



The Signal

The Great Falls Model Railroad Club



VOLUME 29 . ISSUE 10

MARCH 2014



Member since June 1988

NEXT MEETING
March 20
6:45 p.m.

NEXT MONTH
Deadline for
April Issue
April 1, 2014

MEMBERSHIP
125

ATTENDANCE PRIZE

Stephen Martelli won the Attendance Prize. Maybe next meeting it will be **YOU!**

Will your name be drawn on
March 20?
You have to be present to win!

BOTTLES FOR BASICS

- ◆ Total LAST YEAR
- ◆ \$363.85
- ◆ YEAR TO DATE:
- ◆ \$625.48
- ◆ THIS MONTH:
- ◆ \$36.00

What Exactly Is a Schnabel?

Ray Parent

A Schnabel railcar is a set of two identical and highly specialized freight cars, each equipped with a very large lifting arm that pivots at one end, which is supported by a series of independent trucks or bogies. The other end of the arm is bolted to the load being moved. As such, it is designed for the transportation of heavy and/or oversized loads. When the load is attached to the lifting arms, the entire assembly of the two "freight cars" and the load becomes a single long rigid freight car, as seen in the 1/32 scale scratchbuilt model below being pulled by a Maine Central U25B.



Without the load, this Schnabel car measures approximately 6' long (198 scale feet) and can carry loads up to 3.5' long (113 scale feet). It was scratchbuilt almost entirely out of basswood, utilizing 16 LGB modern freight trucks, and is modeled (with some selective compression) after the world's largest commercial Schnabel car, Combustion Engineering's CEBX 800. A total of four different loads were built. In addition, the auxiliary equipment that made up the rest of Schnabel consist was also modeled.

The model was operated publicly for the first time on the Great Falls Model Railroad Club layout at the Amherst Model Railroad Society's West Springfield, Mass. Model Railroad Show in January 2014, where we won the "Best in Show" Layout award, as mentioned in the February issue of the *Signal*.

To the best of our knowledge, this is the largest G Gauge Schnabel model ever built. Details of its unique design and construction are featured in the April 2014 issue of *Garden Railways* magazine.



MEET THE MEMBERS

Maurice Fortin

Nancy Weeks



Nancy Weeks is a grandmother who is very active in the Great Falls Model Railroad Club. She is a widow who lost her husband to cancer several years ago. She says they skipped children and went directly to grandchildren, as her husband had children from a previous marriage. She is employed by the State of Maine as an assessor in the Unorganized Territories of the State during good weather and reviewing municipal records during the winter.

Nancy is an outdoors person who enjoys camping and any aspect of outdoor life. When several club members visited the "Trains from Nowhere to Nowhere" outside Greenville, she brought the "kitchen." In addition to cooking utensils and supplies, she erected a large tent under which everyone could eat. For the last two years, she has also brought this portable "kitchen" to the club's annual summer picnic at Tom Coulombe's and Paul Lodge's houses.

Nancy's grandson Bryce has enjoyed model railroading for a long time. His grandfather got him involved with Great Falls Model Railroad Club. After he passed away, Nancy joined Bryce and became active with the club. Nancy and Bryce took the model railroading class together in the 2011 spring session. Although they do not have a model railroad at home, Bryce is primarily interested in the HO scale and enjoys the Saturday operating sessions at the club and the operating sessions at Jerry Johnston's and Tom Coulombe's homes.

Nancy takes an active role in most club activities. She says, "If I'm going to be involved, I want to be busy." She is an excellent cook who brings food for the workers and helps Jerry Johnston in the Hobo Café during our club fundraising functions. Currently, she and Travis Johnson are looking for ways to get the club's youth more active, organized, and recognized for their contributions.

Besides model railroading, she enjoys her dogs Goldi and Jake and horseback trail riding with her two granddaughters Ashley and Taylor. Nancy is also treasurer for the Maine Association for Search and Rescue, treasurer of Maine Mounted Search and Rescue, secretary of West Gardiner Rod & Gun

Club where she oversees several hunter safety courses, and leader of Loose Shoe 4H. She is involved with Maine Trail Riders Horse Club and Barnstormers Snowmobile Club.

Nancy Weeks has become a valuable member of the club and her helpful suggestions and involvement are greatly appreciated.

VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES AT THE MODEL RAILROADING CLASS

Paul Lodge

This spring's Auburn Adult Education Model Railroading Class has five adults and three youngsters. Brothers Benjamin and Tim Ostergaard from Cumberland recently joined the club, and each is making a module. Maximus Jacobson from Monmouth and his grandmother are also making a module.

A fascinating element in this class is that there are two other construction projects that are not modules.

