



THE SIGNAL



THE GREAT FALLS MODEL RAILROAD CLUB

VOLUME 12. ISSUE 10

MARCH 2011



Member since June 1988

NEXT MEETING
March 17
7:00 p.m.

NEXT MONTH
Deadline for April
March 25, 2011

MEMBERSHIP
121

ATTENDANCE PRIZE

Lee Duguay's name was drawn and he was not present to win.

Will your name be drawn on Mar. 17? You have to be present to win!

BOTTLES FOR BASICS

- ◆ YEAR TO DATE: \$425.55
- ◆ THIS MONTH: \$23.75
- ◆ NEXT MONTH: That is up to you!

Adult Education By Paul Lodge

The Spring Adult Education Model Railroading class has seven new members, plus some who have returned from the fall course. Four of the class members have decided to build modules.

On Tuesday evenings there is a lot of activity and many people are at the club. On the first night, in addition to the seven class members, thirteen club members came to share their support.

The Model Railroading class has benefited the club over the years. Many of our current members first got involved with the club when they took the course. The modules made by the classes provide a continuous supply of new and different modules for our shows. Many people have commented on the fact that our displays always have something new. Because there are many differences in

modeling abilities and interests, people who attend our shows see that they can still have fun with the hobby no matter what their skill level may be. Not all the modules are of a serious nature: some are whimsical, some are used to experiment with new ideas, and some show outstanding modeling techniques and skills.

The all-inclusive nature of the modules has been an inspiration to modelers of varying abilities and interests. We have been



fortunate to have had so much participation in our class throughout the last twenty years or more.

Club T-Shirt Orders by Jerry Johnston

An order for the club T-shirts is being put together. Cost of a shirt is \$12, payable upon receipt of the shirt. Shirts can be ordered in bright green, maroon or royal blue and in any size from XS to XXXL. Please specify quantity, color and size to complete your order. Please send or call this information to Jerry Johnston at 207-966-2932 or Email

jichief@megalink.net. The order will be closed and submitted on March 18, 2011, which will allow for orders to be taken at the next monthly club meeting.



Hart-Swayze Library by Terry King

The next time you stop at the club, please take the time to look at the pictures that have been hung on the walls in the main hall, the Crew Room and the stairwell. We have an interesting array of subjects on display, which I hope you will find pleasing. The many pictures include a publicity poster from the Maine Central Railroad, a 1969 Union Pacific poster, photos of a private car that was sold to the Bangor and Aroostook and then to the Conway Scenic Railway. I want to thank Tom Coulombe for taking the time to hang these pictures and Brenda

Leslie for her help with this project.

Your library has a large number of pictures that are being mounted into albums. If you are trying to model a specific locomotive that belonged to a Maine railroad, we may have the exact picture for you to look at. We have well over a thousand pictures to be mounted. As you can imagine, this is a very time-consuming task.

Did you know that we have over a hundred timetables from a large number of railroads? Do you want to know

what communities your favorite railroad served? We just might have the details.

If you need information on modeling or your favorite railroad, the Hart-Swayze Library should be your first stop!



“Failure is a much more convincing teacher than success. Hopefully, those of us who have failed before can prevent you from experiencing some of the same lessons we did. Please come, partake, learn and enjoy!”

Training Clinics Available By Larry Cannon

The Opportunities Available

One of the items most requested in the January voting for desirable additions to the club’s programs was clinics or training sessions on building layouts and modeling projects. This type of training is available to those interested on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings, weather permitting and when there are no conflicts with other club activities such as train shows or displays.

We are building layouts in N, HO and large scales; and there are plenty of opportunities to learn, participate and build the three layouts. That is a very important part of their function and benefit to the club and its members. You do not have to be an expert to participate. The layouts are being built as group projects that will

take a long period of time to complete and require knowledge or education in all skills used in model railroad-ing.

