



# The Signal

The Great Falls Model Railroad Club



VOLUME 15. ISSUE 3

AUGUST 2015



Member since June 1988

**NEXT MEETING**  
August 20  
6:45 p.m.

**NEXT MONTH**  
Deadline for  
September Issue  
September 4, 2015

**MEMBERSHIP**  
130

### ATTENDANCE PRIZE

Ed Webb  
won the Attendance  
Prize.  
Maybe next meeting  
it will be YOU!  
Will your name be  
drawn on  
August 20?  
You have to be  
present to win!

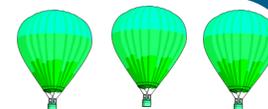
### BOTTLES FOR BASICS

- ◆ Total LAST YEAR
- ◆ \$700.23
- ◆ YEAR TO DATE:
- ◆ \$204.00
- ◆ Last MONTH:
- ◆ \$50.00

Donations of Used  
Ink and Toner  
Cartridges:  
Last Month: \$13.00  
Year to Date:  
\$62.00



## TRAIN FEST



By Paul Lodge

The Great Falls Model Railroad Club will celebrate the Auburn/Lewiston Balloon Festival this month with our fifth annual *Train Fest*. The club will be open on Saturday, August 22, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Sunday, August 23, from noon to 5 p.m. Pictures and models of hot-air balloons will temporarily float in the blue skies above each layout.

As they enter, children will write their names on small paper hot air balloons and add them to a painted backdrop scene. The younger children will enjoy playing with toy trains on the play rug and with the wooden Brio train set on the special layout built at a child's height. In the G-Gauge room, they can operate Thomas the Tank Engine on the recently completed layout and watch the engine named Percy run on the trestle above Thomas. Tickets can be purchased to play the *Balloon Bag Toss* and *Round House Roulette* games and to become a Guest Engineer on the HO layout. A scavenger hunt will encourage people to go into each room to find specific hot-air balloons. The traditional *Bubble Blast* will be held outdoors, weather permitting.



Christopher Gilbert

Club members are asked to help on Saturday and/or Sunday for a few hours or all day by selling tickets, running trains, and supervising layouts and games. Please publicize the event by posting and distributing the colorful flyers available at the club and with email and FaceBook messages to your friends and family. Admission is \$3; children under 12 are admitted free.



CSX, Cornflakes train set for sale in GFMRRC Gift Shop



## DRIVING WAY OUT WEST

By Ray Houlihan

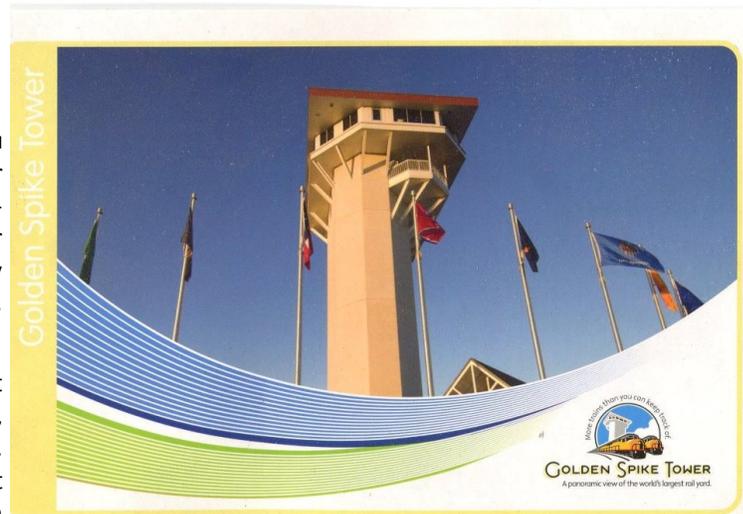
It's coming to the season for long road trips. If you happen to be crossing the prairies for a wedding, graduation or vacation on Interstate 80 in Nebraska, you get within a sixteenth of an inch (less in metric) of The Golden Spike Tower and Bailey Yard. I've known two railfans who have been very disappointed to find they drove right by without stopping. Don't miss it like they did.

