

Member since June 1988

NEXT MEETING
?????????
6:30 p.m.

**Have a story
you want to
share?**

**Send it to the
Editor today
and you may
be published!**

*Bring a friend to our
next meeting.*

DO YOU WANT TO WIN?

Attendance & 50/50 prizes are drawn at every Meeting, on the 3rd Thursday of the month.

**YOU HAVE TO BE
PRESENT TO WIN!**

DONATIONS

Bottles for Basics:

- ◆ 2020- \$301.00
- ◆ May— \$45.00
- ◆ June-\$52.00

PRINTER

CARTRIDGES:

2019: \$547.00
YTD: \$50.00
June: 30.00

MEMBERSHIP:

132

THE SIGNAL



THE GREAT FALLS MODEL RAILROAD CLUB

VOLUME 24. ISSUE 7

JULY 2020

NEW SECURITY SYSTEM NEEDED

By Mike Meserve

Sometime after 9 p.m. on June 17, a person or persons broke into the Great Falls Model Railroad Club shed and stole an item from it. The break-in was reported and filed with the police. The lock seemed to have been cut with a portable saw. Carl Butland installed a new lock and replacement parts for those that were damaged.

Our major concern is that the security system needs to be upgraded. The security camera did not do its job of getting a quality picture of the person responsible. The current system has incredibly poor video quality during playback. There were times while we were watching the video that the shadows were pitch black.

With the age of our current system and cameras, we must provide the club better security measures by replacing this system with a modern one. A few years ago the idea was discussed and approved, but the issue was then tabled. Terry King had gotten a price from Chandler which was a little over \$3,000. With improvements in technology, we can probably get a superior system now at about 2/3 of the cost.

After more research is done, the Executive Committee should approve a new security system. The old system could be moved downstairs to the HO layout. We also need to have a discussion on camera placement. I think we should go with the 16 camera system, which will give us the most options in configuring them. The new cameras are 4K ultra high definition video and can see much further at night and in the daytime. Currently on Newegg.com these systems are about \$1,000 to \$1,500 depending on the product and setup.



MODELERS FORUM

By Kent Waterson

The Modelers Forum returned to the Great Falls Model Railroad Club on June 25. It was great to see the group and talk about model railroading again. Present for the night were Bob Willard, Jamie Robinson, Carmen Anastase, Kent Waterson, Rick James, and George Pitchard.

Bob Willard started the meeting by presenting a pair of O-Scale trucks he had built. Both are based on a Russian version of the Ford 1928-31 Model A. The truck design was sold to the Russians during WWII, and they continued to produce it after the war. One of Bob's trucks was a fully loaded lumber truck and the other was a working garbage truck made to fit in his diner scene.

Bob also commented on his experiments with super glues. He has come to the conclusion that the Gorilla Glue version is easily the best. The most favorable factor is the nozzle that doesn't clog, thereby increasing the longevity of the glue.

Next was Jamie Robinson with a Frisco line boxcar built to Proto-48 standards from a 1960's era kit. Jamie use the underframe, body and roof of the kit; the rest of the details were scratch built. The model features a functional sliding center sill. Details were fabricated from brass or cast parts such as the plug doors. Decals were also modified for this particular car.

Like most people in this hobby, we are all tool junkies, always looking for the best and simplest tool to get the job done. Carmen Anastase presented a circle-cutting jig that reminded us of the opening of a James Bond movie, the shutter mechanism that opens and closes! By adjusting the knob on the one face, the opening expanded or contracted to the circle size desired. Neat little tool!

Kent Waterson did not bring any models or tools, but he did report that the workshop in his garage is nearly complete and he hopes to be back to the modeling phase of the hobby this fall. He also showed an updated version of a track plan in development that will utilize the remaining space in the garage.

George Pitchard closed the evening with a discussion of some of the conversions he is working on. George did not have the models with him this month, but the group looks forward to seeing his work in the months to come.

After a relatively short evening, the group called it a night. Having had a few months of sequestering, it was great to meet again and see the progress others have made.

Our next meeting is scheduled for July 23. We meet on the fourth Thursday of each month, starting at 7 p.m., and meetings are open to all GFMRRRC members. Whether or not you bring your own projects, tools or ideas, we welcome all comments and questions. Hope to see you soon!

Please see the pictures on Page 6.

JOHN MIDDLETON DONATION

By Paul Lodge

Great Falls Railroad Club member John Middleton was an active member of both the G-Gauge and HO crews and shared his expertise with both groups from the time he joined the club in 2017 until his death on March 21, 2020. John also volunteered for nearly every event at the Great Falls Model Railroad Club and at all of the train shows. His railroad collection was donated to the GFMRRRC and other railroad groups to which he belonged, including the Maine Garden Railroad Society, Seashore Trolley Museum and North Shore Model Railroad Club in Wakefield, Massachusetts.

