

## Winter Wonderland Train Show 2017

### The Candy Factory

#### Manassas VA.

Over the years we have partnered with the city of Manassas and SERVE, a Manassas charitable organization, collecting food and money for the SERVE outreach problems in the area. 2017 ushered in several changes plus some new faces. The volunteers for SERVE retired and the City of Manassas took over a greater role supporting the show. For starters new blue pleated skirting for the Standard Gauge layout plus new buildings and decorations from the city and the Manassas Museum. The Museum also offered us a G gauge train from their collection for use on the Standard gauge layout. A Southern 4-6-0 with two passenger cars. The new faces were the *Military Child Education Coalition* providing a display showcasing the brave sons and daughters of military parents. <http://www.militarychild.org>

The city also provided Santa on Saturday afternoon to the delight of all the young children in attendance especially one 5-year old, my great grandson Richie. According to him this was the best Santa Claus because he was Real!

As usual the show featured both a 28 X 44 O gauge Layout and a 20 X 9 Standard gauge Layout.

#### Standard Gauge:



The layout this year proved very special in many ways. A large loop and smaller loops of Standard Gauge and a small loop of G gauge, New buildings and decorations provided by the City of Manassas and the Manassas Museum was a refreshing change and were done very well. I would be remiss if I didn't mention Clem's scenery contribution, numerous trees that added the finishing touch. Clem also loaned the



Museum a “Blue Comet Train” for under the tree in the Museum lobby. Christen Fox added a sign directing folks to the Candy Factory and the Winter Wonderland show. The Standard gauge support this year was over the top. Clem had a host of willing Trackers pitching in the daily operation and of course the initial setup. Ed Beaver (traveled from the PA border) and was instrumental in the design and setup process. Craig Schelle, Dave Eadie, and Clem rounded out the setup. Many thanks to George Tsakris, Norm Beaver, Dave Eadie, Craig Schelle, Ed Beaver, and Clem for a seamless operation. The trains were in a class by themselves. Clem’s J611, Norm’s home-made articulated, Craig’s new Blue Comet, all spectacular. This year was indeed very special for everyone. Of course, the Train Doctors Ed and Clem were on duty.

### **O Gauge:**

The layout this year featured multiple levels and was very spectator friendly with ample space to walk around outside and inside the layout while enjoying trains in every direction, Numerous parents and kids were sitting on chairs along-side the long grade taking it all in. The layout was designed to grab everyone’s attention upon entering the room. Trains at the lower level traversed a large horseshoe curve while two bridges crossed over the tracks below. One



grade climbed the entire 40 feet with no curves other than two 45-degree modules back to back. The scenery this year again was over the top. Winter Wonderland scenes dominated every module. Gremlins raised their heads more than once both DCS and the Lionel operations experienced weird symptoms. We found the building heating system was defective and the Candy Factory folks had placed multiple space heaters throughout the room. Justin suggested we unplug these heaters and it had a positive effect on our command operations. Additionally, we had plugged in the power cabinet to the opposite side of the room than normal, so we went back to the same outlet used in previous shows, phase differences were suspected. Whatever we did Sunday (the last day of the show) our operations were nearly flawless. Several times during the day we had 8-9 trains running including the Standard Gauge. One loop had three trains running for several hours without incident.

### **Special Visitors:**

1. **Wednesday** evening was the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the show and we were paid a visit by none other than the Mayor of Manassas (**Harry J. Parrish**) he spent close to 45 minutes with us and enjoyed both the O and Standard Gauge trains, Clem ran his special J 611 (Unique to Standard Gauge) with the mayor inspecting every detail close-up. Steve Kehn was introduced and the mayor's compliments were endless. He said the NCT display is one of the main attractions for Manassas this time of year. He also related his correspondence with the real J 611 folks and his support for another visit to the Manassas Rail-fest.



2. **Thursday** evening about 7 PM I noticed one of our visitors with a professional tripod and camera making a video of our layouts. I introduced myself and asked a few questions. The young lady was a TV reporter from WDVM TV station out of Hagerstown MD. The station also covers Northern VA with an affiliate in Chantilly VA. After she finished filming she asked if I would be willing to go on camera and say a few words. I responded yes and added Steve to the conversation. We both answered questions with the interview lasting 5 minutes or so. That evening on the WDVM 11 PM news I had my 3 nanoseconds of fame.

The bulk of my interview and all of Steve's made it to the floor of the cutting room. At least the show and NCT were featured even for a brief second or two.

3. **Saturday** was indeed special, The River City Three Railers (**RC3R**) made a visit to the Candy Factory show. Four members made the trip from Richmond Virginia to get a close-up look at our Power Cabinet, our wiring harness plus our operations. Steve and Matthew had visited Richmond earlier this year to check out their Geezer Gate design. RC3C is planning to upgrade their modules in the near future and are very interested in our design. They brought along a few trains and had ample time to enjoy running on our layout.
4. **Sunday** afternoon a dignified gentleman approached me and asked if we could handle a Church bus with 30 plus kids? I answered, of course and he immediately he was on his phone and within minutes we had 30 special kids (early teens) came into the room and quickly circled once around the layout and then disappeared. It had to be the fastest group of spectators I had ever seen!

A special guest "Ms. Sandy" provided much needed **Adult Supervision** after a long week of train operations and repair. Always a welcomed participant and contributor in the Winter Wonderland Show.

### **Food:**

Many thanks to Clem & Sandy (Chicken Soup), Matthew (Pasta and Meat sauce), Harkins Family (Pork BBQ and Coleslaw), Don (Chili), Evans family (Turkey rollup sandwiches and a special Christmas cake). Also thanks to everyone who provided cookies and snacks throughout the week. Apple pie and brownies topped the list. The food Sunday was unique to say the least. Justin made waffles with real Maple syrup, Rick provided three boxes of Popeyes fried chicken, and Martha had Roast beef sandwiches and countless yummy goodies. What a feast, **Chicken and Waffles with Maple Syrup**. Sunday Brunch may be duplicated in the years to come. It was that special.

### **Summary:**

The show was once again a success with 2213 attendees as counted by the building security. Thanks to Bill Creech and Bear Bailey for coordinating the trailer delivery and their endless support. I believe the city of Manassas has a better feel for what it takes to put on the show. The main draw is the National Capital Trackers layouts and 2200 plus people in and out of the building no doubt adds to the economy of downtown Manassas. The new Tracker sign was evident in the lobby of the Candy Factory pointing the way to the elevators and the show, but true to form a lot of people don't read and still get lost on the way to the elevator.

We can't forget one of the main attractions of the Candy Factory, the Real Thing! At the sound of an approaching train blowing it's horn the building sways toward the tracks as everyone rushes to the windows to view passing freights, VRE, Amtrak

regionals and the **Crescent** on its journey to New Orleans. It's always fascinating to see what is being served in the dining car. This unique phenomenon applies to everyone spectators and Trackers alike.

A successful well attended show due to all the Tracker support especially Bob Easton, Joe Lo Cascio, Martha & Jackson Van Ness, Jim Mc Dermott, Craig Schelle, Jack Frost, Rick Eudy, Justin Krause, John Zampino, John & Jake Evans, Steve and Matthew Kehn, Don Roberts, Bill Creech, Bear Bailey, Clem Clement, Ed Beaver, Norm Beaver, George Tsakiris, Dave Eadie and Christen Fox (City of Manassas).

These folks are the secret ingredient for the Winter Wonderland Show. All their hard work, innovation and attention to detail make the show so successful and is always appreciated.

Thanks

***Regis Harkins***

***Trackmaster***