Look, it's the biggest railyard in the world. Doesn't matter if you worship Union Pacific or hate The Borg Railroad, you need to see all this railroading. Touristy rail rides are fine. Photo hotspots are great. The eight-story tower is perfectly set near the middle of Bailey Yard. With field glasses you can't see either end, but focus on what you can see.

The Tower is very well set. To your immediate left is engine servicing, sporting maybe 100 units. More SP paint than I would have guessed. A yellow MP15 and the oldest, dirtiest, biggest SP unit (maybe a 90?) haul 20 units at a time to the ready tracks. Next, the east-bound hump faces you, but the cars are coming toward you off the hump. Then, there's the triple track east-bound main. If you like 135 car coal drags.... You are perpendicular to the west-bound hump, a source of most attention getting. The yard power are pairs of SD45s, controlled by ground packs. (Many MP15s were tied up.) You can watch from the time they pick up a cut of cars, maybe 80 or so, until the last one goes over. Occasionally they work down into the hump yard. Lastly, the west-bound main is in the distance. You can watch for hours; I did.

I was there for North Platte's annual railfest in September. It was UP's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday and they put on a great show. The yellow UP exhibition train was headed by steamer 844, which was so big it could be called a Big Boy if the name wasn't already taken. The heritage units were there. UP displayed a lot of their training aids for motive power. It was great to see the machinery with cut-aways and listen while people smart enough to ask a question talked with UP volunteers from the shops. The usual T-shirt (I got 4) and coffee mug (2) vendors were there, along with food and civilian trinkets for sale. Static displays include a DD40X and a 4-6-6-4.

Getting back to The Golden Spike Tower, UP put on a real show. It can't be coincidence that they spent Sunday replacing ties on the east main right in front of the tower--the middle track no less. And the coal drags in speed restriction for the MOW was great. It takes two separate units to keep fuel oil tankers switched for the engine facility. That was quite a switching puzzle. Now, you can go online by googling Golden Spike Tower, North Platte and check out the live cam action, but it's not the same as being there. On a clear, lucky day you can see the yard from a commercial airplane, but it's not the same. Bailey Yard is worth the trip, but for mercy's sake don't drive right by it.



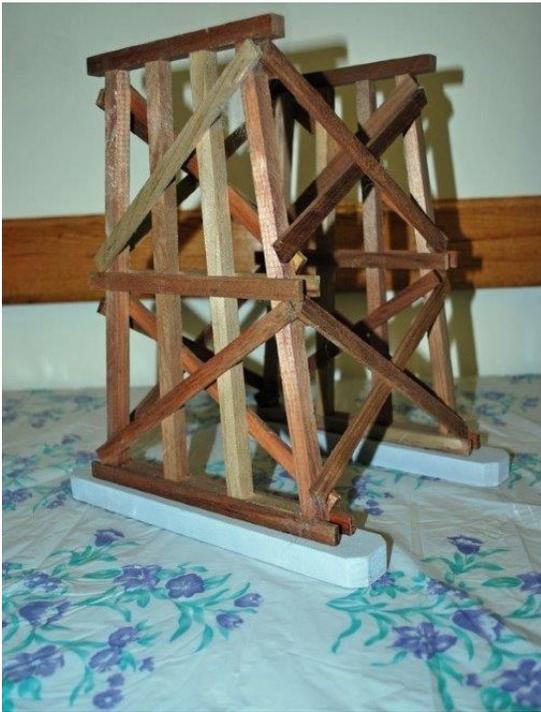
## FIRST PARADE OPPORTUNITY

By Paul Lodge

The Great Falls Model Railroad Club has been invited to participate in the Great Falls Balloon Festival Parade on Saturday, August 22. The parade will begin at 11:00 a.m. and will travel from Bonney Park on Main Street in Auburn to Railroad Park in Lewiston. The route will cover a little more than one mile as it goes north on Main Street in Auburn, across the Longley Bridge to Lewiston, and south on Lincoln Street, finishing at Railroad Park.

