



THE Lantern

November 2019

Volume 24 Number 11

Celebrating Christmas & Other Holidays on a Model Train Layout

From Sam Miller

One of the highlights of my nearly 35 years in model railroading is modeling my two layouts as real-life towns would decorate for Christmas. The fun for me begins as I check out various holiday store displays looking for carnival rides, buildings, LED trees and other lighted accessories, Christmas earrings, holiday stickers and other items. I look for HO or O Gauge, or items close enough. Look long enough and you should find something fitting for whatever layout you have constructed.

Some time ago, nothing was available until Thanksgiving Weekend, but it is now earlier and earlier each year; I first saw holiday displays this year in early October. Michael's, Esposito's, Joann's, Hobby Lobby, Lowe's, Home Depot, Walmart and Target have Thanksgiving and Christmas/December holidays displays up and running. 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 the Walters and Lionel catalogs, other model train advertising and the Internet. Twenty-five years ago, when I began to decorate my HO town for Christmas, nothing produced for the hobby was available. Tom McDonald, who ran Tallahassee's only model train store, made me a Santa Claus out of an HO figure. That Santa is still greeting youngsters in the Christmas carnival scene on my HO layout.

I still rely mostly on Michael's, Hobby Lobby, Esposito's, Lowe's, Home Depot 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

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Wonderful Lemax products available from Michael's and the Internet

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BBMRA Meeting and Swap Meet Tuesday Night

The club's November meeting is Tuesday night, November 19, at Capital City Christian Church, , 6115 Mahan Drive, and we are having a swap meet. Bring items of all scales to swap or sell and bring money. You can be your own Santa Claus or at least a help to the Big Fella.



Scrounge around for things you don't use anymore or forgot you had; not that any of us has too much model railroading stuff. Getting rid of some, however, makes room for more.

This is an experiment, sort of, and if a success Andy Zimmerman and Andy Millott, program director, probably will do it again next year.

Upcoming Shows and Layout Set-ups

Toy & Comic Book Show, Tallahassee Shriners Club: November 23, 2019, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Shriners Club, 805 N Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32303. There is something new and model train-related this year. Former club member Marc Beshera is setting up a LEGO train layout, with help from apprentice LEGO modelers Sam Miller and Doug Gyuricsko. Doug and Sam are trying out some new animation ideas with Marc and on his LEGO layout. If they work well, you will be seeing them again later.

November 24, 2019: Woodgate Lionel Open House: a Sunday, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. at Sam Miller and Linda Medlin's home, 3008 Stillwood Court, Woodgate in Tallahassee. Sunday Lionel Group Therapy folks are helping.

TCA Southern Division Toy Train/ Christmas Show: November 23, 2019, 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. This is a very good, smaller show on Jacksonville's Southside.

Winter Tampa Model Show: December 21-22, Saturday and Sunday, Winter Tampa Model Show, Florida State Fairgrounds, Tampa, FL. Sam Miller is one of the vendors – his first time at this show.

5th Anniversary Pensacola Railfest Model Train Show & Sale: December 7-8, 2019. This has been moved from the Hadji Shrine Temple to the Pensacola Interstate Fairgrounds, 6655 Mobile Highway, Pensacola, 9 to

5, Saturday, 10 to 4 Sunday, Central. Admission \$6 for adults. Our club's N Scalers may participate through their T-Trak confederation with Georgia and Alabama clubs

Sopchoppy Christmas Festival, December 14, 2019: Phil Weston and the HO Division will be operating their T-Traks at the City of Sopchoppy Depot Saturday, December 14, during that community's winter holiday festival. Phil is still working out details and will be updating the HO folks once everything is set.

Sam & Linda's Holiday Reception is Friday, December 13, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.:
(Also the BBMRA December Meeting)

Miller and Linda Medlin are hosting a Holiday Reception once again and inviting all of you and your families. Come to their home in Woodgate for lots of fun, food and various things to drink; holiday fellowship and model trains!

