

Member since June 1988

**NEXT MEETING**  
**November 19**  
**6:45 p.m.**

**NEXT MONTH**  
**Deadline for**  
**December Issue**  
**December 2, 2015**

**MEMBERSHIP**  
**127**

**ATTENDANCE PRIZE**  
Jerry Johnston  
won the Attendance  
Prize.  
Maybe next meeting  
it will be YOU!  
Will your name be  
drawn on  
**November 19?**  
You have to be  
present to win!

**BOTTLES FOR  
BASICS**

- ◆ Total LAST YEAR
- ◆ \$700.23
- ◆ YEAR TO DATE:
- ◆ \$411.00
- ◆ Last MONTH:
- ◆ \$89.00

Donations of Used  
Ink and Toner  
Cartridges:  
Last Month:\$20.00  
Year to Date:  
\$147.00

# The Signal

## The Great Falls Model Railroad Club



VOLUME 17. ISSUE 6

NOVEMBER 2015



### EX-TRAIN-AGANZA: CLUB'S MAJOR EVENT

By Paul Lodge



One of the club's major fund-raising events is the ExTRAINaganza, which starts the Christmas season for the club. This year the ExTRAINaganza will be held on four days, the weekend before Thanksgiving and the two days after Thanksgiving.

As children come into the meeting room, they will write their names on paper locomotives and pin them to a five-foot Christmas tree painted on homasote. During the event, children will be able to run trains as guest engineers, win prizes from the "Roundhouse Roulette" game, make crafts at the crafts table, and decorate cookies and Christmas ornaments. Young children will also be able to play with the train toys on the play rug. Visitors can purchase club t-shirts, railroad books, engineer hats, train whistles, Christmas cards, cookie cutters, and items from our surplus inventory.

On Saturday, November 28, the last day of the ExTRAINaganza, winning tickets will be drawn for the three train sets under the Christmas trees and the club's Raffle Layout.

Because of the number of days and the different activities going on at the event, club members are needed to help by taking charge of games, supervising craft and cookie tables, selling tickets, monitoring layouts, and teaching young "Guest Engineers" how to run trains.



**Craft Table at ExTRAINaganza 2014**

The Great Falls Model Railroad Club holds the ExTRAINaganza during the same times as the FEZtival of Trees sponsored by the Shriners in Lewiston so that visitors can enjoy them both on the same or alternate days.

The ExTRAINaganza is a four-day event with different times each day. It starts on Saturday, November 21, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and continues Sunday, November 22, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. On the Friday after Thanksgiving, the event will start at 10 a.m. and go to 8 p.m. Saturday, November 28, the last day of ExTRAINaganza, we will start at 10 a.m. and finish at 4 p.m.



## A NEW HO OPERATIONS PLAN

By Ray Houlihan

First, let us say that we have an HO layout that we are proud to operate and we are fully in favor of the club having a youth group. As operations mature to card order and support upwards of 20 people at a session, some discipline and order is needed for the three hours of an operating session. Operating, like scenery and wiring, should be fun for those who enjoy it. A new operations plan for these structured operating sessions has been outlined by the HO Operating Standards Committee, comprised of Jim Vatter, Darin Long, Roger Plummer, and Ray Houlihan.

### Standards and Practices

**Realistic Operations:** You operate your train at a proper speed, not too fast nor too slow. You couple and uncouple realistically, pausing a second during coupling/uncoupling maneuvers to allow for coupling of airlines or for setting or releasing hand brakes. You realign switches to original alignment after passing through.

**Care for Equipment, Track and Scenery:** Being careful when reaching into a scene to uncouple or fix a derailment, you don't break trees or structures. When fixing derailments, you are careful not to break small details off cars or locos. You don't break ground throws on track switches.

**Radio Procedures/Following Orders:** You demonstrate an ability to use the radio properly and follow orders from Trainmaster, Dispatcher and Yardmasters.

**Paperwork:** When you're handed a pack of car cards for a train, you understand what is expected of you and place the cards for your setouts in the proper box. At the end of the job, you bring the cards with you.

**Problem Solving/Patience:** You take the time to figure out how to make a switching maneuver without picking up a car to get it where you want it. You are able to wait with your train if you're stuck behind another train's switching moves or opposing movement.

