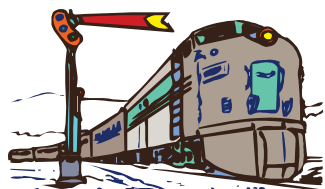




THE SIGNAL



NEXT MEETING

DECEMBER 17
7:00 p.m.

NEXT MONTH

Deadline for
January
December 28, 2009

MEMBERSHIP

96

ATTENDANCE

PRIZE

Charles Schumacher's
Name was drawn and he
was present to win a hat.

Will your name be drawn
on December 17?

You have to be
present to win!

BOTTLES FOR BASICS

- ◆ **YEAR TO DATE: \$328.05**
- ◆ **THIS MONTH: \$17.00**
- ◆ **NEXT MONTH: That is up to you!**

ExTRAINaganza, 2009 A CLUB SUCCESS

The ExTRAINaganza held at the clubhouse from November 21 to 28 was a success in many ways. Club participation, visitors' enthusiasm, and children's excitement were indications that this event was a welcome addition to the holiday season. Nearly five hundred adults and three hundred children participated in the ExTRAINaganza experience. All the children wrote their names on colored train-shaped cards, which they pinned to the "Train Tree." By the end of the event, the "Train Tree" was totally covered with a variety of colored trains.

As guests entered the building, they were greeted by Richard and Terry Obie's "talking" Christmas tree. When anyone walked by the motion detector, the tree began talking and singing Christmas carols. Inside the building were brightly decorated Christmas trees, under four of which were trains to be raffled. Stephen Martelli's G-gauge layout was visible from the entrance and was an immediate hit with everyone. Rick Bibeau and Tom Coulombe each had an N-scale layout set up in the further corner, and the club's traveling raffle layout completed the upstairs train displays.

Downstairs, the first thing visitors saw was the On30 modular layout. The club's HO modular layout featured Dick Clark's animated winter scene and Rick James' lighted ceramic holiday scene, along with several other HO modules. Guests enjoyed watching trains go up and down the helix of the club's permanent HO layout, which is still under construction.



Santa at the club, during ExTRAINaganza.

Photos By Rob Roy



Thanks to Jerry Johnston, refreshments were available in the Dining Car. Andy's prize-winning baked beans from our New
(Continued on page 4)

CLINIC TO INTRODUCE DCC

At the January 21 monthly club meeting, Tom Jones will present a clinic on DCC. The "Introduction to the World of Digital Command Control (DCC)" will include the following topics: 1. A short non-technical discussion of what DCC is and how it differs from analog DC train control. 2. An overview of DCC Standards set up by the NMRA (National Model Railroad Association). 3. A discussion of the major U.S. DCC Manufacturers and their DCC systems and products. 4. A more in-depth look at NCE (North Coast Engineering) and its products. 5.

A hands-on demonstration of NCE DCC and some of its capabilities.

During this introductory session, Tom will touch briefly on decoders. In the spring, he plans to offer a Decoder Clinic, demonstrating a simple decoder installation and a more complex one.

By Paul Lodge

MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER MEETING

*“Stephen Martelli noted that our next meeting is the Christmas party on December 17. Bring the family and enjoy the Christmas ExTRAINaganza decorations and all the wonderful food at our **Pot Luck Party**. Paul Lodge made his usual appeal for CHOCOLATE.”*

“Tom and some other club members have been working to identify locations and mile post markers on the helix. These locations will be necessary later when dispatching is required into and out of the helix. Tom estimated that it will take the next two years to build the benchwork properly so that operations can begin. Because the club layout will use DCC to operate the trains, Tom has offered to give clinics on DCC at the club meetings in January and February to help members who are not familiar with DCC get acquainted with the system.”

Last month the club members who were present saw a video which featured activities of the club from previous years. This month the video for the evening concentrated on current activities of the club, including the club building dedication on September 19.

President Stephen Martelli opened the meeting and asked for the Secretary's Report. A motion was made and accepted to approve the report as published in *The Signal*. Tom Coulombe gave the Treasurer's Report, which was approved as given.

Stephen Martelli reported for the Building Committee. He noted that the shed has been started and needs to be finished. The City of Auburn has completed the drainage project for this fall and the final surface will be laid next spring. After the walls and ceiling are plastered and painted, our next major project (when money is available) will be the hardwood floor upstairs.

Tom Coulombe reported that the modular group will be displaying at the Maine State Museum in Augusta on Friday, December 4, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday, December 5, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The modular group will also exhibit at the Whitefield Lions Club show at the Augusta Armory on Saturday, February 20.

