



Santa in a “Jimmy Suit” **WB&A TRAIN MEET AT KENA TEMPLE**

Santa was there in his jolliness and being his pure and wonderful self. YES!!! I believe. In my mind I went up and sat on his lap and asked for a train set. Actually I waved and felt warm that he was in the house. His subliminal message back to me was: “I am here in many magical forms.” One is the image of an Arctic dweller who knows who did well and who done bad; and drinks hot chocolate before the magic sleigh ride. Our Santa said he was going to morph

in to a bazillion Santa’s at Kena Temple, as well as, all over the world. He tasked us to find them and enjoy his work. Here is my report on what I saw Santa do. I hope you were there and saw many more visions of the “Fab Fat Man’s” magic at work!!

Little Jimmy brought his tall Daddy to the train meet. Jimmy had his conductor’s hat on his head. Jimmy had never been before and did not know what TCA was or why these people would want to gather with their trains. But Jimmy had his Conductors hat on and wished Dad would hurry with the entrance process. Jimmy thought if Santa Mary would stop telling Dad all the exciting things about a train meet so we could get to the trains. Santa Mary was so pleasant to Daddy, helpful and warm in her welcome that maybe she was a Santa in a “Mary suit?” Daddy said he needed to join this TCA group as they were all having fun playing trains. He thought Jimmy would enjoy the trains (Maybe my Daddy is Santa in a “Daddy’s suit?”)

From the time Jimmy hit the floor running, he covered all the layouts, tables and folks 3847128341047 times with his Daddy in tow and us oldsters teary eyed with joy radiated from this boy (Maybe Jimmy was Santa in a “Jimmy suit?)

Santa in a “Regis suit” talked to Jimmy. They agreed Jimmy could have a go at the remote control of the wondrous thundering freight train on the huge National Capital Tracker’s layout. With a little help from some elves in “Tracker suits”, Jimmy controlled the train. He did have to tell Daddy which train he was in command of and how to do, as Daddy was an adult and they have to be kept informed.

Regis said many attendees had seen/heard about the National Capital Trackers at York last fall and wanted to enjoy their exciting layout again. They were happy with all the train action.

Matt and Anthony set up their large complicated LEGO layout, which included a monorail. I don’t remember seeing this before. There were little people everywhere, buildings, streets and action accessories. The expansive layout was awash in movement and activity. Matt and Anthony were making so many things happen to the joy of the visitors. Jimmy was there and I’m sure he took part in the holiday fun. I know I (1) loved the extensive layout and (2) was so glad I did not have to construct and assemble all the many intricate scenes. Ya think maybe Santa was there in his “Matt and Anthony suits?”

Charlie had just acquired a massive custom brass standard gauge loco and tender. He brought it in and many of us salivated over the wondrous piece. Allen figured out that the secret code on the tender’s underbelly was in fact John’s TCA number. Good find Allen! This loc was an extended version of a

Lionel #7, having 6 drivers rather than the normal 4 drivers. It truly was in better proportions than the original. Economies and technologies of the 1910's did not allow for bigger motors for their engines. Thanks Charlie for the show and tell.

As a TCA leader, I worry about many things. One is that our Divisions and Chapters protect their non-profit tax status. For the WB&A, one of the requirements is for teaching sessions for its members. We surely did this time, and mostly from the kids teaching us as they learned and articulated, via kids language and expressions, about the world's greatest hobby. The sounds of happy kids are so powerful to my psychic.

Did I mention Jimmy was everywhere?

I hope Jimmy led his Daddy to the food service area. Our friends from the Temple arrived early and prepared superb breakfast sandwiches of eggs, bacon, and cheese on a warm croissant-golly I need one now as I writing. Lunch was equally as good I understand, but I was so enthralled with the happenings of the mystical Santa's on the meet floor, that I did not notice I was mega-starving.

Another magical scene unfolded, that one could not forecast. One of my antique car club friends is a Mason and helps out in the kitchen. Dick and I are good enough friends that I can ask his wife if he did any of the cooking. She said no way and we were glad to hear that. Anyway, back to my story. Another mason member, Fred, had previously had his Model T Ford stolen and later recovered from the parking lot. We chatted about his happiness in recovering the stolen Model T and how fellow Masons had helped. Fred, knowing I was an antique car nut, asked about who could adjust the brakes on Fred's '30 Olds. We agreed that Tommy, who is both TCA and an antique car master mechanic would be the one for the job. Making all these connections during one meet had to have some "Santa suit" magic involvement for sure.

Out of the crowd a fellow approached me with a sack and a box. I don't know how he found me. He said he had some extra track and would I like it? Of course I said yes. Later I met a family buying their first train for their 3 young daughters and they needed more track, so... more later in another paragraph. The gent also had 3 round cardboard signs saying Lionel. They were very nicely made, about 14 inches in diameter. I'm not a sign expert, but I had never seen this type of sign before. Perfect for a wall display. The gent offered them to me and refused any \$\$ for them. The rule was that they needed to bring use and happiness to someone. One I took and the other two were set as door prizes. There was much interest in them and I think they were sold to help the finances of the Club. A good use. A bit later it came to me that Jimmy might have a blank space on his room walls for the sign. Golly, his loud hoot and grin told me I done good. (Was Santa in a "Clem Suit"?)

Seemed to me this particular meet fostered more good chat and fellowship than others. Chairs were gathered around my table of junk and the likes of Carl; Danny; Dr Bruce; Phil and many others sat and talked of friends and trains events of the past, all laying warm on our heart and minds. Our health was an important topic and we wished all those with health issues the best of luck, good medical care and quick recovery. We understand Brian busted his wrist and we hope for his quick recovery.

As you know, I love home-did trains and happily one wandered by and followed me home. (Don't tell Ms. Sandy.)

The running layouts were certainly a thrill to watch and enjoy. I think many visitors came because they heard there would be running trains. I could have spent all day at the layouts.

A fellow and his family stopped by the table and asked for some track. Further talk revealed that his three daughters saw a Santa on a hand car and had to have it to go around their Christmas tree. This family was

new to trains and needed assistance. We got them plenty of track and taught them how to clean track and set things up. Excitement grew as we laid track out on the floor and they all envisioned the little Santa pumping his way around the Christmas tree. I hope the joy continues forever.

Loco Doctor Al was in place and very busy. Al is very good at fixing trains and is a key feature of the meet. Crowds gather just to watch him fix the trains and to listen to his learned talks.

AL Franceschetti has been gone for several years now, and we so missed him. We miss most of all the friendship, council and advice they freely gave to TCAers. Al was such a powerful positive influence on my life and all who knew him. I continue to perform many of my TCA duties listening for the friendly guiding voice of Al in the back of my head. I hope all of us told him how important he was while he was with us. We were so glad to have his two sons and Nancy back with us selling parts. It was good to chat with them.

Ms Sandy came by (on her way to buy me Blu Comets I hope) and went to the food areas for those super croissants. Soon our table was filled with trainiacs chatting. It is so nice to gather with family and friends this time of year.

Merry Christmas all and I hope your Santa in a "Santa Suit" treats you extra special this season and that, as shown in the "Polar Express" movie, you can clearly and always hear the ringing of the "magic sleigh bell" saying I BELIEVE.

Clem Clement
National President, TCA