



# The LANTERN

Big Bend Model Railroad Association Volume 8, Number 2 Feb 2003

**NEXT MEETING**

**Feb. 18, 2003**

**Myers Park**

**With our deepest sympathies and regrets:** We regrettfully announce the passing of Carlton P. "Bill" Scott. Bill was an avid member of the BBMRA's N Scale Division and will be sorely missed by all of the Association. He worked hard to better the N Scale layout and the Association in general. Bill, age 72, died Tuesday evening, January 21, 2003. He is survived by his wife of 34 years, Sandy Scott. Memorial contributions may be made to the American Diabetes Association, P.O. Box 2680, North Canton, OH 44720, or the American Cancer Society, 241 John Knox Road, Suite 100, Tallahassee, FL 32303. Bill was born in Evanston, Illinois and made Tallahassee his home in 1988. He was a Navy veteran of the Korean War. A retired salesman, he had been a carrier for the Tallahassee Democrat for two years.

Our sympathies as well to Dan King on the loss of his mother and to Joe Haley on the loss of his sister.

**2003 Elections:** Elections were held during the BBMRA's January Annual Business meeting. The following members were elected: President - Jeremy Shaw; Vice-President - Evan Hughes; Treasurer - Sandy Scott; Secretary - John Sullenberger; HO Division Coordinator - Sam Miller; N Division Coordinator - Garth Easton; Large Scale Division Coordinator - Ken Brock and R. L. Lombardo.

The BBMRA would like to thank Eric Taylor (outgoing 2002 President) and Evan Hughes (outgoing 2002 N Division Coordinator) for their hard work and dedication to the BBMRA.

**2003 Membership Dues are due:** Membership dues are now due for the BBMRA's 2003 fiscal year. Dues for returning members are \$20. Families are included in the \$20. Dues must be paid by March 31<sup>st</sup> to remain on the 2003 roster.

If you have any questions, please contact me (John Sullenberger) at 562-5137 (h) or 410-8425 (w) or via e-mail at sullyjws@aol.com. I have voice mail on both phone lines, so please leave a message if I'm not in.

**Jacksonville GATS setup by BBMRA's HO Division - submitted by Sam Miller:** We have been accepted for the Jacksonville GATS on March 1st and 2nd. We will try to set up Friday night, February 28th, if we can get volunteers. Otherwise, we will go in very early Saturday. The exhibition hall opens at 7 am with the show opening at 11 am.

Like last year, we will be looking for a couple of people to spend most of the weekend there and others to come over for the day Saturday and again for the day on Sunday.

Please contact me by email ( smiller@flains.org ) or at my home, 385-7733, if you can help out in this setup - All members are invited.

## 2003 SCHEDULE & TIMETABLE: all meetings 7:30 to 10pm

February 18th	3rd Tuesday	Myers Park Community Room
<b>March 18th</b>	<b>3rd Thursday</b>	<b>Florida Insurance Council</b>
April 15th	3rd Tuesday	Myers Park Community Room
May 20th	3rd Tuesday	Myers Park Community Room
June 17th	3rd Tuesday	To Be Announced
July 15th	3rd Tuesday	Myers Park Community Room
August 19th	3rd Tuesday	Myers Park Community Room
September 16th	3rd Tuesday	To Be Announced
October 21st	3rd Tuesday	Myers Park Community Room
November 18th	3rd Tuesday	Myers Park Community Room
December 16th	3rd Tuesday	To Be Announced



**March Meeting Rescheduled:** The March BBMRA meeting has been rescheduled to March 20th, the third Thursday (instead of the third Tuesday) of the month. The meeting will be held at the Florida Insurance Council Conference Room.

## **The little railroad that could - It's a shot of optimism to struggling county**

**By Gerald Ensley, Democrat Senior Writer**

**Published December 22, 2002 and reprinted by permission from the Tallahassee Democrat)**

**BRISTOL** - Joe Brown took three of his grandchildren on the inaugural ride of the Veterans Memorial Railroad. They wound through the woods and went through the tunnel. And though the train chugged along at only 5 mph, you may color everyone - including Grandpa - delighted. They can't wait to ride again.

"It's not Disney World, and that's part of why it's great," said Brown, the retired secretary of the Florida Senate. "But the great part is it's going to draw a lot of kids and families. And that's great for Liberty County."