Tom Jones talked about the progress of the club's HO layout. He noted that the newly cut hole in the wall near the work room entrance will be the eastern terminus of the layout. Tom and some other club members have been working to identify locations and mile post markers on the helix. These locations will be necessary later when dispatching is required into and out of the helix. Tom estimated that it will take the next two years to build the benchwork properly so that operations can begin. Because the club layout will use DCC to operate the trains, Tom has offered to give clinics on DCC at the club meetings in January and February to help members who are not familiar with DCC get acquainted with the system. Tom appealed to club members to submit layout ideas to him so that these ideas can be used on the layout.

Paul Lodge explained how the clubhouse will be utilized for the club's fund-raising project, the ExTRAINaganza. It is hoped that families will come and enjoy watching our many scales of trains and the special trains under the decorated Christ-

mas trees. Young children will be able to play on the floor with our collection of toy trains. Children can get an Operation Lifesaver hat, put their names on the *Train Tree*, decorate gingerbread cookies, and color in the Operation Lifesaver coloring books. Raffle tickets will be sold for the trains under the trees and for the Raffle Layout. Beginner's train sets will be available for parents to buy as Christmas presents. Terry King hopes that many of our free magazines will be taken during the ExTRAINaganza.

While Paul Lodge had the floor, he complimented club members for continuing to bring **Bottles for Basics**. This is the easiest fund-raising project in which all members “CANtribute”.

Stephen Martelli noted that our next meeting is the Christmas party on December 17. Bring the family and enjoy the Christmas ExTRAINaganza decorations and all the wonderful food at our **Pot Luck Party**. Paul Lodge made his usual appeal for CHOCOLATE.

President Martelli announced that people from the Auburn Public Library will meet at the clubhouse on Sunday, December 6, from noon to 2 p.m. This will give them an opportunity to view the clubhouse and see what is available in our extensive library.

Dale Darling would like to take individual photos of the club officers to be displayed at the entrance of our clubhouse. This will be helpful for new club members and visitors to the building. He plans to bring a light kit so the portraits will look professional. He would also like to take a group picture of the members who have been working on the building and who helped get the Occupancy Permit.

Dale also volunteered to take pictures of members' layouts. These photos could be shown on the club's website along with explanations of the personal layouts. Interested members need to make arrangements with Dale for times and places.

Paul Lodge distributed and explained the New Member Packets. The packets include the following items: a description of the club's objectives, a list of current officers and previous presidents, a page about the library, a page about *Train Time* and the shows available, the Constitution and By-Laws, and a page entitled, “Beware.” Paul read aloud the

(Continued on page 6)

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

“Happy Holidays”

We are in the middle of the holiday season and I want to wish all of you and your families a Happy and Joyous Holiday Season.

We have a long list of Thank You's to say this month:

1) To all of the Shed Building Crew that worked on the shed in the parking lot.

2) To all of the people that worked on or participated in the ExTRAINaganza. This was a huge success during the Thanksgiving week. I hope that we do it again next year and have an even bigger success then.

3) To the On30 group that set up their modules and ran their trains for all to enjoy during the ExTRAINaganza.

4) To Terry King for keeping up with all of the donations of books in the past couple of months, getting them sorted, cataloged and put away.

5) To all of the people that worked on the clubhouse in the past year and worked even harder to get the Occupancy Permit.

6) To all of the new members that have joined in the past year. I would like to meet all of you and have a cup of coffee with you as my treat.

7) To Santa Claus for showing up on the last day of the ExTRAINaganza and making a lot of little children happy and surprised while giving out hugs and candy canes.

8) For all of the people that help out at our shows and help with the set-up, operation and tear downs.

9) To the Executive Committee for putting up with a

President who can be Grumpy, Moody and Touchy from time to time.

10) Last but not least: To our supporters who have given not only from their pockets but also from their hearts with all of those little extras that have been done in the past year.

The parking lot is done for this year and we have a little more work to do on it for next year. The city of Auburn has given a lot more than they said they were going to do and we have benefited from it in the long run.



President, Steve Martelli

Tom Coulombe is continuing to work on the shed and he needs help. Talk to Tom to see how you can help him with that project.

At the December monthly meeting we will have a Christmas party and Paul has instructed me to make sure that I mention in the newsletter that he wants to see a lot of CHOCOLATE items. We will have a very short business meeting and then we can party and enjoy the rest of the night together.

