

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- \$393.00
- ◆ July— \$95.00
- ◆ August-\$52.00

PRINTER

CARTRIDGES:

2019: \$579.00
YTD: \$100.00
August: 52.00

MEMBERSHIP:
132

THE SIGNAL



THE GREAT FALLS MODEL RAILROAD CLUB

VOLUME 24. ISSUE 9

SEPTEMBER 2020

DUES IN JULY

By Owen Buck

Have you paid your Great Falls Model Railroad Club 2020-2021 dues yet?

Dues are especially important this year since so many of our usual sources of income have been unavailable because of the COVID-19 concerns and restrictions.

Our largest sources of income have always been the Topsham shows, but the 2020 April and November shows had to be cancelled. Surplus asset sales at Topsham and at other train shows have been successful in the past, but none of the other clubs have been able to hold their shows either.

Special events at the club have been eliminated so another fund-raising opportunity is gone. We usually hold our Train Fest in conjunction with the Lewiston/Auburn Balloon Festival and were excited that the Maine State Parade would be held the same day. When the Balloon Festival and the Parade were postponed from August until 2021, we canceled this year's Train Fest. We have now made the difficult decision to cancel the four-day ExTRAINaganza in November.

The club began 2020 in a stable financial condition, but without knowing how long our main sources of income will be shut down, keeping that financial stability may become a challenge.

Dues continue at the same level: \$30 adult, \$35 family, \$8 junior, and \$60 contributing. To pay your dues by mail, send a check to:

***Treasurer, Great Falls Model Railroad Club, 144 Mill Street,
Auburn, ME. 04210***

Please keep up your support of the club!

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE LIBRARY

By George Pitchard

There have been several donations to the Great Falls Model Railroad Club library of late, mostly magazines, but also a fair selection of books new and old, most of which the library did not already have. The Kalmbach *Guide to North American Diesel Locomotives* is now on the shelf, as is a relatively recent (by the librarian's standards!) book on VIA's trans-Canadian passenger train, logically called the "Canadian". A sizeable donation of the *Narrow Gauge & Short Line Gazette* magazines provided several of the issues heretofore missing from the GFMRRRC collection. Owing to a large donation from an individual in Farmington, there are now available scads of duplicate issues of *Model Railroader*, *Trains*, and *Railroad Model Craftsman*.

Among the donated material picked up on the 30th just past is a publication entitled *Railroad Explorer*, sub-titled (originally) *Trains of Northeastern North America*, later *The Northeastern Rail Journal* and more recently *The Eastern Rail Photo Journal*. (Whew!) The collection appears to be complete from No. 1, in Spring/Summer 2001, through issue No. 50, in Spring/Summer 2017. It appears that it is (or was?) published by Mike Confalone, in Goffstown, New Hampshire, on a three issues per year basis. (Anyone having up-to-date information on this publication would confer a favor upon The Librarian by communicating same to him at their convenience.)



SECRETARY'S REPORT

By Paul Lodge

During the COVID-19 (corona virus) restrictions, there have been no club meetings since February. Although the Executive Committee has held no in-person meetings since March, they have discussed several issues by email and voted on some of them by email. This report will summarize those issues.

CANCELLATION OF CLUB ACTIVITIES: At various times from March through August, COVID-19 guidelines have made it necessary to cancel all club meetings and other activities. These have included cancellation of our April and November train shows in Topsham, the Train Fest in August, the ExTRAINaganza in November, and the July picnic at James Long's home in Waterford. All other model railroad clubs throughout New England have made similar decisions. The Seacoast Division of the NMRA canceled their meeting which was to be held at GFMRRRC in July, and the Maine Model Railroad Tour has canceled both days of its layout tours in September. Groups within the club have been encouraged to follow COVID-19 guidelines if they choose to continue with meetings such as those of the Modelers Forum and work sessions of the HO and G-Scale groups. The clubhouse has been closed to everyone except club members, and this has meant cancelling all birthday parties and other opportunities to rent the building.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: According to the Constitution and By-laws of the Great Falls Model Railroad Club, officers are to be elected at the annual meeting of the club in May. Because all club meetings since February have been canceled, it was decided to continue with the current club officers until such time as club meetings could be resumed. Alternate proposals included write-in voting by USPS or email. As the club's by-laws do not allow voting by mail, this would require amending our by-laws, which could not be done by mail either. Changes have to be voted on at a club meeting and the membership has to be notified by mail or email two weeks before the meeting.

