



Member since June 1988

NEXT MEETING

October 20, 2022

6:45 p.m.

*Please bring a
friend to our next
meeting!*

When you send an article
with pictures, please do not
embed them into the article—send them as a separate file.

DO YOU WANT TO WIN?

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

YOU MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN!

Bottles for Basics:

- ♦ July—\$0
- ♦ August—\$52.25
- ♦ Sept.—\$0

**We are no longer
collecting used ink
cartridges or toner
packs.**

THE SIGNAL

THE GREAT FALLS MODEL RAILROAD CLUB



VOLUME 26 ISSUE 9

September 2022

MONTHLY MEETING OCT. 20

We are still looking at a budgetary shortfall. If you have not paid your 2022 dues, please do so. Consider paying your 2023 dues as well.

Upcoming events:

- 2022 Fall Train Show **Canceled**
- ExTRAINaganza—November 19, 20, 25, 26 and 27
- Surplus Assets Sale Dec. 10

SEPT. 8 MEETING MINUTES

Paul Lodge — Secretary

President Mike Meserve opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mike asked for the Executive Committee Report from September 1. It was approved as read with two corrections on dates, which have now been corrected.

On the topic of the club inventory, Mike suggested that, when boxes are opened, pictures should be taken of the contents as a means of inventory control.

Owen Buck gave the Treasurer's Report which was approved as given.

A direct wired connection has been completed with computer downstairs. Additional work needs to be done on the network.

Jamie Robinson said he will take the initiative on the books still to be sorted and stored.

It was pointed out that there is a display in the glass cabinet that was donated by Dexter Baum. It was suggested that the cabinet be dedicated to Dexter as a tribute for his donation.

Darin Long reported that the club had an Operating Session last week on the HO layout. The next Operating Session will be on October 1. The HO Division is wrapping up work on the new main line.

Adam Long found things that need to be improved on the N-scale layout. It was suggested that one of the lines can be used for a static display while waiting for work to be finished.

It was reported that a large donation has been received for G-gauge equipment.

SEPT. 8 MEETING MINUTES (CONTINUED)

The Oxford County Fair will be open to the public from September 14 through 17. We will be able to set up our displays on Tuesday, September 13, at 9 a.m. with tear-down on Sunday, September 18.

On Saturday, December 10, the club will sponsor a surplus assets sale at the club from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Members will be able to have first “dibs” starting at 9 a.m. Paul Lodge announced that some of his rolling stock and locomotives will be donated and available at the sale.

For a long time obtaining an inventory of club items has been a goal. On Saturday, October 8, at 9 a.m. an attempt will be made to create an inventory of club property. Organizing the inventory procedure will be a major objective before that date.

A large donation of DVD's has been received. It was suggested that instead of setting a price for them, they be sold as “Any Donation Will Be Acceptable.”

Pilentium TV has offered to play a video we can make of our layout which will potentially receive thousands of views. Mike Meserve will spearhead this project as soon as more scenery is added to the layout.

Kelly Noble and Cory Golob have volunteered to work on publicity for club events. While they are in the planning stages, it was suggested that some local television stations offer free publicity for activities going on in Maine.

There was a discussion about the philosophy of using the modular layouts at shows. It was felt that it is important to continue to use the HO modular layout as entertainment at shows, but more members are needed to participate in order to set up, run, and tear down the layout. The club has accumulated about sixteen modules from donations of previous members. Each module at the show needs to have a person helping to set it up. The Executive Committee has suggested that we have an “Adopt a Module” campaign so that there will be enough personnel to set up and tear down a layout in a timely manner.

Members who visited Joe Landry's O-gauge layouts reported how impressed they were with his large collection and the use of space that allows twelve trains to run at the same time.

Dick Clark will be holding an open house for his G-gauge outdoor layout on Saturday, September 10.

At the conclusion of the meeting Sandy Sondheim won the 50/50 raffle and Adam Long won the Attendance Prize for the second month in a row.