The HO Layout as an Example

It is estimated that we will need another 10-12 years to fully complete the HO layout. At this point we have spent two years building the bench work, laying roadbed track, assembling control stations and wiring the main line and the larger branch lines. With work and luck, those portions of the layout will be operable this summer.

That milestone will mark the end of the beginning – maybe 10-15% of the time required to fully build, scenic and detail a model railroad of this size. There is still more basic construction like valances and lighting systems, fascia, additional wiring, backgrounds and

planning and building support structure for scenery.

Some people question why we did not just start with one and start building complete layouts as we go. The layouts are diorama art forms and we want to put our best effort out there for public display. You cannot completely build an operating layout until you are sure all of the parts work in unison. That almost always means something will need to be rebuilt. From personal experience in learning how to paint background scenery, all of us get better as we go and need to go back and bring the first efforts up to par.

Back to the Opportunities

If you participate and get in on the ground floor, in “W’s” words, you will become one of the “deciders” because you will know where we screwed up and later had to fix things. Failure is a much more convincing teacher than success. Hopefully, those of us who have failed before can prevent you from experiencing some of the same lessons we did. Please come, partake, learn and enjoy!

Club Members Promote Railroad Safety By Paul Lodge

Since taking the Operation Lifesaver training class at The Great Falls Model Railroad Club in October, club members have been busy making Operation Lifesaver railroad safety presentations. In November, Tom Coulombe made a presentation to a class of potential new truck drivers at the Oxford Hills Truck Driving School in Norway. Dave Gilchrist gave his first presentation to members of the Masonic Lodge in Auburn in December. Phil Clough traveled to Biddeford to introduce railroad safety to more than 200 elementary students in January. On February 23, Dick Clark talked about railroad safety to truck drivers from the Town of Greene public works crews. Maurice Fortin and Stephen Martelli have also given railroad safety presentations. Club member Paul Lodge, a long-time Operation

Lifesaver volunteer, has observed each of these initial presentations in order to give evaluations to Fred Hirsch, Operation Lifesaver State Coordinator.

These Operation Lifesaver presenters will be giving additional presentations as more opportunities arise. If any club member has contacts with other groups that might like to have someone talk about railroad safety, please let one of these members know. In addition to snowmobile clubs,

ATV clubs, civic groups, and schools, Operation Lifesaver presenters often talk with first responders including firemen, police, and EMTs.

We all want to promote railroad safety. Operation Lifesaver is an integral part of our club's educational mission for our 501c(3) Educational Foundation status. If you would like to become an Operation Lifesaver volunteer presenter, contact Paul Lodge. New presenter classes are set up whenever there are enough people to war-



Photo by Paul Lodge, at the Greene Town Hall

Car Weights by Jerry Johnston

I recently went onto the Internet to see if I could find anything new on optimum car weights. Aside from the NMRA RP-20.1 recommended practice, there was very little to be found.

I did find comments from an MR editor on their website that a modeler from the Midwest had referenced a study by a model railroad club back east. That club concluded that optimum car weight would be 20% less than the NMRA RP-20.1. I could not find anything about any of the testing procedures that were used.

I have adopted the philosophy that as long as my car weight is in the 100 – 80% range, then my cars are adequately weighted. This is of help sometimes when you have one of the ready-to-run cars that may not be fully up to 100% of the NMRA practice. The table on our website gives weights in both ounces and grams for both the 100% and the 80% weight for several different car lengths. Check it out at www.gfmrrc.com or with the link from www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org.



Pictures in the crew room.

Photo by Terry King



Paul Lodge

“A video security system will be installed by the end of February. The company putting in the security system is the same company that installed the original alarm system and they hope to make the old system active again.”

January Minutes by Paul Lodge Secretary

The evening's *TRAIN TIME* program featured the Victorian Christmas train of the Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway videotaped by Tom Coulombe, Ed Leslie, and Paul Lodge.

