

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- \$484.00
- ◆ October— \$53.00
- ◆ November—\$24.00

When you send an article with pictures, please do not embed them into the article. Please send them as a separate file. This way we can lower the number of MP's. This way we can send the Signal as one file.

THE SIGNAL

THE GREAT FALLS MODEL RAILROAD CLUB

VOLUME 24. ISSUE 12



DECEMBER 2020



GFMRRRC OFFICERS

The officers of the Great Falls Model Railroad Club for the following year are usually elected at the annual meeting in May. Since the railroad club is closed because of the Coronavirus, the election was postponed until a further date after the club reopens.

Several members of the Executive Committee feel that we should do something now about election of officers, even though as Owen Buck said, "We are all still in hunker-down and muddle-through mode." Here's their suggestion:

If there is any member who would like to run for a GFMRRRC office for 2021, please send an email to paulldodge@gwi.net and let him know for which office you would be interested. If the current officeholder wants to stay on, then we'll have an election for that position. Otherwise, we'll continue with the 2020 officers

NEW BUILDING PROJECTS

By Jay Wiley

I've been building some old and new plastic models for my layout. The first one was an old Athearn water tower kit. I used thin steel cable to support the hinged water spout, which can be raised and lowered by hand (or finger). The second was a new kit available through Walther's of a small wood coaling tower. It's a great kit that went together very well. I used the same cable trick on the hinged chute, and it can be raised and lowered too. The third was an old AHM kit that was a bit of a challenge because several large parts were warped, but it came out well and suits my steam era layout.



ANDREW VICK'S LAYOUT



In the September issue of *The Signal*, Andrew Vick's article and photos of his layout included the area of Summerhaven. This month his photos show the scenery he has added to complete the Summerhaven Hill.

MODEL RAILROAD WINTER SCENES

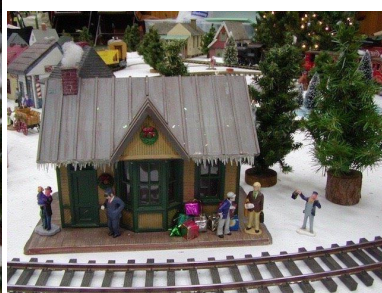
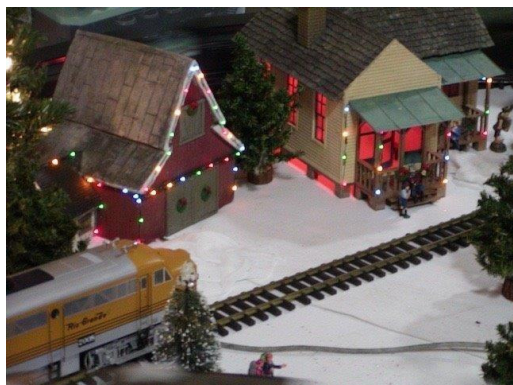
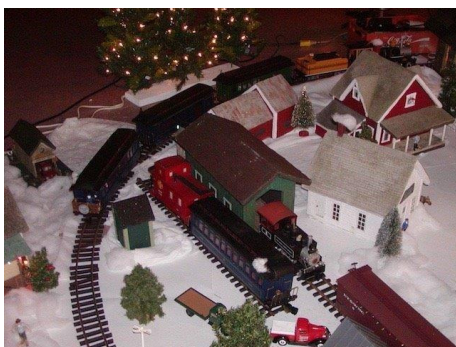
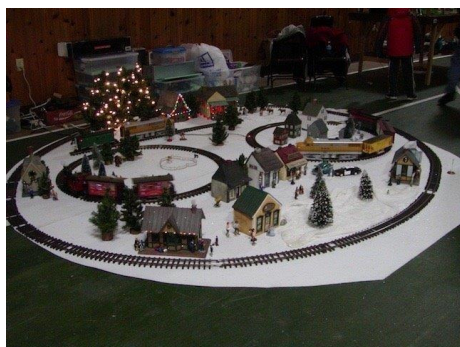
By Dick Clark

Editor's Note: Last month we asked club members to share Christmas ideas from their layouts. These pictures taken in 2014 by Dick Clark show some of the ways he and his wife Sharon have shared their Christmas model railroading ideas with others.

Sharon made most of the characters for the ski slope at the club house, using a product called Sculpy. The other characters in this photo from October 2014 are plastic store-bought figures.

