



THE Lantern

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FROM ANDY!

Dear BBMRA Members,

I hope everyone is doing well as we continue to grow and participate in exciting new events! As a quick reminder, our membership dues were due in August. While many of you have already taken care of them, we still have a few late payments trickling in. If you haven't sent in your dues yet, now is a great time to do so.

Speaking of dues, did you know about the NMRA-sponsored 'Grouper' program? Grouper provides you with \$130 per year to spend on your hobby if you are an NMRA member and have eligible Medicare supplemental insurance. It's an easy way to get your NMRA membership and BBMRA club dues paid and maybe even have some money left over to buy a few trains! All you need to do is enroll and complete their quarterly questionnaire about how you're engaging with your hobby. So far, they've given out \$18,500 to eligible NMRA members this year. Why not get your NMRA membership and club dues taken care of through Grouper?

Looking ahead, we're exploring several ways to get together as a membership and run trains. We're considering options like a membership breakfast, running trains at the Senior Center on weekends, and potentially meeting in person again. Your input is crucial, so we'd love to hear your ideas on how to make these gatherings the best they can be.

Switching gears to the Sunshine Region, I'd like to reflect on the recent cancellation of the Iron Horse 2024 Regional Convention. This past weekend would have marked the event, which had been months in the making. Thanks to the hard work of several past board members and superintendents, we had an exciting lineup of clinics planned—both in-person and virtual. Clinicians from across the Sunshine Region, the U.S., and Canada were set to share their expertise. We had operating sessions, make-and-take clinics, and a special guest speaker ready for our banquet. The NMRA Eastern Director was also scheduled to attend, providing insights into the national organization and offering his own clinics.

For Sunshine Region members, the convention weekend was also supposed to include our annual Membership Meeting time to address your concerns, answer questions, and announce election results. Unfortunately, Hurricane Milton changed all of that. Given the storm's devastating impact, we were left with no choice but to cancel. We're aware many of you, or those you know, were directly affected by the hurricane or the tornadoes that followed. Canceling the convention was the right call, as it freed up hotel rooms for evacuees.

Although we had hoped to reschedule, there wasn't a suitable date left for this year. So, we'll regroup and focus on bringing you an even better experience in 2025. Right now, our priority is helping our friends, neighbors, and families recover from the storm. Let's pull together, lend a hand, and move forward. We'll have plenty of time to return to our hobby once the situation improves.

In the meantime, I want to emphasize the importance of mentorship, fellowship, and community within the Sunshine Region. Even though we missed out on the convention, I encourage you to stay involved by participating in division-level in-person and virtual meets over the next year. These events will keep us connected, sharing knowledge, and growing together in our love for model railroading.

Lastly, we're committed to growing and expanding BBMRA, and we'd love to hear your ideas for the club's future. Let's work together to make BBMRA even better!

Best regards,
Andy J. Zimmerman
President, BBMRA
NMRA SSR President



Celebrating Halloween with O Gauge Trains & Other Stuff

From Sam Miller's O Gauge Garage Layout.



BBMRA meets Tuesday, October 15, 2024, at 7:30 p.m. through Zoom.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87359055848?pwd=WTVtUDhBUmhXVFp3RkY4WWNnZ2NXdz09>

BBMRA Zoom: Go to Zoom Program or Internet site and use these codes.

Meeting ID: 873 5905 5848, Password: BBMRA2022

Sam & Linda's Christmas Holidays Reception Resumes December 14

From Sam Miller:

Food, Fellowship and Model Trains

Linda Medlin and I are resuming our holiday open house with the BBMRA after several years hiatus. It is planned for Saturday afternoon, December 14, from 3 to 5 p.m., although we won't be pushing anyone out the door at 5. This will be the club's December meeting and should be a lot of fun.



We decided against resuming on a Friday night. If the weather is good, we will set up a canopy with tables and chairs in the backyard. So, things will be less crowded.

With the help of the club, we will provide a turkey and ham, drinks and paper goods and ask that BBMRA friends bring side dishes and desserts. This had become a holiday tradition for Linda and me before Covid and we are delighted to have it back.

The garage O Gauge layout has been expanded during the last few years and there are lots to show off. And the reception will inspire me to rejuvenate the much-neglected HO layout.

Linda and I live in Woodgate as most of you know. Contact me if you have questions and I hope you will be able to join us.

Ocala Lions Club Model Train Show November 2

Ocala is not much more of a drive from Tallahassee than Jacksonville, so here is an upcoming train show to consider November 2, 2024, a Saturday, Ocala Lions Club Train Show, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. This is at the First Christian Church, 1908 E. Ft. King Street, Ocala, 34471. Bring a can of food to get \$1 off admission. Proceeds go to Lions Club projects.

There are three of these shows a year, including in March and June. It is a relatively small show, but with established central Florida vendors, including several who participate in the Villages shows. Because the Pensacola show is now in the spring, this is something to consider; about three hours each way. Again, this is not much further than the Jacksonville show attended by BBMRA folks regularly in early February.