This is the first opportunity we have had to display the parade locomotive that was donated to us last month by Operation Lifesaver member Bill Soule of Bangor. New signage on the engine will include the club's name, address, and logo. This extremely well-engineered locomotive is light weight and can be pushed easily through the paved streets. We need one or two club members who are willing to push the locomotive along the parade route. We also need at least one volunteer photographer to take pictures along the route. The pictures will become part of the history of The Great Falls Model Railroad Club. If you are willing to help promote the club with this project, contact Paul Lodge at 966-3641 or [paulldodge@gwi.net](mailto:paulldodge@gwi.net).





The club has for sale two models of G-scale trestle bents. One is 23 inches tall and the other is 13 inches tall. There are 36 of the tall bents and 15 of the short ones. They can be modified to fit outdoors according to the landscape. See Tom Coulombe.

**MODEL RAILROADING CLASS  
STARTS SEPTEMBER 1, 2015**

By Paul Lodge

The fall semester of the Great Falls Model Railroading class starts Tuesday, September 2, at 6:30 p.m. at the clubhouse. For the past few years, we have had young people in every class. Many of them are now members of the club and involved in the Future Master Model Railroaders for 10- to 15-year olds.

This class is advertised through the Auburn Adult Education program and is taught at our clubhouse at 144 Mill Street in New Auburn. The Great Falls Model Railroad Club has been teaching the class for more than twenty years. Participants are encouraged to build a 2- by 4-foot module, which teaches students all the skills they need to have in order to construct their own home layouts.

A large majority of club members have taken the class and then joined the club. All club members are invited to come to the class on Tuesday nights between 6:30 and 8:30 p.m. to help and encourage students in our new class.

Colby & Travis Leavitt with Jay Calnan at last year's Model Railroading Class.



# June

MEETING MINUTES OF

JULY 16, 2015

Submitted by Jerry Johnston



A Power Point slide show of club activities in June was shown from 6:45 to 7:00 p.m.

Vice President Roger Plummer called the meeting to order and led the 27 members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Secretary's report was accepted as published in The Signal. Motion by Bob Willard and second by Terry King.

The Treasurer's report was accepted as presented. Motion by Bob Willard and second by Bill Carson.

The Station Master's report was accepted as presented. The new trim in the meeting room is almost finished. Motion by Terry King and second by Bob Willard.

Bob Willard made a presentation about the merits of the library and what a good asset it is with its large quantity of books, slides, pictures, periodicals, time tables, etc.

Gary Thibeault reported that the work continues on the HO layout. He noted that there will be an operating session on July 18 at the clubhouse.

The G-gauge group has finished the new Thomas the Train Engine display.

The N-scale layout is operating as usual. The club recently purchased a good quantity of N-scale equipment at a beneficial price. The items are of good quality.

Bob Willard reminded everyone of the Modelers Forum on the 4th Thursday of July at 7 p.m. at the clubhouse.

Terry King gave a report on the status of the club calendar project.

Jerry Johnston reminded all present of the club picnic to be held at his home in Minot on Saturday, July 25, from 11 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Peter McKenney of the NMRA Seacoast Division spoke at some length on the upcoming Maine Model Railroad Layout Tours to be held on September 19 & 20. A person needs to be a member of one of the thirteen sponsoring organizations or a guest of one of those members in order to attend. All have to register in advance to participate in the tours. That can be done online at: [www.mainemodelrrtour.com](http://www.mainemodelrrtour.com).

Dick Holman won the 50-50 drawing. Ed Webb won the Attendance prize and selected a mug.

The meeting adjourned.

