

Manassas Candy Cane Factory

December 15-18, 2008



Set up was on Sunday 14th at 1 pm. We started on time decided after the fact to use the outside yard for a storage place for trains that were staging but not running. We also installed DCS & TMCC both of which ran successfully. The setup was complete and running by 5 pm with the outside yard taking almost an hour to install and get operating. It was a great show lots of visitors beginning on Monday. On our first year there were more trackers at times on Monday then there were visitors, but not this year. We had fun and food as we were running trains when some of us would have been home eating. The schedule for meals was as follows and it was great.

Sunday December Set Up	Dan Danielson Sausage, rolls, cheese, bread & dip
Monday December 15	Steve Kehn, Pasta w/meat & cheese, salad
Tuesday December 16	Frank Hale, Sausage & Egg casserole
Wednesday December 17	Joe Helsing, Soup and Cornbread
Thursday December 18	Delaney Ritter Pizza Sodas, surprise dessert

We had 9 modules on each side and a 4 ft module at each end in addition to the corners. We had the following participants, Bear Bailey, Bill Buschmeier, Clem Clement, Allen Crotts, Dan Danielson, Bernie Gross, Frank Hale, Joe Helsing, Regis Harkins, Thom McKinney Steve and Matthew Kehn. What a great team and a pleasure to be with. Delaney Ritter our contact with the City of Manassas Parks and Recreation was there each evening sparkling with enthusiasm and a delight to be around. Her Key lime and Lemon pies were fit to fight over.

Clem Clement waxed eloquently on the operation and his comments are below.

The Christmas trains event at the Manassas Candy Factory is off and running. Monday and Tuesday evenings went very well. A goodly sized crowd of folks enjoying the trains. Mostly ladies and kids and surely a flock of kids involved. Tuesday night was in heavy rain, but they turned out anyway. And the sparkle in the eyes of all the kids makes this a great event. Santa was there in action and lines formed to tell him their secrets. What a great addition to our event

Frank's fish tanks, Bill's Greyhound bus terminal and all the action toys caught the eyes of the kids. This is a great team effort.

Dan and Clem ran the standard gauge layout. It also is very popular because of the size of the toys and the crashing and banging noises of these big trains. We set up the track and Manassas adds the miniature towns, buildings and people. Many of the accessories are animated and with sound as well. It is fun to watch the kid's eyes budge at the eye-level passing of a huge standard gauge steamer tugging an ancient consist of cars. Invariably the adult's question is "1920 and so shiny and still running?" The only wreck so far was when I laid the 390E-powered Blumoon Special into the village square on her side. Toy villagers scattered and lovers fell into the fountain of youth. The Blumooner was righted and back on schedule in no time. Oh, we did have trouble with the Cottonpicker Limited. We use strip cotton as snowy hills and every once in a while the obsy would brush a piece of cotton onto the rails. The next lap the loco would eat it. The American Flyer 4000 leading 3 Bunker Hill cars slowed to a halt with 4 inches of cotton around the pinion gear. During the delay the passengers were feed extra chilies, so nobody noticed.

To add to the realism, Amtrak and VRE rumble by right below us on the mainline. The kids rush to the windows to see the 12 inches to the foot scale trains. We are running a VRE trains on the O gauge layout as well - how is that for realism! I think this is mega neat. A realie and a modelie together. Ms Sandy pointed out that the upper level of the realie had 2 rows of one seat wide whereas the model had two. Ya can't ever get them realies to get it right?

Visitors get in free, but leave donations of cans of food to help the less fortunate at this time of year. Heart warming project.

Now Wednesday evening was something else!! We don't know what happened; the crowd was coming from all directions. In the doors and yelling and squealing with delight. Golly it was exciting as it should be. A full house for most of the evening with families and kids everywhere. Santa nearly wore out his knees holding all the kids and he took a ton of orders for trains for Christmas. This was the most energetic crowd I have seen at this event. So many happy faces watching the trains, both real and surreal. Our trains did their part by performing well. No crashes on the standard gauge layout although a Flyer 4000 electric had some trouble with the Dorfan switches.

Tonight, Thursday evening, is the last night. We go 6-8 pm and then shut 'r down till the 2009 good times open up at the old Manassas Candy Factory.

Clem

Teardown was supposed to start at 8 but we had visitors on the viewing floor so we kept trains running while we removed scenery and than stopped the trains. We had our equipment down the elevator, loaded in our vehicles and ready to go at 10 pm.

It was reported that Santa was observed with attractive young ladies (not children) sitting on his lap and whispering in his ear.

Frank Hale---Trackmaster