AT THE FAIR

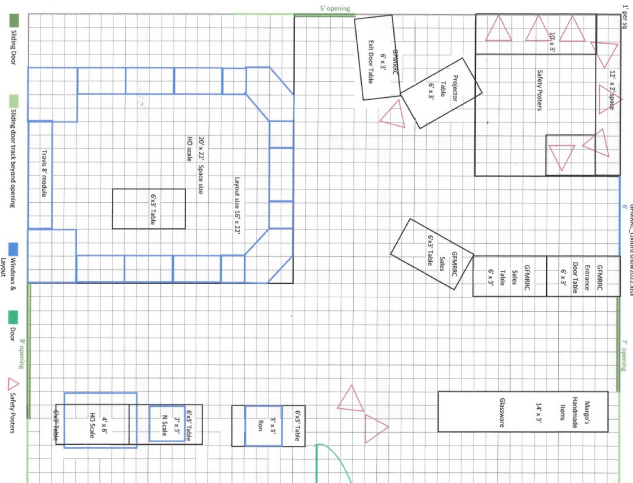


DONATIONS

The increasing cost of electricity has basically doubled our monthly electric bill. There are still lots of opportunities to step up and join our Utility Team by sponsoring a month of Water (\$30) and/or Power (\$150) fees. Dues only cover a small portion of our fixed costs and this program helps fill some of the remaining gaps.

OXFORD FAIR by Paul Lodge

The Great Falls Model Railroad Club participated in the Oxford County Fair from September 21 through the September 24, 2022, a week of nearly perfect weather. Club members set up our displays on Monday, September 19. Margo Robinson had made a floor plan for the building that utilized the space better than last year. Ron Czaja placed his tiny models in a line so that visitors could see their relative sizes before they moved to the larger Operation Lifesaver N scale layout and then to the GFMRRC HO layout. Travis Johnson took a week off from work to set up and run the HO modular layout with the help of several other GFMRRC volunteers. During the week, about fifteen club members helped set up, run the trains, and tear down the exhibits. There was a wide variety of food available at the fair, and the club volunteers tried nearly everything.



In the past it had been a tradition for third grade classes from the Oxford Hills school system to visit the fair. This had been stopped because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but was resumed this year. After a class visited the layout displays, they were invited to learn about railroad safety using several Operation Lifesaver posters. In order to receive an Operation Lifesaver cardboard engineer's hat, each student had to answer ten questions about railroad safety. The correct answers were randomly displayed on the posters. Not only did the students learn, but the teachers learned also.



It is election season and politicians took advantage of the opportunity to shake as many hands as possible. Bruce Poliquin and Rick Bennett watched our exhibits at different times and took pictures with club members. Each of them stayed for about fifteen minutes enjoying the trains and talking to visitors.

There is a good chance that we will be invited to participate in the fair again next year. Our displays are always a hit. A special "Thank you!" to all the GFMRRC members who helped make this event a success.

For a complete look at all the photos, click [HERE](#).



AZATRAX TS3 INSTALL ON GREAT FALLS HO LAYOUT

by Mike Meserve

Being a club member for some time I had found the HO layout was lacking something - signals. Over time I accumulated 2 Atlas 4 Head double track signal bridge, and 2 Atlas double head signal posts, Azatrax Atlas breakout boards, and finally 2 of the Azatrax TS3 kit (I also purchased a crossing kit and signals as well, this will be at the end of the article). The Azatrax TS3 kit is noted as such here: *The TS3 operates up to four trackside signal heads at a single-track junction to simulate the block signals of a real railroad. Trains are sensed at the signal location using IR (infrared) sensors that are independent of the room lighting. The TS3 does not require the rail to be cut into isolated blocks and does not require resistor wheel sets on the train cars.*

I already had colored wire (red, black, and green (I did use some yellow tracer wire for the yellow LED)). I also purchased an Azatrax power pack to power the two TS3s and the Azatrax MRX3 crossing kit (more on this later)

I was able to purchase all said items, and then started on installing this while Project Hades was ongoing. I had originally started with setting up the systems and testing the infrared sensors and lights. Once that was completed, work to setup the system was started.

