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**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
- ◆ January— \$49.00
- ◆ February—\$00.00

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# THE SIGNAL



THE GREAT FALLS MODEL RAILROAD CLUB

VOLUME 25. ISSUE 3

MARCH 2021

## MAINE CENTRAL LOCOMOTIVES

By Travis Johnson

The Moderator of the Maine Central Modelers page on Facebook is asking for help to get Athearn to produce fantasy-painted HO scale GP40 and GP40-2w locomotives in Maine Central's Harvest Gold paint scheme. He got a favorable response from one of Athearn's representatives in charge of finding new locomotive ideas. If done, the GP40s will be in the 300 series and the GP40-2ws will be in the 500 series, like what Pan Am/Guilford Rail has done in the real world with their locomotives.

This would be an opportunity to get factory-painted locomotives from one of the long-time suppliers of HO scale locomotives and rolling stock in a scheme that is well-loved by Maine Central fans. You can make your railroad in MEC as if Guilford/Pan Am never existed!

He does need help, however, to show Athearn there is enough interest in buying these locomotives. If you would be interested, please email Athearn's representative at [athearn-productsuggestions@athearn.com](mailto:athearn-productsuggestions@athearn.com) Expressing your interest in an email does not obligate you to buy the product.

The locomotive paint scheme has recently been released by Athearn on the GP7 locomotive. The paint scheme was last used on the GP38 locomotives bought new by MEC and sold to Guilford when they purchased Maine Central in the early 80's. Maine Central did not purchase the higher horsepower GP40s for use. Guilford used both the GP38 and GP40 series locomotives well into the Pan Am era and until recently.



# SPIKEY'S STATION NOTES

By Tami Paine

*Editor's Note: Because of COVID-19 restrictions, Spikey's Station has not met for over a year. Starting this month, however, Tami Paine will be writing articles of interest to members of Spikey's Station; and her articles will also contain information of interest to all GFMRRRC members.*

Have you ever wondered how long ago it was when the first model train set was invented?

It was 130 years ago. That's a very long time ago, in the year 1891.

A German toy company called "Marklin" had been making doll houses with furniture and other pieces, including dolls, that girls could buy separately. The Marklin company wanted to invent a toy that boys could also buy with many pieces that could be purchased separately. With that in mind, they invented the first clock-work (wind-up) train. A boy could purchase the train with a small amount of track in a box. Then, as he wanted to expand his train, he could buy railroad cars, houses and more track to go with the original set. The toy train sets became very popular. Every boy wanted one, even boys in the United States.

The model train was a big success for the Marklin company and this was the beginning of the model train hobby.



## Hello, My Name is Spikey

My family has a history I'm very proud to tell.  
We do important railroad work, and do it very well.  
You know, of course, that every train must have a railroad track.  
As it moves along, you may hear its song, *clickety-clickety-clack*.

Do you also know of railroad ties that hold the tracks in place?  
Important as those cross-ties are, they also need a brace.  
And so a railroad spike is used. That's where we all come in.  
The job of every railroad spike is to act like a giant pin.

It takes a lot of teamwork to keep a railroad going.  
Although I'm just a little spike, I take great pride in knowing  
My family has been faithful, always standing straight and tall.  
A spike is a spike, I'm happy to say, no matter how big or how small.