For several years a few members of the Great Falls Model Railroad Club brought layouts to the Belgrade Community Polar Express Christmas celebration for children. These pictures were taken at the Belgrade Christmas event on December 12, 2014.

The last set of pictures are from an event that Sharon and I did at the Pine Tree School in Conway, New Hampshire, on December 18, 2014. Different grades came to the stage area and enjoyed the display throughout the day. Each grade spent about 15 to 20 minutes and then moved on for the next grade to come in and enjoy.



ExTRAINaganza THROUGH THE YEARS

By Frances Lodge

Because of COVID-19 precautions, the annual Great Falls Model Railroad Club November ExTRAINaganza was not held this year. Instead of the usual follow-up article in December, therefore, we decided to look back at the ExTRAINaganza through the years.

When the Great Falls Model Railroad Club purchased the building at 144 Mill Street in Auburn in 2007, members looked forward to sharing the hobby with the community. Soon after renovations were completed enough to receive an Occupancy Permit, we held our first open house for the dedication of the building on September 19, 2009. Two months later GFMRRRC held the first ExTRAINaganza on the last two weekends of November. With very few changes, the ExTRAINaganza followed the same format and activities every year from 2009 through 2019, with visitors each year able to see the progress on our permanent layouts.

Nearly five hundred adults and three hundred children participated during the five days of the first ExTRAINaganza. As they entered the building, children wrote their names on colored train-shaped cards, which they pinned to the "Train Tree" painted on a large sheet of homasote. By the end of the event, the "Train Tree" was totally covered with a variety of colored trains. Activities in the main room included decorating cookies to eat, creating candy cane ornaments from colored tri-beads and decorating spice ornaments to take home. Parents could sit at the activity tables to help their children and to watch the youngest children playing with age-appropriate trains on the nearby play rug.

Trains of different gauges displayed under three brightly decorated Christmas trees in the main hallway were raffled to help the club pay for on-going building renovations. Final tickets were sold on the club's portable HO raffle layout, which had been used for the D.A.R.E. program and taken to various schools and other locations during the year. Temporary G-gauge and N-scale layouts were located in the rooms where the permanent layouts are today. Temporary layouts downstairs included sections of the club's HO modular layout decorated for the Christmas season. Guests enjoyed watching trains go up and down the helix of the club's permanent HO layout, although the framework had not yet been hidden by any scenery. More than forty club members and their families helped during at least one of the five days of the event.

Over the years each of the permanent HO, G-gauge and N-scale layouts has been further defined and expanded, with careful attention to scenery and other details. Dick Clark's interactive ski slope draws everyone's attention as they enter the building and see the first part of the multi-level G-gauge layout with trains running through the tunnels from the larger G-gauge room. Younger children have been delighted with the permanent layout for Thomas the Tank Engine and his friends in the G-gauge room. A portable Brio layout built at a young child's height is a recent attraction in the main room as is our portable original game "Spin the Locomotive" to win a prize. Guest Engineers have been thrilled to operate trains on the extensive HO layout. The area formerly reserved for the portable raffle layout now has a permanent O-gauge layout with many interesting features.

For several years Jeff and Beth Chaffee brought their beautiful Christmas layout and set it up downstairs in what is now the workroom. In 2015 Joseph Gilbert donated a locomotive and plastic track so that young children could ride on his small train. Santa Claus has occasionally visited on the final day of the ExTRAINaganza. Live music was provided one year by Richard Obie with his keyboard and another year by Tami Paine with her guitar. Some years recorded Christmas music was played in the background. In recent years the music has been replaced by *Train Time* DVD's, created by club members and shown on the TV near the activity play area.

Spikey's Station members helped decorate the Christmas trees in 2019; and, for the first time, young guests were invited to choose Christmas ornaments to hang on an artificial tree after they had pinned their name-trains to the nearby "Train Tree." Carmen Coulombe had created the Spikey logo in 2015, and in 2018 she painted a large picture of Spikey holding a "Welcome to the ExTRAINaganza" sign.

Beginning in 2015, the ExTRAINaganza was held on four days instead of five. Thanks to good publicity from local newspapers and the club's attractive well-placed signs on the days of the show, many people visited the club for the first time and others returned every year. Club members helped to make the ExTRAINaganza a successful tradition.



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Upcoming Events



Recurrent Activities



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.—8:00 p.m.

Every Sat. 9:00 to Noon

Modelers Forum

December 17, 7:00 p.m.