Janet Colyear from Topsham is building a Christmas display about four feet square. Inside the circle of track will be tunnels, snow, and Hallmark Christmas buildings at different levels. The entire setting will be placed in front of a window in her home so that it can be seen from outside as well as inside the house.

The husband and wife team of Richard and Janet Plouffe from Industry have an American Flyer layout at home. They are interested in building scenery during the class and adding it to their home layout.

Every Adult Ed class is different, and this one seems to have more variety than usual. Class meets every Tuesday from 6:30 to 8:30. Club members are invited to come to help with modeling techniques including wiring and scenery.



Maximus Jacobson & Amanda Gray working on their module

MARCH 20, TO 23

A BUSY TIME

Paul Lodge

In addition to our regular club meeting on Thursday, March 20, the Great Falls Model Railroad Club will have a busy four-day weekend. On Thursday and Friday, March 20 and 21, our club will be open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for visitors from the NCAA Division III Hockey Final Four championships. Members who would like to help welcome guests are encouraged to come. (See separate article elsewhere in the newsletter.)

Saturday, March 22, will be a work day at the club, but the usual operating session will be postponed until March 29 as many members will be in Augusta and Rockland representing the club at shows.

In Augusta, the Maine 3-Railers are having their spring O-Gauge train show on Saturday, March 22. Terry King and Carmen Anastase will be at the Augusta show with the club's O-Gauge surplus inventory to sell.

At Owls Head near Rockland, several members have made motel arrangements for the weekend. At this modelers' show, the club will be represented with a modular layout, the club raffle layout, surplus inventory sales, and Operation Lifesaver displays. Members will be setting up displays on Friday for the weekend show on Saturday, March 22, and Sunday, March 23.

MODEL RAILROADING AND HOCKEY?

Paul Lodge

The Androscoggin Bank Colisee is hosting the NCAA Division III Hockey Final Four on March 21st and 22nd and Lewiston-Auburn will have thousands of visitors from around the United States starting as early as March 19. The Androscoggin County Chamber of Commerce is working with the tournament host and the Maine Sports Commission to welcome our out-of-town guests. The Chamber has asked its members for ideas to help visitors have a remarkable experience while visiting the area.

The Great Falls Model Railroad Club Learning Center and Museum will be opened for guests on Thursday and Friday, March 21 and 22 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. We will be able to give visitors tours of all the model railroad layouts as well as the library and museum pictures and artifacts. In the Adult Education section of the lower level, they will be able to see the progress being made on the modules by the current class. *TRAIN TIME* videos will be running in the meeting room for those who wish to relax for a while. Anyone who would like to help welcome visitors is encouraged to come.

This is a big opportunity for Lewiston and Auburn with many special activities being planned. The organizers are trying for a "block party" and carnival atmosphere at the Colisee. Local restaurants will have tables with samples of their cuisine, magicians will be performing, and musicians will be playing.

Operating the Great Falls Railroad - Part 2

Cab Ride to Obie

By James Vatter

"AYOB-6 to dispatch." With these words, begins another chapter in the Great Falls Railroad (GFR) story. AYOB-6 is the symbol of a train that started in the yards of PanAm Southern in Ayer, MA, (AY) and will terminate in Obie Yard (OB) on the GFR.

AYOB-6 has two MEC EMD GP-38's on the head, Numbers 261 and 263. The train consists of 25 cars including kaolin clay, coal, boxcars loaded and empty, and other assorted cars. The first four cars behind the 263 will be set out in Riverton. There are two grain hoppers and two boxcars, and there should be cars for us to pick up.

The radio crackles, "Go ahead AYOB-6." Our conductor answers with the engine numbers and our destination and informs dispatch that we have setouts for Riverton.

"AYOB-6, your call sign is 261. [Our lead loco.] You have permission to Cave Junction switch," the dispatcher informs us.

"261 has permission to Cave Junction switch, 10-4," the conductor responds. The engineer throttles up and the engines come to life. The locos move slowly as we pull the slack from the train. When the crew in the caboose informs us they are moving, the engineer moves the throttle to notch 6 as we begin the slight climb up to Wilder. On the approach to Wilder we pass a large beach and open field. Someday there will be a busy seaport here. The vibrations from the floor boards slacken as we crest the grade and our engineer backs off the throttle slightly.

We pass through Wilder at track speed, 40 MPH. The small town of Wilder has two customers on one siding, a team track and a farm supply company. There is an empty boxcar at the team track and workers at the farm supply are closing hatches on a hopper that was spotted the day before. One of the grain hoppers we are moving to Riverton is going to be spotted here later today by a local running out of Riverton.

