



The LANTERN

Big Bend Model Railroad Association Volume 8, Number 3 Mar 2003

NEXT MEETING

Mar. 20, 2003

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2003 Membership Dues are due: Membership dues are now due for the BBMRA's 2003 fiscal year. Dues for returning members are \$20. Families are included in the \$20. Dues must be paid by March 31st to remain on the 2003 roster.

If you have any questions, please contact me (John Sullenberger) at 562-5137 (h) or 410-8425 (w) or via e-mail at sullyjws@aol.com. I have voice mail on both phone lines, so please leave a message if I'm not in.

Great American Train Show – Sunday: by Jeremy Shaw As people started arriving Sunday morning to the arena, one could see that Saturday's crowd had done very well setting up the layout. A few things were strange but, with a little trial and error the track was sending the locomotives round and round. We tried three transformers before getting one that would be stable enough for the day. One of the guys found a metal screw on the track. We figured that could have been the cause of the overheating of one transformer. Once things were setup, several of us checked out the goodies (both food and trains) before the doors opened.

The vendors I talked with said our clubs' layout was great and it was good for the show. It wasn't as intimidating for someone wanting to get into the hobby. Beginners could see the talent in the club and know with some practice that much of what is on our layout could be done by them and their children. About 12:30pm the arena started to get pretty active. Parents were racing around looking for their kids who had ducked them at the door. Kids laughing and yelling! Oh cool, hey check this out! Some kids just stood watching the train as it passed two feet in front of them. Other kids wanted to know how we did it. Parents seemed to enjoy the response from their kids because lots of bags were being toted table to table.

The locomotive maintenance clinic drew a few folks and even the members who were there at the layout. Hey we all could use a tip or two. As we took breaks from the layout, others would return with a bag of their own. Show and tell would take place for a few minutes and of course 30 minutes of discussion followed. Occasionally a derailment or a grab from a child would slow the engines. All in all the day went pretty smooth. Sunday's weather was nice. The crowd thickened by 1:30pm. A few familiar faces appeared from behind the displays. The conversations and experiences about this great hobby were had by all.

A brown envelope was handed to me with a certificate from the GATS people and a \$340 check. The club layout won 2nd place in the contest. Good going ya'll.

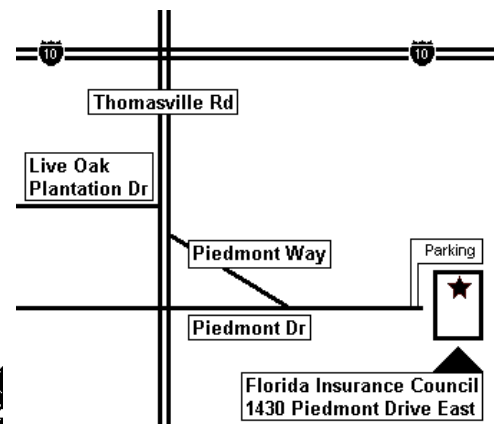
Dealers not wanting to pack up everything started dropping prices and accepting ridiculous offers. When the announcement spoke of the closing of the show, everyone raced back to their spot and began packing and folding everything in sight. The odor of diesel exhaust filled the room in an instant. Banging, clanking and yelling everywhere you turned. Vehicles crammed so tight the doors hardly closed. What?, how?, ouch my finger!, as the racks were pushed up into the trailer. Where is all this gonna go?! Did it all come over here in this trailer? With a few more pushes and a few more smacks the door to GATS closed. We all said our good-byes, gathered our bags of fun and headed home. I-10 westbound.



Photo taken by Crista Jeremiason

March Meeting on Thursday the 20th:

The meeting will be held at the Florida Insurance Council Conference Room located at 1430 Piedmont Drive.