I learned the best locations for the signal bridges from Darin Long, Roger Plummer, and Jamie Robinson in relation to Grand Trunk siding and track layout.

This project replaced the signal that was sitting by Thurston yard with modern double head signal (this is an interlocking signal that can be controlled by the dispatcher, though not currently setup to do so). I drilled holes into the support beams so for the power cables and the thermostat wire together in a clean fashion (more on the thermostat wire later).

Afterwards I started to work on the signal bridge. Since the TS3 only supports 4 heads in total I had to set 2 heads into permanent red signal only. There is a jumper on the board that



allows this function to happen on the signal bridge (if the connector is not plugged in when the TS3 is powered, the LEDs will not turn on until the board is power cycled; I learned this the hard way...).

Atlas signal bridges are designed to have 4 posts and not an actual base. Thankfully Colby Levitt has a 3D printer and was able to create custom bases for the two signal bridges. These give a solid footing and hide the giant hole I made for the connectors. Atlas uses a mini JST connector for their LEDs. Azatrax has made a board so you can plug in the connector and then connect wires via a snap in terminal block. It makes wiring a breeze and avoids working with the magnet wire on the signals.

Once I started getting this together, I had to plan ahead to anyone else who works on the layout. Each Breakout board has a label on it indicating its track and signal head position.

Since I followed the Azatrax manual I created the following labels:

APCH for approach, MAIN for the main line, and SIDE for the siding.

For each signal head I also labeled as well:

APUH: Approach Upper Head

APLH: Approach Lower Head

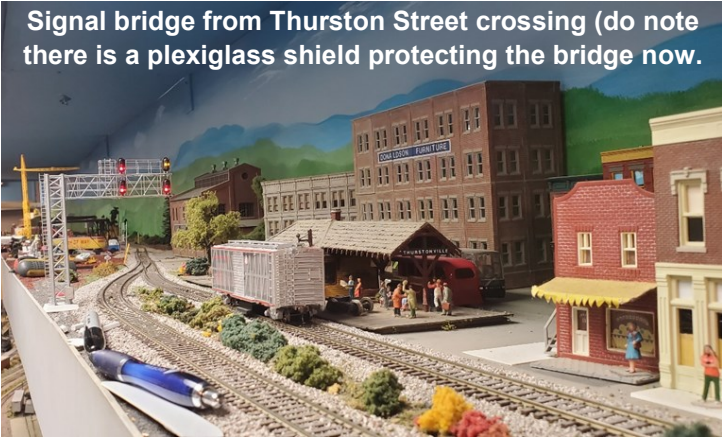
SDUH: SiDing Upper Head

SDLH: SiDing Lower Head

MLUH: Main Line Upper Head

MLLH: Main Line Lower Head

Signal bridge from Thurston Street crossing (do note there is a plexiglass shield protecting the bridge now.)



