



Preparations Continue for Fundraising and Fun This November!

ASTA's first full-scale dinner in support of the organization's missions of education and historical preservation will be at the Hyatt Place hotel in Cedar Park the evening of Thursday, Nov. 7.

Dubbed the "Circus of Wonders," ASTA's event promises a full evening of fun and camaraderie in support of the good cause that's been chugging along in Central Texas for 30 years.

The event will be from 6:30 to 11 p.m. on Nov. 7, at the Hyatt Place, 1315 E. New Hope Drive in Cedar Park.

The Circus of Wonders offers the opportunity for ASTA's current donors, board members and volunteers to introduce new potential supporters to the cause by encouraging them to attend the event, learn about our mission and our projects.

"In addition," said Executive Director Lil Serafine, "we will be leveraging some of our existing partnerships to help offset some of the costs and in turn showcase partners' businesses and strength-

en our relationships. The result is stewarding the partners and new donors to become lifelong supporters."

One exciting element of the event will be that a percentage of the proceeds will fund scholarships for students enrolled in the culinary arts and hospitality programs offered through Leander ISD's Career and Technical Education Courses.

The evening will begin with cocktails, featuring a new signature cocktail, the "Vapeur Merveille" ("Steam Wonder,"), followed by dinner, mag-

ic and a live auction. There will also be a silent auction throughout the evening.

ASTA staff and board members are actively looking for event sponsors at these levels:

- "Big Top," \$10,000.
- "Aerialist," \$7,500.
- "Tightrope," \$5,000.
- "Roustabout," \$2,000.

Each level of sponsorship brings benefits including a table for eight at the dinner, various kinds of public recognition, and the top three packages include train tickets.

ASTA is pleased to welcome Etix as a "Big Top" sponsor!



...and thanks to our other "Circus" sponsors... (so far!)

Austin American-Statesman

Capital Metro

Lower Colorado River Authority

Prosperity Bank

Dennis Kearns

Larry and Lindy McGinnis

William Osborn

Sargent Brothers Printers

If you'd like to be a sponsor, buy a ticket, or contribute items for our live or silent auctions, contact Lil Serafine at director@austinsteamtrain.org or 512-477-8468 ext. 204.

Burdine Johnson Grant Benefits Power-Car Project

A \$25,000 grant from the Burdine Johnson Foundation of Buda will put the project of a generator car to power ASTA's trains well down the road to completion.

ASTA has already located an 800-kilowatt Cummins diesel generator which, once it has a place to ride, will be able to provide electric power for an entire train's lighting and (most importantly) climate-control systems.

Currently, six cars are powered by a 150-kilowatt generator often taxed to capacity, and other cars each have their own generators.

ASTA management is evaluating an appropriate car to carry the generator, its fuel tank and tool storage, one that would fit compatibly with the A&TC's classic mid-century passenger consist.

Burdine Johnson Foundation, over its 60-year history, has benefitted Central Texas causes to the tune of about \$50 million, with a substantial portion going to historical preservation.

Thanks to our generous friends!

(Donations from April through July 2019. If we have left anyone off, please accept our apologies and contact us at director@austinsteamtrain.org so we can make sure we recognize you in our next edition.)

\$3,000 plus:

Ben Sargent
Roger and Jeannie Shull

\$1,000 to \$2,499:

David and Laura Gracy
Jane S. Schoen
Virginia Urban

\$500 to \$999:

Robert Edwin Anderson
Randy Leo
Larry Springer (*Rippling Stream project*)

\$200 to \$499:

William Bingham
Susan Gentz
Joe A. Osborn
Donald S. Winn

\$50 to \$199:

Jimmie and Kathy
Burleyson (*in memory of Bert Dockall*)
Owen and Jan Carpenter
Margaret F. Frihart
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Hall
Frank E. Ruggles
James A. Sandham

Spates Family Fund
George F. Zapalac

\$20 to \$49:

Anonymous
Andrew Diefenthaler
Jason Fowler
Kristi Lane
Paul S. Lewis
Kay Zagst

We'd Love to See Your Name Here!

For building and investing in the future of historic railroad preservation in Central Texas, ASTA depends on the kindness and dedication of its friends! To make a donation or sign up as an ASTA member, call **512-477-8468** or visit our website, www.austinsteamtrain.org.

Industry Group Certifies Marketing Director Zena Vaughn as a Tourism Pro

Zena Vaughn, ASTA's director of marketing and special events, after a rigorous three-year training regimen, has been designated a Certified Tourism Executive by the Texas Travel Industry Association.

Zena has been working for ASTA since 2012, and has brought the association's marketing, advertising, media relations and digital-media presence to a high level of professionalism.

The Travel Industry Association offers a training program called Travel and Tourism College, and after three years of study and a rigorous capstone paper, participants are awarded the tourism-executive certification.

Zena came to ASTA with much previous marketing experience, most recently with Penfold Theater, the Round-Rock-based nonprofit professional theater company.

She also holds a master's

New York Central Parlor-Sleeper Returns, Rested and Ready

The Budd-built New York Central parlor-sleeper *Rippling Stream*, one of the A&TC's most elegant cars, has returned to our regular passenger consist after a five-month hiatus for some long-needed upgrading and maintenance.

Built in 1949, the *Stream* has been on ASTA's roster since 2014, when she was purchased from ASTA President Dr. Robert Schoen.

The car has five sleeping compartments reconfigured for chair-and-table seating, plus a stylish wood-paneled

lounge that seats 22.

