



The Signal

The Great Falls Model Railroad Club



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APRIL 2014



Member since June 1988

NEXT MEETING
May 15
6:45 p.m.

NEXT MONTH
Deadline for
May Issue
May 1, 2014

MEMBERSHIP
135

ATTENDANCE PRIZE

Dean Ostergaard won the Attendance Prize. Maybe next meeting it will be **YOU!**

Will your name be drawn on May 15?

You have to be present to win!

BOTTLES FOR BASICS

- ◆ Total LAST YEAR
- ◆ \$363.85
- ◆ YEAR TO DATE:
- ◆ \$701.48
- ◆ THIS MONTH:
- ◆ \$76.00

OPERATING ON THE GREAT FALLS RAILROAD -- PART 3 Intermodal Operations on the GFR

James Vatter

Most of us know the ups and downs in the history of American Railroads. The most recent downward spiral started in the 50's with the combination of airlines and automobiles eroding passenger traffic, and the interstate highway system taking freight. Truckers' ability to give prompt door-to-door service was an advantage that railroads could not overcome. It was said that when a truck could go from New York to L.A. without a single red light, the railroads would die, and it almost happened.

As railroads struggled to find their way through a changing world, two events occurred that began a resurgence that lasts to this day. The first change was the opening and expansion of the Powder River Coal fields. While noteworthy, I'll not touch on that. The second and more important change was Intermodal. The intermodal revolution had two key components: first was convincing truckers to put more trailers on trains. Truckers underutilized railroads because of poor service and damage to freight and trailers. Santa Fe was the first Class 1 railroad to try to address this problem. They pioneered the ten-unit permanently coupled articulated spine car. This car lowered the trailers closer to the rails, lessening wind resistance; and the articulated design reduced slack action in the couplers, providing a smoother ride. Santa Fe also spent large amounts of capital on improving the physical plant on its Chicago-L.A. main line.

Santa Fe, took Johnnie B. Hunt, CEO and owner of the JB Hunt national trucking company, for a ride on one of Santa Fe's hot intermodal trains. Krebs had his business car tacked onto the tail of the train, and they watched a JB Hunt trailer during the ride to Chicago. Hunt was so impressed with the smooth ride on the rails, the speed of the train and the lack of slack action in the train that he soon began putting more of his trailers on the rails. When other truckers noticed what was going on, they too added their trailers onto trains and intermodal business began to explode across the country.

The other aspect of the intermodal revolution was double-stack containers. Sea-Land, a large international shipping company, had been trying to convince American railroads of the benefits of double stacking containers. At that time, railroads were very resistant to change and would not participate. Sea-Land took it upon themselves to force the innovation onto the rails and contracted car manufacturer Gunderson to build the cars for Sea-Land. After testing the double-stack container car at the Pueblo test site, Southern Pacific ran the cars on their railroad and found the cars to be a stable and efficient way of moving containers.

Double stacking is no longer just for 20- and 40-foot ocean-going containers. Most large trucking companies began buying domestic containers as long as 53 feet. In the past, an intermodal move made money only if it was more than 1,000 miles. Today an intermodal move as short as 500 miles is common. This puts railroads on a more even footing with the truckers for short haul moves.

(Continued on page 2)

MEET THE MEMBERS

LARRY CANNON

By

Maurice Fortin



A life member and charter member of the Great Falls Model Railroad Club, Larry Cannon has been married to Ruth for 43 years. Their two sons now live in the Boston area and their daughter lives in Arkansas. They also have three grandsons.

Larry is currently semi-retired. He was the Controller at Bates College and a Federal Bank Examiner and continues to do consulting work for commercial banks.

When Larry was five years old, his parents bought him a Marx Train set so he would leave his older brother's American Flyer alone. From that, he progressed through S scale to HO and G scale trains. When Larry lived in West Auburn, he had an extensive HO layout in his barn and an impressive garden railroad. He presently has an HO scale layout at home covering about 75% of his basement. This layout has 1,200 feet of track and 193 turnouts. His layout covers a railroad from Whitefield, NH, to Rouses Point, NY, and places in between. Larry is also planning to begin a new G scale layout. He has 400 feet of track but has not yet designed the layout.

Larry has twice been President of the Great Falls Model Railroad Club. When the club house was on Canal Street, Larry and Ray Anderson designed and installed most of the electrical work for the HO layout. They also wrote the manual for the layout, including Excel spreadsheets of all the electrical layout control and lighting systems. At our present location, Larry was involved with Tom Jones in the initial planning and construction of our present HO layout. He is active in the continuing development of the layout, including the Grand Canyon of Maine on the peninsula area. Larry, John Visco, and Roger Plummer are currently organizing and supervising the scenery on this major section of the layout. (See article in the January issue of *The Signal*.)