In closing, we have a lot planned for the next year not only with shows but also with fundraisers like the annual yard sale. This year I would like to see a dunk tank added for “Dunk the President” while you shop. That should be fun for sure and a GREAT moneymaker!!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL!

Stephen



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“To Santa Claus for showing up on the last day of the ExTRAINaganza and making a lot of little children happy and surprised while giving out hugs and candy canes.”

EXTRAINAGANZA CONTINUED

(Continued from page 1)

Auburn neighbor were a special menu item. Some members brought homemade cookies and brownies for our guests and workers. Adults as well as children decorated homemade gingerbread cookies to eat and spice ornaments to take home.

Rick James had brought in ten Christmas banners which were displayed on the walls and a longer banner which covered the closet door. Rick's father, Bob, had made a wooden snow man and snow woman with the faces cut out so that children could have their pictures taken as they looked through the cutouts. The children's play area with toy trains was a major attraction as well.

During the five-day event, visitors had the opportunity to buy raffle tickets on the four model trains featured under the Christmas trees. On the last day of the ExTRAINaganza, the winning tickets were drawn. The G-gauge train was won by Jay Jasper of Bowdoin. Jay already has G-gauge models which he sets up under his Christmas tree. He said that the additional train will allow him to have an even larger display for his family, which includes four children ranging in ages from 8 to 17. Jay is considering joining the club.

The HO GG1 Pennsylvania special locomotive was won by Jay Szutarski of Winthrop. He is currently visiting relatives in California, and will make arrangements to pick up the train set when he returns. Gavin Lepage, who won the Lionel set, lives in Auburn. Bob Mathieu of Lewiston won the Percy HO starter set, which features railroad cars from the "Thomas the Tank Engine" stories. Bob is also interested in joining the club.

Club member Karen Bragg of Bangor won the beautiful display case built by club member John Visco.

Each child who came to the ExTRAINaganza wrote his or her name on a train-shaped card and tacked it on the "Train Tree." Three names were selected from the "Train Tree" to receive gift certificates. Mikayla Spinney of Minot won a gift certificate from Subway. Cecilia Miller of Lewiston and Everett Greenwood from Middlebury, Connecticut, won gift certificates from Sam's Italian Shop. Everett's grandmother, Candy Greenwood, had brought him to the ExTRAINaganza after seeing the front-page picture in the *Lewiston Sun-Journal*. She plans to take Everett to Sam's to use the gift certificate the next time he and his family come to

Maine. She added that he had a wonderful time at the ExTRAINaganza and wore his Operation Lifesaver engineer's hat when he left to go home to Connecticut.

The ExTRAINaganza's success can be measured in different ways. We made money for building renovations. Even more important, our guests enjoyed the varied activities available for children and adults. Hundreds of adults visited our club for the first time, and many of them want to come back again for other occasions now that they know where we are located. In addition, several new members joined the club.

More than forty club members and their families helped during at least one of the five days of the event. Some members were there every day. This was an excellent opportunity for club members to share their interests and talents and enjoy the camaraderie of the hobby. It is sometimes difficult for club members to find ways in which they can contribute their time and energy. This was a good experience, involving many of our newer members as well as "the usual suspects." A special "Thank You" to all of the club members who helped to make the ExTRAINaganza a success.

By Paul Lodge

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RAFFLE WINNER



Jay Jasper proudly holds the locomotive he won in the G gauge raffle.

Photo by Paul Lodge

NEW SHED



Our new shed is taking shape.

Photo by Terry King

DECISION TIME

We now have permanent quarters. We also have in Tom Coulombe's barn an inventory of materials from past donations that have not been sold, pending decisions on what the club would need for its future use.

We are all aware of the extensive library collections now at the club. Using the library materials as an illustration, despite the efforts of Terry King over the past year, we still have an 11,000 slide collection that needs to be cataloged and imaged. We also have a smaller but significant collection of railroad memorabilia. We need to decide what to retain and what to sell. We also need to determine what to charge and how to sell it. Obviously, train shows in Maine are NOT the way to sell some of these items.

Using the library example, realize that we also have the same situation for layout materials. We have a significant inventory of electrical supplies, modeling

materials, and detail parts that we may or may not use.

Many of these things cannot be sold in the uncontrolled environment of a table at a train show. Detail parts that may be worth \$5-15 have a way of "disappearing" or getting broken and made worthless in that situation. We also have the issue of the hobby changing and fewer people pursuing serious detailed modeling. This does not impact the value of what we have unless we expect to turn it into money in a short period of time.