February 2003 - Model Railroad Clinic: Subject/ Design Considerations for a Model Railroad: To the beginning hobbyist the creation of a model railroad layout is sometimes intimidating. Because the ideas of how can be overwhelming, the modeler needs to have a rough plan of how to proceed with this task. Before making any purchases, you may want to go to a hobby store to see what is available and the kinds of things that interest you. To begin this project a basic plan should be put down on paper. Considerations for a layout include space available, the scale (size train) to model, your budget (starting and ongoing), era, interests, your carpentry and electrical skills. Researching the items listed above will help the process in ways you may not realize now. The space available will help pinpoint what scale to model. For instance, a 4x8 sheet of plywood could easily handle a huge Z scale, a large N scale, a moderate HO scale, a little O-27 scale and a cramped G scale. Remember you don't have to buy everything at once but, there are expenses in the beginning and as the layout grows maintenance issues will arise. Era and interest go hand-in-hand. What do you want the layout to look like? Mountains, lakes, streams, cityscape, industrial, seasonal, steam era, diesel era, electric era will determine which direction you will go to attain these things. Your ability to construct bench work, supports, and electrical basics will need to be figured out too. As with any hobby there are other people to help when you need it. Pick up a copy of the BBMRA member roster for names and numbers of these people. The purpose of February's clinic, Design Considerations for a Model Railroad Layout, was to introduce the hobby of model railroading. Researching can start at several places. Try hobby stores, on the internet, state libraries, local libraries, historical societies and museums. Because my layout is still in the box, I asked several members to share their experiences while building their layout.

David White, HO: Use focal points to set areas apart. Find effective uses of space. Try not to do too much. Separate open spaces and built up scenes. Use several small scenes instead of running one big scene. Zero in on certain aspects- Does it fit my focus?

Mike Webb, G: Plan your layout around the landscape in the yard. Consider weather, drainage, leaves, pets, mowing, storage of the trains, and plants. If your yard is sloped, can you build a layout on level ground? What needs to be done to make the yard flat in those areas? Because G scale costs are high, Mike will be building many of the structures from scratch. He will be using most of the estimated \$4000 on trains, track and heavy equipment rentals. He hopes he will have 250ft of track to work with in this budget.

Bob Woodard, HO, N: Bob said he put his layout in the shed. He had to have somewhere to store the stuff that was already in the shed. Bob had to plan for storage under the layout. Also finding the best location in order to reach into the layout. Make sure you can access most all of the track. Derailments are a chore in a long tunnel or a back corner. Put side rails up so trains won't fall off the layout. Use mirrors to make your city look bigger.
Harold Odom, HO,

30" reaching ability and casters under the legs of the supports of the bench work are helpful. Think about slopes before doing scenery. Decide on a switching or a running layout. Sidings should be flat not on slopes. Look ahead for maintenance. Wiring needs to be centrally located, solder all track-joints, keep bench work light (use 1"x2" boards).

John Sullenberger, N: When planning a layout try using computer software that designs it for you. Atlas (www.atlasrr.com) freeware is good to use. 3rd Plan It and Abracadabra are other software packages for planning. Try libraries for books you can check out in the model railroad section.

Sam Miller, HO: Figure out where to put the layout. Decide what materials to use for bench work and track bed. Build landscape in levels so all of the layout will have some scenery. You can add details later. You will be the one using and playing with the layout so make it fun for you. If your layout has an open center, figure out how you will get to the center. Duck under or a hinged bridge.

Thank you to the members who contributed to the discussion.

2003 SCHEDULE & TIMETABLE: all meetings 7:30 to 10pm



March 20th	3rd Thursday	Florida Insurance Council
April 15th	3rd Tuesday	Myers Park Community Room
May 20th	3rd Tuesday	Myers Park Community Room
June 17th	3rd Tuesday	To Be Announced
July 15th	3rd Tuesday	Myers Park Community Room
August 19th	3rd Tuesday	Myers Park Community Room
September 16th	3rd Tuesday	To Be Announced
October 21st	3rd Tuesday	Myers Park Community Room
November 18th	3rd Tuesday	Myers Park Community Room
December 16th	3rd Tuesday	To Be Announced

Check out our Web Site:

"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. The deadline to submit

ALL ABOARD!

COME RIDE THE TRAIN!

Hop aboard for an exciting tour through scenic countryside and historic towns. Stops include Cordele, Americus, Leslie and Plains, the famous town where President Jimmy Carter grew up, ran his campaigns and still lives today.

1-800-864-7275 or 770-389-7275
www.samshortline.com

SAM SHORTLINE
EXCURSION TRAIN

What You'll See

Note: This is a sample schedule. The train does not always stop in every town. When making a reservation, ask the agent which towns will be on your route.

While you can board the Southwest Georgia's Excursion Train at any of its stops, the official beginning is at [Cordele](#).