Signal Bridge for Grand Trunk side of layout

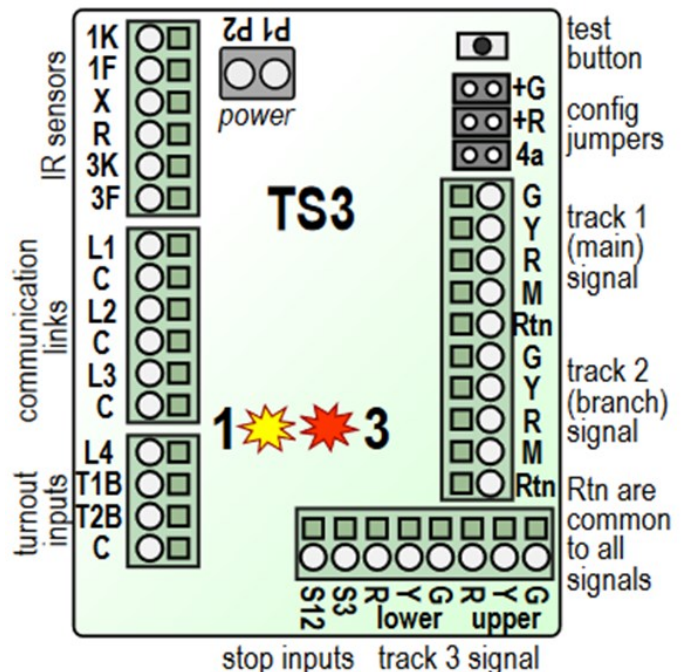


Once that was done, it was time to install the signals and place the TS3 accordingly. I found it best to have wire longer than the distance between the signal and the TS3.

The wire can be tucked up out of the way and hidden by the fascia. Keeping the wires to the colors of the LEDs makes life simple. Once both TS3s were installed and sensors working, it was time to connect the 2 boards together. The club has 4-conductor thermostat wire and this was used to interconnect the two boards. This will allow one TS3 tell the other a train is coming from one side and will change the signal to red over red accordingly. The last major speed bump I had was figuring out how to make the TS3 see how the Tortoise switches are set. It took some head thumping but I finally have the signals to display correctly whether the switch is normal or reverse direction.



View of the Grand Trunk Approach signal



TS3 board as it comes from Azatrax

Once this was setup it was time to make sure the sensors would pickup on traffic correctly. It has taken some time, but they are working well. I will likely need to make some changes in the near future to improve the IR sensors picking up traffic.

While I was working on the TS3s I was also installing an Azatrax MRX3 crossing kit. This uses Infrared technology to active the crossings. I am still troubleshooting some sensors for correct operation This has added animation to the layout that it never had before (not including buildings with full day/night lighting sequences). With the MRX3 I can include a bell module and use Tortoise for gate activation. We will be leaving this scene as it is for now.



VISIT TO JOE LANDRY'S LIONEL LAYOUT by Paul Lodge

About a dozen Great Falls Model Railroad Club members and their guests attended Joe Landry's Open House in Lewiston on Saturday afternoon, August 27. After admiring his locomotive static display in the backyard and relaxing in the swings, they came inside to see Joe's extensive Lionel layout and interesting model collections.

Joe recently purchased a replica of a unique steam locomotive that a department store had used as an attention-getter to attract customers. The locomotive is several feet taller than Joe and has many imaginative details. Although reluctant to sell the locomotive, the store manager agreed to sell it to Joe at the end of the season. Once Joe had the locomotive, he acquired from the GFMRRC a set of real railroad signals and cross-bucks, which he wired to work. While sitting in the cab of the locomotive, guest engineers can see them and turn them on and off, giving a realistic feeling to the experience.



THE SIGNAL



Inside the house, Joe showed visitors a layout he is building for his grandson and explained how he created it. He also displayed his first train set, which was given to him by his father. The feature of the day was Joe's impressive multi-level Lionel layout which can run twelve trains at the same time on different loops. The layout is controlled by DCC and has excellent sound quality.



Joe helped start the Maine 3-Railers club several years ago. The club now has about 125 members. In addition to participating in most of the train shows and events in Maine, they hold their own annual show in Augusta. As an income-producing project, the Maine 3-Railers sell different rolling stock every year.

Each year they design and sell a special car which has some connection to Maine railroads or industries. Joe stores examples of all their special rolling stock and many locomotives on the walls surrounding his layout.

Joe explained how he developed his beautiful home and landscaped property from what was once a swamp. He purchased the entire swamp of about two acres for a dollar from the City of Lewiston. His house was already at this location and he rebuilt it to its current outstanding appearance. When contractors started building additional homes in the area, they needed a place to dispose of the dirt they were digging from the cellars. Joe didn't need to advertise for solid fill. The contractors were glad to have such a convenient location to dump the dirt, and the clean dirt from those cellars was used as solid fill to change the swamp into a usable and beautiful back yard.



