



Members since June 1988



Signal indicates **STOP AT**  
**OUR NEXT MEETING**  
**January 18 2018 6:45 pm**

Check out the pictures  
 from  
 Our Christmas Party!

### Involve friends & relatives

Meetings demonstrate how  
 Hobbies impart the trades  
*Fabrication—Finishing—Electricity*  
 Tell me and I forget. Teach me and  
 I remember. Involve me and I learn  
 - - Benjamin Franklin

### Have a story you want to share?

Share your account at the meeting!  
 Or publish it in our newsletter!  
 Let us know by January 25, 2018  
 Email secretary Paul Lodge  
 See back page for contact info . . .

### Do you want to win

### Attendance & 50/50 prizes?

Don't let somebody else  
 score a brass locomotive  
 with the cash  
 from the winning prize!  
 You must be present to win!

### DONATIONS . . .

#### Bottles for Basics (B4B)

Total Last Year \$ 712.00  
 YTD \$458.00  
 Last month: \$ 21.00

#### Used Printer Cartridges

Total Last Year \$ 350  
 YTD: \$ 105.00  
 Last month: \$ 2.00

# The Signal



January Edition  
 2018

## CHRISTMAS PARTY AT DECEMBER MEETING

The Great Falls Model Railroad Club Christmas Party meeting on December 21 began with a 15-minute Power Point presentation of club activities from November through December. There was a brief business meeting highlighting upcoming events for the next year and outlining the clinics planned for the next six months. Kent Waterson has volunteered to make a presentation on XtrkCAD at the January 18 club meeting.



An appeal was made for members to volunteer to contribute to the Utility Team's monthly payment for electricity or water and sewer bills. The electric bill is approximately \$150 monthly, and the water and sewerage fee is about \$30 a month. In order to keep club dues low, members who can afford more than the annual dues of \$30 are asked to pledge a payment to one of the two utilities. Sometimes two or three people or families will volunteer to share the cost of electricity for a month. By the end of the meeting, nearly one-third of the pledges had been made for next year's utility bills.



Treasurer Owen Buck gave the Treasurer's report. November and December were profitable months for the club, thanks to the efforts of club members at the Topsham show and the ExTRAINaganza as well as sales at the Brewer show and the Surplus Inventory Sale at the club. If the club continues to be active and financially successful in 2018, he believes it will be possible to make the final payment on the mortgage within the next year.



The club is again looking for someone to be our bottle redemption volunteer. The bottles usually need to be redeemed only once or twice a month. Chuck Bagley had volunteered for the position this fall, but because of health problems, he will be unable to continue helping in this way.



Continued on page 4



Member  
#076805 00  
Since 1988

Come share  
your projects & tools  
at our  
Modeler's Forum

## CLUB ENTERTAINS AT BELGRADE CHRISTMAS EVENT

Nancy Weeks and Travis Johnson continued the GFMRR tradition of providing entertainment at the annual Christmas event for children and their families at the Belgrade Community Center. Nancy and Travis used the club's Brio set and Raffle Layout, Balloon Bag Toss and Hoop a Caboose game. The evening event on Saturday, December 9, also included a video show and the reading of a Christmas story.

By Paul Lodge

## WINTER WEATHER

If severe weather threatens on a meeting night, the meeting will be postponed until the following Thursday night. If you have email, you will receive an email message about the postponement. We will also notify the following TV stations: WCSH, WGME, and WMTW.

After each snowstorm, the club parking lot will be cleared and cleaned as soon as possible. Tire tracks pack down the snow and make the work more difficult. Please help us keep the railroad club parking lot empty of cars until it is empty of snow.

## BOTTLE REDEMPTION VOLUNTEER NEEDED

Bottles for Basics fund-raising has earned over \$700 for the club during each of the past four years. On the front page of the newsletter, we keep a "year-to-date" total for the club's fiscal year, which has been from June 1 of one year to May 31 of the following year. During our fiscal year from June 1, 2016 to May 31, 2017, the total earned from bottle redemption was \$712. During the calendar year from January 1, 2017, to December 31, 2017, the total earned from bottle redemption was \$644. Thank you for bringing in your returnable bottles and cans.