John's son David Middleton had asked Stan Ames of the SJR&P Fn3 garden railway operating group in Chelmsford, Massachusetts, to organize the distribution of John's model railroad collection. John was an active member of that garden railway operating group and his good friends in the group helped with the distribution of his collection. Stan noted that John's family was very generous in giving away his collection with the only stipulation that it go to people who will use and enjoy it and to places that will care for it. Stan's plan was to first inventory everything and then work with his friends to ensure it would all go to good homes.

In his emails with Eric Long and Paul Lodge, Stan mentioned that John loved his work at the Great Falls Model Railroad Club; he really enjoyed his time at the club and often spoke about it. Stan wanted to ensure that the club was high on the list of receiving what it desired, and he was pleased to offer John's G scale and HO switching layouts to the Great Falls Model Railroad Club.

John was an active member of the Boston Museum of Science and spent a lot of time volunteering at the Museum. One of his NCE throttles has been donated to the Boston Museum of Science layout. Currently the HUB division of the NMRA builds and displays several layouts at the Museum during the Christmas holiday season. Stan would like one or two of the buildings from John's switching layout to be part of the display.

John's son David invited the Great Falls Model Railroad Club to come to John's home in Kennebunkport to get his G scale and HO switching layouts. Because of COVID-19 concerns, the invitation was postponed until June. On June 20, four members of GFMRRRC went to John's home in Kennebunkport to pick up the donation: Larry Cannon, Jamie Robinson, George Pitchard, and Paul Lodge.

The rooms in John Middleton's 19th-century home were too small for a layout with a loop. Instead, he had switching layouts in both G-Gauge and HO scales; and these were brought back to the club. The G-scale switching layout was divided into three sections. The large center module for the G scale switching layout is 72" long x 36' wide x 7" thick. The other two modules are 42" long x 36" wide x 7" thick. The HO layout was over 72" long. Using this kind of switching layout is like a chess match as a person tries to move cars to assigned locations.

John did not have much rolling stock left, but the GFMRRRC did get some nice locomotives. One of these is the Camelback steam engine Eric Long had custom built for John. Eric had decided to put John's name on it in his honor and has already added it to the Grand Trunk area of the HO layout at the club. George Pitchard was also able to bring back several interesting railroad books for the GFMRRRC library. John's HO Scale Switching layout is complete with structures and track, and it is donated to GFMRRRC to do with as the club sees fit.

The G Scale Switching Layout is complete with buildings, locomotives, DCC system and rolling stock. John really enjoyed teaching railroad operations using this layout and it is hoped GFMRRRC will continue this tradition. John's G Scale switching layout will be on permanent loan to the Great Falls Model Railroad Club, and the club is welcome to modify it as members see fit. When the club no longer wishes to have it, the layout will go back to the Seashore Trolley Museum for its use or disposition.

The Great Falls Model Railroad Club has been asked to display John's G Scale module switching layout once a year at the Seashore Trolley Museum at one of its events. It is hoped that the club will agree to display it at other places such as at a future NER regional convention.

Once the layout is set up, GFMRRRC should thank the family and invite them up.

Stan Ames has extended an invitation for members of the GFMRRRC to visit the SJR&P Fn3 garden railway group at his home in Chelmsford, Massachusetts in the future. Stan explained, "It is the tradition of our SJR&P Fn3 garden railway operating group to hold a whistle blow at the next ops session. Alas, due to COVID we will not have a major session this year. The Great Falls Model Railroad Club is invited down next year to join us in an ops session and hopefully to christen Middleton Pickles, a new switching location being built in a town currently under construction. We typically operate with a crew of between 18 and 35." We are looking forward to joining Stan and his group in this way of honoring John Middleton and his contributions to model railroading.

EASTERN MOUNTAIN COASTLINE RAILROAD EMC RR (part 2),

by James Long

In last month's edition of *The Signal*, readers were introduced to the Eastern Mountain Coastline Railroad (EMC), the fictitious railroad that my son Darin, my brother Bob and I began in 2001 and work on as time permits. EMC owns and operates the Selkirk Yard and the full servicing facility. Trains come into the huge Selkirk Yard, where freight is broken up and sorted for delivery by EMC to Jersey Central, to and from the paper mill at Linden, and serving the railroad barge on the Hudson River. Since the first article was written, EMC no longer delivers raw iron ore to the steel plant. As will be explained later, the iron mine has changed hands and Duluth, Missabbe & Iron Range motor power and ore cars now run over EMC tracks. EMC still delivers the sheet steel and heavy steel for truck frames to the Ford Motor Company. Ford, which has a huge stamping plant and forging mill to produce fine cars and heavy trucks in Illinois, is a substantial customer for EMC railroad.