I'll pick one inventory item to show what I mean. We have, at current prices, approximately \$500-1,000 of Grandt Line plastic building detail parts. They have not been cataloged and are very fragile. They would be very expensive to buy if someone in the club wanted to include them in a structure for the new HO layout. These items were donated and cost us nothing. The

question is whether we want to sell them quickly for \$100 or less, keep them in inventory in hopes somebody will use them in buildings for the club, or attempt to sell them in a manner that will help the club to earn closer to their real market value.

I have been the "steward" (caretaker, person responsible, etc.) of these materials for close to twenty years. As part of our expansion, we need to involve other people who are willing to volunteer the time to preserve these club assets or take the responsibility to see that the club realizes as much of their true worth as possible.

You don't have to be an expert, but you do have to be practical, patient, and willing to dicker to get the job done. ANYONE interested, please contact me. If you have the basic qualifications, I will recommend to the Executive Committee that you be put on the "team".

By Larry Cannon

"We are all aware of the extensive library collections now at the club. Using the library materials as an illustration, despite the efforts of Terry King over the past year, we still have an 11,000 slide collection that needs to be cataloged and imaged. We also have a smaller but significant collection of railroad memorabilia. We need to decide what to retain and what to sell. We also need to determine what to charge and how to sell it. Obviously, train shows in Maine are NOT the way to sell some of these items."

YARD GETS FIRST COAT OF BLACKTOP



The City has applied the first coat of Black top and will apply the final coat next spring.

Hopefully there will be less ice in the yard this winter.

By Terry King



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[Http://www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org](http://www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org)

Your business tag line here.



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**MINUTES
CONTINUED**

(Continued from page 2)
“Beware” page. In essence, it explains to new members that we are always going to be in a fund-raising mode, but new members should not feel pressured into donating more than they can afford. Because the annual dues of \$25 do not cover the cost of the mortgage and other regular monthly expenses, there will always be appeals for money. After reading the “Beware” sheet, Paul made an appeal for money to be donated to the HO layout fund. A friend of the club is willing to match HO layout donations, so every dollar donated is doubled with the match.

After a little confusion about using the current club list instead of the old one, Charles Schumacher’s name was drawn to win the Attendance Prize. He chose one of the hats which were available.

The meeting adjourned and members were invited to tour the building and see the Ex-TRAINaganza Christmas decorations.

**ON TRACK TO
CLUB’S DESTINATION**

Included with this month’s newsletter, members will find an envelope for donations for the club’s HO layout. Money collected from this fund-raising project will be matched by an anonymous donor. As a result, every dollar that we contribute will equal two dollars for the layout. (If you are receiving this newsletter by e-mail and would like to make a donation, please send it to Great Falls Model Railroad Club, 144 Mill Street, Auburn, ME 04210.)

We all know that our annual dues of \$25 will never pay for the mortgage and upkeep of the building or for the construction of layouts. It is up to those of us in the club who can afford it, therefore, to go beyond the annual dues and provide additional funds so that the club can present the image all of us want to convey. Because of the different income levels within the membership of the club, we do not want to increase the dues and eliminate good members who happen to have smaller incomes. We want this club to include everyone who has an interest in model railroading regardless of their income level.

It would not be unusual to receive contributions

**CALENDAR OF
EVENTS**

Every Saturday, Work Session 9:00 a.m.

DECEMBER

- 12 & 13 McLaughlin Garden South Paris
- 17 Meeting and Christmas party 7:00
- 20 New Auburn Social Club, Children’s Party at club house.

January

- 12 Operation Lifesaver, Lewiston Bus Drivers.

- 14 Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

February

- 9 Auburn Adult Education Model Railroad Class.

- 18 Meeting 7:00 p.m.

- 20 Train Show—Augusta Armory 10:00 a.m.

March

- 18 Meeting 7:00 p.m.

- 20 Narrow Gauge Train Show—New Gloucester

Don’t forget that we are working on the building every Wednesday night starting at 6:00 p.m., and Saturday Mornings at 9:00 a.m.



MM & A power at Northern Maine Junction in November.

Photo by Terry King

from people who are not members of the club just as we did in the TOP program (Tiles for Occupancy Permit). What we should do is get as many contributions as possible and see if we can get to the “maximum” donation, the amount of which the donor wishes not to reveal.

So, let’s get on track and get this railroad built!

By Paul Lodge