After the *TRAIN TIME* show, Dick Clark gave an interesting clinic on animation. Using several examples of motors that were parts of discarded equipment, he demonstrated how the motors could be used to create motion on the layout.

Rick James opened the meeting and asked those present to introduce themselves. Two new members joined the club at the meeting.

The Secretary's Report was approved as published in the newsletter.

Tom Coulombe gave the Treasurer's Report, which was approved after he answered a few questions.

As Station Master, Tom Coulombe gave a report about the building. He explained the reason for changing the locks. Members who have keys for the old locks can give them to Terry King for recycling. A video security system will be installed by the end of February. The company putting in the security system is the same company that installed the original alarm system and they hope to make the old system active again. The storage closet planned for the entrance room will be built after the weather gets warmer.

Rick James reported that the club cars should be available in about two weeks. Members who have already ordered club cars will be able to pick them

up at the club during open hours or at next month's club meeting.

Jerry Johnston is still taking orders for the club T-shirt. The shirts are \$12 each and can be ordered in different colors. If you would like to order one, call Jerry at 966-2932.

Dick Clark asked how many members would be bringing modules to the shows in Augusta and Owl's Head. We will also be using our club truck to transport enough extra modules to help fill the space provided to us.

Brenda Leslie asked how many members were interested in going to Buxton to visit the Bar Mills Scale Model Works for a tour of Art Fahie's business which uses a laser cutting process to create fine scale models. About twenty club members indicated they are interested in meeting there on Saturday, March 5, at 11 a.m.

Brenda also asked members to check off potential train excursions which could be organized for members to enjoy. On a large pad of paper stationed on an easel, she listed nearly ten suggestions from which members could choose.

Rick James acknowledged Terry King's efforts in filtering through the club's history and organizing a list of important dates for the club as well as reviewing policy decisions voted upon during the club's history. In 1999, the club members had determined that youth members were those aged 16 and under. In actuality, we have been including older members in that category. The Executive Committee voted on February 10 to estab-

lish a new policy which reflects what we are currently doing. Youth members are now defined as those under 21 years of age or still in college.

President James noted that he has started appointing a Nominating Committee to prepare a list of potential candidates for next year's officers.

Paul Lodge reported that we have seven students in our current Model Railroading Adult Education Class. He was pleased that thirteen club members came to help with the first meeting of the course. Members are welcome to come to the class to help on Tuesday evenings at 6:30.

Jay Calnan donated to the club a framed picture of the old Union Station in Portland. He received a round of applause for the contribution. Jay also noted that the runaway train movie "Unstoppable" is now available in local stores.

Representatives for the club's layouts gave reports on their progress. Gary Thibeault indicated that the HO layout Maritime District is wired and the main line is scheduled to be completed by the end of July. Tom Coulombe reported that the N-scale group has plans for a trolley line which will run point to point. Bridge piers have been made and reduced to the proper size. Dick Clark reported that the G-scale is looking forward to developing scenery and having a different look by this year's EX-TRAINaganza.

The Attendance Prize was drawn. Craft Mania owner Lee Duguay's name was drawn. He was not in attendance so the prizes will be available for next month.



Rick James

President's Corner by Rick James

Well, the train show season started off with a bang, with 27 club members making the trip up to Augusta on February 19 for the show. The modules were up and running in no time thanks to all the help. The club tables did well also, helping to offset most of the expense of the video system being installed at the clubhouse. Thanks to all who helped make it a success. The next show will be a new one for the club, we will be heading up to Owls Head Transportation Museum for a modelers show on March 26 and 27. Tom Coulombe and Larry Cannon will be heading up this venture so please contact them for more information on that event. Speaking of models, our club cars have finally have come in! Terry has printed a picture of the car in the newsletter and I hope everyone jumps at a chance at one. There are 50 of the cars and when they are gone, there gone! There has been talk of more club cars but we will

wait to see how this one sells. The people at Accurail have been great to work with and when I told them we may be order more cars, he was happy to show us what was available from them.

