

## Georgia Division of Atlantic Coast S Gaugers Donates Layout to Southern Museum

By: Cecil Schneider

In 2004 I went to a model train show in Cobb County, where I lived at the time. Since I had S Scale model trains, I dropped by the Atlantic Coast S Gaugers layout and talked to Tom Robinson and Bob Lacheen, two of the club members working in the layout. Thus began my 20-year association with some of my best friends in the model train world.



*Greenburg Show 10 April 05. The layout in 2005 was Much Smaller than the Current Layout*

At that time the layout was 21' by 20' in size with 19 modules. Tom Robinson explained that "I started out setting up a small layout that I made to highlight S Scale to attendees since most of the layouts and trains for sale at these shows were O, HO and N scale". In discussions with other S Scale people over the next couple of years a small core of S Scale enthusiasts was gathered to form the Georgia Division of the Atlantic Coast S Gaugers. Tom added that "The club is associated with the National Association of S Gaugers, Inc". Bob said that "We got started in early 2004 and it grew from there as we attended train shows around Atlanta".

At that time new members were requested to build modules to add to the layout size. Since the members were 'ducking under' the tables to get inside, I decided to build three bridge modules because I was getting to the age where getting down and back up was getting harder to do – little did I know that it would just get worse as I aged (The things they don't tell you when you're young!). Later members who joined added

modules to the end and sides until the layout reached the current 29' by 30' size with 32 modules.



*Unidentified Girl Operates one of the Accessories as her Mother Watches*

Over the years the club has operated the layout at least 4 times a year in the greater Atlanta area, Manchester, GA and as far away as Jacksonville, FL, Chattanooga and Knoxville, TN and Concord, NC. Over this period the club has gained new members (but very few young members) and unfortunately have lost a few key members to death. As the club members aged, we realized that moving the layout around in my 6' by 10' trailer, with unloading and reloading each time, was getting to be too difficult for the 'older guys' and we had only a few younger members who could do this task without having many painful days of recovery.

The club has set up the layout for the past few years in July at the Southern Museum in Kennesaw. At a show in July, the club offered to donate the full layout to the Southern Museum. The museum accepted, and ownership of the modular layout was transferred on December 14, 2024, at their 'All Aboard' event, where the club operated the layout.

On one side of the layout are several American Flyer accessories, which can be operated by push buttons located on the outer edge of the layout. Youngsters, as well as the older generation, enjoy pushing the buttons and seeing the log loader, barrel loader, lights and other accessories operate.





*Visitors Watch the Trains Passing by the Layout at the Southern Museum*

One of the corners of the layout has a coaling station, with two different coal loaders and a light tower where a little man climbs up a ladder to turn the light on and off. A tiring job for the little man, but a delight for the youngsters.



*DSC\_3655 Two Coal Loaders and a Light Tower Cover one of the Corners*

Dr. Richard Banz, Executive Director of the Southern Museum, said “We are extremely fortunate to have this large layout as part of the museum event options. The agreement with the museum covers club members donating buildings, cars and accessories that are shown on the tabletops”. Bob Lacheen, one of the club leaders, explained that “The club will operate the layout on occasions when the museum wants the layout set up for public open houses.”. The next event will be held on January 25 and 26 when the Southern Museum holds their annual “Trains, Trains, Trains” event.