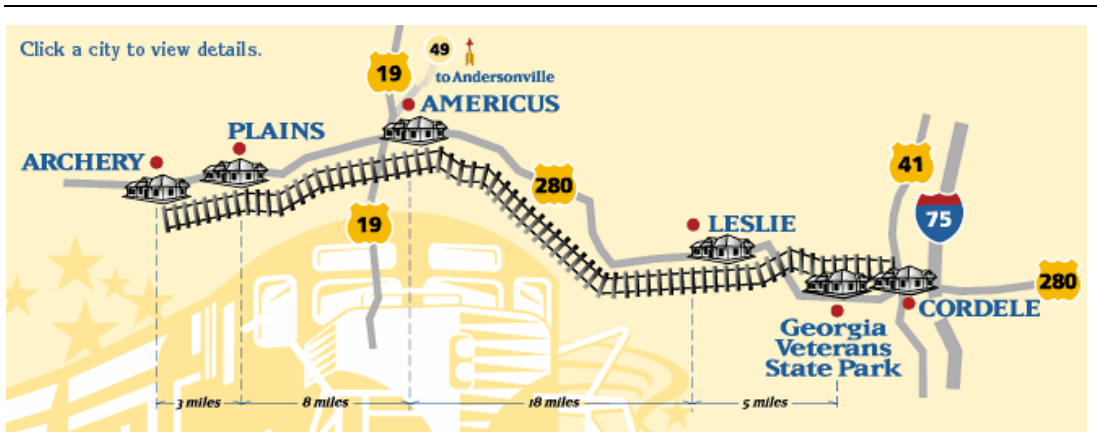
Next on the route is [Georgia Veterans State Park](#), Georgia's most-visited state park, featuring championship golf, sparkling Lake Blackshear and fascinating military exhibits.

Your next stop will be [Leslie](#), home of one of Georgia's most unique museums. The [Rural Telephone Museum](#) is situated in a beautifully restored cotton warehouse that showcases antiques, switchboards, classic cars, colorful murals – and, of course, antique telephones.

The Victorian town of [Americus](#) is your next stop. Tour [Habitat for Humanity's](#) new Global Village and browse quaint shops. The award-winning 1892 [Windsor Hotel & Spa](#) is the perfect place to turn your train excursion into a relaxing weekend vacation. You can even take in a show at the breathtaking [1921 Rylander Theatre](#).

The small Georgia town made famous by President Jimmy Carter is your next stop. While in [Plains](#), browse President Carter's campaign museum and an antique mall, then buy a bag of peanuts from local merchants.

A bit further down the tracks is the community of [Archery](#), featuring the president's [boyhood home](#). The train will stop just steps from his old front porch, and you'll have plenty of time to explore the farm before the SAM Shortline returns to Cordele.



Getting Around

The train stops at each town long enough for passengers to get on and off the cars, usually 15 minutes. If you would like to tour one of the towns, you may catch the train back on its return trip, or even the next day (if scheduled to run that day).

Our staff will let you know what time to catch the return train.

Many attractions are within walking distance of the depots, while others require transportation. Some attractions may be able to provide transportation for their customers. The SAM Shortline does not provide shuttles to attractions.

For those who do not wish to walk long distances, the closest attractions are the Rural Telephone Museum (Leslie), Habitat for Humanity's Global Village (Americus), and President Carter's Campaign Museum and Boyhood Home (Plains). All of these are just a few feet from the depots. Of course, you can always stay on the train to simply enjoy a leisurely 68-mile trip past scenic country farms and small towns.

Tickets

Call 1-800-864-7275 or 770-389-7275

Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

We hope to offer on-line ticket sales soon.

TIPS FOR A COMFORTABLE RIDE:

Riders should wear comfortable shoes and dress in layers. Rain gear is suggested since the depots are not covered and the train runs rain-or-shine. While snacks are available on the train and some towns have restaurants, riders with special dietary needs may want to pack a picnic lunch.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the train named SAM Shortline?

The train tracks that ran from Savannah to Alabama were used by the Savannah, Americus and Montgomery Railroad Company during the 1880s, headed by the late Colonel Samuel Hugh Hawkins of Americus. Many towns along the tracks were born from the railroad, so it was appropriate to name this new excursion train in honor of the original railroad and its leader.

Are restrooms available?