### Defining Jobs

**TRAINMASTER** is responsible for everything that happens and fails to happen at an operating session. He is designated by the Head of The Beloved Operations Sub-Committee, preferably two weeks before each session. He may delegate to Assistant Trainmasters. He is easily recognized by newbies by The Trainmaster Vest. He keeps a written record of who is assigned to each job on the layout and accommodates guests. He should make sure trains are staged before 8:30 for a 9:00 a.m. session. He is the final arbiter for checking inappropriate behavior and attitude on a "3 strikes and you are uninvited" basis.

**DISPATCHER** is responsible for issuing track warrants for anything that moves during the session. He also is designated with a vest or something snazzy.

**YARD MASTER** is qualified for switching operations and in overall command of a given territory between yard limits. His pri-

mary work consists of breaking down inbound trains to make up outbound ones. No movement can be accomplished without the approval of the Yard Master. In larger yards there may be a Yard Master Assistant, whose job it is to work the opposite end of the same territory, but whose work is ultimately controlled by the Yard Master. Additional work of the Yard Master and the Assistant may or may not include (at the Yard Master's discretion) local switching of industries within the yard limits, hosteling locomotives, and "paperwork." Yard areas on the Great Falls Railroad include, but are not limited to, Ayer Yard, Obie Yard and OBI (Obie Intermodal), Hillcrest Yard, Thurston Yard, Riverton, Grand Trunk, and the International Paper Mill.

To help these people move some freight (and the occasional passenger train), participants should be grouped by ability and desire to participate. (Note: groupings are positive in nature and NOT age related.) Color coding is added to help keep "levels" organized. Again, operating is a fun pastime and a privilege for those who choose to participate.

**Rookie or Guest** is White. He is obviously new and is learning the layout and procedures. He will always be paired with an experienced operator. After two sessions, he may apply to the next level.

**Apprentice** is Green. He commits to operating the layout in a responsible manner and may operate independently at the discretion of the Trainmaster. He learns the layout, card order, bad order and operating procedures; and he observes the duties of the Trainmaster, Dispatcher, and Yard Masters. (Note: Apprentice gives everyone an early chance at promotion, like Scout to Tenderfoot.)

**Journeyman** is Yellow. He demonstrates knowledge of the layout and provides leadership toward the success of the session. He will have "job shadowed" for an hour or so the Trainmaster, Dispatcher, and a Yard Master; and he may be assigned to any necessary job by the Trainmaster.

**Superintendent** is Red. He comprises the Beloved Operating Sub-Committee and commits to the success of the session. He may, with approval of the Trainmaster, issue strikes for inappropriate operating behavior.

*Come on Down and Let's Move some Freight!*



**Dispatcher Travis Johnson checks the routes and train cars for an HO Operating Session.**



### THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE NEW FEATURES

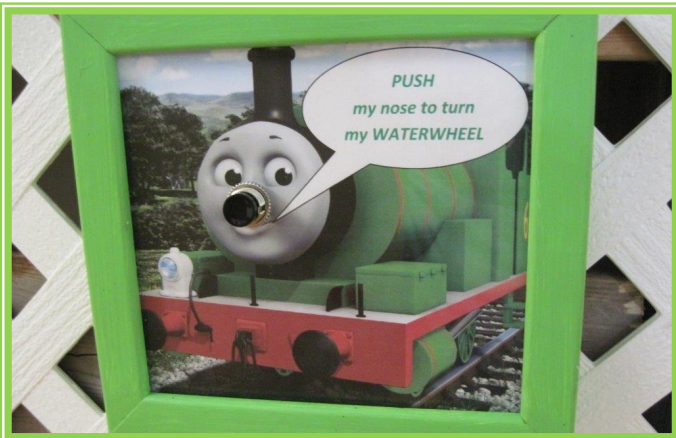
During the month of October several members of the G-Gauge Division have made improvements to the Thomas the Tank Engine layout. They put down a new base for the display and modified the cars to run through the bridgework on the layout. They have also installed a water-wheel which is interactive by pushing a button. Thomas the Tank Engine has always been one of the favorite attractions for the younger visitors to our special events, and we are



GFMRRRC was represented with games and candy at the Buckfield Trunk or Treat on Halloween night.



Ray Parent updated the wiring for Thomas the Tank Engine.



Guests will have fun pushing the nose on the Thomas photo to turn the water wheel.