Suggested changes to the by-laws that will be voted on when meetings resume include these: (1) to allow voting by mail or email, either when meetings cannot be held or to allow more participation by people who are unable to attend meetings, (2) to elect officers on a calendar year basis, serving from January to December instead of beginning their terms in May; (3) to elect officers for terms of two years instead of one, staggered so that four Executive Committee members would come up for reelection each year instead of all at once; (4) to eliminate the nominating committee.

REDUCED RATES FOR NEW DISPLAYS AT TOPSHAM SHOWS: At the Big E Show in January, Mike Meserve talked with several vendors and manufacturers who expressed a willingness to come to our April and/or November shows in Topsham. Leaders of several clubs were also interested in putting on displays at our shows. Since many of them come from long distances, George Pitchard suggested giving 1/2 off or even free tables to those who displayed and/or sold items at our shows for the first time. The Executive Committee discussed this idea by email and recommended doing this.

MAINE MODEL RAILROAD TOUR: This year's Maine Model Railroad Tour was scheduled for September 26 and 27 and we were invited to host again. The Executive Committee recommended that GFMRRRC have an Open House during the layout tours only on alternate years, with the club open as a host site on the odd-numbered years and closed on even-numbered years to allow more time for club members to tour other layouts. This year's tour has been canceled because of the coronavirus.

SECURITY SYSTEM: Purchasing a new security system is a top priority. Mike Meserve recommended a Security Camera System by Newegg.com that has 16 outdoor/indoor weatherproof wide angle bullet cameras with 100 feet night vision motion detection. This system was approved by the Executive Committee and arrangements will be made for its purchase and installation. Other security measures discussed were repairs or replacement of the outer door leading to the HO layout and installation of a door at the top of the stairs.

DONATION FROM JOHN MIDDLETON'S ESTATE: The GFMRRRC was pleased to receive a donation from John' Middleton's estate which included John's G scale and HO switching layouts. The G Scale Switching Layout is complete with buildings, locomotives, DCC system and rolling stock. John really enjoyed teaching operation using this layout and we plan to continue this tradition. John's G Scale switching layout will be on a Permanent Loan to the GFMRRRC. When the club no longer wishes it, it goes back to the Seashore Trolley Museum for its use or disposition. The club is welcome to modify the layout as seems fit during its time at the club. The only stipulation was that the GFMRRRC agree to display John's G Scale module switching layout once a year at the Seashore Trolley Museum at one of its events. It was also hoped that the club would agree to display it at other places such as at a future NER regional convention.

The HO Scale Switching layout is complete with structures and track. It now belongs to the club to do with as we see fit. John was an active member and volunteer at the Boston Museum of Science. Currently the HUB division of the NMRA builds and displays several layouts at the Museum during the Christmas holiday season, and they would like one or two of the buildings from John's switching layout to be part of the display.

Eric Long noted that the stipulation for the G Scale Switching Layout to be brought to the museum annually was discussed and approved by all Executive Committee members via email. The Executive Committee's decision was that we would get the layout to the museum via at least two warm bodies from any group in the club. All of those in the HO scale group are willing to take the layout down and operate it. Although it was hard to get the G group involved during the COVID lock-down, they may also help with this. The layout will be kept at an appropriate place in the club so it can be operated during open houses and at other times by qualified members.

MODELERS FORUM

By Kent Waterson

The Modeler's Forum returned to the clubhouse on August 27 for another round of information sharing and general discussion. The men behind the masks included Bob Willard, Carmen Anastase, Jamie Robinson, Larry Cannon, George Pitchard, Dexter Baum, Kent Waterson and newcomer John McMullen.

John started off by introducing himself and stated he is new to the hobby and the club. He is getting started in N gauge and came with a variety of questions. John brought a variety of track pieces and looked for information regarding wiring practices, primarily with switches. He quickly was introduced to how something seemingly so simple can become quite complex! I hope we helped and didn't confuse him all the more! Regardless of getting answers that night, the club holds many resources (both written and people) that will help him on his way.

Kent followed John with an update on a diorama project that has been on hold for a while. The diorama depicts a scene from a WWII battleship that, while in transit to station, encountered a storm that damaged one of the on-board aircraft. The diorama is in 1/48 (or "O") scale. The diorama will be mounted on the quarterdeck of the battleship, and what Kent showed was the beginning of construction of the hull section. Four layers of blue foam were glued together with spray adhesive and then shaped with a hot-wire cutter followed by 60-grit sandpaper. The next step is to cover the surfaces with fiberglass. Along with the hull, Kent also showed one of the 40mm Bofor's guns that he purchased from Shapeways that will be mounted on the stern of the quarterdeck.