We roll into the S curves that pass us over a river and under the Cave Junction branch. Coming out of the S curves we enter a tunnel and begin the long pull up to the Cave Junction switch. The 261 and 263 are running in notch 8 when we hit the darkness of a tunnel. The roar of 5,000 horsepower is deafening in the confined space of the tunnel and the acrid smell of diesel exhaust begins to assault our noses when the 261 blasts out of the tunnel and into the sunshine and fresh air. We are moving at about 30 MPH as we round the curve at Lower Lookout Point and pass the reservoir.

(Continued on page 5)

January Minutes by Paul Lodge



MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 20, 2014 MEETING

The entertainment for the club meeting began with a combination slide and video show of the award-winning G-Gauge multi-level display at the West Springfield Show. The evening's TRAIN TIME program featured the trains on the Sunset Route in California.

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. A different feature was added to the Secretary's Report. Paul Lodge summarized the minutes from the meeting of February 17, 1994. It was interesting to listen to some of the items that were discussed twenty years ago by people who are still in the club. Those present agreed that we should continue to read minutes from twenty years ago at future monthly meetings.

Tom Coulombe gave the Treasurer's Report, which was approved as given. He noted that the next big bill is the \$1,300 Auburn property taxes. It is hoped that income from the next shows will help cover the tax bill.

As Station Master, Tom Coulombe observed that one of the outside lights is not working. As soon as funds are available, an LED light will be purchased to replace the broken one.

Travis Johnson reported that the HO scale layout will hold operating sessions on Saturday, February 22 and again on March 1. Because the Owls Head Show is on the third Saturday of March, operating sessions will be rescheduled for Saturday, March 29 and April 5.

Ken Nettleship said that the G-gauge Division is planning to convert the rolling stock wheels from plastic to metal. They also plan to standardize the couplers to the USA Trains couplers. They will continue working on the winter scenery featured in the lobby and hope to have it completed by the Hobo Holiday on May 17.

Tom Coulombe noted that Charles Bagley has constructed some more buildings on the N-scale layout. The layout is now DCC compatible and has four engines with decoders.

Ed Leslie announced the names of the Nominating Committee. They are Maurice Fortin, Nancy Weeks, and Darin Long.

Bob Willard asked if there was any interest in hav-

ing a regular meeting of members to discuss modeling ideas. There was sufficient interest expressed, and the first meeting will be Thursday, March 13, at 7 p.m.

Jerry Johnston explained the "12 Gifts of Christmas" raffle and suggested that members could take tickets to sell to friends and relatives. This is a limited raffle with only 900 tickets available for sale.

Stephen Martelli told the group about his Appalachian Trail 2,186-mile excursion which will start in March and last for as many as five months. He gave members handouts showing mail drops where people can send encouraging messages to him as he walks the trail.

The Chamber of Commerce is looking for activities for people coming to the Lewiston/Auburn area during the Division III National Hockey Final Four tournament on March 21 and 22. It was agreed that the club could host visitors during the tournament.

Paul Lodge noted that the Bottles for Basics have already reached the goal of \$500 and we still have a few months to go before the end of our year in May.

We have been invited to the West Paris Old Home Days on Friday and Saturday, June 13 and 14. As this event has a carnival atmosphere, we will take all our games in addition to the modular layout and try to generate some extra income.

The current Adult Ed Model Railroad Class has three youngsters and five adults. They will be doing a variety of diorama modeling in addition to creating modules.

Larry Cannon displayed several buildings he had created from two kits that were designed for something else. This "Thinking Out of the Boxcar" concept is one in which the kit materials were used to create totally different structures.

Ken Nettleship introduced the "What's on Your Workbench?" portion of the meeting by exhibiting some scratch-built N-scale buildings he made when he first started modeling at age six. To make a replica of a current building, he suggested taking several photos of what one wants to model and making a pencil drawing of the building to scale. He uses the drawings as templates to cut pieces for actual construction. Ken passed around several buildings on which he is currently working and also displayed trees he has made using different types of natural materials. He also brought a VW beetle, donated by Dave Kierstead, which he had repainted in John Deere colors.

Stephen Martelli won the 50/50 raffle and also the Attendance Prize, giving him a good start for his long journey on the Appalachian Trail.

(Continued from page 3)

The 40+ year old engines are still screaming in notch 8 as we approach the GFR's largest customer, International Paper, on our right. As we draw near the Cave Junction switch, the engineer begins to back off on the throttle, using gravity to slow the train and save the air in his tanks. We look at the paper mill as we pass by. A GFR crew spends its entire day working the maze of tracks in this mill. The mill switcher is shoving a cut of pulpwood cars into the log yard as we creep by.

We ease up to the signal that protects the Cave Junction switch and come to a stop. This is where the lead to the IP Mill and the Cave Junction branch begins. Our conductor keys his radio. "261 to dispatch," he says.

"Go ahead 261," comes the reply.

