

Glen Carbon-Inspired Train Set Showcased At 2023 Metro East Model Railroad Club Open House

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
March 28 2023 2:15 PM

GLEN CARBON - A model train set based on the Village of Glen Carbon was the central attraction at the Metro East Model Railroad Club's most recent Open House event. Publicity Chairman Bob Gibson said the train set includes models of several historic Glen Carbon buildings along 1,000 feet of track, and is appreciated by visitors of all ages.

Gibson said many adults recognize some of the buildings in the miniature depiction of the village, including one visitor who even spotted the house they grew up in.

"A lot of the adults will come in and say, 'Gee, this is really nice,' and very realistic if you grew up in Glen Carbon, this area. In fact, there's a building behind me which was the superintendent's house for the railroad at the time, and one of the visitors came in and said to us, 'I grew up in that house,'" he said. "We got a lot of that ... people who grew up here recognize some of the stuff."

The club's model train sets are also a huge hit with local kids, like Evee Ringer, who was at the Open House with her grandma, Ellen Becker-Law.

"I love to take my granddaughter out for any kind of adventures that there are that she'll remember," Becker-Law said. "She loves all of the little arrangements - all of the cars, the cows, the dogs, all of that - she's been counting those as well, pointing them out."

Ringer added: "I love them!"

Gibson said some kids spend hours at the club, and that the club always welcomes them.

“We especially like the kids. The kids who come in, they just absolutely love trains,” Gibson said. “Literally, we’ve have had some children who come in at 10:00 when we open, and they’re going out screaming they don’t want to leave at 3:00 . They just really enjoy it.”

Gibson said the model train set’s layout is rooted in Glen Carbon’s history, which is itself rooted in coal mining.

“The layout is constructed at least in large part around old Glen Carbon. Of course, this was a mining area for many years,” Gibson said. “We have miner’s houses, we have the building we’re standing in - this building is over 100 years old, it was originally the City Hall and the Fire Department - and then a church just down the block, we have a model of that as well.

“It kind of depicts the way things were in Glen Carbon in ... 1920-1930, that range. Again, this was a mining area, so lots of coal.”

Gibson said the Metro East Model Railroad Club is “always looking for new members,” and that their dues are “exceptionally reasonable” at \$60 per year.

“ an opportunity to share some fun with the other guys and learn some stuff about trains,” he said. “We’d love to have you.”

This year’s Open House was held on March 19, 2023, at the old Glen Carbon Fire House /Village Hall building. Gibson said this was their “Spring Event” and that they have events open to the public every quarter.

A video from this year's Metro East Model Railroad Club Open House is available at the top of this story or on [Riverbender.com/video](https://riverbender.com/video).