The Veterans Memorial Railroad is an amusement-park-style miniature locomotive and three cars that recently opened for service in Bristol, the county seat of Liberty County, which is 50 miles west of Tallahassee. The railroad is the work of a group of community volunteers and an integral part of the new Veterans Memorial Park in Bristol.

The park itself is a still-building example of rebirth in Liberty County, a rural county that has struggled with the decline of its once-dominant timber industry. Working with grants from federal, state and industry sources, county officials got the financing to build the county's first park. Ultimately, the park will include a Civic Center, a softball-baseball complex, the railroad and a replica railroad station/museum of local transportation history.

The 40-acre park is located on State Road 12, a half-mile south of State Road 20. The 20,000-square-foot Civic Center opened in November and can hold up to 800 people in its auditorium. Two of the ballfields are completed; lights are up for two more.

"Something like this has been long needed in Liberty County," said longtime Liberty County Commissioner L.B. Arnold. "With wood products in a slump, the county has been hurt. But with this park, everybody's been in really good spirit."

The railroad is a big contributor to that optimism.

The train consists of a 1950s-era amusement park locomotive, which tows three cars that were once roller coaster cars and still have their original metal trim.

The 2-foot-wide train tracks wind 3,300 feet through a pine forest and pass through an 80-foot tunnel - built out of ship cargo containers that also serve as the nighttime warehouse for the train.

"It's just like going through a real railroad tunnel," Brown said.

The tracks eventually will be extended an additional 1,800 feet, allowing them to encircle the entire park. The train will traverse a bridge over a small wetland and stop at a replica railroad depot, which will become the transportation museum.

### **Brainstorm of railroad buff**

The railroad was the brainstorm of Tom Keenan, a retired Air Force pilot who bought the train from a St. Augustine collector and proposed the idea of a public attraction to the County Commission. A railroad buff who already owned a portable train that runs on 7½-inch tracks, Keenan invested two years and \$15,000 in restoring the train and building the railroad.

Keenan got lots of help from a 20-member group of residents who formed the nonprofit Veterans Memorial Railroad Association. The group, particularly local craftsman Gerald Barber, helped Keenan with the restoration and continues to raise money for the railroad.

The county donated several truckloads of dirt. A local contractor kicked in \$11,000 worth of gravel. The Liberty County sheriff contributed jail inmates, who spent the past four months helping Keenan build the railroad. Numerous local residents have contributed \$3 to sponsor a railroad tie.

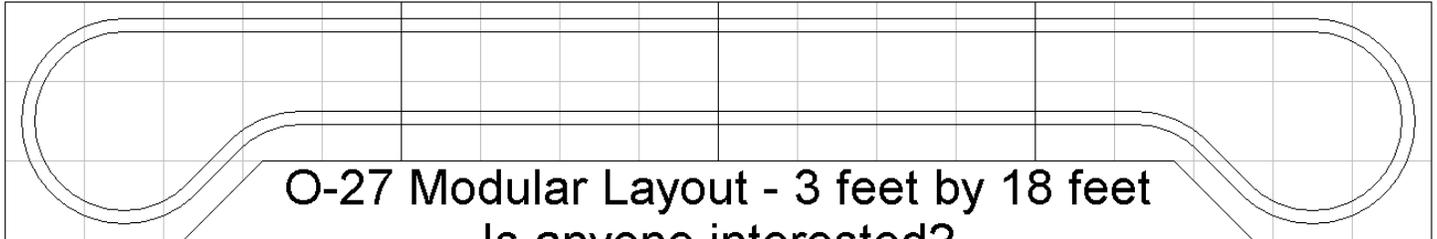
Group members are drawing up plans for a 40-foot-by-60-foot replica of an old Florida railroad station/museum. They are collecting old photos and memorabilia from the railroad and steamboat history of Liberty County, which is separated from Calhoun County by the Apalachicola River, which was once crossed only by boat.

"These are things our children don't know about," said Keenan's wife, Gloria Keenan. "This is all about education, cultural enhancement and giving kids something to do."

And in a county whose chief diversions are hunting and fishing, a whistle-blowing railroad may be just the ticket. The railroad will be available for birthday parties, and the rides are free.

"Kids in this area have nothing, so by golly they're going to ride for free," said Babs Moran, historian and member of the Veterans Memorial Railroad Association. "And how often do you get something for nothing?"