Yes, there are restrooms on the train and at most of the depots.

Can I bring food or drink?

Coolers and picnic items are allowed on the train provided that they fit under the seat. Alcoholic beverages are not allowed. Drinks and snacks are available for purchase on the train.

Can I walk between cars while the train is moving?

When the train is not filled to capacity, riders are usually free to explore the different cars.

How accessible is the train?

The SAM Shortline is a vintage train; therefore, accessibility is limited. Because passengers must climb steps to board the cars, and space between seats is limited, the train can not accommodate wheelchairs.

Passengers needing assistance should make us aware of their needs when making a reservation.

Who operates the train?

The SAM Shortline is operated by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and under the guidance of the Southwest Georgia Railroad Excursion Authority.

Management is provided by staff at Georgia Veterans State Park in Cordele. While the cars are owned by the DNR, the engine is owned and operated by the Heart of Georgia Railroad Company.

SAM Shortline Opens after Winter Break - March 2003

The nostalgic tune of a train whistle is drawing tourists to southwest Georgia to see its newest attraction, the SAM Shortline Excursion Train. Riding in 1949 vintage cars, riders cross scenic Lake Blackshear, travel past country farms, and stop in quaint towns filled with historic attractions, restaurants and shops. The train has already made a few sold-out trips during local festivals, and regularly scheduled runs begin November 1, 2003.

"Excursion trains are a wonderful opportunity for families to spend a whole day together, traveling the way people did a hundred years ago and slowing down to enjoy their journey. Plus, the SAM Shortline is the kind of train people will ride over and over because it stops in several locations," said Manager Kathy Odom. "On some runs, riders can even spend the night and catch the train back the next day."

On Fridays, riders can explore the Victorian town of Americus, including the historic Windsor Hotel, the elegantly restored Rylander Theatre, restaurants and shops. Habitat for Humanity is currently building its Global Village, a showcase of homes volunteers build around the world. On the return trip, the train stops in Leslie where riders can tour an impressive Telephone Museum filled with switchboards, antique cars and, of course, telephones.

Saturday trips highlight presidential history, allowing riders to explore either Plains or Archery. Plains is home to Jimmy Carter's campaign headquarters; a new antique mall, inn and sandwich shop; and stores filled with peanuts and presidential memorabilia. In Archery, the train stops just steps from President Carter's boyhood home and farm, recently designated a National Historic Site.

The train is stirring up excitement in towns along the track, with merchants hoping to benefit from increased sales to tourists. Since the train's arrival, a sandwich shop, B&B and antique mall have opened in Plains, and the Windsor Hotel in

Americus has booked train packages for business groups. Shops in Plains have seen a large increase in sales when the train rolls into town. In late October, the SAM Shortline will host dozens of national and international tour operators looking for new destinations to offer their clients.

"Tourism is Georgia's second largest industry," noted Odom. "This train is a fantastic addition to southwest Georgia and will bring more business to local restaurants, hotels, convenience stores and gift shops. I hope everyone will ride this magic carpet made of steel, enjoy the rhythm of the wheels and take a step back in time." She added that the main depot's location just two miles from I-75 makes it easy for interstate travelers to spend more time and money in Georgia.

Response from visitors has been overwhelmingly positive. Riders find it an enjoyable way to spend time with their families, especially since most children have never ridden a train. And homeowners along the route frequently wave as the cars roll past, proving that Southern hospitality is alive and well.

Prices

Tickets are \$20 adults, \$10 children. For \$10 more, riders can sit in the first-class Sam Hawkins car with mahogany and brass fixtures, and dining-car-style tables and chairs.

Tickets: 1-800-864-7275 (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.)

Schedule

FRIDAYS

Americus Adventure Departs Cordele at 10 a.m. with stops in Americus (11:30 p.m.) and Leslie (3 p.m.). Riders may tour Americus attractions and the Rural Telephone Museum in Leslie.

SATURDAYS

Archery Explorer Departs Cordele at 10 a.m., with stops in Americus (11:30 a.m.), Plains (noon) and Archery (1:20 p.m.). Riders may tour both Plains and Archery.

SUNDAYS

Peanut Express Departs Cordele at 10 a.m., with stops in Americus (11:30 a.m.) and Plains (noon). Riders may explore shops, attractions and restaurants in either Americus or Plains, but not both.