

# The Signal

The Great Falls Model Railroad Club



VOLUME 22. ISSUE 3

AUGUST 2013



Member since June 1988

**NEXT MEETING**  
August 15  
6:45 p.m.

**NEXT MONTH**  
Deadline for  
August Issue  
August 30, 2013

**MEMBERSHIP**  
125

**ATTENDANCE PRIZE**  
Ed Leslie won the  
attendance prize.

Kent Waterson won  
the 50/50 raffle.

Will your name be  
drawn on **August 15?**  
You have to be  
present to win!

## BOTTLES FOR BASICS

- ◆ Total LAST YEAR
- ◆ \$363.85
- ◆ YEAR TO DATE:
- ◆ \$236.90
- ◆ THIS MONTH:
- ◆ \$60.40



## BALLOON FESTIVAL TRAIN FEST Paul Lodge



On Saturday, August 17, the Great Falls Model Railroad Club will celebrate the Lewiston-Auburn Balloon Festival with its third annual Train Fest, a family fun event at the club building at 144 Mill Street in Auburn from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Many club members have already volunteered to help at this event and more will be welcome.

As they enter, children will write their names on paper hot-air balloons and pin them to a homasote board painted with a sky and hill backdrop. For this event, brightly colored balloons will be temporarily floating in the blue skies of each permanent layout with various sizes to give perspective. The building has been decorated with model hot-air balloons and many balloons made of paper, including those which demonstrate the possibilities for a craft project. Paper balloons will be available for children and adults to paint or color and then glue to a used DVD to add strength and structure. These can be taken home and hung individually or as part of a mobile.

The Bubble Blast activity outside the building will let families use special wands to create beautiful clusters of colorful, long-lasting bubbles. Children will enjoy the balloon bean-bag toss game, which features a railroad scene with holes cut out for hot-air balloons and puffs of smoke from a steam engine.

Club members have made many changes to the scenery on the layouts. Children can run trains on the club's extensive HO layout as guest engineers. Younger children will enjoy Thomas the Tank Engine in the G-gauge room and the children's play area in the meeting room with age-appropriate trains. For the first time, this will include a special Brio train layout built at a child's height.

Operation Lifesaver will provide railroad safety tips and materials. Model railroad supplies and *TrainTime* videos will be available to buy.

Please plan to come and enjoy the event. If you would like to help and have not already signed up, call Paul Lodge at 966-3641 or send an email to [paul lodge@gwi.net](mailto:paul lodge@gwi.net). You can also volunteer to help on that day, especially if you see a need that is not being filled. Club members who are familiar with the operation of the HO layout can help our "guest conductors" and everyone can help visitors feel welcome. Our best publicity happens when people spread the word among friends and family, and we hope you will do that as well.

Admission is \$3, and children under 12 are admitted free.



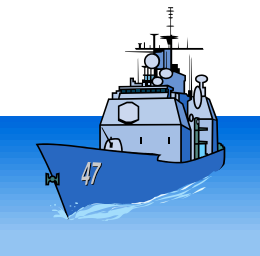
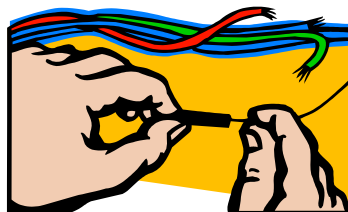
**MEET THE MEMBERS****Gary Thibeault****By Maurice Fortin**

Gary Thibeault is an active member of the Great Falls Model Railroad Club. He and his wife Carol recently celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary with a vacation trip which included a visit to Steamtown in Pennsylvania. They have two sons. William is 23 years old and a member of the 101st Airborne Screaming Eagles. Andrew, who is 20, enjoys photographing trains. Gary has been employed at Bath Iron Works for 34 years as a Material Clerk.

He has enjoyed trains since he was a kid and received an HO set at a young age. Gary became interested in GFMRRRC after seeing the layouts at one of our train shows and has been a member of the club for four years. His HO layout at home is the "Sagadahoc Valley Railroad" and is six feet by seventeen feet. This is his third layout since 1992.

Gary is very much involved in the HO layout at the club. His title for himself is "Chief Wiring Officer". With other club members, Gary spends many Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings wiring the layout so that everything works correctly. As they progress, more areas are being wired to complete each section. Wiring a layout this large requires planning and patience to ensure accuracy. Gary takes part in many of the club activities, including helping children learn how to run the trains at special events and Saturday morning operating sessions. If there are any wiring problems, he is also available to help fix them.

In addition to model railroading, Gary enjoys building models of military planes. His family vacations are planned for railfan sites and have included overnight trips to North Conway, NH, for the Conway Scenic Railroad and to Lincoln, NH, for the Hobo Railroad. Several years ago the entire family went to the railroad museum at Strasburg, PA. Last year Gary, Carol and Andrew visited Horseshoe Curve in Altoona, PA.

**THE SIGNAL****DID YOU KNOW?**

Paul Lodge

Even before the club was officially organized, several model railroaders decided to create a modular HO layout. Paul Lodge made two six- by four-foot modules which had a loop of track that would allow the modules to be used as a dog bone arrangement. With additional four-foot modules, combinations of various lengths could be displayed. Once the club was formed, club members created four corners and made individual modules. Since the two loops were no longer needed, they could then be used as corners or as straight modules.

The original modules were used for the first time outside KB Toys at the Auburn Mall. Club member Bud Santos was the manager of KB Toys. He got permission from the mall management to have the display in front of his store. It was a great attention-getter for the toy store. Many people stopped to watch the trains and some later joined the club.

**OPERATION LIFESAVER  
REGIONAL CONVENTION**

Paul Lodge

One mission of the Great Falls Model Railroad Club is to educate the public about railroad safety. About ten percent of the club members are Operation Lifesaver Authorized Volunteers, and several of them plan to attend the Operation Lifesaver Regional Convention in Mystic, Connecticut, from September 16 through September 18. OL members can ride Amtrak without charge to and from the convention.

Recent federal budget cuts have left Operation Lifesaver without much of its federal funding. Because of its importance for railroad safety, the Class I railroads have stepped in to be sure the program continues to exist. Since the Class I railroads are now in a position of responsibility, some changes to the safety presentations are being anticipated. The regional convention is one way that Operation Lifesaver presenters can learn about these changes. The three-day event will include national speakers discussing several topics of importance. For example, fatalities from pedestrian trespassing have become more of a problem than vehicle collisions. The convention is a place where new information and teaching tools can be obtained, both from workshops and pamphlets.



## ANNUAL CLUB PICNIC AT LODGES ON AUGUST 10

Paul Lodge

Every year club members are invited to bring friends and family to a summer picnic. At this informal gathering, you can relax, socialize, and meet with members of other families who may not attend other club events. The pot luck meal is always tasty and you can bring whatever you'd like to share. There is no special schedule, so there's food for everyone whenever you arrive. Nancy Weeks will bring her "chuck wagon" and will be cooking hamburgers, hotdogs, and other goodies.

This year the annual picnic will be held on Saturday, August 10, at the Lodges' home in West Minot, starting at 10 a.m. and ending when the last guest leaves. Club members should have already received a letter or email with a map and written directions.

In addition to the HO layout in the old hayloft in the upper portion of the barn, there are extensive flower gardens. Nature walks in the woods may include splashing in the brook and visiting the site of the old sawmill owned by Frances' grandfather. The brook is not deep enough for swimming, but anyone who would enjoy wading should wear shoes in the water as protection from the rocks.

Members are encouraged to bring family, friends, pets, lawn chairs, and your choice of food to share. Come to enjoy the surroundings and each other's company.



Seacoast Division meeting at the clubhouse



## NEXT ADULT ED CLASS STARTS SEPTEMBER 3

Paul Lodge

On Tuesday, September 3, the Great Falls Model Railroad Club will again sponsor the Model Railroading class through the Auburn Adult Education program. All the classes will be taught from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the club's facility at 144 Mill Street in Auburn. The class will run for at least eight weeks and end just before the train show at the Auburn Middle School on Saturday, November 2.

Class members are encouraged to build a module which can then be displayed at the Auburn train show. This class has been very popular over the years, and many members have joined the club as a result of their continuing interest in model railroading.

Several club members help at the class every year, and it is because of their dedication that the class continues to be popular. We are a 501c(3) Educational Foundation, and the class fits into the club's mission of promoting model railroading as a hobby.

All club members are invited to participate in the Adult Ed course, even if it means coming only one night out of the eight the course is offered.





# July Minutes by Paul Lodge

**MINUTES OF JULY 18, 2013**

## **MEETING**

Before the meeting started, club members were treated to a slide presentation made by Ed Leslie showing many pictures of club activities since the last meeting. To help give the evening a cooler feeling, the evening's TRAIN TIME program showed the Ski Train on the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railroad in 1996. Terry King had sent e-mail notices telling club members that the building would be cool in spite of the heat wave because the air conditioning would be working for the meeting. Dave Gilchrist suggested that Terry continue to send e-mails to members before each monthly meeting. In the same message, he can also relay other important messages, such as reminders about the Train Fest.

President Ed Leslie opened the meeting and asked for the Secretary's Report. A motion was made to accept the report as published in the Signal.

Tom Coulombe was not present so Terry King gave the Treasurer's Report, which was accepted as given.

Terry also gave the Station Master's report for Tom. An air conditioner donated by Larry Cannon (purchased at a yard sale) has been installed next to the double doors on the lower level. Our dehumidifier had not been working properly until Stephen Martelli made some adjustments and fixed the problem. With the air conditioner and dehumidifier, the humidity downstairs has been reduced from 70% to 49%. It was also reported that the security system has developed some abnormalities. It is dropping member codes and causing the alarm system to go off. Two of the surveillance cameras are not working properly. The installer has been notified and he is looking into the problem.

Gary Thibeault reported that the HO turnouts are being worked on and control panels for the turnouts are being installed. He reminded members that there is an operating session on Saturday, July 20. Ken Nettleship said that Dick Clark has taken the G-Gauge ski slope home to work on. They hope that it will be ready for the Train Fest on August 17.

Paul Lodge noted that the next Model Railroad-ing Class offered through the Auburn Adult Education

program will start on Tuesday, September 3 at the club. The annual Club Picnic will also be held this year at Lodge's home in West Minot on Saturday, August 10.

The Train Fest is scheduled for Saturday, August 17. The Boothbay Railway Museum has donated passes to be used as prizes for club events. A new play area item has been built by Paul Lodge. It is a train table with wooden track and trains, utilizing a Brio system with other compatible tracks and trains which children can enjoy on this 3-foot by 4-foot layout. During the Train Fest, the theme of the Balloon Festival will be evident throughout the building with "hot air balloons" hung from the netting on the ceiling and pictures of hot air balloons on the backdrop scenery in the layout areas. The Balloon Bag Toss game will be used as well as the Bubble Blast. A sign-up sheet was distributed for members to volunteer time to be at the club for the event.

Plans are still being made for the Auburn Mall Train Show on August 24 and 25. We will be using open store fronts for many of the activities, but we do not yet know which ones. We will have the popular mall scavenger hunt again and will try to obtain some gift certificates as prizes for activities. Club members are encouraged to help set up displays on Friday, August 23.

On the first Thursday of each month, our club brings activities to Governor's Restaurant for their Family Night. Every Thursday children get a meal for ninety-nine cents and different organizations provide special activities for the children. The first day of August will be the third time we have done this. We bring layouts and games that we have created for club events. All club members are invited to come to Governor's and help on the first Thursday of each month between the hours of 4 and 8 p.m.

The club module layout corners are being improved. New surfaces have been added, track laid, scenery built, and buildings selected and upgraded. It was recommended that the buildings for the corners be stored carefully so that they will not be damaged between shows.

The Seacoast Division of the NMRA will be meeting at the club on Saturday, August 3, and will have an operating session. Club members are invited to come and enjoy the clinics and help run the layouts.

(Continued from page 4)

Next year the club hopes to be involved in the Moxie Parade in Lisbon Falls. We need to complete an application and make arrangements for decorating our truck and any other floats or vehicles we may want to use. It may be possible to rent space for a booth to explain our club's purpose and publicize our annual events. Charles Bagley also suggested that a display could be set up at the Railroad Restaurant.

At the last club meeting, selling club bumper stickers was brought up as an idea for promoting the club. Marquis Signs has furnished a bid of \$100 for 100 bumper stickers. Terry King made a motion, which passed, to purchase 100 bumper stickers.

For the "Did You Know?" segment of the meeting, Paul Lodge told about our first modular display at the Auburn Mall in 1986. (See article elsewhere in the newsletter.)

Ed Leslie and Bob Willard volunteered for the "What's on Your Workbench?" segment at the next meeting. They will be presenting a clinic on making trees. Terry King was asked to make a presentation on "Thinking Outside the Boxcar."

Kent Waterson won the 50/50 Raffle. Ed Leslie won the Attendance Prize and selected a Bangor & Aroostook cup.

The meeting adjourned.



## CLUB HOSTS SEACOAST DIVISION OF NMRA

Paul Lodge

The Great Falls Model Railroad Club hosted the summer meeting of the Seacoast Division of the National Model Railroad Association on Saturday, August 3. The Seacoast Division represents the Northeast Region of Maine and New Hampshire. Formed in 1986, it is one of eleven divisions of the NMRA. About thirty model railroad enthusiasts from the region participated in this meeting.

Rick Mills conducted a clinic called "Realistic Train Operations on Model Railroads." His presentation explained how to get an operation system up and running with a minimum of paperwork and cost. Starting with the concept of interchange flowing in and out, he had developed a schedule to allow freight and passenger traffic to co-exist using a string diagram. He then set up a card-order system for freight, which is suitable for single or multiple operators.

Great Falls Model Railroad Club member Tom Coulombe explained how operations are handled on the club's extensive HO Layout. Tom and other club members provided an overview of the layout to prepare visitors to enjoy operating trains later in the day.

Dick Holman of the Great Falls Model Railroad Club had brought a diorama and asked for constructive critiques on how to improve his modeling. Tom Oxnard displayed a chemical plant and explained how it was created by using different parts from a variety of model kits.

During the question and answer session, participants posed questions which were then answered by the more experienced members of the group.

Tom Oxnard was presented with the Certificate of Author, which is one part of the NMRA Achievement Program. In order to become a Master Model Railroad-er, an NMRA modeler must complete seven of the eleven model railroading categories. The eleven certificates include building railroad equipment, creating structures and scenery, designing railroad operations, writing magazine articles, and serving the hobby by volunteering or as an officer in NMRA.

After the meeting, an operating session was held on the club's HO layout, with assistance and dispatching by members of the GFMRR Club. Running trains on other clubs' layouts is part of the fun that Seacoast members have while attending regional meetings.

The Great Falls Model Railroad Club provided a lunch cooked by Chef Jerry Johnston and served at the Hobo Café.

Following the luncheon, the Board of Directors of the Seacoast Division held its meeting.



## 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.

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### THE SIGNAL

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## Upcoming Events



**August 10**, Club Picnic

**August 15**, Membership Meeting

**August 17**, Train Fest

**August 24, 25** Train Show  
Auburn Mall

**September 3**, Adult Ed Class  
Starts

**September 12**, Board Meeting

**September 19**, Membership  
Meeting

**September 21**,  
Operating Session

**November 2**, Train Show:  
Auburn Middle School

**November 23-25 and  
29-30: ExTRAINaganza**

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

