



THE Lantern

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Upcoming BBMRA Set-Ups, Woodgate Sunday, then Old Capitol & Museum of Florida History Downtown

Next on the BBMRA schedule of local setups is November 18, a Sunday, the Woodgate Lionel Open House, 1:30 to 4 p.m. at Sam Miller and Linda Medlin's home, 3008 Stillwood Court, Woodgate in Tallahassee. Sam and Linda have welcomed their Woodgate neighbors to view the big Lionel layout around the winter holidays for years and the Sunday before Thanksgiving is now on the Woodgate Calendar of Activities.

The Lionel Sunday Group Therapy folks will be helping run the Lionel layout. Joe Haley will operate the HO Time Saver and Ron Fletcher will be helping Sam operate a Garden Railroad loop. Set-up at Sam's house begins at 12:30 p.m. Sunday.

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BMRA Meetings at Capital City Christian Church Begin November 20

November 20, this Tuesday, will be the first BBMRA meeting at Capital City Christian Church. Capital City Christian Church is located at 6115 Mahan Drive, next door to the Florida A&M University Viticulture Center (formerly Lafayette Vineyards). It is on the south side of Mahan Drive, a little east of the Leon County Public Library Branch on Pedrick Road.

BBMRA member Don Meeks is an elder at the church and helped us secure our new meeting place. The program for November is running trains and members are expected to bring their T-Traks.

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*** BBMRA Meetings ***

November 20, 2018, 7:30 p.m.: "Third Tuesday" BBMRA Meeting. **NEW LOCATION:** Capital City Christian Church, 6115 Mahan Drive, near the Florida A&M agricultural facility and a little east of the Old Antique Car Museum. Program is running trains, so bring T-Traks.

December 14, 2018, 6:30 p.m.: BBMRA Holiday Reception, Sam Miller & Linda Medlin, Woodgate. Call 459-3012 for additional information.

Upcoming BBMRA Set-Ups

From Page One

The Large-Scale Division and Joe Haley with the Time Saver also will set up at the Old Capitol in the downtown Capitol Complex, Saturday, December 15. The Large Scalars will be running the Disney II layout decorated for Christmas and with a special guest – the Climbing Santa Claus.

Here is a note from Erin O'Connor, education coordinator at the Historic Capitol Museum.

“We are partnering with WFSU for a children’s event and wonder if you would like to come and bring in your trains? The event will be on December 15 from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. We will be debuting the holiday special of PBS Kids’ new show Let’s Go Luna. The show is centered around the moon, Luna, and her three friends as they travel the world with their parents’ traveling performance troupe. The holiday special will be about the different gift-giver traditions around the world.”

BBMRA will continue its years-old participation in the 35th Annual Children’s Day January 26 at the Museum of Florida History, also downtown. Plans right now are for Disney II, the Thomas layout, the Time Saver and the HO T-Trak layout.

Christmas & Model Trains – Birds of a Feather!!



**Expanded Christmas scene on Sam Miller & Linda Medlin’s Lionel layout.
See it during their Holiday Reception Friday, December 14.**

Running Trains as the Wolves Howled

From Phil Weston, BBMRA HO Division Director

We had a great day at the Tallahassee Museum’s Fall Farm Day event on Saturday November 3, 2018. We started the day setting up in the dark and listening to the Museum’s wolves howl and awaiting the arrival of the swarms of children.

Thanks to HO Division participants Art Wilson, Paul Schneider, Sheldon Harrison, Don Meeks, Dave Brazell, Joe Haley and Phil Weston who provided their HO T-Trak modules, set up, operated, supported and took apart the layout. Bob Feuerstein contributed by taking pictures to document the event.

Joe Haley, the Yardmaster, was in command of the Timesaver switching yard layout and Randy Lombardo was at the helm of Thomas the Tank layout.

All three layouts received enthusiastic attention from the many children and adult attendees. It was rewarding to see lots of future train operators going "hands on" with Randy and Joe's layouts.

Early Winter Busy Time for Area Train Shows

TCA Southern Division Toy Train/ Christmas Show: November 17, 2018, Saturday: Jacksonville, Morocco Shrine Auditorium, 3800 St. Johns Bluff Road, Jax, 32224. Open to the public from 10a-3p. Open to TCA members beginning at 9a.

Winter MRC Train Show, Pensacola: December 1-2, 2018, Winter MRC Train Show, Pensacola, Hadji Shrine Temple, 800 North Nine Mile Road, Pensacola, FL 32534-1858, 9 to 5, Saturday, 10 to 4 Sunday, Central Time. Admission \$6 for adults.

Winter Tampa Model Show: December 15-16, 2018, Saturday and Sunday: Winter Tampa Model Show, Saturday & Sunday, Florida State Fairgrounds, Tampa, FL.