The *Stream* was first taken out of service to replace wheels, one of which had developed a noisy flat spot, and while she was in the hands of ASTA maintenance personnel she received not only new wheels but rebuilt bearing boxes and all-new head-end power conduit, boxes and connections.

Completion of head-end power improvements awaits purchase and installation of all-new wiring, a project that awaits an \$8,000 donation!



A Special Thanks to Our Friends and Supporters,
the City of Cedar Park and Cedar Park Tourism Services!



degree in non-profit management from DePaul University in Chicago.

Said ASTA President Dr. Robert Schoen, "Zena, now in her seventh year with ASTA, has revolutionized the way we advertise, especially

in the digital and social arena. We look forward to her leading us into the future, with marketing as a tool to reach more Texans and educating them on what we do and what our mission of historic railroad preservation is."

Bert Dockall, One of ASTA's Originals, Makes That Last Run at Age 68

Bert L. Dockall, one of ASTA's original volunteers at the association's founding in 1989, died June 10 at his home in Rockdale, at age 68.

A constant presence around the Austin & Texas Central, Bert served as an engineer on both steam and diesel power. For many years, he also served as the railroad's designated supervisor of locomotive engineers, and was in charge of railroad training for operating volunteers.

Bert had also served on ASTA's board since 2009.

He owned a number of cars used by the A&TC, most notably the Missouri Pacific parlor-sleeper *Eagle Cliff*, which was part of the railroad's original passenger consist and can be found in A&TC trains to this day.

Bert and his friend James Vaughn, with James' son Jimmy

Vaughn, found the 1948 *Eagle Cliff* on a siding in Comfort, Texas, and restored the car and operated it in Amtrak charter service before leasing it to ASTA in 1992.

Bert also owned a 1929 Santa Fe caboose still used in charter service on the A&TC. He also owned a rare Santa Fe horse car (built to carry race horses, and now used by ASTA as a museum space), a Southern Pacific express baggage car used for tool storage, and was restoring a Missouri



Pacific dining car for A&TC service.

Bert was a lifelong professional railroader and a lifelong resident of Rockdale. Just out of high school, he entered an MP program for brakeman and management trainees, and began a rail career that spanned 50 years.

He worked as a Santa Fe agent-operator at various stations in Texas, and worked as an Amtrak agent at Temple.

In the late '70s, he went into engine service for the Santa Fe,

ran for a time on Amtrak, then returned to the Santa Fe until his retirement.

Bert was one of the founders, and still was president, of Rockdale Historical Society, organized in 1998 to acquire and restore the old International & Great Northern depot in Rockdale as a museum. He also acquired a caboose and dining car that are part of the museum's collection.

"Bert was a friend and mentor to everyone on ASTA's railroad," said ASTA Chairman Ben Sargent. "He was a tangible link to Texas railroading's past, and he will be greatly missed."

Best Known as Ms. Claus, Popular Volunteer Bettsie Zolondek Departs

Bettsie Isaacs Craven Zolondek had only been an ASTA volunteer for two years when she passed at her home July 6, but had already made an indelible impression on her fellow volunteers with her cheerful disposition and rapport with ASTA's passengers. She was 77.

Bettsie served as an on-board car attendant, and she particularly stood out serving

as Ms. Santa Claus, handing out cookies and candy canes on the A&TC's North Pole Flyers. She also served frequently in ticket support at the Cedar Park depot.

"Being a volunteer for ASTA is the perfect addition to any week," she once told ASTA's annual report. "Not only does one get to meet some fantastic people from all over, but you get to ride in



a vintage train, and are always learning a little more about the history of Texas."

She described service on the North Pole Flyers and Day Out With Thomas as "more fun than a basket full of puppies."

Bettsie was born in Corpus Christi, and for 30 years worked in federal civil service as a housing specialist. In addition to her work with ASTA, she volunteered at Bay Area Medical Center in Corpus Christi and at Baylor Scott & White Hospital in Round Rock.

She is survived by four children, 10 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Now Arriving....Everybody's Favorite Familiar Blue Engine!

Tickets are selling fast for the 2019 visit of Thomas the Tank Engine to the Austin & Texas Central's rails!

This year's two-day extravaganza will be at the Community Center in Burnet on Saturday and Sunday, **Sept. 28 and 29.**

The event, as always featuring a full-scale, operating replica of the famous "useful little engine" of storybooks and television, will be Thomas' 17th visit to our railroad. Since the first Thomas event in 2003, nearly 200,000 visitors have shared in the fun.

The centerpiece of the weekend, of course, will be 25-minute train rides into the countryside behind Thomas, a dozen each day in the A&TC's air-conditioned cars.

Tickets are **\$24** apiece for



everyone two years old and older. Reservations are recommended, and may be made by calling **866-468-7630** or going to **austinsteamtrain.org.**

In addition to Thomas' train rides, there will be plenty of other family-friendly activ-

ities, including coloring and crafts, storytelling and videos, a rock-climbing wall, a magician and balloon artist, a selection of Thomas souvenirs and the opportunity to have a photo made with the famous little blue engine!

Join us for the fun, and for the satisfaction of a worthwhile job well-done....

Be an ASTA Volunteer!

If you love railroading, love history, or just love helping people have a good time, give us a call. We have a place for you!

It's simple....call our volunteer coordinator, Erin Hoff, at 512-477-8468 ext. 205, e-mail volunteers@austinsteamtrain.org or come by our office, 401 E. Whitestone, Suite C-100, Cedar Park.

Your Summer CALL BOARD!

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