Now we need your help again. We need a Volunteer Redemption Assistant who would be willing and able to return bottles and cans once or twice a month to a local redemption center. We are grateful to Chuck Bagley for his help with that responsibility during the past few months, but he is resigning from that position because of health reasons. Please see Thunder McBride, Owen Buck, or Ed Webb if you can volunteer.

## PREPARING FOR THE NEXT TRAIN SHOW

The Whitefield Lions Club will sponsor its annual Dollhouse and Model Train Show at the Augusta Armory on Saturday, February 17, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.



Participating in this unique mid-winter show has been a tradition for the club for many years. Combining model railroading and dollhouse displays shows guests how these hobbies complement each other. Dollhouse modelers enjoy our scenery, which for them is landscaping. Many model railroaders find small items from the dollhouse hobby which work in model railroading.

As is customary, we will be there at 7 a.m. to set up the modules and sales tables for the show. If you would like to include your module in the club's modular layout, it needs to be at the Augusta Armory by 8 a.m. Tear down will be at 3 p.m.

By Paul Lodge



## NEW DUES SYSTEM

Dues are now being figured on a calendar year basis for everyone. The previous system, tracking 12 months from the various join-up dates of over 100 members, was just too complicated! Anyone who had made earlier payment under the old system gets a prorated credit applied for 2018.

Dues payments for 2018 can be made now, either in cash or by check made out to Great Falls Model Railroad Club. (Reminder, do not send cash by mail.) The deadline for the year is July 01, but earlier payments are certainly welcome. We still offer the "pay for 4 years get the 5th year free" option.

About half of the membership is already on the new schedule. I will let each member know how much the 2018 dues will be to get them aligned with the calendar year.

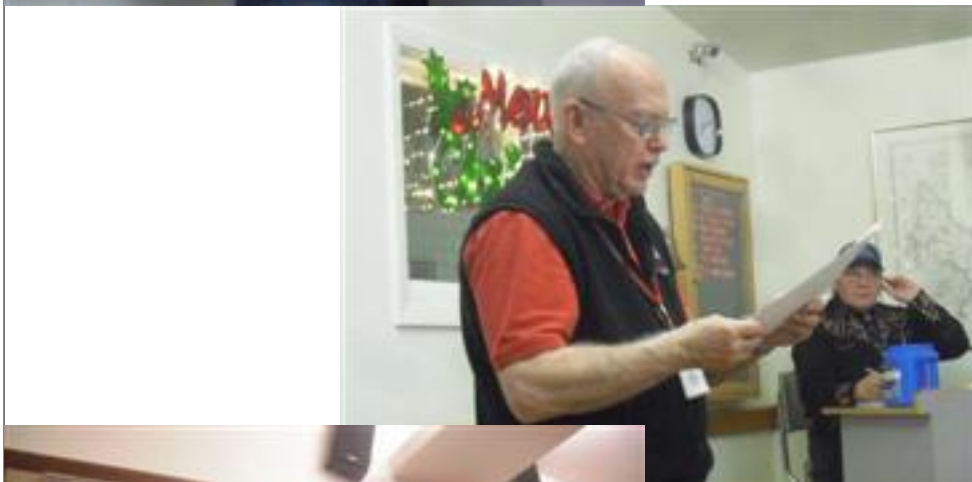
Thanks to everyone for their support, financial and otherwise!

By Owen Buck, Treasurer





## CURRENT GFMRRC OFFICERS



## CLINIC AT JANUARY CLUB MEETING XTrkCAD

Computer Aided Design (CAD) has been available for decades and is useful to the designer for increasing productivity, quality of the design, communication through documentation, and reuse of designs through databases of previous work. Traditional CAD programs such as AutoCAD have their uses to the model railroader; but when it comes to track layout design, they can be quite cumbersome, especially to a non-experienced user. With the goal of providing the benefits of a CAD system without the complexity, XTrkCAD was developed specifically for model railroaders and it meets those goals.