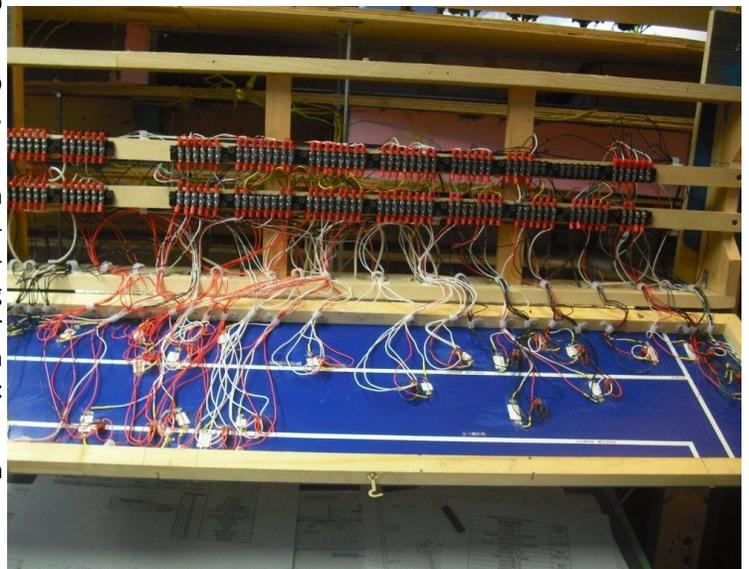
## SPECIAL TRAIN SHOW, AUBURN MALL

On Saturday, August 29, the Great Falls Model Railroad Club will hold our third special train show at the Auburn Mall. The modular HO layout and our children's games will provide entertainment. A children's play area will be available for the youngest children. Again this year we will have the popular scavenger hunt, with about a dozen stores displaying railroad-related items for the children and their families to find. All activities are free.

Annie and Heidi Giroux have their Scavenger Hunt card signed at Nail Trix in the Auburn Mall.



Wiring for Helix control panel



# NEW CONTROL PANEL FOR HO HELIX

By Gary Thibeault

Check out the new control panel for the helix district located inside the big helix on the HO scale layout. Since this panel now gives the dispatcher complete control of all the mainline turnouts in the helix district, he can control which track a train takes as it passes through the district.

The panel also has toggle switches controlling four two-light signals at the boundaries of the helix district: one at the warehouse district, one just outside Thurston Yard, one as you approach Riverton and one soon to be installed at the beginning of Ray's Cut.

Trains approaching a red signal must stop and contact the dispatcher. The engineer gives train info and final destinations of his train. The dispatcher can now set the turnouts so all the engineer has to do is move his train on. When the train clears the signal, the dispatcher resets the signal to red, waiting for the next train to come.

Building and wiring the control panel was a great project. There are 25 toggle switches, 50 LEDs, and about 350 feet of wire. I built the panel at home. Starting with several schematics on paper, I tried to get everything just right. Then I made a mock-up on particle board. After this mock-up was approved by the HO-Scale Committee, I started putting things together. Each track is color coded using the original color code. I had to paint and mask each track until I completed the track plan. This was the hardest part of putting the project together.

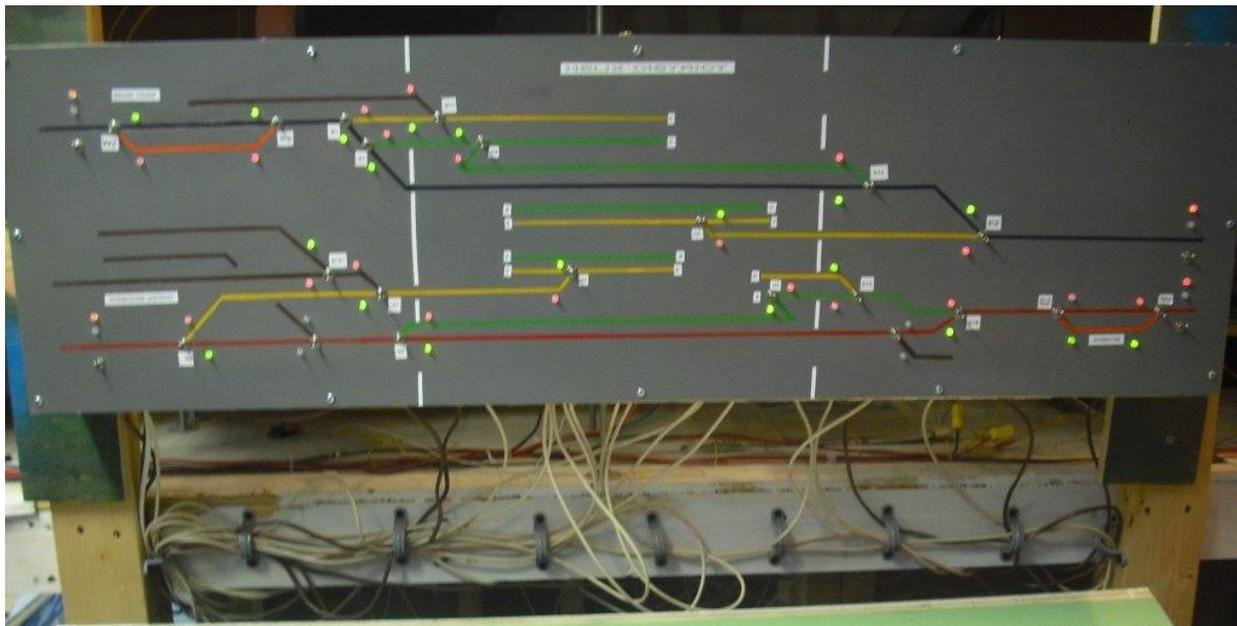
Once the schematic was painted, I drilled all the holes and installed the toggle switches and LEDs. I then prewired the entire panel. When that was done, I installed the panel in the