Larry is also an active member of the National Model Railroad Association. At various times he has been both Secretary and Treasurer of the Northeastern Region of NMRA. He has a Master Modeler Railroader Certificate from the NMRA and is Deputy National Contest Chairman.

When not involved in model railroading, Larry also enjoys hunting and gardening.

(Continued from page 1)

Our Great Falls Railroad is a major player in intermodal operations. We bridge traffic between intermodal ramps at Mechanicsville NY (NS), Worcester MA (CSX), and CP rail. A small amount is also interchanged between us and the St. Lawrence & Atlantic RR (SLR). We have an intermodal yard and a planned port that will originate and terminate intermodal traffic, at least one train in each direction every day.

Four trains a day ply our rails, two in each direction. They are CPWO-Z-1 and WOCP-Z-2 and CPME-Z-1 and MECP-Z-2. The "Z" designation helps dispatchers know that these are trains with tight schedules and need to be hurried across our railroad to meet connections at their destinations. Each train stops at Obie Intermodal (OBI) setting out and picking up cuts of cars.

"Z" trains coming off CP Rail pass Hillcrest Yard and run down the East Main to Helix Junction, where they proceed up the North Main to OBI. When a "Z" train arrives at OBI, the train crew and yardmaster coordinate the switching of cars. When that is complete, the "Z" train flies down the South Main heading for connections with the NS or CSX. "Z" trains going in the opposite direction will perform work at OBI as well.

The intermodal traffic with the SLR is handled with manifest trains. A Hillcrest-bound train from OB yard will have a cut of one or two sets of intermodal tacked onto the back of the train. At Hillcrest the yardmaster will pull the cut and add it to the HCSLR transfer run. This service is slower than the high-speed "Z" trains, but these are low volume, low priority moves.

These intermodal trains are a low percentage of the trains on the GFR, but are a large percentage of the bottom line. Running one of these trains across the railroad is a lot of fun. Watching double stacks blast across the railroad is very impressive. I invite all interested operators to join us on the Saturday operating sessions for your chance to move one of these high priority trains through the GFR.



MODEL TRAIN SHOW ON SATURDAY, APRIL 26

Paul Lodge

The Great Falls Model Railroad Club of Auburn and Lewiston is sponsoring their annual model train show at Mt. Ararat High School in Topsham on Saturday, April 26, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Displays feature a variety of model trains including HO, G-gauge, and N-scale, built by model train enthusiasts throughout Maine. New display modules will include those created by students in this year's Model Railroading Classes offered by the Great Falls Model Railroad Club through the Auburn Adult Education program. Dealers from around New England will be available to answer questions and to sell new and used model railroad items. Admission is \$4 and \$2 for those under 15.

Mt. Ararat Sports Boosters will benefit from the sale of refreshments at the model train show. They provide coffee and donuts throughout the morning, with luncheon specials beginning about noon.

Many local residents regularly view *Train Time*, the club-produced program seen on local cable access channels in Bath, Brunswick, and Lewiston and on Time-Warner cable Channel 9 from Portland. *Train Time* videos will be shown continuously throughout the day and will be available to purchase.



Tom Coulombe talks about the club during an interview with Ethan Yankura, Education Director, at the Owls Head Transportation Museum modelers show on Sunday, March 23. About sixteen club members helped at the two-day event.

HOBO HOLIDAY

MAY 17

By Paul Lodge

On Saturday, May 17, the Great Falls Model Railroad Club will hold its third annual Hobo Holiday, a family fun event at the club building at 144 Mill Street in Auburn from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Hobo Holiday is an opportunity for the public to learn about an interesting part of railroad history while enjoying model railroad displays and participating in various activities. Hobo culture and hobo folklore are explained in a special handout, and hobo symbols will be visible throughout the building. Everyone will be encouraged to sample hobo stew. A scavenger hunt will encourage participants to investigate the entire two-story railroad club building with its extensive library and model railroad layouts in various scales. Children can run trains on the club's permanent HO layout. Games for the children will include *Hoop a Caboose*, *Roundhouse Roulette*, and fishing for prizes in a special fish pond. Operation Lifesaver will provide railroad safety tips and materials. Model railroad supplies and *TrainTime* videos will be available to buy.

