



# THE SIGNAL



THE GREAT FALLS MODEL RAILROAD CLUB

VOLUME 12. ISSUE 8

JANUARY 2011



Member since June 1988

**NEXT MEETING**  
**January 20**  
**7:00 p.m.**

**NEXT**  
**MONTH**  
**Deadline for**  
**February**  
**Jan. 27, 2011**

**MEMBERSHIP**  
**116**

## ATTENDANCE PRIZE

No name was drawn because of the Christmas Party

Will your name be drawn on Jan. 20?  
You have to be present to win!

## BOTTLES FOR BASICS

- ◆ YEAR TO DATE: \$361.80
- ◆ THIS MONTH: \$31.45
- ◆ NEXT MONTH: That is up to you!

## Raffle Layout Delivered by Paul Lodge

The Raffle Layout was delivered on Sunday, December 19, 2010. Well, not exactly delivered. Billy Neville of Newfield drove his truck to Paul Lodge's home in West Minot to pick up the layout. He was accompanied by his two sons, Owen (age 6) and Eli (age 3), and his father David Neville.

The winning ticket for the 2010 Raffle Layout was drawn on December 12 at the McLaughlin Garden "Trees and Trains" event. David Neville, who takes his grandsons to as many train-related events as he can, had bought raffle tickets for both boys at the Sanford show in April. Owen, whose name was on

the winning ticket, is in the first grade at Line School in Newfield.

Owen and Eli were excited at

Their father has a large area in which to build a layout and has already begun construction.

After they had loaded the raffle layout into the truck, Paul Lodge gave them a tour of his Pine Tree Lines.



winning the raffle layout.

## Victorian Christmas At The WW&F by Paul Lodge

On Saturday, December 18, several club members went to Alna for the Victorian Christmas at the two-foot narrow gauge Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway. Tom Coulombe, Ed Leslie, and Paul Lodge captured much of the event on video, which Paul will edit into a *TRAIN TIME* show.

The free rides started at 11 a.m. and continued all day until 5 p.m. The sun went down shortly after 4 p.m. and it was dark by the time the last run was made. On that trip, John Robertson and other WW&F volunteers used lan-

terns to light the train and signal the engineer and conductor.

Because of the beautiful day and good publicity, there were hundreds of guests. It was estimated that two to three times as many people came to this event as have visited in the past. On each four-mile round trip from the Sheepscot Station to the Alna Station, the train carried about 150 passengers. In addition to the two coaches they usually use, the WW&F crew added a caboose and open air car after the first run of the day.

Club member Bryce Weeks is a regular at the WW&F. After having one ride as a passenger on the train, Bryce rode in the cab of some of the other engines as they moved rolling stock around the yard. Of particular interest to Ed & Brenda Leslie was the Model T scratch built rail car, which was used only in the yard. Steam engine number 10 was used to transport the guests. Because this year's lack of snow made the usual sleigh rides impossible, passengers were given wagon rides from the Alna Station through the nearby fields.

# GOLDEN SPIKE CEREMONY by Dick Clark



At the regular club meeting on December 16, midway through the Christmas party, the G-scale group had their "Golden Spike" ceremony. Although trains had run on the line earlier, the G-scalers postponed their official ceremony until more people could attend. Following Dick Clark's invitation, many

club members had brought cameras to preserve memories of the occasion.

Ed Leslie, whose preliminary architectural drawing of the layout hangs on the wall in the main hallway, had the honor of being the first to hammer the golden spike. While Dick Clark and Paul Lodge took video of this historic event, additional members of the G-scale group took turns driving the golden spike. Other club members were then invited to take a few whacks.

The group's objective had been to have at least one line operating during the ExTRAINaganza in November. They actually had three trains running for the event, with two trains on the large layout and one train on the small section between the doors to the room. Now that the ExTRAINaganza is over and the golden spike has been driven, the group will meet to decide on their next major objective.

*"Two major projects in the works are repairing the roof, which will cost us \$3,300 and has been approved by the Executive Committee, and installing a security system to prevent vandalism. If funds are available"*

## PLEDGE DRIVE—2011 by Tom Coulombe

At the December 2010 meeting, I mentioned that we are starting in January the Pledge Drive for the calendar year 2011. This is our fourth year of the five-year plan to help offset the initial cost of remodeling and maintenance of the building. In order to keep our membership dues as low as possible, we are asking for additional pledges from those members who can dig a little deeper to help support the club in these efforts.

We are grateful to those who have contributed in the past, not only with labor but with monetary contributions

to support our ongoing activities. Some have contributed directly to specific projects when asked; others have contributed materials to help in building the layouts in the club. The public response during the open house and ExTRAINaganza has been very encouraging to everyone who has made this possible.

Two major projects in the works are repairing the roof, which will cost us \$3,300 and has been approved by the Executive Committee, and installing a security system to prevent vandalism. If funds are available,

we hope a security system will be installed sometime this summer with the approval of the Executive Committee.

As I report at each monthly meeting, the revenues generated from dues, train shows, raffle layout, and donated materials are supporting the normal operations of the club. These additional pledges help to pay for the club's major projects. You will find in this newsletter a pledge form to fill out and forward to me. All pledges will be held in strict confidence.