helix. Paul Richards and Bud Cherry helped hook up all the turnouts in the helix district. Since these turnouts were already hooked up and operational, we made them dual-control. This means that the dispatcher can control the turnouts and, in the absence of a dispatcher, they can be controlled from trackside.

After hooking up all of the turnouts, we installed the four signals. The signals have been a big hit at operating sessions. They add a bit of realism to running trains.

Future projects for the electrical crew include signaling the approaches to Obie Yard and the Ayer/Mechanicsville staging yards.

Gary Thibeault with control panel





## THE GREAT FALLS MODEL RAILROAD CLUB

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### An Educational Foundation

#### MEETING POSTPONEMENTS

If severe weather threatens on a meeting night, Tom Coulombe will notify local television stations that the meeting will be postponed until the following week. This would make it the fourth Thursday of the month instead of the third. Club members who receive the newsletter via e-mail will be notified by e-mail about the postponement.

## OFFICERS:

#### President:

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[jayceeltc@live.com](mailto:jayceeltc@live.com)

#### Vice President:

Roger Plummer

#### Secretary:

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## THE SIGNAL

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[www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org](http://www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org) or [www.gfmrrc.com](http://www.gfmrrc.com)

## Upcoming Events



**August 20** – Regular monthly club meeting 6:45

**August 22** - Train Fest during Balloon Festival 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**August 23** – Train Fest during Balloon Festival 12 to 5 p.m.

**August 27** – Modelers Forum 7 p.m.

**September 1** – Retired Renovators 9-11 a.m.

**September 1** – Model Railroading Class 6:30 – 8:30

**September 10** Executive Committee Meeting 6:30 p.m.

**September 17** – Regular monthly club meeting 6:45

**September 18** – Shriners Northeast visit club

**September 19** – Maine Narrow Gauge visit club

**NOTE:** Model Railroading Class starts September 1 and continues every Tuesday night for 8 weeks from 6:30 to 8:30

**September 7-10, 2016**, 36th National Narrow Gauge Convention at Augusta, Me.

### SHRINERS INVITED TO CLUB

By Paul Lodge

The 2015 Shrine Northeast Fall Field Days will be held in Lewiston and Auburn on September 17 through 20. Canada, Vermont, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine expect to send between 2,000 and 2,500 Shriners. More than

400 hotel rooms, B & B, and campsites have been blocked out for the occasion.

There will be a grand opening event at Veterans Park on Thursday, September 17. Friday, September 18, is an open day for all attendees. We have invited the Shriners to visit our club and enjoy our displays. In March an advance committee of seventy Shriners were given our club's brochure with an Operation Life-saver key ring attached.

On Saturday, September 19, the public is invited to watch the Shriners' Motor Corps Competition at the Auburn Mall. A huge Shriners Parade in downtown Lewiston will also be part of the convention.