RadioShack Staying Alive in Hobbytown USA; Fouraker Electronics a Dandy Find

RadioShack is no more as a standalone store and the closing of the final shops in Tallahassee last year left us searching for another outlet for the special electronic parts needed for various and especially innovated model railroading projects. Sam Miller and Doug Gyuricsko have been roaming around and found two new stores to try. One is Hobbytown USA, in the strip mall on Thomasville Road, near Joann's Fabrics and Beef O'Bradys.

Doug noticed that Hobbytown now offers a lot of items from the old RadioShack stores in a special section; which was, in fact, announced nationally by RadioShack in June.

The other is Fouraker Electronics, 572 Appleyard Drive, just south of Tallahassee Community College. BBMRA member Sal Martocci recommended Fourakers and it has turned out to be a dandy find.

RadioShack reported this summer it would be once again be selling its branded electronics, opening locations across the U.S. after filing for bankruptcy twice in just over two years, according to the International Business Times Internet site. "The consumer electronics retailer announced its partnership with HobbyTown, a toy and hobby retailer, which will bring RadioShack's branded merchandise to 60 HobbyTown franchise locations across the U.S. The new stores, dubbed 'RadioShack Express,' will operate with a 'store-within-a-store' concept eventually reaching over 100 of HobbyTown's locally-owned businesses."

Fouraker Electronics is a family owned and operated business. It was started by Ichabod Fouraker Jr. in 1976 in Valdosta and is now operated by three of his sons. The stores are in Valdosta and Macon in Georgia, and Tallahassee. The Tallahassee store is run by crusty Ichabod Fouraker III.



Here are notes from Doug Gyuricsko:

My first impression about Hobbytown is they have a variety of basic electronic parts with a few specialty electronics; all together in a special part of the store. Along with their own electronics for radio control planes, and cars you may find some good things for unusual projects. I doubt the counter help can be of much assistance, though some may be at times?

Fouraker has a huge variety of electronics that seemed to me to be more than RadioShack had in the last few years. RadioShack's focus on selling Phones, toys, audio and TV accessories took up most of their space.

Fouraker is definitely a place to check out and keep in mind. Some prices in a brick and mortar store will be higher than eBay-like sites. However, for me, it is important that I can hold the item I think I want in my hand and see it better than in a photo most times. And Fouraker is right here, so we're supporting a local business.

I know I'd have to go there for many days to see all they have. I'm sure Mr. Ichabod Fouraker III can help right on the spot also. Sam and I asked if he had certain parts and he would know off the top of his head. How could he do that, Sam asked. "Because I have been working here every day for 40 years," Mr. Fouraker replied.

Fouraker can do some repairs that are not too complicated, but we did not go into every kind of repair. He remembered a former Lionel modeler, part of the late Sim Dekle's group, as a regular and noted that many other model railroaders have been his customers over the years.

This is a must visit when you are near the TCC area.

From their Internet site: Fouraker Electronics provides quality voice, data, security and electronics products to a variety of markets, including government, industrial, hospital, educational, commercial and retail customers. Knowledgeable and responsive employees."

Hurricane Michael's Damage Cancels Critical Fundraising Events at Veterans

The Calhoun-Liberty Journal, November 7, 2018

Among the many homes damaged in Liberty County was one iconic residence: the little white dog house with the red roof occupied by everyone's favorite cartoon character Snoopy.

The structure was one of many flattened when Hurricane Michael raged through Liberty County October 10 and demolished buildings and props at Veterans Memorial Railroad, located behind the Civic Center in Bristol.

"We were pretty much devastated," said volunteer Melissa Durham, who was among those who rushed to the park two days before the storm to try to store as much as possible in U-Haul trailers. That property survived the storm; nothing much else did, she said.

One bright spot? The trains themselves were not damaged, but falling trees left sections of the rails badly warped.

For years, volunteers have been building and adding on to the collection of props that create displays for the evening train rides around Halloween and Christmas. Many of those are now gone.

"We lost quite a few," she said, explaining that a tree went through the back of the large brown building where most of the props were stored. "Our spider tunnel collapsed, our reindeer stalls were smashed to the ground. Our spaceship is as flat as a pancake," she said.

The depot was also hit. "It has quite a bit of damage under the edge. The covering was pulled off the caves and the roof is exposed," she said.

The group that oversees the little railroad has yet come together to access the damage. Most have their own homes to see about, including Durham, who fortunately was next door when a roof came through their roof on Durham Road. Her husband, Gordon, saw the big tree slam into their house during the last 30 minutes of the heaviest part of the storm, she said.

Even if volunteers were able to come back to the railroad, there was too much to be done to continue with the Halloween train rides this year. They won't be having their Christmas rides either.

"We always start the day after Halloween setting up the Christmas scenes," she said. "There is no way we could get it done in time this year even if we wanted to."