Children and adults are invited to add to the festive atmosphere by dressing as hobos. Admission \$3, children under 12 admitted free.

BACKDROP PAINTING

FOR THE RELUCTANT PAINTER

Paul Lodge

On Saturday, April 12, from 9 a.m. to noon, Paul Lodge will share some simple techniques in painting backdrops. The class is open to all club members and their friends who want to experience some basic methods of backdrop painting.

The registration fee of \$10 helps cover the cost of using the building as well as the paints and supplies for the class. If participants need brushes, the tools can be purchased for \$20 on the day of the class. The price pays for a fan brush, a one-inch brush, a two-inch brush, and a pallet knife. The fan brush and pallet knife are bought from Craft Mania at a special club discount which is passed along to those who purchase the tools for the class.

March Minutes by Paul Lodge



MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 20, 2014

Ed Leslie presented a slide show of club activities since February. The evening's video featured the 2010 ExTRAINaganza filmed by Dick Clark. The contrast of the layouts four years ago with what we have today was striking.

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. Paul Lodge highlighted the minutes of the meeting from March 1994.

Tom Coulombe gave the Treasurer's Report which was approved as given. As Station Master, Tom indicated that a new LED outside light will be installed when funds are available. At the next meeting, he will present next year's budget proposal.

Terry King reported that the library is selling its collection of VHS tapes for \$1 each, 6 for \$5, or 13 for \$10.

Travis Johnson noted that the next operating sessions are scheduled for Saturday, March 29, and Saturday, April 5. Scenery details, backdrop painting and work on the canyon are continuing. As suggested by some club members, a Wednesday operating session will be scheduled in April or May.

Ken Nettleship reported for the G-gauge Division. He said that Dick Clark has fine-tuned the ski slope. A tree-making clinic is being planned, but no date has been determined. Track in the snow scene area will be painted white, and an ice-cutting scene is to be installed.

Tom Coulombe informed the group that the N-scale DCC units are now operating and that Maurice Fortin has completed a depot for the layout.

Bob Willard announced that the modeling group is planning to meet on the fourth Thursday each month starting on March 27 at 7 p.m. They are looking forward to a "show and tell" session and later a tree-making clinic.

Maurice Fortin reported that the Nominating Committee will submit a slate of officers for the next year at the April 17 meeting.

Paul Lodge read a communication from Joe Marshall, the club's webmaster. Joe suggested that our monthly newsletter be cross-posted to our Facebook page, and that

members "Like" the page to get more people to see the posts. He also reminded members that there is a classified ad section on the website for swapping, selling, and bartering of train-related items. He thinks that the club could sell some of our surplus items this way.

Paul Lodge also reported on two events to be held in the Rockland area on Saturday, April 12. The Maine Eastern Railroad is sponsoring a fund-raiser for the New England Steam Corporation, which is raising money for moving and restoring the Maine Central 470 in Waterville. (Governor's Restaurants are also contributing to the MEC 470 with a big locomotive burger at all of their restaurants. A dollar from each sale goes to helping the cause.) The second event is at the Owls Head Transportation Museum. There will be a lecture and video on 21st century steam and high-speed rail in China. Another program at the Owls Head Transportation Museum on that day will discuss the present and future of passenger rail in Maine.

Travis Johnson and Nancy Weeks are developing a program for the young people in our club, several of whom have been attending our monthly operating sessions. This program will include ways in which the youth of the club can participate in the maintenance of the layouts and in helping at our shows and special events. Badges or pins, which can be placed on club vests, are planned as recognition and motivation. The group does not yet have a name. They plan to officially begin in May, the start of the club's fiscal year.

Paul Lodge displayed the "Ticket Train" built by Dick Clark. The pedestals for the three units were built by Stephen Martelli, using actual rail for the base. Terry King painted the pedestals Christmas colors for the ExTRAINaganza and he made decals for use on the boxcar. Paul Lodge painted the three-unit train which includes an engine, box car, and caboose. The train will be used for raffle tickets for the ExTRAINaganza and to contain game prizes at our other events.

For the "Thinking Outside the Boxcar" part of the meeting, Jerry Johnston explained and displayed a wheel he developed to measure the scale miles on a club or personal layout. He gave each member a slip of paper containing a formula for calculating the miles in HO scale.

Kent Waterson gave a fascinating demonstration using electronics to run a servo from an Arduino which can be used for magnetically uncoupling cars. The Arduino is also versatile enough to be used as a train speed detector.

At the end of the meeting, Bill Meehan won the 50/50 raffle and Dean Ostergaard won the Attendance Prize.