"261 is holding at the Cave Junction Switch"

"OK 261, you will be waiting for the OBWV-L to pass."

"261 is holding for the OBWV, 10-4"

We see the OBWV-L approach, and our conductor climbs off the loco to give the train a roll by inspection. The Alco RS-3 bumbles by with a dozen empty woodchip cars in tow. The conductor waves a greeting to the engine crew and the rear end brakeman as the caboose clears the junction. Our conductor informs dispatch that OBWV has cleared Cave Junction. We are given clearance to Riverton south and we are told to take the siding there. We are also told to contact the Riverton switch crew and coordinate the switching with them. Our Geep's come to life as we struggle to get our tonnage moving up the hill. Sand is applied, the wheels find purchase on the rails and we close in on Riverton south. The south switch is open and we begin to take the siding.

Our conductor is in contact with the Riverton switch as we move into the siding. We inform them of the four cars we have to set out. They tell us they have three empty hoppers and two loaded boxcars for us to pickup. The caboose crew tells us we've cleared the south switch and we let dispatch know this. The silos of the Riverton Agway block out the sun as we enter the Riverton passing siding. The Agway is the largest customer in Riverton, which takes up to eight loads of grain daily, and the equipment dealer where we set out loads of farm machinery. We cross the river and see the Maine Master Weaves building. Boxcars of threads or yarn are set out here and they ship boxcars full of bolts of cloth. With the assistance of the Riverton crew we complete our moves in Riverton and move to the north switch.

We tell dispatch we have completed our work and ask permission to continue our journey to OB Yard. Dispatch

says we have to wait for two southbound trains, a hot Intermodal and an auto rack train. Fifteen minutes pass and we hear the horn blasts as the first train approaches the crossing in Mechanic Falls north of us. Our conductor climbs down to give it a roll by inspection. The headlight of the lead SD40-2 is seen down the tracks. The CPWO-Z-2, or "Z" train as they are called, roars passed. Double stack containers in well cars and truck trailers on spine cars fly by at 60 MPH. This train originated at the CP Rail interchange and is headed for the Worcester, Mass, Intermodal yard where we interchange with the CSX. With the departure of the Z train, relative silence returns to Riverton north as we wait for the next train.

A slight breeze rustles the trees and our Geeps' idle patiently on the siding. Air horns sound to the north again and, CPAY-A-2 with a pair of Guilford GP-40-2's runs down the rails southbound with a string of auto racks loaded with Canadian manufactured cars. This train also originated at CP Rail and is headed for the automobile ramps at the Ayer, Mass., yards.

The roll by complete, our conductor climbs aboard the 261 and calls dispatch. We are finally given permission to enter the mainline and complete our run to OB yard limits, where we are to contact OB yardmaster. Easing out to the main line we sound the horn for the crossing at Mechanic Falls. One customer is worked here by the Riverton crew, a coal dealer. We leave the south main line and enter Helix Junction, here we enter the north main line and pass the Warehouse District. We see the Warehouse District switcher setting out a boxcar at River City Textiles.

Continuing north, we ease to yard speed as we pass the OB Intermodal yard, OBI. A pair of MP15-1's is marshalling intermodal cars through the canyons formed by stacked containers in the yard. We stop at the OB yard limits and call the OB yardmaster. We are given clearance onto yard track 2. We begin moving slowly and pass the Chase Locomotive facility. Workers are busily moving about the fueling racks as we go by. They are fueling, filing sand bunkers and inspecting locomotives, getting them ready for another trip on GFR rails.

Our train moves onto track 2 as the south yard crew is pulling track 5 to sort cars for an OBAY, or OBHC, or maybe a local. When the caboose is clear we stop our train and cut the locomotives loose from our train. Our run is done, but our work is not. We now must take our locos through the yard and put them on the inspection track that we passed on our way in. We park our tired veterans of American railroading at the fuel rack and tie them down. Immediately workers begin their job of reading the Geeps for more trips on the GFR. We grab our gear and paperwork and climb off the locomotives and head for home.

That is just one train of the many that keep the GFR alive. I hope you've enjoyed this trip and join us for the Saturday sessions that this story represents.



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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Upcoming Events



- March 1,** Operating Session
- March 13,** Board Meeting
- March 20,** Membership Meeting
- March 22,** Maine 3-Railers Show, Augusta Elks Lodge
- March 22-23,** Owls Head Model Festival
- March 29,** Operating Session
- April 5,** Operating Session
- April 10,** Board Meeting
- April 17,** Membership Meeting
- April 26,** Train Show, Mt. Ararat, Topsham

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



Stephen Martelli ready to leave for his Appalachian Trail hike. He will be gone for about six months as he walks the 2,181 mile trail from Georgia to Maine