"There are many trees to be removed, buildings to be repaired and props to be rebuilt...while the railroad's volunteers are trying to get their own homes repaired and their yards cleared," she said.

But they're losing more than a few days of holiday rides; shutting down means they are losing a lot of money that is needed to operate and maintain the railroad. "We could have raised nearly \$100,000 this year," she said. "We had nearly sold out on line all of the tickets for Halloween. Last year, the Halloween rides raised between \$24,000 and \$25,000. It could have been \$30,000 this year."

The Christmas Train rides are also profitable, bringing in even more.

"Eighty percent of our patrons are from out of town," she notes. "We bring a lot of people in here. Folks don't really know how much this will affect the community, including the sale of gas and food."

The money they had anticipated raising this year was already earmarked for maintenance and improvements.

Now, she said, they are going to have to find a way to raise funds. She acknowledges that money probably won't come locally, but she hopes repeat customers from outside the area will be willing to help. Train enthusiasts come from all over, she said, commenting that a lady from Mississippi always comes to ride the Ghost Train on Halloween. Many families come from surrounding counties and states. "It was putting Liberty County on the map," she said.

There is a lot to do, she said, but they are not giving up. "We've put too much into it," she said. She hopes that between insurance and fundraisers, they can put it all back together.

She knows the community will miss the holiday rides, which have become a family tradition for many. But right now, there is not much they can do. "Everyone has so many personal tragedies of their own right now," she said about the hurricane's impact on the community.

If you would like to get the railroad back on track, contact Gloria Keenan at (850) 643-6646 to find out what you can do. For more information about Veterans Memorial Railroad, visit: www.veteransmemorialrailroad.org



CSX Transportation Finds a Buyer for Florida Panhandle Route

November 12, 2018, Trains Magazine Internet Site

WASHINGTON — Shortline holding company RailUSA will acquire nearly 375 miles of CSX Transportation main line across the Florida Panhandle.

Last week RailUSA notified rail labor on the affected routes that it would be acquiring the lines from CSX, according to a Nov. 6 filing with the Surface Transportation Board.

The Florida Gulf & Atlantic Railroad will acquire 373 miles of CSX routes, including the Tallahassee Subdivision between Baldwin and Chattahoochee, Fla., the P&A Subdivision between Chattahoochee and Pensacola, Fla., and portions of the Bainbridge Subdivision between Tallahassee and Attapulcus, Ga.

No startup date was given, but people familiar with the matter say the railroad was likely to begin operations in mid-January.

Florida Gulf & Atlantic will hire 37 people in Tallahassee to run the railroad.

Rail labor was notified that the railroad will seek a superintendent, two trainmasters, nine conductors, nine engineers, one track inspector, one roadmaster, two brakemen, five maintenance-of-way crew members, one sales and marketing staff member, one controller, one accounting clerk, three bridge tenders, and one office manager.

The new railroad will roster up to 20 locomotives, mostly GP38s and GP40s, that will wear a red, white, and blue paint scheme, according to a person familiar with the matter.

The route once hosted Amtrak's Sunset Limited, which ran between Orlando and Los Angeles. It was cut back to a New Orleans-Los Angeles routing after Hurricane Katrina damaged Gulf Coast trackage east of New Orleans in 2005.



CSX's line sales in Florida are highlighted in yellow on the map.

The line, which carries a pair of through trains to perform local work, is maintained to Class 4 track standards with maximum speeds of 60 mph for freight trains. CSX has rerouted most through traffic off the Panhandle line to its parallel route via Waycross, Ga., and Montgomery, Ala.

Florida Gulf & Atlantic will be the second acquisition for RailUSA, a new company headed by Gary Marino, who founded shortline holding companies RailAmerica and Patriot Rail. RailUSA is a subsidiary of International Rail Partners. Both companies are based in Boca Raton, Fla.

RailUSA operates the Grenada Railroad, the 180-mile former Illinois Central Grenada Subdivision between Jackson, Miss., and Memphis. RailUSA acquired the operating rights on the route from Iowa Pacific Holdings in August.

The sale of the Jacksonville-Tallahassee route is CSX's largest to date since it began a line rationalization program under former CEO E. Hunter Harrison.

CSX has been reviewing up to 8,000 miles of lines as it looks to shed low-density and redundant routes that are no longer considered core parts of the network. Management does not expect that many miles of track to ultimately go on the block.

The Florida Panhandle route was put up for sale in January, along with 126.7 miles of lines in Illinois and Indiana that became the Watco-owned Decatur & Eastern Illinois Railroad in September.

In June, CSX put 650 miles of lines up for bid.

Separately, CSX sold 176 miles of lines in Alabama and Georgia to OmniTrax short lines in July. Those short lines were already leasing and operating the routes.