## PLEDGE FORM

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ St \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

In 2011, I wish to contribute \$\_\_\_\_\_ for operation of the club. I will make my contribution in \_\_\_\_\_ installments payable (Monthly, Quarterly, Semi-annually).

Mail to Tom Coulombe, Treasurer, The Great Falls Model Railroad Club, 144 Mill St., Auburn, ME 04210

## TRAIN TIME GOES NATIONAL by Paul Lodge

During the past year, J. P. Fortier of Mount Blue Local Community Television in Farmington has uploaded nearly one hundred (out of our current 228) *TRAIN TIME* shows to PEGmedia in Rockland. About two years ago, Bob Nichols of Rockland developed a media transfer process to allow public access cable television stations to share locally created programs with other stations. More than 1,000 stations and producers currently provide PEGmedia with a wide variety of programming which they offer to local cable channels throughout the country. By downloading programs from this media exchange, stations can provide more options for their viewers.

PEG is an acronym for the different types of public access cable television stations which local communi-

ties can have. "P" represents "public," "E" is for "Education," and "G" signifies "Government" programming. Communities can choose to have any one of the three types of stations, or their local station may carry all three kinds of programming.

PEGmedia allows stations to download one episode or an entire series of programs. Some stations download each episode during the week they plan to show it. One station in Tennessee has already downloaded all of our shows which are now available.

*TRAIN TIME* has been downloaded by stations in at least twenty different states, including all New England states except Rhode Island. *TRAIN TIME* has been downloaded by public access television stations in eight New Hampshire towns: Cheshire, Concord, Newmarket, Enfield,

Bristol, Derry, Hudson, and Nashua. Massachusetts stations in Boxford, Cambridge, Amherst, Revere, Granby, Spencer, Leominster, and Wales have downloaded *TRAIN TIME*. In Vermont, shows have been downloaded in Windsor, Stowe, Jeffersonville, Cambridge, Falls Area and by two stations whose locations were not identified.

Episodes of *TRAIN TIME* have also been downloaded by stations in the following states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin.

"One station in Tennessee has already downloaded all of our shows which are now available."

## THE BASICS OF MODELING by Paul Lodge

The Great Falls Model Railroad Club offers a six-week course twice a year in the basics of modeling. In this short introductory course, students of all ages learn (or review) how to build benchwork by constructing a 4' x 8' module, which they can take to model railroad shows as part of the team's modular layout. For some people this will become their permanent home layout as well. The class also provides an introduction to laying track, wiring the layout, and learning the fundamentals of creating scenery.

Many of the club's current members have taken the class. For

most of the adults who take the class, this is just "the nudge to get you started" as our promotional flyer suggests. Many of them hope to build a permanent home layout, using the skills they have practiced in the class. If you are ready to take that next step, Larry Cannon has some good advice in this newsletter in his article entitled, "The First Lesson of Modeling."

Our next Model Railroad Class begins Tuesday, February 8, at 6:30 p.m. To register, call the Auburn Adult Education Office at 784-9220.



Back, Gabriel Garcia, with Bob Russell in front. At the Golden spike ceremony on Dec. 16, 2010.





Paul Lodge

*At this month's club meeting on January 20, club members will have an opportunity to follow up on the Open Forum discussions that were held at the October meeting. Members at that meeting were divided into three groups and asked to express their ideas about the directions in which they feel the club should go.*

# December Minutes by Paul Lodge Secretary

## MINUTES OF DECEMBER 16, 2010 MEETING AND CHRISTMAS PARTY

Throughout the evening, a video was shown about the club's recent activities at our ExTRAINaganza and the "Trees and Trains" exhibit at McLaughlin Garden in South Paris. Trains were running on the HO and G-gauge layouts. Brightly lighted and decorated Christmas trees helped to give the club house a festive appearance.

President Rick James conducted a brief "stand up" meeting during the festivities. The Secretary's Report was approved as reported in the newsletter. Tom Coulombe gave the Treasurer's Report, which was also ap-

proved. He noted that we earned over \$2,000 on the ExTRAINaganza, which was nearly \$500 more than last year. Club cars have been ordered. They will be covered hoppers with our club's name and logo on them. Although Tom had expected the roof repairs to be completed before the December meeting, they have not yet been started. Tom is preparing a new pledge form so that club members can sign up for additional donations beyond their annual dues. Fortunately, many club members are in a financial position to be able to support the club with more than the annual \$25 dues.

The more than fifty club members who helped or supported the ExTRAINaganza were thanked. President Rick James recognized some of our younger helpers and invited Julie Bruce, Bryce Weeks, and Conor Drouin to select the hat of their choice.

President James suggested having a model train operating session on Sunday, December 26 from noon to 5 p.m. Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway is holding its annual Victorian Christmas on Saturday, December 18, and club members were encouraged to attend the narrow gauge railroad and enjoy the free train rides.

There was a wide variety of food available for club members and their guests. We hope everyone who brought special items for the party received the appreciation they deserve. Paul Lodge would like to thank all those thoughtful members who brought chocolate items to help finish off a good meal. Another highlight of the dessert table was the cheesecakes made by Travis Johnson. Well done, Travis!