The meeting adjourned.

FIRST MEETING OF NEW MODELING GROUP

Paul Lodge

On Thursday, March 27, sixteen club members met to form a new group of modelers at the Great Falls Model Railroad Club. It was decided to meet regularly on the fourth Thursday of each month. Bob Willard led the meeting and suggested that the group could be used to talk about and share modeling ideas and knowledge, learn new things, and encourage others to join and share their knowledge.

Ken Nettleship and Bob Willard displayed projects on which they have been working and explained the methods used in creating them. Bob noted that there is a wealth of information and projects in the magazines in our library. He encouraged members who want to build a project to check the library for appropriate magazines.

Norm Ness asked about scratch building structures based on actual existing buildings. Other club members offered several suggestions on how they have successfully made buildings by using graph paper or CAD computer programs.

Topics discussed at the meeting included the following: canopy glue, decaling, adhesives, air brushing, resin based kits, fiber optics, and rock casting.

Decaling and air brushing were selected as the modeling skills to be demonstrated at the next meeting on April 24. Participants were encouraged to bring items for the "show and tell" portion of the gathering.

At the end of the meeting, Jerry Johnston asked the members to come to the next meeting with ideas for a name that would be appropriate to call this group.



CLUB TO FORM

YOUTH GROUP DIVISIONS

Nancy Weeks & Travis Johnson

Nancy Weeks and Travis Johnson are leading a new group within the club. The group's name has not yet been finalized, but its purpose is to recognize the amount of time that youths 5 through 17 years of age devote to club-sponsored model railroad hobby activities. Those 5 through 9 years old will receive recognition for total accumulated hours operating trains or attending club-sponsored model railroad events, shows, clinics, or operating sessions. Those 10 through 17 will receive recognition for hours accumulated on various functions of model railroading at club-sponsored model railroad shows, events, clinics, and/or operating sessions. Age will be determined as of May 1.

Hours will be tracked and accumulated from year to year. Hours accumulated during the 5 through 9-year-old category will not be carried over to the 10 through 17-year-old category. Forms will be kept and hours will be verified by a non-family member on the day of each event. Any off-site functions will be logged in at the next business meeting, based on a slip signed by a non-family member who was present at the event. Family dues must be paid prior to participating in the program and must be current in order to accumulate hours.

Our goal is to provide our youth members of the Great Falls Model Railroad Club (ages 5 through 17) with a means to advance themselves in the model railroading hobby. We will use badges or pins to show their accomplishments in various tasks. These tasks are divided into two categories. The categories are "Play," which includes running trains during operating sessions, and "Work," which will include working on the layouts or helping to set up and/or take down layouts at model train shows.

Members of the older group will be mostly self-reliant, working with adult supervision on various projects according to their experience. Tasks will include what adults would be expected to accomplish with reasonable accommodations for age and maturity. They are expected to be role models for the younger members. This group has already been formed and is being well received by both parents and club members.

The younger members will be given simpler tasks to complete. We want to create an atmosphere in which they can grow and continue to enjoy trains with the aid of their parents/guardians. They will be aided by older youth and adult members but the parents/guardians are expected to remain with the child during events. We want the older youngsters to be able to assist us in helping the younger members get involved.

Meetings of the two youth groups will take place after Saturday morning operating sessions. The current goal is that the older group will officially start on May 1, the beginning the club's fiscal year.



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



April 10, Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.

April 12, BACKDROP PAINTING
FOR THE RELUCTANT PAINTER

9am –noon

April 17, Membership Meeting 6:45 pm

April 19, Operating Session 8:30 to 12

April 26, Train Show, Mt. Ararat,
Topsham Workers: 7 am.

Show is open from 10 am to 3 pm

May 8, Board Meeting 6:30 pm

May 5, Membership Meeting, 6:30 pm

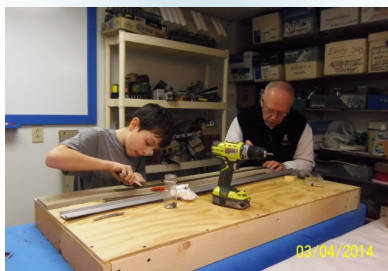
May 14, Operating Session
5:30 pm to 8pm

May 17, HOBO HOLIDAY

Workers: 8 am Public 10 am to 4 pm

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

Pictures Taken at the
Auburn Adult Education class in
Model Railroading held at the
Great Falls Model Railroad Club



Tim Ostergaard, Paul Lodge



Dick Clark, Maximus Jacobson,
Janet Colyear