Dexter was up next with an update on his sifting of materials. Since moving, he is still down-sizing and has 138 kits. Since he can't build all of them, most of the kits are for sale. Anyone that is familiar with Dexter knows he is a master of organization (as opposed to most of us who are masters of disorganization). He brought in some sectional cases he used to keep things organized as an example of "what planning can do for you." What a concept!

Dexter also brought in some Lego pieces and described how he uses them to build support structures while building various models. Bob also chimed in, noting that the Lego pieces also make great dams for molds.

George didn't bring any models to the meeting, but he did give us an update on a 2' gauge tank car he is working on. Hopefully we'll see it next month. He commented on getting started on a 8' x 1.5' test track he is building.

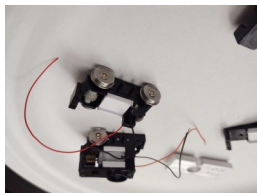
Larry joined us this month with a couple of projects he has been working on. He added an annex to his layout that includes the Fairbanks Scale Co. in St. Johnsbury, VT. The first piece was a machine shop built from an outline found on the area Sanborn map. Larry used a Walther's Front Street Warehouse kit to mold and cast various wall sections, along with a foundation and skylights from a model he had purchased from the club. The second piece, a work in progress, is a coal dock for the same facility. The structure is built from styrene shapes. Although not 100% prototypically accurate, it was tailored to fit the space on his layout.

Jamie then gave an update on a 44-tonner project he has been working on for Dexter. The model is an early Bachmann locomotive with plenty of room for mounting a decoder and speaker. The issue is the trucks, which were individually motored with a 3-pole motor. The axle gears were also cracked and needed to be replaced. However, the NWSL gears he purchased were slightly out-of-round and needed much time to file and work the gears until the locomotive ran smoothly. While the model was apart, he also replaced the 3-pole motors with 6-pole, 3-magnet motors that ran much smoother. Jamie had finished one truck but still needed to complete the second.

Carmen brought parts of his commuter locomotive and asked for assistance on how to lower the various under-shell components so that the shell would fit. Jamie offered suggestions of removing the circuit board (that will be replaced with a decoder) and then milling down much of the support. Since the commuter train will always be run as an MU'd unit, the decoder and speaker(s) could be mounted in the trailing unit.

Bob closed out the evening with a story of how he had spotted a built model of a boat in a magazine in 2004. The model was a 3/8" scale model but he thought it would be interesting to build in 1/4" scale. The difficulty was that all he had to go on was the picture! He was able to obtain the basic dimensions, but the rest of the dimensions came from measuring the picture and trying to scale the model accordingly. Bob then showed the model, mostly complete, made from basswood and planked with scale planking. There are still deck components to add; perhaps we will see them next month.

Planes, trains, boats and buildings ... we had a nice assortment of projects that night. We all learn from one another and would be glad to hear from others as well, come join us next month on September 25!



FORSTERS TOOTHPICK MILL, Part 2

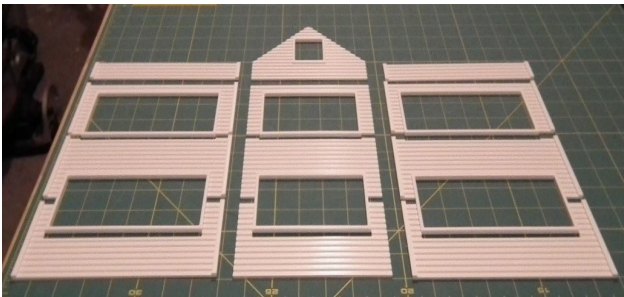
By Ray Parent

G Gauge Forster Toothpick Mill via 3D Printing:

As a follow-up to last month's article, here is a brief description of how the exterior building components were made with 3D printing. All components were designed with a free user-friendly on-line CAD program that creates STL files for 3D printing, called [Tinkercad](#). To the below is an example of what the main building wall components look like.

The STL files are then converted to G-code files by what is called a 'slicer program' which comes with the 3D printer. Once you transfer the G-code files to the printer, you're ready to print.

Below are the unassembled clapboard siding pieces for the small side building.



Next these pieces are 'snapped' together prior to gluing to the wooden substructure using [Gorilla](#) Super Glue Gel.



Two views of the final structure follow with all components 3D printed except for the metal corrugated roof. Note the unique corner doors in the second image.

How do you spell RELIEF? Finally, the true test is whether the design clearance calculations were accurate. To the right is the installed mill with wood being successfully delivered on the flatcar, and finished toothpicks being loaded into the boxcar.

Conclusion: TEST PASSED!