This month's article will describe the challenging project involved in creating the scenery for the backdrop behind Selkirk Yard. The two window openings in the wall behind the yard are recessed three inches from the blank walls flanking them on both sides. Bob and I put 1/4" luan plywood over the sheetrock, using small nails. This way the nail holes filled in with primer and paint, which is quicker than patching screw holes. After painting the blue sky, Bob added clouds with white and gray paint.

By expanding the yard into the recessed areas of the windows and putting buildings there, we had another three inches of depth to work with. Instead of having just a long plain expanse of flat wall with low relief

buildings, the two recessed areas provide another dimension. There are low relief buildings on the long length of the wall before it turns and offsets into the recessed window areas. Then the scenery goes around the corner into the extra depth, giving the layout a completely different appearance. This makes the L-shaped buildings a left and a right configuration on both corners of the window. I left an area between the buildings for a street to come through. In the background I placed a picture of a city street, looking down the street into the distance. (The perspective may not be quite right, but I can change the picture if I find a better one.) Between the two buildings in each window, the wide open sky above the city street had destroyed the illusion of perspective. There was too much contrast between the street sky and the backdrop sky. Using a slight variation, I solved the problem differently in each window.

To solve the perspective problem in the first window, I connected the two L-shaped buildings with a second-story building on top of them. The second floor goes over the street, hiding the open sky. As the attached photos show, this also funnels the eye into the depth of the picture, adding to the illusion of distance.

In the railroad area of this window, the trailer trucks needed more room to drive up the street between the buildings and back into the loading docks. I used foam roadbed upside down to make hot top between the tracks and over the ties. This allows the trucks to drive out onto the tracks and then maneuver back to the docks. The flashing crossbuck lights warn them of any approaching train on the mainline tracks, and dispatch will signal the yard crew about the trailer trucks in that area. One of the pictures shows the crossbuck and another shows the

(Continued on page 5)

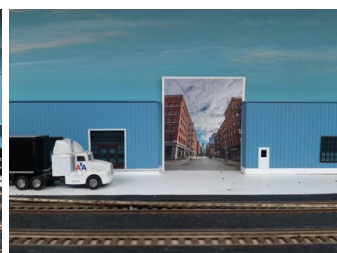
EMC RR (part 2) EASTERN MOUNTAIN COASTLINE RAILROAD

By James Long

tool and method I used for quickly slicing the foam road bed to the correct thickness.

Two of the buildings in this first window, as well as the low-relief buildings along the wall, were made by kit-bashing "Pike Stuff Kits." Four-sided buildings can be turned into low relief buildings for a fraction of the cost of buying flat relief that covers the same large area. Because of kitbashing freedom, one kit can cover three feet of low relief with a more interesting appearance, as illustrated by the different roof lines of the buildings pictured along the wall. It took a lot of Pike Stuff Kits to make each of the modern buildings. Both the green building and the blue building are Pike Stuff Kits. Pike Stuff is easy to work with. It cuts easily, glues together well, and has recessed cut marks for all the window and door openings on the back side of the panels.

In the next window recessed area, the style of the old building created with an old, old Schrafts kit is in marked contrast to the modern Pike Stuff Kits. The Schrafts kit uses cast resin, which was much harder to work with. The variety of buildings helps to establish the illusion of time and illustrates the length of time the railroad has existed. The railroad is more than 175 years old. The steam era is represented with a 400-ton coal-ing tower, round house, ash dump, and water tanks. It has all the things a steam-powered locomotive would have needed, including steam-supporting operations on other sections of the railroad, such as at the Jersey Central Yard.



DUES IN JULY

By Owen Buck

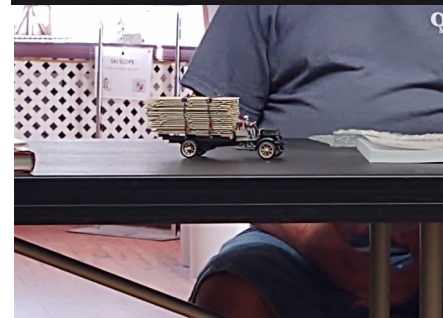
The season for annual dues begins in the month of July. Please pay your dues in July if you can. Dues are especially important this year because surplus asset sales at train shows have been torpedoed by COVID-19. Our largest sources of income have always been the Topsham shows, but the 2020 spring show had to be cancelled and the 2020 fall show is uncertain. The club began 2020 in a stable financial condition, but with our main source of income shut down for who knows how long, keeping that stability is going to be a challenge. Please keep up your support!