Celebrating Christmas & Other Holidays on a Model Train Layout

(I have published this article in the Lantern in the past, but always keep updating it, including this year.)

From Sam Miller

One of the highlights of my almost 40 years in model railroading is modeling my two O Gauge and HO 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, however, and you should find something fitting for whatever layout you have constructed.

Jack Herzog also adds wonderful Christmas enhancements to his Lionel layout. Art Wilson has developed a terrific winter, Christmas HO T-Trak module. Others of you probably do as well and I would like to hear from you.



Michaels 2024 Christmas Village



Lowe's Carol Towne 2024 Christmas

Some time ago, nothing was available until Thanksgiving Weekend, but it is now earlier and earlier each year. Holiday displays with items appropriate for modeling have been up for at least a couple of weeks at Michaels and the Lowe's on the west side of Tallahassee; and probably a lot longer at Hobby Lobby and Esposito's. Also, good places to check are Home Depot, Walmart and Target and Costco's.

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 Michaels, 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 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. N Scale holiday items are available from some of the model railroading sites.



Wonderful Lemax products available from Lowe's, Michael's and the Internet



Lowe's: Holiday village items this season once again are available only at Lowe's on Capital Circle West. There are a dozen new animated buildings and Christmas scenes, at least, this fall, including three or four new carnival rides. And with one major change: many are modern and not all are decorated in the Victorian England era as in the past.

Michaels: This wonderful store is always worth checking out during the winter holiday season. Right now, there are still plenty of holiday village items, but they sell out quickly, especially animated rides and buildings. Michaels still has plenty of string lights and transformers for them. You can also use batteries. Michaels has a lot of landscaping materials designed for their Christmas villages.

This can be useful for general landscaping layouts. It includes snow Lemax **Landscaping** 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.

You may see something in the Michaels Lemax display you want, but they have sold out except for the display model. They might sell you that one but take down the item number and title and you almost certainly can find it on the Internet.



Lemax battery operated HO train

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. *(Neal says that the Liberty Falls Americana Collection are N-Scale houses of the early 1900s era that work well for N-Scale. They were sold by Dillard's each year for many years, so there are a lot of different ones to choose from. Many*

are available on EBAY.)

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. Walmart and Home Depot also have mall 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 4.5-volt transformer. Steve Pollock and Doug Gyuricsko showed me how.

Other Outlets: Focus on Christmas ornaments, earrings, necklaces, Christmas card holders, stickers 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 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 getting harder to find but may be available. The Christmas tree cords are invaluable. If you can't find them, use power strips. What is available now are replacement light bulbs which are used in many ceramic buildings and the light cords.

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.

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. A great place to find these is Hobby Lobby. Barbara Donner developed a wonderful Hanukkah holiday scene and donated it to the Large-Scale Division, which will use it at several upcoming events.



Use your imagination and these stickers

String Lights & Transformers are a Must and Good for All Scales



String lights are a must and come in varying sizes, so you should find something to work with most, if not all, scales. Similarly with LED lighted Christmas trees. My basic string light set over the years has come from Lemax – at Michael or from the Internet. In recent years, several wonderful types have appeared at Hobby Lobby and Walmart, including Santa Claus, Christmas Reef and The Nutcracker wooden soldier strings.

Classic string lights

Most smaller accessories like string lights and LED trees can be powered with either batteries or a 4.5-volt adapter. The larger accessories, including buildings and carnival rides require a light bulb power cord or 4.5-volt transformer/adaptor; which usually comes with new in-the-box items, but not always. If the box says the transformer is included, ask permission to open it to make sure it is there. I had to make a return trip to the West Tennessee Lowe's because my transformer was missing.

Many of Michael's items require the separate purchase of an adapter; these are available at the Michaels Lemax display. One of the most economical adapters is available from the Menards Internet site: <https://www.menards.com/main/home.html>. Search for model trains. If you are powering more than one item, purchase a multi-plug adapter, with three or four outlets, instead of a single plug. It is a little more expensive. If you are using several adapters, hook them up with a single switch power strip.

Let your fun begin!

BBMRA Important Events in 2024!!



Help us build this calendar. Email sammiller61113@outlook.com. Please confirm that an activity is still on before you travel to it. We are listing Internet links whenever possible.

Here is a terrific national calendar:
https://www.railserve.com/events/train_shows.html

BBMRA meetings are the third Tuesday of each month through Zoom.

BBMRA Zoom: Go to Zoom Program or Internet site and use these codes.

Meeting ID: 873 5905 5848, Password: BBMRA2022

Lionel Interest Group Operating Sessions: most Sundays at 1:30 p.m. at Sam Miller's house in Woodgate. Call (850) 459-3012 for further information.

November 2, 2024, a Saturday, Ocala Lions Club Train Show, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.: This is at the First Christian Church, 1908 E. Ft. King Street, Ocala, 34471. Bring a can of food to get \$1 off admission.