Sam used a new shoe horn to force additional Christmas lights and accessories into the Lionel layout. He believes he is close to a world record on the longest Christmas train.

The fun is Friday, December 13, from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. You don't have to bring anything, but if you want to, bring snacks like chip and dip or holiday desserts. Call Sam for more information at (850) 459-3012.

Sam & Linda live at 3008 Stillwood Court, off of Woodgate Way. Woodgate Way runs between Thomasville Road, just north of Tallahassee Nurseries, and Centerville Road, just north of Native Nurseries. From Thomasville, Stillwood is the first left turn, about half a mile down Woodgate. From Centerville, it is a right turn, about two-thirds of the way toward Thomasville. Look for Reddington and then Stillwood.



VMRR's 2019 "Christmas in the Park"

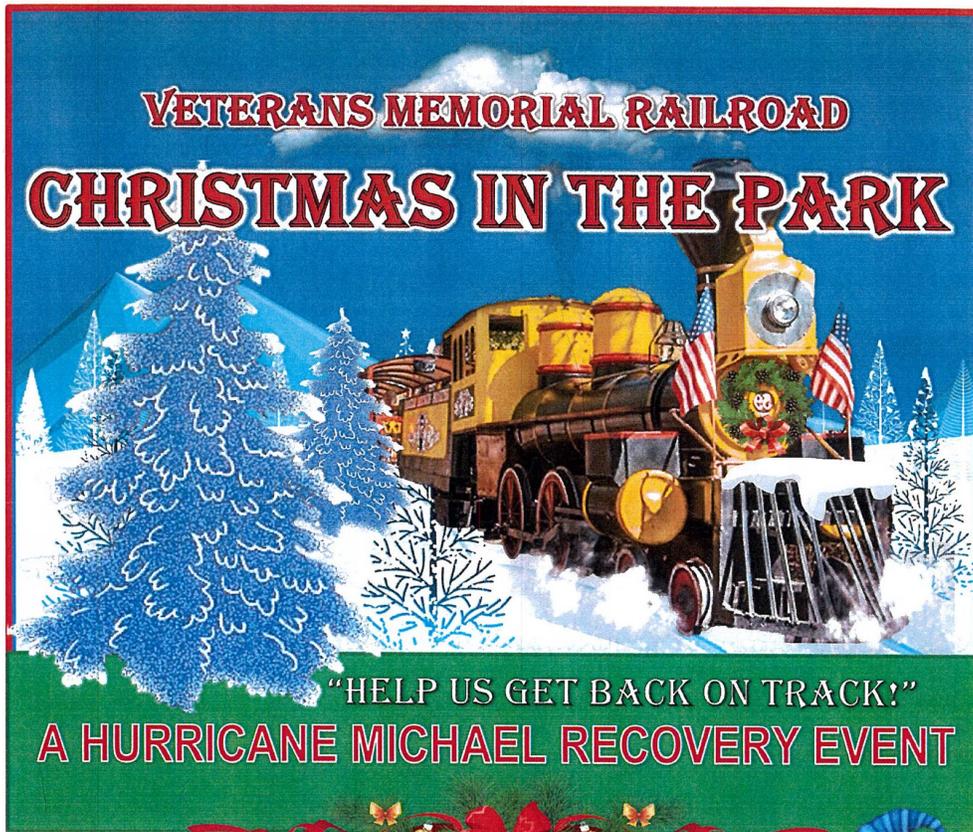
Xmas & Trains, Natural Pairing

Continuing its recovery from Hurricane Michael, the Veterans Memorial Railroad Christmas Train is back on track. Celebrate the Winter Holiday Season with "Christmas in the Park," beginning December 13 at VMRR in Bristol and on other designated days from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Trains will be diesel-pulled as VMRR's two-foot gauge Crown Live Steam Locomotive is unavailable this year.

Trains will be running Friday, December 13; Saturday, December 14; Thursday, December 19; Friday, December 20, Saturday, December 21, and Sunday, December 22.