Darin Long, Gary Thibeault and Bob Willard presented an airbrush clinic at the Modelers Forum meeting on October 22. Plans are being made for another clinic.

# October Minutes by Paul Lodge



## MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 15, 2015

A Power Point presentation was shown highlighting club activities for the last four weeks. Ray Parent and Ken Nettleship had produced a video showing the double heading of two United States Hudson locomotives on Ray's home garden railroad layout.

President Jay Calnan opened the meeting and asked for the Secretary's Report. Paul Lodge noted that the list of "Rights and Responsibilities" was not printed in the *Signal* because of lack of space even though the minutes from last month said they were printed elsewhere in the newsletter. A motion was made to accept the report as published in the *Signal*.

Tom Coulombe gave the Treasurer's Report which was accepted as given. He also noted that many club members have donated to the **Bottles for Basics** project. It is doing very well with more than \$100 earned last month.

As Station Master, Tom Coulombe reported that the painting of the walls is still being done. If anyone would like to help, they can make arrangements with him.

Terry King noted that some new books have been added to the library.

Darin Long and Jim Vatter reported for the HO Division. Standards and practices for operating the layout are being created along with car cards and proper paper work. They also emphasized the importance of respect for the equipment, some of which belongs to individual club members. On those Saturdays when there are operating sessions going on, a sign has been developed to let visitors know that they are welcome to watch trains. In some cases they may be encouraged to participate.

The HO team is developing a graded system to identify the ability level of the different operators. The first category is "Rookie." "Rookies" would need to run a train with a more experienced person. The "Apprentice" would know the standards and practices and would have demonstrated the ability to follow them. The "Journeyman" can work independently throughout the layout. The top level for the operating team will be the "Superintendent" class. A "Call Board" is also being developed which lists the jobs available for that operating session so people can sign up for jobs at the beginning of the session. At this time, two groups of trains are being considered: both local switching trains and through freights or passenger trains.

It is proposed that youth will be encouraged to run trains on the first Saturday of each month. The second operating session would be only for adults and for those who have achieved one of the advanced levels of operating ability.

Ken Nettleship reported that the G-Gauge Division has put down a new base for the Thomas the Tank Engine display. They have also modified the cars so that they can run through the bridgework on the layout. A mill has been donated for the layout, and it is being equipped with a waterwheel which will be interactive with the push of a button.

Tom Coulombe said that he has made arrangements with the youth group to run the N-Scale layout during the first day of the ExTRAINaganza. Tom and several other club members will be at the Eastern Maine Railroad Club show in Brewer on that day, selling surplus inventory.

On Thursday, October 22, the Modelers Forum is providing an air brushing clinic at the club from 7 to 9 p.m. When asked how many were planning to attend, about twenty members raised their hands.

Our next train show is at Mt. Ararat High School in Topsham on November 7. Members are asked to be at the school to help set up tables and layouts on Friday, November 6, from 4 to 6 p.m. About seventy tables have already been rented and about twenty tables are still available. Because this is a change of venue, Jay Calnan volunteered to stay at the Auburn Middle School to notify people who did not get the message about the change.

Tom Coulombe reported that a Boy Scout railroad-merit badge class will take place at the club for about eight scouts with disabilities.

Carmen Anastase has spoken with a teacher at the Central Maine Community College who is willing to have up to six people visit the school for a demonstration of a 3-D printing machine. Anyone interested in the 3-D printing presentation should contact Carmen.

St. Mary's Hospital in Lewiston has asked that an N-scale layout be developed that they can have on display in the children's section.

Because November is Railroad Month, Clover Manor has requested that the club set up a display on November 3 from 9:30 a.m. for their residents and the pre-school children at their facility. We have presented an exhibit at Clover Manor in the past.

Kathy Williamson from Eastern Star has asked if our club would like to participate in a Halloween "Trunk or Treat" activity in the Buckfield town office parking lot. They would provide candy to be given away. Paul Lodge noted that our kids' games could be used and that flyers for our ExTRAINaganza can be given out at the event.

Jerry Johnston again won the Attendance Prize and this time stayed at the meeting long enough to collect the attendance prize. He selected a ceramic coaster from the Central Maine and Quebec Railroad.

Paul Lodge won the 50/50 raffle.

The meeting adjourned.