As I mention early, the club is in the process of having a video security system installed into the clubhouse. As most of you know by now, we had an incident down at the clubhouse after-hours were part of old layout was damaged. The locks on building were re-keyed and now we have posted hours when the building will be opened. The days and hours are the following: Wednesdays from 5pm to 9pm and Saturday from 7am to 1 pm. There are phone numbers posted on the building if some need to get into it on any other times. Most of knew this day would come, as people know more about us and projects we are working down at the building.

On a much more positive note, Brenda Leslie has stepped- up to take on new position of Activities Director for the club. There was much talk of a need for someone to work on giving the club membership some fun activities for both they and their spouses could enjoy

other than train shows. Brenda has already has come up with one trip to Bar Mills Scale Model Works on March 5th. She has many other ideas for trips so stay posted for more happenings from our Activities Director!

Seems like just yesterday, but it's time to start the process elections for this year. I have appointed Dick Clark, Tom Jones and Bob to the nomination committee. They will getting together sometime soon and have a list of nominates for April meeting.

This club has come a long way in a short time, with last few years seem to be at a dizzying place. Starting in the freight station, then the basement space on canal street alley to now our own building on Mill Street in New Auburn. Most club members varying backgrounds, some of us from the lunchbox set, working set hours for place of business, just worker bees doing a job. Others have been out in world, in school, sales, self-employed, or a managers of crew of people. Some have had the honor of serving our country. But there is bond that draws us all into the Great Falls Model Railroad Club. It is the love Railroads, the history of how they built this nation. There will some disagreements from time to time but overall, the love of rails keep us together.

Special Events Planned for Club Members by Brenda Leslie

Our aspiration is to have fun activities away from the club house. A time not to fuss or agonize about who is to do what and when, but to share the comradery of each other's company. As a consideration, we have suggested a local train ride or visit to a historical site. Please remember that family and friends are welcome to join us on our adventures. At our February 17th meeting, a very unscientific survey was conducted. Worthy of note is the last item, the Eagle Lake & West Branch Railroad, which is one of the most overlooked railroads. Yet in our survey this railroad received more interest than the others. This rail-

road is absorbed in the northern Maine woods and can be accessed only by foot or by boat. A two-night overnight camping trip and a two-mile walk into the sleeping giants are set for July 29 through July 31. Terry Harper, who is an authority on the EL&WB, will be the guest speaker at our April 21 meeting. I do trust you plan to attend!

Here are the results of our survey of the club members interested in the different excursions listed:

- ◆ Mt. Washington Cog Railway – 5
- ◆ Wiscasset, Waterville, & Farmington Railway – 2
- ◆ Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes

- Railroad – 1
- ◆ Maine Eastern Railroad – 4
- ◆ Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad – 0
- ◆ Amtrak's Downeaster – 4
- ◆ Conway Scenic Railroad -4
- ◆ Down East Scenic Railroad – 4
- ◆ Boothbay Railroad Museum – 2
- ◆ Eagle Lake & West Branch RR – 9



Part Of Jerry Johnston's layout.

Photo by Terry King



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www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org

Upcoming Events

March 12 & 13, Bedford Boomers-NH Garden Railway Society
www.nhgrs.com

March 12, Essex Junction, VT, Champlain Valley Fairgrounds
ronprio@aol.com

March 19, Augusta, "O" Gauge Show, Elk's Club,
hotelnorth@midmaine.com, 207-582-1410.

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

April 9 Seacoast Division meeting

Rochester NH

April 10 West Lebanon NH Train Show, Fireside Inn
www.cvr.railfan.net/cvmrr

April 16, 2011, Model Railroad Show, Sanford ME 10:00—3:00

April 30, Model Railroad Show, Mt. Ararat High School, Topsham, Me., 10:00 to 3:00 p.m.

November 5, 2011 Model Railroad Show, Auburn Middle School 10:00—3:00.



Our new car from Accurail will be here soon.