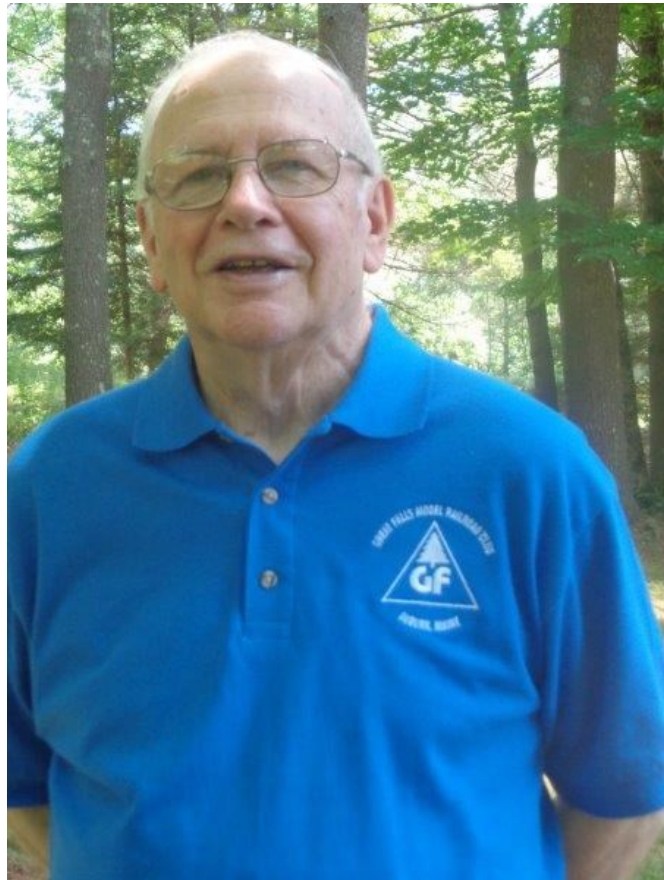
-- Sally Rowe Joy

9/18/2015

**Note:** Up to 3,000 ties are used per mile of railroad track in the United States.

**Rails in the US may be fastened to the tie by a railroad spike.**

*Spikey, the Club's mascot, was created by Carmen Coulombe.*



Our vests are still available to buy.

Give Paul Lodge a call for more  
Information.





# MODELERS FORUM

By Kent Waterson

The Masked Modelers Forum was back in the clubhouse on February 25 for an evening of sharing and learning. Those attending that night were Bob Willard, Dick Holman, Jamie Robinson, Steve Doughty, Kent Waterson, Dexter Baum, George Pitchard and Carmen Anastase.

Dick Holman started off the night with a demonstration of taking some relatively inexpensive trees (100/\$30) and turning them into something more effective. He showed some pine trees that started as a uniform shape and color. After trimming a few branches (because nothing is "perfect" in nature) and painting with a variety of subtle shades, he had made the trees more realistic looking. Dick then attached the trees to a styrene tube that had been scribed and painted. The taller trees represented trees in the forest which tend to lose their lower branches. Grouping the trees together gives a very realistic appearance from less expensive materials. Dick also described using the same technique with hardwood foliage branches that can be twisted together to form a small tree.

Jamie Robinson followed with a reclamation project from the HO layout. He had taken a station from the layout and upgraded it to represent "Reid Point" station. New signs were created using a font from the Boston & Maine porcelain signs. An NCE Light-It decoder and numerous interior and exterior lights were added to the building. The lights can now be controlled via DCC, which made for a nice look when observed under low light conditions.

Steve Doughty was up next with a variety of items for his layout and construction. He showed a set of three building flats that are close to HO scale and could be used in the confined spaces on his layout. Next, he showed how he had improved some standard generic telephone poles by adding light green seed beads to the crossbars to represent insulators. He then produced a roll of black duct tape that he plans to use for making quick roadbeds.

Steve followed with an interesting idea for protecting the edges of his layout. His layout does not run along the walls, but instead is in the center of the room. To protect areas where the track runs close to the edge, he installed sections of plexiglass. A special feature is that he added building sections to the outside of the plexiglass to provide depth to the scenery when observed from the opposite side.

Lastly, Steve showed some 90-degree corner clamps that he uses for assembling buildings. These types of clamps help ensure tight right-angle joints in the building components.

Dexter Baum next explained that he had spotted some letter sets at Staples that he thought would make good business signs. Dexter purchased the sets, then brought them to a local printer who scanned them, then scaled and printed them on cardstock. Dexter also showed a variety of items from his "hobby shop" that he has collected over the years.

George Pitchard and his narrow-gauge items were next. First was a station that he built a few years ago based on a plan in a book about the Wiscasset Narrow Gauge Railroad. The station is constructed primarily from wood with the window frames cut from styrene.

George next presented a pair of locomotives that were converted to different gauges. The first was a Grandt Porter kit that was converted to 2-foot gauge and will be finished to represent Wiscasset #4. The second locomotive was a Bachmann On30 2-8-0 that he converted to 3-foot gauge. George ran both locomotives on a short test track and they appeared to run very well. Lastly, he showed a 3-foot gauge 38' passenger car that had been combined from two 30' On30 cars.

At last month's meeting, Carmen Anastase had mentioned the website "Wish" that he had discovered and ordered some parts from. This month he showed some of the items he has received. Among them were a set of magnifying glasses, a collection of cars with working headlights, a bag of 50 HO figures (although the figures appear to be a bit small) and some small pre-wired LED lights. None of the items was particularly expensive, but shipping is somewhat slow since they are coming from China.

Bob Willard wrapped up the evening with his completed O-Scale 1930's garbage truck that was built on a 1931 Ford chassis and a scratch-built body. Bob also brought the completed fire station he had shown in progress last month. Lastly, Bob showed an interesting logging skidder he is building, starting the conversion from an M30 Ammo Carrier.

The evening wrapped up around 8:30. The collection of skills on display made for an interesting evening. Each month there are numerous ideas and demonstrations presented that make us all better modelers. Join us next month on Thursday, March 25, at 7:00 p.m. and add your contribution.



# MODLERS FORUM PICTURES



Pictures by Kent Waterson.





# WALTHERS BUILD-OFF

By Mike Meserve and Walthers Website

Walthers National Model Railroad Build-Off for 2021 has a new Open Division which may be of interest to Great Falls Model Railroad Club members. This division is open to modelers of all ages, both individuals and teams, and has several advantages. Scales for the Open Division are N, HO, and O. The other build-off divisions (Youth 14 and under; Adult Individual; and Adult Team) are limited to HO Scale and require the purchase of a contest kit from Walthers. No purchase of a Walthers kit is required for the Open Division. The Open entry has to be the standard module size of 4 feet by 2 feet. The sizes for the other divisions vary, and "starter kits" for them must be ordered from the Walthers website by April 15 (at costs of \$50, \$100, or \$200). Entries for all divisions must be submitted by May 31.

The Official Competition Rules are available as a group-by-group explanation at <http://trains.walters.com/national-model-railroader-build-off-2021-0-0-1> and an 11-page pdf of the rules is also available. Check the walters.com website for other formats of the instructions. The condensed version of the rules is given below.

A backdrop and fascia are not required, but are recommended. Since the base will not be judged, it does not need

special design work. Any material may be used for the base including, but not limited to, foam insulation or plywood. Several photographs are required and should be uploaded as digital photos using the Walthers contest portal as explained in their Official Competition Rules and instructions. Photos should be in jpg format with a maximum file size of 2MB.

There must be at least two or three photos showing progress to document activity on the project. Photos of the final entry must include a tape measure showing width and length to spec. They must also show the final entry from several angles – from the top down, the front and all sides. Detail shots of interesting features or techniques are optional but would be helpful. You will also need a final photo of the individual creator or the team with the module. Contact information must include the name, address, email address and phone number of each team member. Anyone under the age of 18 must also have a permission slip, which can be found at the address on the website.

Entries will be judged on creativity, skill, scale interpretation and following the rules. Winners of the Open Division get the following: 1st place \$1,000 cash; 2nd Place \$500 cash; 3rd Place \$100 product bundle.

# USING THE CLUB PARKING LOT DURING THE WINTER

It's time again for our monthly reminder about snow and ice at the Great Falls Model Railroad Club. Snow and ice build up on the roof and can severely damage your car or truck if they fall on your vehicle, so be careful not to park too close to the building. After each snowstorm, Carl Butland clears and cleans the club parking lot as soon as possible. Tire tracks pack down the snow, making the work more difficult and sometimes leaving icy spots which make the parking lot more dangerous. Even though there are now very few activities at the club because of coronavirus concerns, we want everyone to be safe.

***Please watch out for falling ice and please help us keep the club parking lot empty of cars until it is empty of snow.***



## THE AUGUSTA TRAIN SHOW, FEBRUARY MEMORIES

By Paul Lodge

In mid-February each year nearly 40 members of the Great Falls Model Railroad Club have helped with our modular display and sales tables at the annual Whitefield Lions Club Dollhouse and Train Show at the Augusta Armory. Coronavirus restrictions prevented the Whitefield Lions Club from holding the show in 2021. This month's article will include some of the highlights of our participation in earlier years, with special details from 2018, 2019 and 2020. Photos which accompany this article were also taken during those three years.

During the 30 years that we participated in this show, we looked forward to seeing people who came regularly. We connected with old friends and made new contacts, many of whom became club members as a result of meeting us there. Club members have come to work or just to enjoy the show. Members of Spikey's Station came to the Augusta Armory together as a field trip for their regular bi-weekly group meetings in 2019 and 2020.

In addition to model railroad layouts from other clubs, there were always many individuals and dealers selling model railroad and dollhouse items. Combining model railroading and dollhouse displays illustrates how well 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 also work in model railroading. In 2019 Neva Parsons, the wife of GFMRRRC President Thunder McBride, was at the show to sell the dollhouses and furniture that she had made.

Sales of surplus assets at model railroad shows help pay the expenses of the GFMRRRC. Our club had always rented several sales tables at this Augusta show. Successful sales of surplus items and of *Train Time* DVD's, filmed and produced by the GFMRRRC Train Time Team, help us financially. Handouts at these shows let people know about our other events, such as our annual train shows at Mt. Ararat High School in Topsham.

On Saturday, February 17, 2018, about thirty members of the Great Falls Model Railroad Club attended or helped at the Whitefield Lions Club Dollhouse and Model Train show in Augusta. More than a dozen club members set up our modular layout and ran trains from the beginning to the end of the show. In the months leading up to the February 2018 show, the modular group had spent many hours upgrading the modules with wiring for DCC. When the doors opened at 10 a.m., trains were already running. During the day multiple trains ran at the same time on both the outside and inside tracks. There were still some recurring electrical shorts which needed attention, but the guests had a chance to see a lot of trains in operation. The sales tables were manned all day by more than a half dozen club members.

The club's modular layout is different for every location every year, including modules that were built by people in our Adult Education Model Railroad Classes and some that have recently been renovated by club members. All our modules had to be at the Augusta Armory by 8 a.m., and we typically began setting up the layout and sales tables at 7 a.m. Doors opened to the public at 10 a.m. and various club members kept the trains running and answered questions throughout the day. We began tearing down the layout as soon as the show ended at 3 p.m.

Because our display is so large and takes so long to unload, the Lions Club asked us in 2019 to begin setting up on Friday afternoon. Three club members started loading the club's modules into the rental truck at the GFMRRRC building about noon on Friday, February 16. With the help of another club member who met them in Augusta, they were able to unload the truck and set up about half of the club's modular layout that afternoon. They also worked out the floor plan so they could easily hook up the modules that other GFMRRRC members would be bringing on Saturday morning.

Thanks again to all the club members who have helped to make our participation in the Whitefield Lions Club Dollhouse and Train Show in Augusta a success for over 30 years. We look forward to resuming the show with them next February.



More pictures on last page.





## THE GREAT FALLS MODEL RAILROAD CLUB

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## THE SIGNAL

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## Upcoming Events



## Recurrent Activities

Please check our web site on Facebook.



Pictures continued from page 7.

### 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*

*February 25, 7:00 p.m.*