



THE Lantern

January 2013

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The January program: Clark Turner – Good Rail Service

Clark Turner's presentation will be a participatory dialog on the subject of "good rail service." After reviewing the points he made in his column he will then let the Q's & A's lead the way.

Clark Turner: Good rail service has its place

It's an essential part of a transportation system

Published by permission from Clark Turner and the Tallahassee Democrat.

There was a rally in June at the Amtrak station in Tallahassee, to urge restoration of Sunset Limited service.

The Sunset Limited once ran from Jacksonville to Los Angeles. In 2005, Hurricane Katrina washed out part of the track bed between here and New Orleans, disrupting the service. Not long afterward, the bed was restored, but the Sunset Limited was not. It now runs from New Orleans to Los Angeles.

Why does Tallahassee need Amtrak rail service, you might ask.

Would it stimulate local business? Not by any measurable degree.

Would it call favorable attention to Tallahassee? No, except among rail fans.

Would it help with traffic congestion here? No, it most certainly would not.

Would it add one more train whistle to our otherwise tranquil city? Yes.

Would it add a transportation option to the automobile, air and Greyhound? Yes, a welcome one.

Would anyone use that option? Yes, but probably not enough to make a significant dent in the others.

So why should we care?

In the larger scheme of things, it's essential not only to restore the Sunset Limited, but also to vastly improve and expand rail transportation here and in the rest of the country.

Again, you might say: Why? I'm glad you asked.

*** Next Meeting ***

January 15th

at the

**'old' Tallahassee Antique
Car Museum**

The 'old' Tallahassee Antique Car Museum is located at 3550 Mahan Drive just east of the intersection of Capital Circle and Mahan Drive (across from the McDonalds in the Wal-Mart parking lot).

MRR101 discussion will begin at **7:00 pm.**

The meeting will begin at **7:30 pm.**

Larry Benson – 1929 - 2012

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of Larry Benson on December 6th, 2012 at the age of 82.

He was born in Oklahoma in 1929 and settled in Florida in 1960. He was a member of Trinity United Methodist Church, the Antique Car Club, the Big Bend Model Railroad Association, and the Tallahassee Stamp Club. He became a published author at the age of 80.

Larry was a good friend to all of us and he will be missed. Please keep his family in your thoughts and prayers.

John Sullenberger

I've spent more than 50 years as a transportation policy planner, working closely with elected officials on transportation issues. My experience has led me to some observations:

- Passenger travel divides generally into three types of trips: short (say, up to 50 miles); middle (50-500 miles), and long (more than 500 miles). In this country, short trips are most effectively done by automobile (or by rail in major metropolitan areas, such as the northeast U.S.), and long ones by air. Middle-distance is the problem — too long for car, and too short for air, and cost-ineffective and inconvenient for both.

- Industrialized nations world-over use passenger rail for middle-distance trips because, when done properly, it's cost-effective and convenient. The U.S. is virtually alone with its two-mode system.

In the U.S. as well as practically all other nations, all passenger transportation is heavily subsidized by government. Our federal and state governments subsidize highway and airline infrastructure as well as some of the operating costs. Without such subsidies, our systems would be either primitive or too costly for most people to afford.

- Absent a workable middle-distance rail option, both our government and the public pay much more — directly and indirectly — than we would if rail were available. Moreover, we sacrifice convenience and waste energy as well. It's a lose-lose-lose situation.

- Using cost-per-passenger-trip and other such data for passenger transportation can be misleading, depending on what variables are included and on the relationship between level-of-service and usage. Amtrak, for example, exhibits a high per-passenger cost. But all per-passenger transportation costs decrease dramatically as usage increases, through economy of scale. Amtrak has high fixed costs to spread over a small passenger volume. However, significant ridership increase can't be expected with the current Amtrak system because it runs at practically full capacity and its schedule and chronic lateness are such that only the most devoted rail traveler will use it. Plus, Amtrak must lease freight rails from private companies and is at their mercy with respect to priority of use and schedule.

In a word, Amtrak is a miserable excuse for a passenger rail system, but not through its own fault. It was crippled from the beginning by lack of foresight, inadequate funding and costly band-aid operations.

As our country continues to wrestle with the already high and increasing costs of all transportation, it's essential that we consider the role rail can play to help keep government and user costs as low as practicable, while increasing convenience and efficiency. Fundamental changes are necessary to make Amtrak a viable option. We need to recognize that the rest of the world already has demonstrated how this can be accomplished. We can as well, if we're willing.

I'm fully (and painfully) aware that the mere suggestion of increasing government spending in today's political climate is anathema to most elected officials. Our current representative in congress, Steve Southerland, is not very keen on my Amtrak idea. But wise and enlightened leadership — alas, largely lacking — can and should encourage progress, especially when such spending would result in long-term savings and increased convenience for the voters. Cost-effective and politically popular — a win-win situation.

If Sunset Limited service is restored to Tallahassee, it would be a visible presence that might, just might, make a difference in how our citizens view rail transportation. A wistful hope, perhaps, but one that could help nourish a new reality.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Clark Turner is a retired transportation policy planner and a life member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), the American Planning Association (APA) and, until retirement, the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). He lives in Tallahassee. Contact him at cpturner01@gmail.com.

Minutes of the November 2012 BBMRA Meeting

Meeting started at 7:44 PM.

Dinner will continue as long as interest is there.

Oct. 16th. minutes; accepted as is.

Treasurer report; we are in the black.

Visitor; Beth Edwards former large scale co-coordinator.

Division reports;

Small scale, Fall Farm Day at the children's museum was a success. It was moved this year from the Admin building to the Explorer exhibit building. The Administration building under renovation.

H.O.; No report.

Large scale; No report.

Switching; No report.

NMRA; Barrett Johnson reports the "Prototype Rail Meet" in Cocoa Beach, FL January 10-13th.

Good of the group;

Our 2013 Train Show to be held June 15th.

New Car Museum train room still closed, we can still work on the layouts. The weather being cooler should help with staying longer.

Sam Miller, open house Dec. 14th. In Woodgate area, 6:30 to 10+/-!

Feedback wanted on the news letter sent as a PDF.

Drew will hold a school on building modules at his workshop, if there is enough interest.

Thanks to Bob, Paul, and Eric for the layout tour, some made it to dinner too.

Meeting adjourned at 8:01 P.M.

The club program was presented by Andy Millot. How to build a layout 101. On screen display, books, magazines of many kinds, and narration by Andy opened many subjects to think about. Well done Andy.

Respectfully submitted by Doug Gyuricsko.

Flint River Model Railroad Show is January 19 & 20, 2013

The 22nd Annual Flint River Model Railroad Train Show & Sale will be held in Albany, GA on January 19th and 20th at the Knights of Columbus Hall located at 2009 Gillionville Rd. Hours for the 2-day show are 9 am to 5 pm on Saturday and 10 am to 4 pm on Sunday. Admission is \$6.00 for adults; children 12 and under are free with an adult.

Under our reciprocal agreement with the FRMRRC BBMRA members get in free. For more information, contact Jimmie Swann evenings at (229) 854-1193.

Children's Day Festival is January 26, 2013

This annual event includes entertainment, hands-on crafts, exhibits, storytelling, and much more for the whole family. There is a small fee for some crafts. The event runs from 11 am to 4 pm at the Museum of Florida History.

Model Railroading 101 – Step 2

HO and N T-Trak modules have been constructed and we are ready to proceed to Step 2: basic landscaping. Our "Professor's" thoughts are to utilize Scene-A-Rama Diorama kits made by Woodland Scenics. They come in Basic, Desert Oasis, Mountain and Water diorama kits and can be purchased for \$19.99 at either HobbyTown or Hobby Lobby. As each kit is self-contained the basics can be learned without having to buy a lot of landscaping materials that you might not need in the future.

Therefore, we would like all members who participated in our first session (plus anyone else who wants to jump in now) to meet at 7 pm on Tuesday, January 15th (prior to our monthly meeting) at the old Antique Car Museum to discuss Step 2.

Upcoming Events

January 5-6, 2013

42nd Florida Rail Fair

Volusia County Fairgrounds
DeLand, FL

January 12, 2013

44th Atlanta Model Train & Railroadiana Show

9 am to 4 pm, Admission Adults: \$7.00 (under 12 free)
Atlanta's oldest and largest model train and railroadiana show. Over 300 tables of model railroad items in all scales and gauges. Large operating layouts. Free parking.
North Atlanta Trade Center
1700 Jeurgens Court
Norcross, GA 30093

January 19th & 20th, 2013

20th Annual Model Train Show & Sale Flint River Model Railroad Club of Albany, Ga.

Sat. 9 am to 5 pm / Sun. 10 am to 4 pm
Admission: \$6.00, Under 12 free with an adult
Knights of Columbus Hall
2009 Gillionville Rd.
Albany, GA 31707

January 26 and 27, 2013

24th Annual MODEL RAILROAD AND TRAIN SHOW COASTAL RAIL BUFFS, INC.

Savannah's Model Railroad Club
WWW.COASTALRAILBUFFS.ORG
Saturday.....10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sunday.....10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
THE SPORTS CENTER AT
ARMSTRONG ATLANTIC STATE UNIVERSITY
11935 Abercorn street
Savannah, GA 31419

New Year's Resolutions....

I'm not one for making resolutions. I'm not one to make long range plans. But with the New Year comes an opportunity to reflect on where we've been and look toward the horizon to where we may want to go.

And begin our journey in that direction.

A half dozen of you built new T-Trak modules as part of our "Model Railroading 101" concept. We'll continue on over the next several months. Adding scenery. Building structures. If you're interested, it is not too late to join in. All the steps are small and catching up is pretty easy.

Your journey can only start by taking a step and then another. Get out of your armchair.

Build something.

Thank you

Drew Hackmeyer

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February 2, 2013

Regal Railways Knights of Columbus Hall

5850 K Of C Drive
Port Richey, FL 34668
Adults \$5.00 children under 12 free
EARLY BIRD \$6.00 9AM to 10AM
Hours 10-3
Vendors and Small Layout
Lunch will be for sale

February 9, 2013

23rd ANNUAL TRAIN SHOW AND SWAP MEET H. B. PLANT RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
John R. Trinkle Center
Plant City Campus
1206 North Park Road
Plant City, Florida 33563

February 16, 2013

35th Jacksonville Show

Prime Osborn Center
Jacksonville, Florida

February 23, 2013 day

Regal Railways Knights of Columbus Hall

2000 Neptune Road
Kissimmee, FL 34744
Adults \$5.00 children under 12 free
EARLY BIRD \$6.00 9AM to 10AM
Hours 10-3; Food for Sale