

The Signal

The Great Falls Model Railroad Club



VOLUME 26 . ISSUE 7

DECEMBER 2013



Member since June 1988

NEXT MEETING
December 19
6:45 p.m.

NEXT MONTH
Deadline for
January Issue
January 2, 2014

MEMBERSHIP
125

ATTENDANCE PRIZE

No one won the attendance prize this month. Maybe next meeting it will be YOU!

Ed Webb won the 50/50 raffle.

Will your name be drawn on **December 19?**

You have to be present to win!

BOTTLES FOR BASICS

- ◆ Total LAST YEAR
- ◆ \$363.85
- ◆ YEAR TO DATE:
- ◆ \$507.80
- ◆ THIS MONTH:
- ◆ \$90.30



FIFTH ANNUAL

ExTRAINaganza

Paul Lodge



The fifth annual ExTRAINaganza was the best so far. Nearly sixty club members came to help or support this major club event. More than 650 adults attended the five days of the ExTRAINaganza and more than 400 children put their names on our "Train Tree."

The G-Gauge winter scene was an instant attention-getter as children and adults arrived. One of the new attractions was the interactive ski slope created by Dick Clark, which allows children and adults to push a button that activates the skiers coming down the hill. In addition to watching trains, children enjoyed free activities putting their name on the Train Tree, operating Thomas the Tank Engine, and playing with the trains on the wooden Brio layout and in the younger children's play area.

More than 750 tickets were sold to be used for games, crafts, and operating trains on the HO layout as a "Guest Engineer." While waiting downstairs to be "Guest Engineers," families enjoyed watching the trains on the On30 exhibit set up by Bob Willard and Greg Ouellette. Their display is an attractive, highly detailed showpiece with a nostalgic setting.

Children could decorate and eat gingerbread and sugar cookies made by club members and friends. Crafts included decorating spice ornaments with glitter glue and creating tri-bead candy canes to hang on a Christmas tree at home. Operation Lifesaver coloring books and Chuggington posters were given away.

To prepare for the event, several club members had decorated the building and Christmas trees on Monday, November 18. Three of the trees were used to display trains for a special raffle. On the last day of the event, Saturday, November 30, drawings were held for these trains, the club's HO raffle layout, and a colorful train crocheted afghan made by Terry Obie, Rita Vatter, and Terry James. Surplus inventory items and crafts from our "Cottage Industry" were sold as well.

At 2 p.m. on Saturday, the last day of the event, Santa Claus arrived and was greeted by many children and their parents. Several of the families had been to the ExTRAINaganza earlier and came back with free return passes just to see Santa.

Club members were generous with free family passes for the event, and about fifty of the passes were used. Ed and Brenda Leslie gave out passes while they were working at Norm's O-Scale business in Naples. The Auburn Public Library gave out family passes and had flyers and signs promoting our event. During one of the days of the ExTRAINaganza, the *Polar Express* was read at the Auburn

(Continued on page 2)

MEET THE MEMBERS

**Owen
Buck**

By Maurice Fortin



(Continued from page 1)

library and families received ExTRAINaganza passes as they left.

Governor's Restaurant and Bakery distributed our free passes and publicized the event with our handouts and our large display sign. They also donated chocolate chip cookies which were sold or used as prizes for the "Roundhouse Roulette" game. Governor's supplied coupons which their customers could use for half off the second entrée at the restaurant. Carlene Barnies, Governor's Lewiston Manager, visited the club for the first time and was surprised and favorably impressed at what the club had to offer families. She also saw how we promote Family Night every Thursday when the restaurant provides kids' activities and a special children's menu with meals for 99 cents. The Great Falls Model Railroad Club members bring railroad layouts and games on the first Thursday of each month.

Publicity for this event was seen in the Turner Publishing Company newspapers which cover most of central Maine. *Twin City Times* displayed our article and photo on their front page. The *Lewiston Sun/Journal* not only published our article in advance but also sent photographer Russ Dillingham during the event, putting his picture on their website and on the front page of their newspaper the following day. Some of those who came to the event mentioned hearing the message on radio or seeing it on local cable television, our website, or Facebook. Many people came because they saw the signs which Jerry Johnston put out around town.

The success of the fifth annual ExTRAINaganza is due to all the club members who helped and supported this event.

Owen Buck is a psychiatrist at the Togus VA Medical Center. Before that, he worked at Tri County Mental Health for sixteen years. He has been married to Donna for thirty-six years and they have two children, Peter and Samantha.

He first joined after taking the adult model railroad training course about eight years ago. He has been a member since then, but an inactive one. He is now anticipating retirement and having a lot more time for hobby interests.

Owen enjoys the HO scale. He used to have a small layout at home. He has recently torn out and renovated his basement, and he is now in the benchwork stage for a much larger layout. He is interested in the overall history of railroading, as opposed to modeling any one era. He hopes to eventually have a train (and a layout sector) that will be representative of several eras from the earliest days to contemporary.

Owen and Donna are avid bird watchers. They try to do a trip per year from their bucket list, and last year their trip was to Alaska. This year it was Panama, where part of their tour included a ride on the Panama Railroad along the canal.

Levi Taylor, Jack Gilpatric frosting gingerbread cookies



NOVEMBER SUCCESS

Paul Lodge

Wow! We had a good month of November. The club train show on Saturday, November 2, was a financial success because so many club members came to help and support the club. On Friday, November 1, about twenty club members helped set up dealer tables and cleared the cafeteria for the club modules. More people attended the show than usual, and we had additional income from the display and sale of the club crafts and from sales of raffle tickets on the train afghan made by Terry Obie, Rita Vatter, and Terry James.

Bob Willard had arranged for two clinics. Bob Bennett conducted a clinic on creating buildings "From Concept to Conclusion" and Paul Lodge demonstrated techniques for painting scenic backdrops. Clinics had been an integral part of our November train show in the early years, and we hope to bring back the clinics as part of our annual train show.

On the first day of the ExTRAINaganza, Terry King, Tom Coulombe, and Jerry Johnston went to the Eastern Maine Train Club show in Brewer to sell surplus inventory. While in Brewer, club member Travis Bragg came to help them out. The five-day ExTRAINaganza was also a financial success. Even more important was the fact that many families found us for the first time. Nearly sixty club members helped or supported our effort.

Thank you everyone for making November 2013 the best month we've ever had!

Terry J, Rita V and Terry O hard at work at the Auburn Show



WW&F VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS

Paul Lodge

The Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway sponsors free train rides during its annual Victorian Christmas. On December 21, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., the WW&F will again be giving free train rides as a "Thank you" to the abutting landowners along the train route. The general public is also invited to enjoy the event. Last year over 1,000 visitors came to ride the Victorian Christmas trains. In the past, several club members have gone together to enjoy the train rides and each other's company.

Riders will travel in vintage passenger cars behind a narrow gauge steam locomotive and get off at Alna Center. They can then take a sleigh ride if there is snow or a wagon ride if there is not enough snow. Either the sleigh or wagon will be pulled by horses. Inside the Sheepscot station, guests can get refreshments and buy items at the gift shop. Artifacts can be found and examined at the engine house, which is open to the public.

The WW&F has many members from the United States and around the world. Financial contributions from its members and other individuals are used to maintain and expand the railroad and cover its annual operating costs. Several of our club members are contributors to the WW&F and/or volunteer regularly to work on the railroad. Club member John Robertson, who is a WW&F volunteer, has been instrumental in getting family passes for our club to use as raffle prizes at several of our events.

Get a group together and enjoy a day riding the Victorian Christmas train on the Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway.



Caleb is playing with the Brio table layout



November Minutes by Paul Lodge



MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 20, 2013 MEETING

President Ed Leslie was not able to attend the meeting. Paul Lodge moderated the meeting in his place. Instead of the usual slides of the previous month's activities, there was a video of November club activities from 2008. The TRAIN TIME video of the evening featured trains in California.

The Secretary's Report was accepted as published in the Signal.

Station Master Report: Tom Coulombe reported that plastic covers have been placed over the air conditioners. Two birthday parties have been scheduled, including one that was held on Sunday, November 17, from 1 to 3 p.m. On Friday, November 15, Tom Coulombe, Jerry Johnston, and Rick James traveled to Cornish to pick up Patty Ireland's layout with structures and other supplies. A program of labeling Great Falls equipment and supplies has begun. It is hoped that this will help us keep track of club materials versus equipment brought in by members. The DOT sign project is underway. One sign will be placed on Riverside Street 7/10ths of a mile from the club, and the other will be placed at Rooper's on Main Street 1/10th of a mile from the club. The HO modular layout will be set up at the Maine State Library and Museum on Thursday, December 5, and will be available for the public to see on Friday and Saturday, December 6 and 7. Some members of the club will also be helping at Governor's Restaurant Kids' Night on Thursday, December 5.

Library Report: Terry King said that some books were left in our mail box. He does not know who they came from.

Chamber of Commerce: Terry King and Jerry Johnston distributed packets of free material at the November meeting of the Chamber of Commerce. The packet included the club's brochure, a flyer about the ExTRAINaganza, and a free pass.

Next Adult Ed. Class: Paul Lodge announced that the spring semester of the Model Railroading Class will start Tuesday, February 11, and finish in time for the Mt. Ararat Show.

ExTRAINaganza: Decorating for the ExTRAINaganza took place on Monday, November 18. This year tickets will be used for Guest Engineers who are running the HO layout. Tickets will be one dollar

each and can also be used for all the crafts and the Roundhouse Roulette. Raffle tickets for the three trains under the trees, the raffle layout, and the afghan will be sold separately. Winning tickets for all of the raffles will be drawn on Saturday, November 30. Tom Coulombe will make arrangements to get coupons from Governor's for the event.

HO Layout Site Names: Gary Thibeault and the HO group have requested that three upper yards be named for Al Thurston, Ray Viere, and Wally Chase. The Executive Committee voted unanimously to approve the location names.

Fund Raising: Because of our success with the Power Team effort, it was suggested that we could do the same thing with the Water and Sewage bill, which is about \$30 each month. It was proposed that this could be called the "Utility Team" with both the "Electrical Power" and the "Water & Sewage" units being options for pledges during the coming year.

Did You Know? Paul Lodge gave a brief explanation about the club's Christmas party tradition. The parties started in 1991 and have been held in several different locations as the club moved from place to place.

Thinking Out of the Boxcar Jerry Johnston displayed a paving device he created for building realistic-looking roads.

What's on Your Workbench? Brenda Leslie gave a slide presentation of buildings and scenes she has created at Norm's O-Scale business.

There will not be any special clinics during the Christmas party on December 18. Volunteers for the January meeting are as follows: Stephen Martelli will do the "Thinking Out of the Boxcar" segment. Jerry Johnston will tell us "What's on his Workbench."

The 50/50 drawing was won by David Gilchrist. Three names were drawn for the Attendance Prize, but none of the people were in attendance.



DECEMBER ACTIVITIES

Paul Lodge

Isn't it great to be part of an active club which shares its love of trains with children and their families?

DECEMBER 1 Tom Coulombe and Paul Lodge were at the club to supervise a birthday party for three-year-old Gabriel Berube. About thirty children and adults attended the two-hour party.

DECEMBER 5 Club members supervised the Brio train set and the "Roundhouse Roulette" game for "Family Night" at Governor's Restaurant in Lewiston. Every Thursday the restaurant offers kids' meals for 99 cents; and on the first Thursday of each month, the Great Falls Model Railroad Club provides the entertainment while families wait for their meals. If you are interested in helping at "Family Night" in the future, contact Tom Coulombe or Paul Lodge.

DECEMBER 5 Several club members traveled to Augusta to set up our modular layout at the Maine State Museum.

DECEMBER 6 and 7 People visiting the museum on Friday and Saturday saw several train displays and had free admission to the Maine State Museum.

DECEMBER 12 Your Executive Committee meets at 6:30 at the club.

DECEMBER 13, 14, or 15 Club members will travel to Belgrade to display trains for an event which includes the Polar Express. Travis Johnson will exhibit his DCC equipped HO layout with the help of Bryce Weeks. Ken Nettleship and Dick Clark will display G-Gauge equipment in a village scene.

DECEMBER 13, 14, 15 The Woman's Literary Union of Androscoggin County has asked the club to set up a display with a train under the Christmas tree. The WLU mansion, located at 19 Elm Street in Auburn, was donated to the WLU by Horatio and Ella Foss in the 1940s. Each room in the mansion has been fully decorated for Christmas by different volunteer groups from Lewiston and Auburn.

DECEMBER 19 The Club Christmas Party

DECEMBER 20 Dick Clark will set up a G-Gauge display on the stage of the Pine Tree Elementary School in Conway, New Hampshire.

Club member Stephen Martelli has many engagements as Santa Claus throughout the months of November and December.

DECEMBER 25 Merry Christmas



UTILITY TEAM

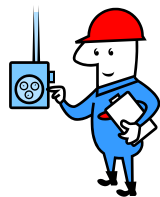
Paul Lodge

At the November Executive Committee Meeting, it was suggested that we expand the *Power Team* concept to include the monthly water and sewage charge.

The new pledge option will be called the **Utility Team**. It will include \$150 pledges for the *Power Team* monthly electricity bill, and \$30 pledges for the *Water Team* monthly bill.

As almost everyone knows, our annual dues of \$30 do not cover all the costs of the building. The club's philosophy has always been to be an inclusive club—one which anyone can join. This philosophy has sustained our organization while others have ceased to exist. We have a vibrant membership of younger and older members, a club which can continue to exist into the foreseeable future. In order to continue to be an inclusive club, members who can afford to pledge more than the annual dues have been a major reason for our continued success. Since we first decided to purchase this building, several club members have made substantial financial contributions. Others have made contributions of time, supplies, and equipment. It all works together for the common good.

By having two options for pledges, we hope more members will be able to contribute to our financial success.



Santa's visit at ExTRAINaganza



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



December 12, Board Meeting

December 19, Membership Meeting.

Christmas Party

December 21,

WW&F VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS

from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m

January 9, Board Meeting

January 16, Membership Meeting

January 25 - 26

West Springfield, MA

Amherst Railway Society Railroad Show

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