XTrkCAD was originally a commercial product written for LINUX, produced by Sillup Technologies of Ottawa, Canada. Later it became open source (i.e., "free") and is now available for the Windows and MAC operating systems as well. The term "open source" means that the source code that lies behind the application is publicly available and can be copied, modified and used however the user would please. Since its release into the public domain, the application has continued to be maintained, fixing bugs and adding new features. The development is very much currently active; a new release is in testing and will be available soon.

With XTrkCAD, the user draws with sections of track. Straight and curved sections are flex-track; and components such as turnouts, crossings, and cross-overs are simply "dragged and dropped" from an extensive library of manufacturers' components. These libraries continue to be maintained as well, and new products are added regularly.

With XTrkCAD, a simple 4'x8' plywood sheet oval layout with a few turnouts and sidings can be created in minutes. The design can be printed out full scale (1:1) and used as a template for laying track to build your dream layout.

XTrkCAD is not limited to just track-work. The application can add multiple drawing layers, each with its own unique objects, such as benchwork, structures, scenery and wiring diagrams. On a completed layout, the user can actually "run trains" on the layout and evaluate how well the layout works for various operations and switching maneuvers. It's much easier to find these issues before track is laid than after.

Online resources are available for help, and the user-supported community is very active in providing help for new users. The interface may be a bit challenging to a new user; but once you understand the basics, you are limited only by your imagination. It's free!

By Kent Waterson

## CHRISTMAS PARTY AT DECEMBER MEETING

Continued from Page 1

Nancy Weeks recognized Calvin Ames, Dan Malkowski, Josh Stevens, Bryce Weeks, Graham Huckins, and Drew Raslavsky-Veilleux for their volunteer work accomplishments during the past year. Nancy reminded club members to sign the Youth Group members' time cards when they work on the layout or at train shows. The youth



members are given credit for the time they spend working on behalf of the club.



Paul Lodge won the 50/50 raffle and Neva McBride won the attendance prize.

The Christmas party was very well attended by more than thirty members and their families. Several fami-



lies came to enjoy the opportunity to socialize and to sample



the varied and delicious food at the pot luck buffet.



By Paul Lodge

Check out our  
Facebook page at:

Great Falls Model  
Railroad Club

For up to date  
Reports on our  
Activities...

Visit our  
web page!

See  
Facebook page  
And  
Web Site  
for posted pictures  
of club events



VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS  
AT WW&F

The 17th annual Victorian Christmas at the Waterville, Wiscasset & Farmington Railway was held on both December 16 and 23 in spite of the weather. The Victorian Christmas is held every year in rain, snow, sleet, or sunshine. The

weather doesn't matter; the trains will always run.

To thank all the area people who support the WW&F, the Victorian Christmas gives free train rides for all, starting at the Sheepscot Station in Alna and going a mile and a half down the line to Alna Center, where passengers meet Santa and Mrs. Claus

and enjoy horse-drawn sleigh rides and activities for the younger children. Free cookies, cakes, cheeses, hot chocolate and coffee are served in the shop building across from the museum and gift shop at the Sheepscot Station. An operating G-scale model railroad set up by a friend of the WW&F in the shop building was also of great interest to this year's visitors.

On Saturday, December 16, the unofficial attendance at the Victorian Christmas was approximately 850 passengers. The day was cold and there was plenty of snow on the ground, which made for a perfect train ride to the station at Alna Center and for the sleigh ride and special children's activities and crafts. The cold and rainy weather on the second Saturday kept the attendance down to 225, with few riders in the afternoon as the weather deteriorated.

It takes many volunteers doing all sorts of chores and activities to make these days a success. A lot more preparation is needed in addition to the main event and includes preparing the trains and getting qualified volunteers for all the train positions as brakemen, firemen, engineers and conductors. Several Great Falls Model Railroad Club members regularly volunteer with the WW&F and most of them helped during this year's Victorian Christmas events.

On December 17, Dan Malkowski was the brakeman on steam locomotive #9, built by the Portland Company in 1891 and renovated by the WW&F over a period of almost ten years. At the Victorian Christmas on December 19, 2015, #9 was run for the first time in over 82 years. This year #9 made four round trips on December 17. The diesel locomotive #52 also made four round trips each day.