For you purists, the original mill never had a sign, and Forster was spelled with only one "s". I added the second "s" because this one is "special" to me! Happy Modeling...

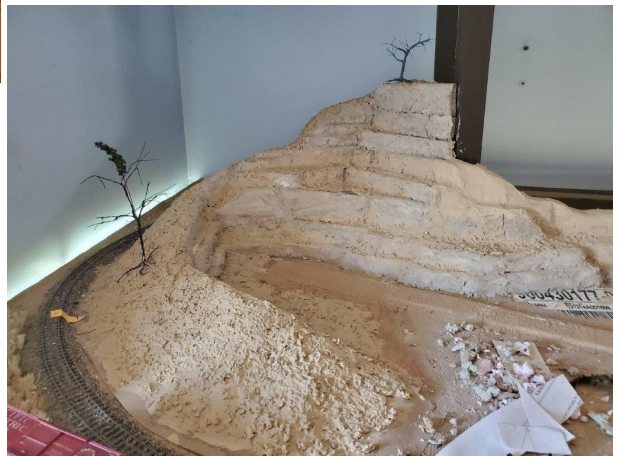
SUMMERHAVEN'S HILL

By Andrew Vick

The Fall River Road is set in the late 1800, based loosely on the WW&F and Belfast & Moosehead. It connects a port of Winterhaven (based on the wharfs in Wiscasset) to a connection with a larger railroad in Springfield. The town of Summerhaven contains a rail-served quarry; as I was working on it, it occurred to me that I needed to fill in the back corner before I filled in all the trees on the quarry.

I roughed in the hill with foam board and cardboard from cereal boxes, then covered it with paper and latex paint. Already the cereal box base is starting to warp; my plan is to fill that in after the hill is complete to make a small cut. I fit a piece of posterboard over the hill and around the corner to get the shape of the backdrop. I took the picture for the backdrop in my in-law's back field, then used image editing software (GIMP) to bend it to the hill. I printed it and glued it to the posterboard. Once the backdrop was attached to the hill, I built stone walls.

Now I'm working on the ground cover. I'd welcome advice from anyone who can get static grass to stand up straight; mine keeps falling over in random directions. (andrewvick0@gmail.com)



AMERIMARK RR

By Tom (the can man) McAvoy

My HO layout is titled the AmeriMark RR. The name stems from the fact it is a combination of American two-rail and Marklin three-rail tracks. As a big fan of Apple, I figured butchering the convention for not capitalizing letters in the middle of a word for AmeriMark was no worse than Apple's transgressions for iPhone, iPod, iMac, etc.

The layout was started around late 2017. Ed Webb and Jerry Johnston were a huge help getting me off the block and helping me build the tables and layout. We used a 1/4" plywood base with 3/8" homasote over it for the table top. The layout is in the shape of a large capital E with 16' by 4' prongs joined to the spine of the E by two approximately 2' by 5' sections. The two Marklin C track mainlines run over about 2/3 of the layout inside the American track while the two American mainlines cover the outer edge of the entire layout, making for about a 100' run for one loop. The minimum radius on those lines is about 22", putting it right at the minimum for many passenger cars. I have no American passenger cars yet. I need to be careful to find a passenger car in Maine livery that can handle a 21" or 22' radius. The Marklin C track runs 18" radius but the Marklin passenger cars handle that fine.

When Jerry decided to sell his model railroading equipment, he was kind enough to set me up with the NCE digital boards, throttles, some rolling stock and buildings to get me off to a much quicker start. He was also a huge help in showing me how to build mountains and scenery as well as other skills I lack. I will have to add a hobo camp as tribute to the contributions Jerry and his Hobo Railroad have made to my AmeriMark model railroad. Travis Johnson was nice enough to come up to Sidney and wire the NCE digital system for the American layout for me once it was ready for that stage of the build. I wired drops from the tracks every 3' down to the track Bus to ensure good voltage throughout the layout. The older Marklin digital is much simpler than the NCE system since it all stems from power packs with the digital wiring built in. It is a little crude compared to my NCE system with multiple throttles. I can only control one Marklin locomotive at a time while the number of locos I can simultaneously control with the NCE digital is constrained only by the number of throttles I plug in to the 10 jacks distributed around the layout. The Marklin equipment and rolling stock is also insanely expensive, although the quality and details of the rolling stock surpasses all but the highest end two-rail equipment. Someday I will upgrade to the far more powerful and easy to use Marklin Central Station or its successor for better functionality.