**A Follow Up – submitted by Jeremy Shaw:** Tom Keenan, who was featured in the Tallahassee Democrat about the ride on a train located in Bristol, contacted me. Tom was excited to hear that interest was moving about in our club. He said the track is a 2700 ft dog bone. The train is run on the 2nd and 4th Saturday's each month. Tom said he could really use help running the train so he could take a break from time to time. Also Tom mentioned workday's to lay track and do other maintenance. The prisoners had been doing this kind of work, but there isn't enough stuff for a whole crew to do. Tom hoped to schedule the 1st and 3rd Saturday's as maintenance days, though it would probably end up being one of those days. If you would like to call him he can be reached at 850 643-5235. If you don't reach him you can call Babs at 850 643-5491. This sounds like something we all can enjoy in some way or another.



**Life as a “travelling salesman” - submitted by Bob Loehne** - Howdy Editors, Contributors and those who keep me on the straight & narrow ...

Well, my trip of January 9th has extended itself and as of today (January 29th) I have not been back home to dear old “Way South Georgia” since my departure. I am in Northern Virginia today (near DC), will drive to Walton, KY (just south of Cincy) tomorrow, will do a GATS in Columbus, OH this weekend, will return to Manassas next Tuesday, will do a Greenberg Train Show in Upper Marlboro, MD that weekend and will (oh sure!) finally return home about Feb 11th or 12th.

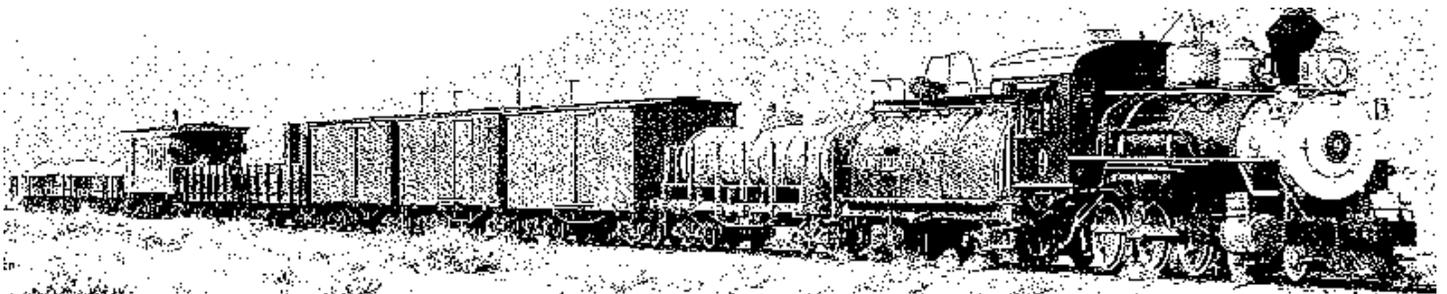
My parents just moved (after years of prying by their kids) to a retirement village, and, while that has gone well, there's a house with 46 years of collections, memories, trash and unidentifiable STUFF. Today and next week, that house IS my job. My brother and sister live in the area and wonderfully have been handling the lion's share of the work and ... so ... since I was in the neighborhood, well, I should do some old housework, too. Seems fair.

Likewise, I thought, since my Honda is FUUULLLLLL of railroad videos and DVDs, well heck, I might as well do some train shows on the weekends... VOILA! So, last weekend I did a smashing Great Scale Timonium, MD show and previously had a fine Louisville show "as originally planned." Business is good ... Family ties are in great shape ... and, on the other side of things, well, I miss Harriett. For sure ... I won't be getting home any too soon.

Anyway ... the second part of the Steam Update is on my Thomasville, GA computer and, thus, will not be heading your way for your February issues or corrections. Right now, it looks as though I'll have it for you near the end of February ... Let's call it a March supplement. Life is good ... closely followed by Skippy Crunchy Peanut Butter! Later ... Bob

**Spring 2003 “Whistle Stop” Layout Tour:** The 2003 Spring “Whistle Stop” Layout Tour is still in the planning stages. Bob Woodard has joined Jim Faris. We now have two “Whistle Stops”. If anyone is interested in hosting a “Stop”, please contact John Sullenberger at (w) 410-8425 or (h) 562-5137.

**Narrow Gauge Railroading – a survey:** Is anyone interested in narrow gauge, either model or prototype? If so, Drew Hackmeyer would like to hear from you. He can be contacted by phone at (850) 942-2536 or e-mail at drgw492@att.net.



# [www27.brinkster.com/bbmra](http://www27.brinkster.com/bbmra)

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