## Open Forum by Paul Lodge

At this month's club meeting on January 20, club members will have an opportunity to follow up on the Open Forum discussions that were held at the October meeting. Members at that meeting were divided into three groups and asked to express their ideas about the directions in which they feel the club should go. The topics selected for the brainstorming sessions were Organization and Building, Fund Raising and Membership, and Layout Operation.

The group leaders – Tom Coulombe, Paul Lodge, and Dick Clark – have each met with volunteers to prioritize the suggestions that were made in their group sessions. The Executive Committee will consider these proposals and present them to the members at the January 20 meeting. Members will then be invited to help decide which ideas should become definite goals for the club.



Rick James

## President's Corner by Rick James

I was glad that some of you got the chance to travel up to the Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway to take part in their annual Victorian Christmas on Saturday, December 18. My wife and I had a great time riding in the open car.

On December 26, a few brave souls put down their new toys and came over to the club house to play trains. I understand that not everyone could make it, but those who came had a good time.

At the upcoming meeting, we will be voting on which topics the members would like to see the club work towards in the next coming months and even years. This is a way to encourage every member to give input on how to shape the growth of the club. There will be charts on the walls and all the members that attend

the meeting will have the chance to indicate which ideas they like. This is a follow-up to the October meeting when we broke into three discussion groups to brainstorm ideas. Each group's ideas were recorded and will have been narrowed down to present for your votes at the January meeting.

Upcoming events for the club members to put on their calendars include the club meeting on January 20 and the Whitefield Lions Club train show at the Augusta Armory in February.

Great Falls Model Railroad Club members are invited to attend the Seacoast Division Winter Meeting from 10:00 to 1:00 on January 8 at the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, 301 Cottage Road, South Portland. There will be two presentations on topics related to the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad, and Tom Jones will be giving a clinic on building turnouts. You do not have to be a member to attend.

## The First Lesson of Modeling by Larry Cannon

The first lesson of modeling is very basic, but so complicated that many people do not master the lesson even after several attempts: know what you are trying to model. The majority of people are so concerned about getting something up and running that they give little concern to what they hope to accomplish.

They may envision a Maine Central branch line from their childhood, but can anyone accomplish that on a flat 4'x 8' sheet of plywood with a Santa Fe F-unit, Bachmann train set? The reality is that you not only need to do research on the models and materials required to build something that meets your expectations, but also to decide what part of your vision you have the space to model. Most people find that their vision exceeds their available real estate – you can have the unfinished

basement space, but no track-age rights in the laundry room.

You have to shape your vision to the space, models and materials that are available to support the vision. In the older, more established gauges, this is not as much of an issue as it might be in large scale or Z gauge. The product offerings are more limited in the less popular gauges. In any gauge, the offerings may be limited or expensive depending on what you want to model.

What you can model of a Class 1 railroad (the larger railroads that have become fewer and fewer into the present age) in a small space is often limited to a branch line or a limited portion of the main line with staging areas to represent trains going through your modeled area. You have to consider if such limitations will really keep you happy with your layout before you take the time and effort to build something you end up feeling is a dud. If you

want to hit a home run, take the time, effort, and research to learn how.

If you are reading this article, you have the pathway to the research vehicle. The Great Falls Model Railroad Club has an extraordinary local source of model and prototype railroad materials in our library. We also have a number of members who are pretty good modelers and others who know the technical side of what it takes to run a good layout.

If you are a club member, you already have access to a great resource; if not, we hope you will join. Annual dues are \$25. The small investment of \$25, doing the research, talking and working with those who have made the mistakes (and also have the resultant knowledge) could save you a lot more money and valuable time and result in an effort that you find rewarding.



## THE GREAT FALLS MODEL RAILROAD CLUB

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An Educational Foundation

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## THE SIGNAL

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## Upcoming Events

January 8, Seacoast Division Meeting, 10:00—1:00 p.m. The First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, 301 Cottage Rd, South Portland, ME.

January 13, Executive Committee, 7:00 p.m.

January 20, Meeting, 7:00 p.m.

February 8, Model Railroad Adult Education Class starts.

February 19, Model Railroad Show, Augusta Armory, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

March 12 & 13, Bedford Boomers-NH Garden Railway Society

[www.nhgrs.com](http://www.nhgrs.com)

March 12, Essex Junction, VT, Champlain Valley Fairgrounds  
[ronprio@aol.com](mailto:ronprio@aol.com)

March 19, Augusta, "O" Gauge Show,



Elk's Club,

[hotelnorth@midmaine.com](mailto:hotelnorth@midmaine.com), 207-582-1410.

April 2, Gray, Me., Narrow Gauge Show Gray/New Gloucester High School, Bob Willard, 207-795-6476

April 10 west Lebanon NH Train Show, Fireside Inn  
[www.cvr.railfan.net/cvmrr](http://www.cvr.railfan.net/cvmrr)

April 30, Model Railroad Show, Mt. Ararat High School, Topsham, Me.,