## CLUB DECORATING FOR CHRISTMAS SEASON

By Paul Lodge

On Tuesday, November 17, starting at 10 a.m., members are asked to help put up Christmas decorations in preparation for the ExTRAINaganza and for our annual Christmas party. We are looking forward to having each room sparkling. With many people decorating, there should be a variety of ideas to help make the club look more festive.

For the ExTRAINaganza, the Great Falls Model Railroad Club makes an effort to have our displays open during the same hours as the FEZtival of Trees sponsored by the Shriners in Lewiston. We want to make Lewiston/Auburn a fun destination for our out-of-town guests.

Come to the club at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, November 17, and get into the Christmas spirit with inspired decorating ideas for everyone to enjoy.



Dick Clark's annual Halloween Open House had a lot of new features.

## MODEL RAILROADING CLASS

By Paul Lodge

A feature of both our spring and fall railroad shows is always the new modules created in the 8-week Model Railroading Classes that we teach at the club. This fall's class started on September 1 and ended on October 27. There were eleven class members, and on October 31 four of them took the additional class, "Backdrop Painting for the Reluctant Painter." Many of their modules will be part of our November 7 train show at Mt. Ararat High School in Topsham.

The class included two husband-and-wife teams, Mike & Tami Paine and Stephen & Karen Cole. Each team chose to work together on the same module. Several class members traveled quite a distance. Steve and Karen drove from Saco, Frank Hatch and his son Bruce are from East Vassalboro, and Sharon Barber is from Strong.

Eight club members came to two or more sessions to give advice and act as mentors to class members.

The next Model Railroading Class is scheduled to start on February 16 and end on April 12 so that the new modules will be ready for our spring model railroad show on April 23 at Mt. Ararat High School in Topsham.



Bruce Hatch and his father, Frank Hatch, work on their module.



Stephen Cole and Bruce Hatch working on scenery for their modules.



## 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:

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## THE SIGNAL

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## Upcoming Events



**November 12** Executive Committee Meeting 6:30 p.m.

**November 19** – Regular monthly club meeting 6:45

**ExTRAINaganza** at the railroad club  
November 21, 22, 27, and 28.

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

**December 19** – Regular monthly club-meeting and Club Christmas party 6:45

**HO Work Sessions** every Saturday morning 8:00 a.m. to noon when no Operating Session is scheduled and every Wednesday evening from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. (times are approximate).

**NOTE:** Retired Renovators meet every Tuesday morning from 9:00 to 11:00 to restore and upgrade trains and buildings.

**September 7-10, 2016,**

36th National Narrow Gauge Convention  
at Augusta, Me.

#### 2016 CALENDAR

By Paul Lodge

The club's 2016 calendar is available to purchase and would make an excellent Christmas gift for club members and their families. The calendar features the club's activities month by month. Those who have a hard time remembering all the dates and times of the many events in which we participate will have the monthly reminders right on their calendar.

All the calendar pictures except one have been chosen from the club's slide collection. Terry King designed the calendar and sold most of the ads. He is printing the calendars in small batches on the club's computer and using the club's recently purchased spiral binding machine to complete the project.

Club members will be able to purchase the calendar for \$12; non-members will pay \$15. Publicity ads were sold at \$25 each to help offset the cost of printing. The following businesses are advertising in our calendar: Ray & Robin's

Hobby Center, Norm's O Scale Trains, NMRA's Seacoast Division, L-A Harley-Davidson, Governor's Restaurant & Bakery, Simones Hot Dog Stand, The Hobo Line, the 36th National Narrow Gauge Convention, and Rolly's Diner & Catering. Calendars may be purchased at the club's Company Store or from three of the advertisers: Ray & Robin's Hobby Center, Norm's O Scale Trains, and Rolly's Diner.

#### SURPLUS INVENTORY SALE

DECEMBER 12, 2015

By Paul Lodge

The Great Falls Model Railroad Club will hold its second annual Surplus Inventory Sale on Saturday, December 12, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the club. Most of the items available for sale have never been displayed at any of our shows, and club members will have the first choice. This is a great way to improve your model railroad collection at very reasonable prices.

Tom Coulombe has announced that this year's selections will include some surprises. Several items of older vintage have been donated to the club which would be great for personal displays.

Whether you're buying items for display or for your own layout or to give as Christmas presents, we hope you will join us on December 12 for this special Surplus Inventory Sale.