November 16, 2024, Woodgate Neighborhood Model Trains Open House: 1:30 to 4 p.m., at Sam Miller's house in Woodgate. Sam and the Large-Scale Division run trains for Sam's neighbors.

December 14, 2024, a Saturday, Linda Medlin and Linda Medlin's BBMRA Holiday Open House: from 3 to 5 p.m., although we won't be pushing anyone out the door at 5. God to have this going again.

December 2024: Polar Express Holiday Trains, Veterans Memorial Railroad, Bristol. Dates to be announced later.

December 19, 2024 (tentative): BBMRA Holidays Trains at the Tallahassee Senior Center, 6:30 to 8 p.m. HO, O Gauge and N Scale layouts.

February 1-2, 2025, The Villages Model Train Show: Savannah Regional Center, 1545 N. Buena Vista Blvd., The Villages, FL, 32162. Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Sunday, 10 am. To 3 p.m. Admission \$7; children under 12 free.



Minutes from the September 17, 2024, Meeting of BBMRA

Submitted by Sheldon Harrison

President Andy called the meeting held on September 18, 2024, via Zoom to order at 7:32 pm. There were 14 participants present at

maximum.

Minutes – The minutes from the August meeting were discussed. Bob Ruggles moved to accept the minutes and Neal Meadows seconded. The minutes were passed without objection.

Treasurer's Report – Neal then proceeded to read the abbreviated Treasurer's Report. As is customary, the actual financials are not disclosed in the minutes, but club members are free to request the details if needed. Bob Ruggles moved a motion to accept the report as presented by Neal and Phil seconded. The motion passed without objection.

Division Reports

Small Scale – Stacey had nothing to contribute except that the members should plan for a meeting in the near future. President Andy then mentioned that he went to look at trailers as storage and transportation logistics are getting difficult to sort out with the current trailers / equipment. There was discussion of piggybacking on the HO Scale Senior Center outing in December with the T-Trak. There was then discussion with Bruce Arbo about the NMRA Train Show in 2026 in Chattanooga and the excitement is building regarding a potential record-breaking T-Trak layout that could occupy as much as 10,000 square feet.

Large Scale – Sam gave an update regarding the large-scale T-Trak plans including new Lionel items and a reorganization of the modules etc. He also mentioned his upcoming Christmas layout and there were ideas regarding a potluck style event to make the event easier on himself and Linda to plan. He also mentioned his regular weekly Sunday gathering.

HO Scale – Phil described the Sopchoppy Depot Days event held on Saturday, September 14. He said it was a very good event and the rain cooperated perfectly. He mentioned the GFA equipment that members had on display and mentioned that several people drove from quite a distance to view the display. Phil then mentioned the planned Senior Center display sometime in December, which will be the next HO division outing with the public. The dates are not yet confirmed, however. President Andy then mentioned a donation of HO scale kits, showing them in the meeting and asked about interest. Phil also mentioned a gift in Sopchoppy of some HO scale equipment including engines etc. for the club.

NMRA – President Andy, along with Bob F mentioned the upcoming Sunshine region convention in Ocala at a Hilton property on Oct 10th through the 12th. He stated that planning is well underway with clinics etc. and it should be good. He again also mentioned the event in Kingsland, GA that will likely occur next Spring.

Switching Layout – Joe was absent.

Good of the Group

There was no Good of Group discussion. Bob F and Andy Millott seconded to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was thus concluded at about 8:37 PM.

Pay Your 2024-25 Dues – *Not Paid? Get your dues paid quickly – Use PayPal!*

The BBMRA now has the option for new and current members to pay their dues online by using the PayPal link on the BBMRA.ORG website. It is under the Membership menu item. When you select the PayPal button you will get the option to use your PayPal account if you have one or use a credit/debit card. The dues are \$21.25 using this method, 2 years for \$42.00.



BBMRA dues are \$20 a year and must be paid by July 30, under club bylaws. Over the years, however, we have not considered dues delinquent until the end of August, BBMRA President Andy Zimmerman says.



If you want to mail a check, please mail it directly to Neal Meadows at 2812 Whittington Dr. Tallahassee, FL 32399. This will expedite the process since the mailbox only gets checked about twice a month during this time.

Pedaling The Rails

By: Neal Meadows, Ed. D.

My wife gave me a couple of articles out of the February/March 2024 AARP Magazine that were interesting. The first one was concerning riding the rails in a pedal car. You can enjoy a scenic trip in the open air viewing all the nature that surrounds you as you use your pedal power to travel along the rails. These are round-trip leisurely rides that last from one to four hours. The pedal cars are like recumbent bicycles with the seat tilted back and the pedals out in front of you. If you have ever ridden in a paddle boat the arrangement is similar. Guides accompany riders and administer safety checks and operating instructions.

The excursions are conducted on decommissioned trackage or scheduled during times when there are no trains scheduled to come cruising through. The excursions are operated in six states. The operator is Revolution Rails Company. The pictures below are some of the scenes you might expect to see on your trip there. Website Blog: [www. https://www.revrail.com/blog](https://www.revrail.com/blog)

