. We will work to resolve this matter in a timely manner. We anticipate, that strong actions would be levied against the offending individual(s). Our club is united in its' disapproval of this occurrence and it does not represent our memberships' beliefs or ethics.

If you would like to further discuss this incident with us, we are offering to discuss this matter in person.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Hechel, President
Lionel Railroad Club of Southeastern Wisconsin
dhechel@wi.rr.com

Q: Did Trainfest receive any complaints about this layout scene or any others on display?

A: No. Until approached by the TV station after the close of the show, all volunteer Trainfest organizers had no knowledge of the scene depicted.

Q: Will Lionel Railroad Club of SE Wisconsin be at Trainfest 2018?

A: No. Poor judgement and a lack of awareness have consequences. As a result of the Lionel RR Club of SE WI irresponsibility, they will not be invited to display at Trainfest 2018.

more

Q: How will Trainfest policy on display content change in the future?

A: A committee has been formed to ensure all displays do not depict any social, race, religious, gender or political commentary or inequality.

The committee is **drafting a policy and protocol** to ensure Trainfest exhibitors always present appropriate subject matter in line with being a family-friendly event.

Q: Has Lionel LLC made a statement regarding the issue?

A: Yes. *“The ‘Club’ in question is in no way associated with Lionel as we do not run, manage or engage with the club on any regular basis. Lionel does not agree with or condone such a display.”*

Q: Will the policy and protocol change affect all exhibitors?

A: Yes. There is no tolerance for any exhibitor to use the Trainfest venue to promote anything but a family-friendly event filled with train fun, the opportunities to be inspired by the artistry of the modeling hobby, and to learn and appreciate the accomplishments of how trains shaped our world.

###