



# THE Lantern

May 2008

Volume 13 Number 5

Meeting Entrance

## May 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting: at the OLD Tallahassee Antique Car Museum

The OLD Tallahassee Antique Car Museum is located on Mahan Drive just east of the intersection of Capital Circle and Mahan Drive. The meeting will begin with a catered dinner at 6:45 and continue with a regular meeting at 7:30.

**Menu: grilled chicken, veggies, salad, bread, a drink and desert, all for \$6.50 per person.**

We need as good a body count as possible, so please RSVP to me (John Sullenberger) by Monday, March 14<sup>th</sup>: I can be reached by telephone at (850) 562-5137 (h) or (850) 544-1870 (c) or via e-mail at [sullyjws@aol.com](mailto:sullyjws@aol.com).

**HO Division Meeting: Sam has requested an HO Division meeting at 7 pm on Tuesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>.**

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## June 21<sup>st</sup> Tallahassee Model RR Show & Sale

Hours are from 10 am to 5 pm. Members need to show up and support their divisions.

### Set-Up

**Friday:** set-up begins at 1 pm and runs to 5 pm.

**Saturday** set-up is scheduled from 7 am to around 10 am. I will be opening the fairgrounds and building #4 by 7 am. Members are welcome to come in and either complete their set-ups or to "Run Trains".

### Saturday Tear-Down

Will commence at 5 pm and continue until the last vendor is out of the building.

### Sign-In Book

There will be a sign-in book at the entrance table. I would like all members who work the show, either Friday or Saturday, to sign the book.

### Extension Cords

We will need extension cords. Using the masking tape and a magic marker found in our building (I will provide both) please put your name on your cord. This will help during tear down making sure the cord goes to the proper home.

## Work Sessions at the NEW Antique Car Museum:

**HO:** Saturday's at 10 am; weekdays if you can, contact Sam Miller (385-7733), Bill Thompson (385-6581) or Roy Mantooth (422-3038) for assignments.

**N Scale:** Saturday's at 10 am.

## TALLAHASSEE MODEL RAILROAD SHOW & SALE

Saturday, June 21st, 2008 -- North Florida Fairgrounds, Building #4 -- 10 am to 5 pm

Admission: Adults & children 13 and older: \$5 -- Children 12 and younger are Free -- Free Parking



# Minutes of April 2008 BBMRA Membership Meeting

Thirty-five (35) members of the BBMRA met in the Banquet Room of the old Antique Car Museum. The HO Division and N Division held meetings to discuss the progress on the layouts at the New Antique Car Museum and what needed to be done next.

President Barrett Johnson announced the gentleman who was going to present a program called him at 4:30 pm. He informed Barrett something came up and he would not be able to meet with BBMRA. Barrett then announced there would not be a meeting.

Jim McGill and John Edrington provided a DVD regarding replacing turnouts and the Children's Medical Foundation of Texas' layout. The two story layout runs 9 to 10 hours each day and is believed to be very therapeutic. Thank you guys.

John Sullenberger brought in and passed out the new badges he created for members. Thank you John.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be at **7:30p.m., Tuesday, May 20, 2008, in the Banquet Room** at the **Old Antique Car Museum**. Dinner will be catered for \$6.50 at 6:30p.m. Please contact John Sullenberger if you plan to eat dinner so he or Barrett can give the caterer a headcount.

Respectfully submitted, Lyn Heath, Secretary



## Passenger Cars Prepared For New Name Part 2 in a Series by Larry Benson

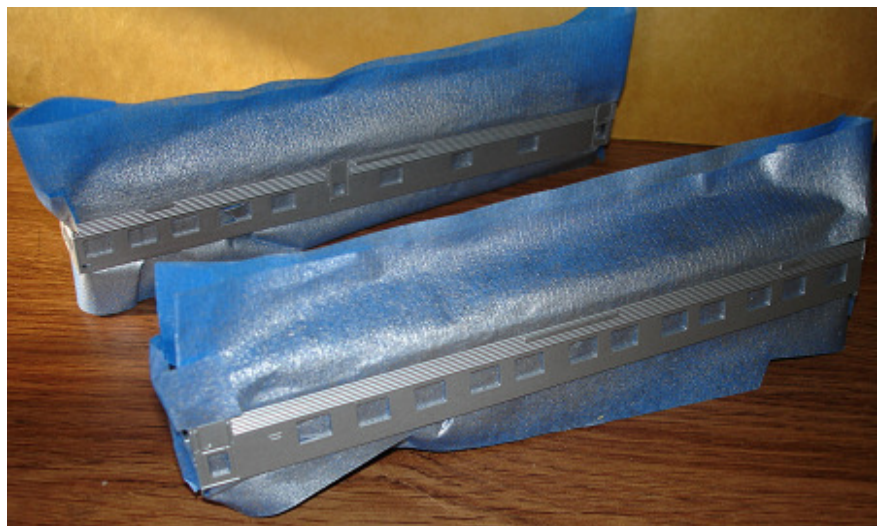
In part one of this series, I told about my plans to rename several passenger cars I had bought for a song in 1973 from Santa Fe to Rock Island. The steps I took to prepare the cars for their new names follow:

First, I had to take off the old Santa Fe decals on each side of the cars. I did this by using a pencil eraser and gently going over the decals again and again until the lettering was removed. Regrettably, I rubbed a little too deep on the first couple of cars allowing the underlying color of the plastic to show through. That meant I'd have to repaint them.

Before I could apply new paint, I had to strip the interior of each car. After taking off the tops, I carefully removed the sets of clear plastic windows from inside the shells. Then, I lifted out the seats by pulling gently upwards in the middle which released the ends so they could be taken out. The empty carcasses appear in the top photo.

The interiors were masked so the sides opposite the windows would be protected from the paint. The photo nearby shows how the exteriors were also covered so the original black color of the undercarriage, wheel sets and couplers would be kept clear of aluminum overspray.

I hope to have the cars completed in time for the next issue of The Lantern.



## **Amtrak Day is May 1<sup>st</sup>** submitted by R. M. Lombardo, Large Scale Crew Chief

In 1970, when President Richard M. Nixon created "Railpax" to operate many of the passenger lines in the United States that the railroads found unprofitable, little did he know it would still be around 37 years later.

The name "Railpax" didn't stay around for long and when operations were finally commenced, on May 1, 1971, it was changed to Amtrak (Also known as National Railroad Passenger Corporation) however, that name is seldom used now. Those railroads that participated donated all their passenger equipment to form the bulk of Amtrak's roster and became known as "Amtrak's Rainbow Era" because of the many varieties of locomotives & coaches acquired.

Some might believe that Amtrak took over all the passenger services; however that statement wasn't true until Amtrak was at least a decade old. Southern Railway (SR) still had "The Crescent" & Denver, Rio Grande & Western (DRG&W) stuck with their "Zephyr". The end result was Amtrak finally taking over services. It is interesting to note that DRG&W was the last private railroad to run regularly scheduled passenger service in the United States.

Amtrak has continued to survive through seven United States Presidents (Nixon, Ford, Carter, Regan, Bush (41st), Clinton & our current President, George W. Bush.

Threatened slow downs, strikes, cutbacks, lack of sufficient Federal funding (a proposal to fund Amtrak with some of the money from the Gas Tax or Given to Highways and Interstates has been debated many times in congress), still continue to hinder performance. In my opinion, Amtrak best days were when Ronald Wilson Regan was President.

Amtrak Models are available in the following scales: N, HO, O & G. If I left out a scale, please let me know & don't forget to browse at our annual train show Saturday, June 21st.

Currently, Tallahassee doesn't have Amtrak service. Please let Congressman Allen Boyd, Jr., Senators, Bill Nelson & Mel Martinez & Amtrak President Alex Kummant (his address: 60 Massachusetts Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20002), how you feel about loosing "The Sunset Limited".

## **Old Railroads of Tallahassee - Part 2** submitted by Bill Bell **The Sumatra Leaf Route: The Georgia, Florida Alabama Railway Company**

CSX's Bainbridge, Georgia to Tallahassee, Fla. mainline was once two struggling short line railroads that were founded to harvest the rich yellow pine forest in southwest Georgia and northern Florida. In 1883, the Florida Legislature granted the Thomasville, Tallahassee & Gulf Railroad a charter. The railroad was to run north from Carrabelle to Thomasville, Georgia, via Tallahassee. But the railroad was only able to build 11-1/2 miles from Carrabelle, to where it met its first obstacle, the Sopchoppy River. At this point the railroad did own one locomotive, which was used for construction, but no regular trains were operated. Unable to secure funding for a large bridge the railroad did what most poor railroads did, it changed its name and obtained a new state charter.

In 1889 it was known as the Augusta, Tallahassee & Gulf, and they quietly took over the old railroad. But this company also floundered until William Clark of the Clark Thread Company purchased 175,000 acres of pine lands near the railroad. Clark needed the pine for thread spools and he needed a railroad to transport the pine. He purchased the Augusta Tallahassee & Gulf in 1891 and reorganized it as the Carrabelle, Tallahassee & Georgia RR on January 5th. Clark then hired the contractor who had just built the famous Brooklyn Bridge and sent him south to build the less famous Sopchoppy Bridge. They brought along two feisty 0-4-0's for construction which stayed with the railroad. The CT&G quickly purchased the old AT&G in 1892 and began construction of the bridge and they pushed north to Tallahassee, reaching the city by October of 1893. For a reward the CT&G received a state land grant of 206,370 acres, though they were promised 600,000 acres. In Tallahassee the CT&G connected with the Florida Central & Peninsular, which ran east and west, connecting the railroad with Jacksonville and Chattahoochee.





In 1895, a Savannah lumberman, John P. Williams, needed a railroad to be built through his pine lands south of Bainbridge, Ga. He quickly incorporated the Georgia Pine Railway on September 13, 1895. The railroad slowly built south from Bainbridge, reaching 40 miles to Arlington, Georgia in 1897. The first section of tracks opened between Bainbridge and Damascus in 1898. Seeing an opportunity to reach Tallahassee and its Jacksonville connection he proceeded to build 41 miles further south, to the Florida capital in 1902. At the same time he built north 25 miles to Cuthbert, Ga.

Then something wonderful happened to the Georgia Pine Railway., instead of a logging and naval stores hauling short line, "bridge traffic" started creeping into the mix. Being a north and south railroad in a section of Georgia that was all east and west railroads, "bridge traffic" began forming at all its connections as short cuts to Alabama, Southwest Georgia and points in Florida. Williams realized his good luck in 1901 and reincorporated the railroad as the Georgia Florida and Alabama Railway, a name more reflective of his regional traffic. In 1904 he leased the struggling CT&G, buying it outright in 1906. Williams also realized that if he reached the Seaboard mainline at Richland, Georgia, he could secure a "bridge" route between two Seaboard mainlines. He began an extension to Richland, finishing up in 1910. The last bit of construction was a short branch from Havana to Quincy, Fla., an important tobacco farming and fullers earth mining town.

The new GF&A stretched 192 miles from Carrabelle, Fla. to Richland, Georgia, forming an important "bridge" route between Richland and Tallahassee. Richland was on Seaboard's Montgomery to Savannah route and Tallahassee was on the Chattahoochee to Jacksonville route. Other important junctions were with the Atlantic Coast Line at Bainbridge and the Central of Georgia at Arlington and Cuthbert. Traffic included yellow pine and cypress timber harvested along the entire mainline. Some important lumber mills were the Babcock Lumber Co., Flint River Lumber Co. and Camp Brothers Lumber Co. Tobacco was the principal crop along the route, and gave it the nickname Sumatra Leaf Route. Fullers Earth was mined near Quincy, Florida and provided many carloads for the local trains plying the branch.

Steamship service was offered by the old CT&G and the new GF&A from Carrabelle to Apalachicola. The railroad owned the side-wheeler "Crescent City" and the tug "Iola," which was used for freight barges.

With the sudden increase in traffic after the 1906 merger the railroad had to counter with an increase in size of the motive power. Where once 4-4-0's and 4-6-0's respectively handled the passenger and freight business, the railroad began buying 2-8-0s in 1906 for the longer freight trains. By the end of World War One, the railroad's motive power was aging and could not keep up with the demands that were needed in the post war world. First they purchased two Russian Decapods in 1923. These two engines soon showed that the bigger engines would reduce the operating costs of the railroad so that they added six more by 1927.

In 1927 the railroad was up for sale, due to the death of Mrs. Williams, who had inherited the railroad from her husband a few years before. A charity trust fund was set up for a hospital and the railroad had to be sold to fulfill the will. The Seaboard stepped in and received approval from the ICC to refinance and reorganize the GF&A and to lease it to the Seaboard for 99 years. The bonds and a special non-voting stock issue as well as the lease payments were promised to the Hospital Charity Trust Fund, which also received the semiannual interest payments and stock dividends. The Seaboard received the actual voting stock and gained control of the railroad, merging it into the Seaboard in 1928. The Carrabelle to Tallahassee line was abandoned in 1948, after serving a prominent role during World War Two as an important military line, serving the amphibious base near Carrabelle. The Havana to Quincy branch was abandoned soon after the merger because Quincy was already served by the Seaboard. The railroad north of Bainbridge is now operated by the Georgia Southwestern RR, while the Bainbridge to Tallahassee line is still operated by CSX with an important connection with the old ACL line to Dothan and Montgomery.

More information on the GF&A, along with photographs of some of its locomotives, can be found online at [Taplines.net](http://Taplines.net).

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