I also wired in a Broadway Limited Wireless receiver to a large home theater subwoofer to provide absolutely incredible sound from the two Broadway Limited locomotives that transmit their paragon 3 sounds into the system. It provides crazy realistic bass that lends an incredible realism to steam drivers, whistles, horns, etc. Totally excessive and unnecessary but great fun. Kind of like a Hellcat Dodge Challenger.

I am in the summer dormancy right now, but my next step is to add steel wheels to all my 181 American HO cars so I never have to run plastic wheels on the track. As I replace the wheels, I am encountering a problem with losing the small springs in the trucks and not being able to reassemble the trucks with the tiny springs so I have to find a source for reasonably inexpensive trucks that do not use separate easy-to-lose springs. All Marklin cars have steel wheels so no upgrade is necessary there.

Once the wheel upgrade is done, I want to run the NCE system extensively to work out all the bugs before moving onto turnout motors, more layout details and landscaping, lighting streets and buildings, ballasting, etc. One area I really need help with is how best to automate at least some of the turnouts to cut down on the need to run around using manual throws on the roughly 30 turnouts. (In next month's article, I will make more suggestions for helping beginners and others like me who are experimenting with modeling techniques.)

Well, that is all for the moment. Once I get restarted in a few months, I will have to send you another update. Any suggestions, training, etc. that anyone would like to offer for improving my limited "skills toolbox" would be eagerly and gratefully accepted.



FOR SALE

HO TESTING TABLE

By Kevin LaMarre

FOR SALE: A custom-made HO scale testing system. This comes mounted on a table that can be removed easily. Mounting table serves as a work station for making needed repairs. There are cubby-holes that contain tool and paper trays. There are **15** stations designed to test a car or locomotive under various conditions, but you could add more. Comes with many extras. Inside the test table drawer is a transformer, 12-volt power pack and small volt/amp meter as well as pertinent modelling paperwork. Lamp included. Electrical work started but not completed. Comes with electric switches and wiring, so you can finish the job. Test table comes on casters and moves easily. It can be removed from work table as well as all draws for transport. Price \$300. More photos are available; contact Kevin LaMarre at:

klamarre@maine.rr.com

Dimensions: Test table by itself: 68 ¾" x 18" x 8 ½" tall
Work table by itself: 32" x 70" x 34 ¾" tall
Complete Table: 32 ½" x 70" x 43 ¼" tall

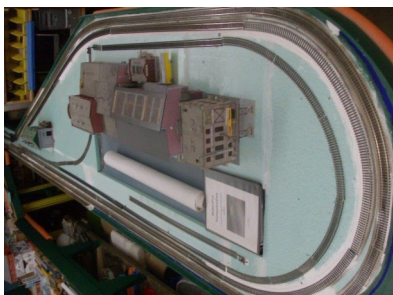


For Sale The Maine Central Railroad...Again! By Kevin LaMarre

Pan Am Railways is up for sale, and so is the Maine Central...my Maine Central, that is! I am selling off my model railroad collection, and am starting with the table-works in my garage. This consists of three (3) inter-connected train tables. One table represents the Maine Central Shops in Waterville, ME. The other two tables are for the Waterville yard system.

These tables will be disassembled and ready to go for the person or persons who purchase them, so there will be no disassembly hassle involved. Just pay me, load up, and go! I have more specific information and will send it as well as prices upon contact. This layout will be sold "as is". More will be available after this portion is sold and moved out. (The junk on the yard table is not included in the sale.)

Interested persons can contact me, Kevin LaMarre at klamarre@maine.rr.com My home address is 4 Shaw Road in Raymond. When you contact me, I'll send further info and photos. This would be an ideal starter set for someone contemplating getting into the hobby, or a great addition to an existing layout. If you're a Maine Central fan, this whole package might interest you!





THE GREAT FALLS MODEL RAILROAD CLUB

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Upcoming Events



Recurrent Activities

Please check our web site on Facebook.

MAINE GARDEN RAILWAY SOCIETY AUCTION

By Terry Norton

Maine Garden Railway Society is auctioning off items from three estates. There are buildings, rolling stock and a lot of track. The auction will be held on Sept 20 at 12 noon at 82 Carll Rd, Buxton ME. They have not yet taken any pictures. Items may be previewed, starting at 10 a.m. on the day of the sale. All items will have two tags: a "buy it now" price and a minimum opening bid for the auction. For more information, contact the Maine Garden Railway Society secretary, Terry Norton<bl2gscale@gmail.com or 207-748-3009.

Operating Sessions

NONE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Regular Monthly Meeting

NONE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Spikey's Station

NONE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Work Session

Every Wed. night—6:00 p.m.

Modelers Forum

Sept. 24, at 7:00 p.m.