Admission is \$10, with children two and under riding free. The rides are about 25 minutes long around Veterans Memorial Park to and from the Tom Keenan Station. Fast Track tickets are available online at: <http://www.VeteransMemorialRailroad.org>. For additional information, go to the Internet site or call: (850) 643-6646.

VMRR is located at Veterans Memorial Park, 10561 NW Theo Jacobs Way, Bristol, FL 32321. Although pretty far west of here, it remains in Eastern Standard Time.



501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization

SWAT



Florida HEALTH



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
OF TABULA RASA

DECEMBER

13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 2019

STEAM TRAIN IS UNAVAILABLE FOR THIS EVENT

7-10 PM ET

TRAIN TICKETS \$10

TOM KEENAN DEPOT
10561 NW Theo Jacobs Way
VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK
BRISTOL, FLORIDA

Need More Info: VETERANSMEMORIALRAILROAD.ORG or Call (850)643-6646



Celebrating Christmas & Other Holidays on a Model Train Layout

From page one

layouts. N Scale appropriate is the toughest to find, but earrings, pins and small Christmas tree ornaments can serve as Christmas decorations for your N Scale layout town. Sometimes small children's stickers will work for N Scale.

I will bring in some samples of what is out there for the 2019 holiday season for the November BBMRA meeting and plenty will be on display on my layouts during the December 13 holiday reception which I am hosting along with my wife, Linda Medlin. 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.

Holiday village items this season once again are available only at the Lowe's on Capital Circle West. There are several new animated buildings and Christmas scenes. The people are dressed Victorian, but that has never bothered me. 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 this year, which is a must if you can find them. String lights are available at Michael's and Walmart and probably other stores as well.



Michael's goodies

This can be useful for general landscaping of layouts. It includes snow sheets, snow particles, foam bases, and plastic sheets of brick and stone, in large and small rolls. Look carefully not only at Michaels, but all stores, for trees of various sizes and shapes, lights, accessories like wood piles, benches, mailboxes, and birdhouses which may work on your layout. Michaels and Hobby Lobby have much more stuff overall of potential use to model railroaders than many of the other stores.

Lowe's Christmas Village:

Walmart's ceramic buildings generally are smaller than at Lowe's or Michael's and other places and will work better on HO, if you are willing to use ceramic buildings. I have seen tiny ones somewhere that would work for N, but again, they are ceramic. 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.

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. They run on batteries, but you can rewire them for a transformer. Sal Martocci and Doug Gyuricsko showed me how.

Halloween: Home Depot had for Halloween 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. Buy some next Halloween. Lemax camp fires are available, but they are a little large.

Michael's has special Lemax displays for Halloween, which have been sold out by now, but remember them next year. For the first time, as far as I know, Michael's had a Lemax display for the summer, which has some neat stuff.

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. I have found several useful accessories at Cracker Barrel. Check out holiday decorations but also toys, especially cars, trucks and tractors. One of my favorite stores for my Christmas layout shopping was



3" Xmas tree at Michael's

Sear's, which is no more. It had the Disney Mickey Mouse Christmas collection which is featured on the Large Scale Division's Disney Two layout. This is still available from eBay and the Internet.

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. I have seen them at Walmart and Michael's. The Christmas tree cords are invaluable. I have 15 to 20 of them as part of my Lionel layout.



All of the stores 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. They will have very little left right at Christmas.

My good friend Bob Feuerstein notes that a primary decoration for the Hanukkah holidays is blue and white ribbon. Star of David ornaments are available in various sizes. I am certain other fine symbols of Hanukkah are available from the Jewish temples in the Tallahassee area.

Lowe's had this last year. Look on the Internet for it now. (Yes, I have one.)

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.

First Observations of FGA's Local Freight Activity

By John Odom

John is president of the Gulf Wind Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. (This appeared in the November 12 issue of Big Bend Ties, the group's newsletter. Dave Hodges is editor of Big Bend Ties. Thanks to Ed Schroeder and Drew Hackmeyer, we have now an agreement with John and Dave to swap articles and calendar dates between the newsletters.)

Before the Florida Gulf & Atlantic Railroad (reporting mark FGA) began operating the former CSX line between Baldwin (west of Jacksonville) and Pensacola this year, many of us wondered what the railroad's primary commodities would be, what kind of locomotives it would use, and how much traffic it would have.

Based on four months of observations, we have some of the answers to those questions. The following information is based on the trains that have passed my workplace (east of the yard in Tallahassee) between 8 a.m. and 4:45 p.m., plus a few days when I worked late.

Trains almost always go east in the morning and west in the afternoon. Eastbounds usually pass between 9 and 11 a.m., and westbounds usually pass after 3 p.m. The majority of FGA's freight shipments travel in covered hoppers or tank cars, with a significant number of specialized "rock hoppers" (small, rectangular cars with open tops and vertical ends) or conventional open-top hoppers with slanted ends, which are used to haul crushed stone. All crushed stone loads have been headed west.

A smattering of boxcars and loaded centerbeam lumber cars have been seen, almost always eastbound. A few "banded" tank cars (white with black band, white with brown band, or black with white band) are seen in most trains. "Banded" tank cars are believed to carry only one chemical when used, and white with black band cars are believed to carry hydrogen peroxide, used to manufacture paper.

The locomotives I have seen are leased, mostly from FURX, some from HLCX, and a couple from unknown sources. A blue locomotive with a yellow stripe, without owner initials, is seen regularly, and a black with white markings (apparently ex-Norfolk Southern) locomotive has been seen once.

During June and July, the first two months of FGA operation, a CSX locomotive (presumably leased) was seen

regularly, but it has not been seen since Aug. 1. The locomotives appear to all be GM (no farm-tractor chug), but the model(s) are unknown. Someone said at least some of them are SD-40s.

Car counts per train have varied widely, from zero (light engine moves) to 121 cars. From Aug. 1 to Oct. 10, the trains averaged about 30 cars per train, but I was not always able to see the entire train and only the cars I saw are included in the car totals per train. In September, there were seven light-engine moves out of 25 trains observed, which seems like a large proportion of non-revenue moves.

This is not a comprehensive or definitive analysis of FGA's operations, but I hope it answers some of your questions about the new railroad in town.

This 'N That: New Hess Truck; 2019 MATCHBOX Line-up **From Randy Lombardo:**



The New Hess Toy Truck for 2019 is....

Tow Truck/Rescue Team: two tow trucks, one large, and the second small enough to ride on the back of the first one. \$35.99 + tax & free standard ground shipping. Batteries included. push -friction motor Unlike last year's silent model, this makes four sounds - start, backup, horn lowering & lifting ramp. Order at: hesstoytruck.com

Sam Miller was the first on his block to get the 2019 edition – for grandsons Logan Shettle, left, and Charlie Mac, right.

Celebrating 150th Anniversary of the Golden Spike....

The United States Postal Service (USPS) has issued Transcontinental Railroad Stamps, \$9.90 for 18 stamps. Visit your local Post Office or order at: usps.com

Lionel at Publix

The Publix near me is offering a battery operated Lionel Polar Express Set for \$39.99 + tax. It's the first time anything Lionel has been available at Publix.

2019 MATCHBOX Catalog of 100 vehicles

Once a competitor, but since 1997, MATCHBOX has been owned by Mattel (makers of Hot Wheels , 1968) . We've discussed the past 50 Years several times; however, not the current line-up. I now bring you the 2019 Catalog of 100 vehicles:

Note: * This is a symbol for a new model. ** This is a symbol for a new design. *** This vehicle was originally introduced in 2001, appeared in another Matchbox segment & as a special vehicle in a nine-pack set, but never was in the regular 1-100 line-up. Some MATCHBOX models may be colored Gold to celebrate the 50th Anniversary Of Superfast-MATCHBOX.

*# 1- 2011 Mini Cooper Countryman; *# 2- 2018 Dodge Charger; *# 3- 1980 Mercedes-Benz W 123 Wagon; *# 4- 2018 Ford Mustang Convertible; *# 5- 1995 Subaru SVX; *# 6- 1975 Chevy Caprice; *# 7- 1969 BMW 2002; **# 8- 2017 Honda Civic; **# 9- 1957 Jaguar XK140 Roadster; **# 10- 2015 Mercedes-Benz GLE Coupe;***# 11- 1955 Cadillac Fleetwood; **# 12- 1962 VW Beetle; ***# 13- Oldsmobile Vista Cruiser; **# 14- Jeep Wagoneer; **# 15- Lotus Europa Special; **# 16- Audi RS 6 Avant; **# 17- VW Karmann Ghia Type 34

November 23, 2019: Tallahassee Museum of Natural History Farm Days, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

November 24, 2019: Woodgate Lionel Open House: a Sunday, 1:30 to 4 p.m. at Sam Miller and Linda Medlin's home, 3008 Stillwood Court, Woodgate in Tallahassee. Sunday Lionel Group Therapy folks are helping.

December 7-8, 2019: 5th Anniversary Pensacola Railfest Model Train Show & Sale: Saturday and Sunday. This has been moved from the Hadji Shrine Temple to the Pensacola Interstate Fairgrounds, 6655 Mobile Highway, Pensacola, 32526.9 to 5, Saturday, 10 to 4 Sunday, Central. Admission \$6 for adults.

December 13, 2019: 6:30 p.m. BBMRA Holiday Reception, Sam Miller & Linda Medlin, Woodgate.

December 14, 2019, Sopchoppy Winter Holiday Festival: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., HO T-Trak set-up at the City of Sopchoppy Train Depot.

December 21-22, 2019: Winter Tampa Model Show, Saturday & Sunday, Florida State Fairgrounds, Tampa, FL.

December 2019: Christmas Trains, Veterans Memorial Railroad in Bristol. The Polar Express will run this Christmas after the one-year hiatus caused by Hurricane Michael. 7 to 10 p.m., December 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22. (Additional details in this Lantern.)

2020

January 9-11, 2020: Prototype Rails, NMRA Sunshine Region-sanctioned event. Cocoa Beach Hilton Oceanfront, 1550 N. Atlantic Ave. [Highway A1A], Cocoa Beach.

January 11-12, 2020: 70th Florida Rail Fair, Volusia County Fairgrounds, DeLand, FL, Golden Spike Enterprises. Saturday, 9-4, Sunday, 10 to 3:30.

January 21, 2020, 7:30 p.m.: "Third Tuesday" BBMRA Meeting. Capital City Christian Church, 6115 Mahan Drive, near the Florida A&M agricultural facility and a little east of the Old Antique Car Museum.

January 18, 2020, 58th Atlanta Model Train Show & Sale, The Infinite Energy Forum, 6400 Sugarloaf Parkway, Duluth, GA. 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.

January 25, 2020: Saturday, 37th Annual Children's Day, Museum of Florida History, Capitol Complex; HO, T-Traks, Brand New Switching Layout!! and O Gauge Disney II and Thomas.

March, 2020: BBMRA annual Layout Tour. This will be on a Saturday, although the exact date has not been set. Andy Millott, who organizes the layout tours, is looking for members ready to show off their modeling work. Contact Andy at millott32073@hotmail.com

June 27, 2020: a Saturday, the 29th Annual Tallahassee Model Railroad Show & Sale. Leon County Fairgrounds. Set-up is Friday, June 26. Consistent with BBMRA's past practices, the June 2020 club meeting, presumably, will be moved to the fourth Tuesday, June 23, for last-minute planning.

Lantern Plans for Rest of the Year

The December Lantern will be an early edition with details on the December 13 Holiday Reception and Christmas/Holiday displays in the area, including Stephen Foster Memorial State Park at Lake City, Veterans'

Memorial Railroad, and the TCA folks in Jacksonville. We will include photos of special holiday decorations on your layout. Send them to Sam Miller - sammiller61113@outlook.com

Big Bend Model Railroad Association Minutes for Meeting of October 15, 2019

President Andy Zimmerman called the meeting, held on October 15th to order at 7:33 PM at the Capital City Christian Church, 6115 Mahan Drive. The meeting was well attended with approximately 25 folks present. He gently reminded persons who owe dues to pay up.

Minutes – The minutes from the September meeting were accepted and passed without objection.

Treasurer's Report – The club is solvent. In keeping with club policy, detailed financial numbers are not published in the Lantern. Should a club member require the details, they are available upon request from paid members. The club has 57 paid members, which is 7 and 12 down from previous year and two years respectively.

Division Reports

Large Scale - Sam Miller, large scale coordinator, mentioned that a lady from the Collectibles and Antiques Club contacted him two to three months ago. He will attend the meeting at her club at Dorothy B. Oven Park one week from the date of the BBMRA October meeting. He will describe the BBMRA club, our annual show etc. He described how the contact with the lady was initially made. Sam then mentioned that there is the regular Sunday meeting at his house in Woodgate. He mentioned a planned open house for his Woodgate neighborhood November 24, the Sunday of the weekend before Thanksgiving, Nov 24th between 1:30 and 4:30 pm.

Drew Hackmeyer asked for more information on the Antique club on what they collect etc. He mulled attending and helping Sam out at the meeting. There was then discussion on visiting Gary Edwards' layout, which is close to completion. October 28th was the agreed upon date for such a potential meeting. Gary is coordinating with Sam on this.

HO – Paul Schneider, filling in for HO Coordinator Phil Weston, mentioned that not much is going on with HO right now except for additional work on large radius curves and associated T-Trak corner modules. There is a plan on adding more. President Andy suggested HO may soon need to consider a T-Trak Junction module to which there was agreement.

Small Scale – Garth Easton, small scale coordinator mentioned, that on December 14th, there will be a setup in Sopchoppy with a Christmas theme. The setup is planned for 9AM – 4PM. There was discussion on whether setup the day before is feasible.

Switching Layout – Joe Haley had nothing to say regarding the switching layout.

Good of the Group – President Andy mentioned additional potential opportunities to run T-Trak modules. He mentioned the new Northeast Community Center that has large rooms and a big gym. The center is interested in the club's participation in a festival. We would have to pay for our rooms. N-Scale, HO Scale and Lionel may be possible options. It's a good opportunity to run trains, test and debug issues etc. and this is something for the club to think about.

There was a question on whether there is a specific date for the request to which the response from President Andy was that at the moment, things are fluid. There was a bit of concern regarding the \$40 per hour room rate for the community center which is considered too steep!!! There was general realization, however, that we (the club) may have to pay up to get decent space to set up and there will likely be a discount.

John Sykes continued to market his HO and N power poles.

There was mention of a planned BBMRA layout visit, featuring N Scalers, to the Pensacola show in December.

Sam mentioned the Farm Day at the Tallahassee Junior Museum in November and asked the HO folks to contact the museum if they want to operate again this year. He stated that only a very few folks enjoyed the Disney Layout setup at the Old Capital during its Christmas Open House last year and he is not planning on setting up there this December. Plans are to continue club participation in Children's Day at the R.A Gray Building on the last Saturday in January.

David Brazell mentioned Folkston Trainfest in April and said it should be kept in mind.

The business portion of the meeting was then concluded at approximately 7:59PM.

Submitted by Secretary Sheldon Harrison.

The LANTERN" is the official publication of the BIG BEND MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION, INC. and is published monthly just prior to each regularly scheduled meeting. Subscriptions are included in all members' dues. Submit materials to Lantern Editor Sam Miller at sammiller61113@outlook.com