Nancy Weeks set up her food truck for those who wanted a light lunch. Jane and John Robertson greeted guests in the gift shop, where Joan Meehan worked. Bryce Weeks worked wherever he was needed. Joe Fox also helped with the trains, while his wife Dawn and their daughter Leanne enjoyed the day.

Bryce Weeks mentioned that one of his favorite memories from a previous Victorian Christmas was having both locomotives #9 and #10 running in 2015. Another special memory, although not from the Victorian Christmas, was the Photo Charter Specials in January last year. His favorite events, however, are the work weekends because they are always fun. Everyone is friendly, and members get to see friends they don't normally get to see the rest of the year.

Caption for attached picture: Daniel Malkowski as brakeman on steam engine #9 at the Victorian Christmas. Photo by Cindy Rhine.

By Bryce Weeks and other contributors



CLINICS AND TIME CHANGE FOR CLUB  
MEETINGS ANNOUNCED

Beginning with the GFMRR club meeting on January 18, meetings will start 15 minutes earlier than before. As part of the new format, a railroad-related video will be shown from 6:30 until 7 p.m. The traditional 15-minute Power Point program featuring club events for the past month will be shown next, followed by one of the clinics below, presented by various club members:

- January 18: XTrkCAD, Kent Waterson (see separate article)
- February 15: Model Railroading Sites on the Computer, Darin Long
- March 15: Locomotive Sound Systems, Jamie Robinson
- April 19: Locomotive and Rolling Stock Maintenance, Travis Johnson, Ed Webb, Eric Long
- May 17: DCC Programming, Darin and Eric Long

Although other topics for clinics have been mentioned, there will be no clinics during the summer months. Please continue to email me suggestions about clinics you would like to see during next fall and winter.

After each clinic at club meetings, members are invited to run trains on the HO layout downstairs to learn or teach about procedures for using the DCC operating system on our layout.

By Paul Lodge

Utility Team

Paul Lodge talks with Roger Plummer and Joe Fox about signing up for the 2018 Utility Team. Members can help the club by pledging to make a single payment of \$30 to meet the cost for the water and sewerage bills for one month or \$150 to cover the cost of electricity for a month.

Paul Lodge



## The Great Falls Model Railroad Club (GFMRRC)

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**See us on Facebook!**

Great Falls Model Railroad Club

An educational foundation



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## The Signal

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## GFMRRC 2017 Special Events

### January 27 & 28

**Eastern States Exposition, Springfield, MA**  
– Amherst Railway Society 50th anniversary  
Railroad Hobby Show – for more details, see  
their website [www.railroadhobbyshow.com](http://www.railroadhobbyshow.com)

### February 17

Whitefield Lions Club annual Model  
Railroad and Dollhouse Show, Augusta  
Armory, 10 to 3. Cost is \$5 for adults; free  
for children under 12; \$10 limit for families.  
We will need help setting up and supervis-  
ing our layout. To include your module,  
bring it to Augusta Armory between 7:00  
and 8:00 a.m. (see article)

### Special Notice:

For a prize-winning copyrighted photo  
of the WW&F Railway, see downe-  
ast.com/2018-reader-photo-contest



## GFMRRC Recurrent Activities

Please check web site or Facebook page

1st Thursday of each month - 5 to 7 PM

**Family Night at Governor's Restaurant**

1st Saturday of each month - noon to 1 PM

**Future Master Model Railroaders**

1st & 3rd Saturday each month - 8 am to noon

**HO Operating Sessions,  
also December 2, 9 & 23**

2nd Thursday of each month - 6:30 PM

**Executive Committee Meeting**

3rd Thursday of each month - 6:45 PM

**Regular Monthly Club Meeting**

4th Thursday of each month - 7 PM

**Modelers Forum**

### HO Work Sessions

**December 16 & 30**

Except for Operating Sessions and special  
events, work sessions are scheduled:

- 2nd & 4th Saturday 8:00 am to noon
- Every Wednesday 6:00 pm - 8:00 PM