Dues continue at the same level: \$30 adult, \$35 family, \$8 junior, and \$60 contributing. If you pay now for four years, your fifth year will be free. All dues are set up on a calendar year basis. If you have a pro-rated credit from the previous system that hasn't already been applied, let me know and I'll take care of it.

To pay your dues, you could leave a check or cash in my box in the library. Probably the easiest way is to mail a check to the clubhouse: **Treasurer, Great Falls Model Railroad Club, 144 Mill Street, Auburn, ME. 04210. Thanks for helping the club!**



Pictures from Modelers Forum on Page 2.



CLUB SHIRTS

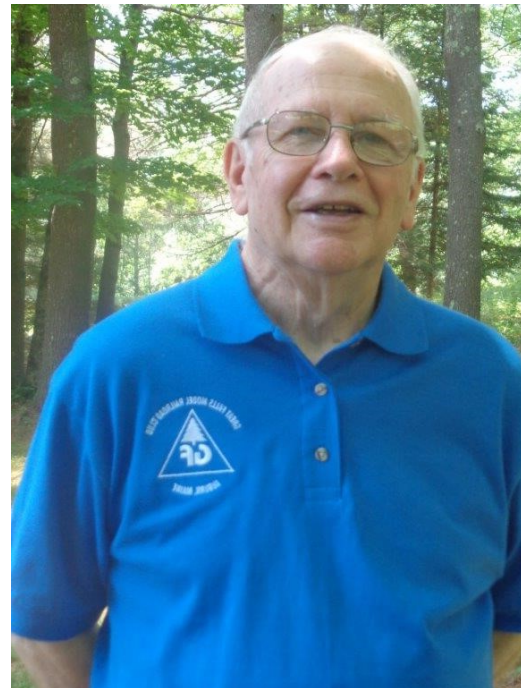
By Paul Lodge

The Great Falls Model Railroad Club T-shirts and polo shirts with the GFMRRRC logo on them have arrived after a major delay caused by the coronavirus. Club members can pick up and pay for their shirts at the club store. Contact Owen Buck, Eric Long, or George Pitchard to learn when someone will be there. (Phone numbers and email addresses for these club officers are on the back page of the newsletter.)

The shirts are a medium blue with white lettering. The design on the back of the T-shirt was duplicated from that on the most recent vest. A small copy of the same design is embroidered on the front of the polo shirt, which will be sold exclusively to club members.

Both the T-shirt and polo shirt are available in adult sizes Small, Medium, Large, XL, 2XL, and 3XL. T-shirts cost \$10 and polo shirts cost \$20. There will be an added charge of \$5 if we mail the shirt to you. We have a few extra shirts in all sizes in addition to those shirts that were pre-ordered, and we can place another order later if needed.

We hope the COVID-19 restrictions will be lifted soon and that all of you will then be able to enjoy wearing your Great Falls Model Railroad Club shirts to club activities.





THE GREAT FALLS MODEL RAILROAD CLUB

144 Mill Street
Auburn, Me 04210

<http://www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org>

Facebook: Great Falls Model Railroad Club

An Educational Foundation

OFFICERS:

President:
Mike Meserve
574-1476
y2f250mike@yahoo.com
Vice President:
Jamie Robinson
212-6027
j-robinson@roadrunner.com

Secretary:
Paul Lodge - 966-3641
paul lodge@gwi.net

Treasurer:
Owen Buck, 485-9736
obuck61@hotmail.com

Librarian/Archivist
George Pitchard, 330-9860
greatfallsmodelrailroad-club@yahoo.com

Directors:
Rick James, 740-1266
Darin Long, 782-3652
Eric Long, 754-4493

Webmaster:
Joe Marshall - 751-0554
joe@braintriggers@gmail.com,

Assistant Webmaster:
Frances Lodge - 966-3641
paul lodge@gwi.net

Social Media Editor
Tami Paine, 595-4668
Tami.girardin@yahoo.com

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Editor:
Terry King
207-576-3788
terrenceking112@yahoo.com

Proofreader:
Frances Lodge
966-3641
paul lodge@gwi.net

Address Change

If your mailing or e-mail address changes please notify
Paul Lodge at
paul lodge@gwi.net

www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org

Upcoming Events

Please check our web site on Facebook.



Recurrent Activities

The club
house is
closed
until
further
notice.

Operating Sessions

NONE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Regular Monthly Meeting

NONE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Spikey's Station

NONE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Work Session

NONE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE