



THE Lantern

October 2015

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Celebrating Christmas & Other Holidays on a Model Train Layout

From Sam Miller

One of the highlights of my nearly 30 years in model railroading is always checking out holiday decorations and looking for carnival rides, buildings, LED trees and other lighted accessories, Christmas earrings and other items for my layouts. Some time ago, nothing was really available until Thanksgiving Weekend, but it is now earlier and earlier each year.

Lowe's, Michaels, Walmart and Hobby Lobby have Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas/December holidays displays up and running now. Last time I checked, The Home Depot had lots of Halloween and Thanksgiving items, but no Christmas, but that will change any time.

I focus on what is available at stores like these and not what is actually produced for the hobby. N, HO, O and G Gauge Christmas trees and other holiday items are available now from Walters, other modeling catalogs advertising and the Internet. It used to be they were hardly available. I still rely on Lowe's, Home Depot, Michaels and Walmart.

The most goodies are for the larger scales, O Gauge, especially, but plenty of items can be found which fit on HO and G Gauge layouts. N Scale appropriate is the toughest to find, but earrings and small Christmas Tree ornaments can serve as Christmas decorations in your N Scale layout town. Sometimes small children's stickers will work for N Scale.

More on page three

2015/16 BBMRA Officers

Last month, Andy Zimmerman was elected to his first full term as president of the Big Bend model Railroad Association. Also elected to new terms were Vice President Sheldon Harrison; Treasurer Drew Hackmeyer and Secretary Doug Gyuricsko. The N Scale, HO and Large Scale Divisions will be electing division coordinators who will round out the 2015-16 BBMRA Board. The current coordinators are Garth Eaton, N Scale; Art Wilson, HO; and Sam Miller, Large Scale.

No one needs reminding of our loss last year of long-time BBMRA President John Sullenberger and veteran Treasurer Sandy Scott. Andy, Sheldon, Drew and Doug stepped in following the deaths of John and Sandy and deserve the new, full terms which they were granted by consensus.

BBMRA Meetings

Third Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. "Old" Tallahassee Antique Car Museum, 3550 Mahan Drive.

October 20, 2015: Andy Millott: Story Telling on your Model Railroad.

November 17, 2015: TBA



Oct. 20 BBMRA Program: Storytelling for Your Model Railroad

Andy Millott will conduct a presentation on Storytelling for your Model Railroad. The presentation will be an extension to the operation of a railroad. Facets to be discussed will be as follows:

- Choosing a particular date
- Introducing notable people within the community featured in your layout.
- A detailed description of the area being modeled and how it intertwined with the people and operation of the layout.
- In short, the "sights and sounds" of the area being modeled.

This will be different type of presentation and it is based on principles taught in Bruce Metcalf's "Storytelling and Model Railroading" clinic during the 2013 NMRA convention in Atlanta, as well as in Fred Lagno's "Changes, A model railroad comes to life", which highlights his HO scale photography friendly Allegheny Central layout.

BBMRA Important Events for 2015!!

BBMRA Meetings: 3rd Tuesday of each month, 7:30 p.m., Old Antique Car Museum, 3550 Mahan Drive.

Lionel Interest Group Operating Sessions: Most Sunday afternoons, 1:30 p.m. – Sam Miller's, Woodgate. Call 850-459-3012.

October 20: BBMRA Meeting – Andy Millott, Storytelling on Your Model Railroad.

October 22-25: NMRA Sunshine Region 2015 Convention, Jacksonville.

October TBD: Farm Day, Tallahassee Museum of Natural History (Junior Museum),

October 31: Garage Sale – Model Trains, Toys, Hobbies. Sam Miller, Doug Gyuricsko and anyone else interested. Sam's house in Woodgate.

November 14: BBMRA Tour of Layouts.

November 17: BBMRA Meeting.

December 11: Sam Miller/Linda Medlin Holiday Reception, Woodgate. Call 850-459-3012.

December 19-20: 14th Tampa Model Train Show & Sale, Florida State Fairgrounds.

January 9-10, 2016: 54th Florida Rail Fair, Volusia County Fairgrounds, Deland.

January 16, 2016: Atlanta Model Train Show.

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Two Special Events This Fall – Layout Tour and Garage Sale

Two special events are planned for this fall – a Saturday Tour of Layouts November 14 and a model railroading and hobbies garage sale Saturday, October 31.

BBMRA Layout Open Houses: BBMRA President Andy Zimmerman announced the layout tour during the August 18 club meeting. The other Andy, Andy Millott, is coordinating this really fun event. This has been a regular BBMRA activity in the past, but not in recent years. Signed up so far are Ed Schroeder, HO; Art Wilson, for his HO setup and a Christmas village layout constructed by his wife; and Bill O'Rourke, O Gauge, HO and Garden Railroad. Contact Andy M. if you want your layout included.

The tour will begin at 10 a.m. and run until early or mid-afternoon, depending on the number of stops. The club will provide maps and allow about 30 minutes between each layout open house.

Model Railroad/Hobbies Garage Sale: October 31, 8 a.m. to 1. Model Trains, Toys, Hobbies. Sam Miller, Doug Gyuricsko and anyone else if you bring your own table. This will take place at Sam's house in Woodgate, 3008 Stillwood Court, Tallahassee, 32308. . We will promote this on Craig's list and the Tallahassee Democrat and with yard signs.

Model railroading items will be available in N Scale, HO, O Gauge and Garden Railroad sizes. There will be model kits, old toys, some newer stuff and, we are not sure what all else.

Let Sam or Doug know if you would participate as a vendor and customer.

Celebrating Christmas & Other Holidays on a Model Train Layout

From page one

I will bring in some samples of what is out there for the 2015 holiday season for the November BBMRA meeting and plenty will be on display on my layouts during the December 11 holiday reception which I am hosting along with my wife, Linda Medlin. But now is the time to buy when the selections are the best, so here is my annual status report on one of my favorite holiday activities.



Santa Ferris Wheel from Lowe's

Lowe's: There are holiday village items this season at both Lowe's stores in Tallahassee for the first time in several years. I used to have to drive across town to the west side Lowe's. The main animated ride for Lowe's holiday villages this year is a Santa Clause ferris wheel. There also are animated skating rinks in two sizes, a "Kids Visiting Santa Clause" building and other nice items. The people in the ferris wheel and some other pieces are dressed Victorian, but that has never bothered me.

92 or e-mailed to smiller@flains.org

Lowe's has an LED Christmas tree and transformer and probably some other lights as well. I am not sure I have seen their string of Christmas lights yet, which is a must if you can find them. String lights should be available at Michaels and Walmart.

Michaels: Michaels has both Halloween Village and Christmas Village displays now. They are in separate sides of the store. The Halloween items are in front as you come in the front door and the Christmas items are on the other side of the store near the checkout counters. A lot of the Halloween Village items are gone, but what is left will be marked down. It is worth checking and you should go to Michaels anyway because Michaels has only recently put out its Christmas/December Holidays displays and there is lots to see there.

The main animated Christmas ride this year at Michaels is the Santa Carousel. In the Halloween Village display, there is a monster bumper car ride, Bump in the Night and several haunted house like buildings which work on a carnival scene or Halloween layout.

The Christmas display has several attractive ceramic buildings and a bumper Christmas trolley, which is O gauge. I think it is battery operated. Michaels has a lot of different LED item and the transformers, which power three or four pieces, depending on the type.

Look at both displays carefully for lights, accessories like wood piles, benches, mailboxes, and birdhouses which may work on your layout.

Michaels has a lot of landscaping materials designed for their Christmas villages, but it can still be useful. It includes snow sheets, snow particles, foam bases, and plastic sheets of brick and stone, in large and small rolls.

Michaels has much more stuff overall of potential use to model railroaders than Lowe's or other stores, but as I have noted before, it is much more expensive. The village items are always on sale, but the discount is from a much higher price than is charged by other outlets. Occasionally, there is a Michaels coupon for 50 percent off regularly priced items or a designated percentage off of your entire purchase. These usually are only good for one or two days, so check the date.

Walmart: Walmart has both Halloween and Christmas items for sale. As with all of the outlets, some of the Halloween lights may be useful outside of Halloween season modeling.

Walmart's ceramic buildings generally are smaller than at Lowes or Michaels and other places and will work better on HO, if you are willing to use ceramic buildings. Walmart has a lot of trees which can be used on any layout, even N. They pretty much look like manufactured trees and not the real thing, but I have found plenty of use for them over the years.

The Home Depot: Home Depot's Christmas items come out about Halloween, much later than Lowe's, Michaels and Hobby Lobby. Home Depot has produced a Home Depot ceramic building which looks great on a layout depicting a modern town. As far as I know, it will be available this year. Home Depot also has small ferris wheels and merry-go-rounds and other items which are not duplicated at Lowe's and other stores.

Home Depot has special LED lights to replace candles in pumpkin jack-o-lanterns. You can use these for terrific effects on a model train layout, including a flickering fire.

Other Outlets: Focus on Christmas ornaments, earrings, necklaces, Christmas card holders and other smaller accessories at Hobby Lobby, Joann's Fabrics, CVS and Walgreen pharmacies. Check out Ace Hardware and Dollar Stores. Check out holiday decorations but also toys, especially trucks and tractors.

Christmas tree cords which have a dozen or more places to plug in lights and accessories are only available locally at this time of the year, as well as replacement light bulbs. The Christmas tree cords are invaluable. I have 15 to 20 of them as part of my Lionel layout.

All of the outlets I have discussed will mark down holiday items toward the end of the season. This used to be on Christmas Eve or a day or so earlier. Now, it begins a week to 10 days before Christmas. Lowe's and Home Depot probably will have little left by Christmas Eve.

Keep looking and you will be delighted at what you find and how you end up using it to fancy up your train layout for the holidays. You are out shopping anyway. It really adds to my holiday spirit and fun.

BBMRA Meeting Minutes for August 18, 2015

The BBMRA meeting minutes for September 15, 2015.

President Andy Zimmerman called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.

Minutes of August. 18, 2015 were accepted as is.

Treasurer Report: Drew Hackmeyer reported we are in the "Green". Report accepted as is.

Large Sale: Sam Miller announced a garage sale. Tentative schedule is for October 31, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. On sale will be trains, planes, cars, toys. Contact Sam or Doug G. to visit, or set up a table at Sam's. Advertising will be done in advance.

Thomas: no report.

HO. Scale: Art Wilson stated no report.

Small scale: Garth Easton stated no report.

Switching: Joe Haley stated no report.

Good of the Group: President Andy Zimmerman announced a new education coordinator. Mathew's Mom, Ms. Blair, handed out a rough draft of an introduction sheet to the BBMRA. Ms. Blair is asking for input. We have had a need for a RR person in this position, and it is starting out well.

Andy Millott reported the layout tour is to be to be November 14, 2015. Anyone needing more information should contact Andy Millott.

David Brazell said he had video tapes related to trains, on the table, for the taking.

Dan King said the Dothan train show is this weekend, for two days; we are invited and as a reciprocal club we get in free!

Marc Beshara reported his store (Hobby Monstrosity) is closing this weekend; there will be 40 to 65% off many items.

President Andy Zimmerman told us "Porky", Clyde Bacon is recovering; and will miss the Dothan show this year. Porky and his wife Aven have been members for a long time. Although living in the Villages, they travel all over to shows, and attend some of our meetings.

Elections: Andy Zimmerman turned the meeting to the election committee leader David Brazell. David read the list of officers as they are; President, Andy Zimmerman; vice president, Sheldon Harrison; Treasurer, Drew Hackmeyer; Secretary , Doug Gyuricsko.

No other members jumped in, or were nominated to compete for the positions at this time. Dan King made a motion to unanimously elect the current officers. No objections were heard. All officers were elected to serve one more year.

Division leaders to be elected at the next meeting, Oct 20, 2015.

All Aboard Florida: Our guest speaker was Rusty Roberts, vice president for government affairs of the privately owned passenger rail line "All Aboard Florida," which is a subsidiary of Florida East Coast Railroad. Rusty is a professional in presentations and used humor, visual comics, and expert diagrams to enlighten us about the plans for a modern passenger rail line in Florida. He had quite a question and answer period at many times during the presentation, and had a vast knowledge of the project. He drove up to Tallahassee from Orlando to help us understand how it can work. Of course there will be bugs to work out, like any huge innovative plan. Thank you, Rusty Roberts.

I counted 39 members present.

Respectfully submitted by Doug Gyuricsko