Joe made the tour interesting as he shared explanations and answered questions for the full three hours. We hope he was still able to speak after talking that long. The members of the Great Falls Model Railroad Club thank him for his invitation and hospitality. For a complete photo spread:

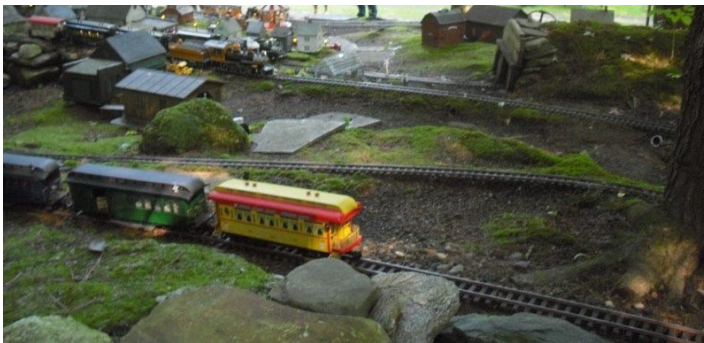
<https://www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org/joe-landry-open-house-aug-27/>



TOOT N' CHUG OPEN HOUSE SEPT. 10, 2022

For a full spread of all the photos, go here:

[Toot 'n Chug Open House – Great Falls Model Railroad Club \(greatfallsmodelrrclub.org\)](https://www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org)



THE SIGNAL

WEATHERING TECHNIQUES

by Paul Lodge

At the next Modelers Forum on Thursday, October 27, at 6:30 p.m. members of the Great Falls Model Railroad Club will hold a clinic to demonstrate different techniques for weathering buildings and rolling stock. All GFMRRC members are invited to attend.

Members are invited to bring items on which they wish to experiment. Rolling stock and some buildings will also be available from the club's inventory on which to develop weathering skills. Chalks and powders will be among the materials demonstrated as methods for weathering.

Members who have weathered items for their own layouts are encouraged to bring them. Explaining how they accomplished the weathering can be helpful for members new to the hobby and for those who wish to bring more realism to their layouts.

BOWDOINHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY VIDEO

History aficionados and lovers of the Maine Central Railroad may appreciate a short video that was created by the Bowdoinham Historical Society and which is now available on YouTube.

You can check it out here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RPhe2nFOQ1U>

MODELER'S FORUM Aug. 25 by Kent Waterson

The Modeler's Forum met again on August 25th to catch up on projects and ideas. Six regular members and two visitors made for a busy evening. Attending that night were Bob Willard, Jamie Robinson, Bob Wright, Kent Waterson, Paul Lodge, Dick Holman, and two visitors Shawn & Bryn Doyle.

Bob (Willard) started off with an update on his E. L. Moore's "Bunn's Feed and Seed Plant."

Bob did most of his building during the balloon festival, both as a demo and a chance to get some work done!

To make the silo, Bob wrapped the styrene around a bottle of Gorilla Glue and then covered with wood strips. Banding and other details are still to come. The roof is styrene with Evergreen strips. The building sports wooden shingles from BEST and a foundation from cast plaster. Corrugated siding came from Northeastern Scale Lumber. The structure was colored with [Hunterline](#) stains.

Next, Jamie showed a Central Locomotive Works Type B truck. The O-Scale trucks are fully sprung, but could be modified. After swapping out the springs for a stiffer spring (found on Amazon) he mounted them on the RS-3 from last month. With the previous springs, the frame with the stiffener/weight would completely compress the springs. After swapping out the springs the trucks held the weight of the frame.

Jamie also showed a fan motor that he mounted in one of the tabs of the Tang Band speaker enclosure. The fan is powered by a small motor and will be tied in with the decoder to cycle on and off during operation.

Our visitors chimed in next stating they are checking things out and just getting started. Shawn is more focused on the trains while Bryn is more interested in the scenery and more "artistic" type aspects.

Bob (Wright) next showed some cardstock that had been printed with shipping containers. The cardstock can then be formed into quick and cheap containers. The containers were printed free from a couple different sources: [krafttrains.com](#) and [buildyourownmainstreet.org](#). Bob (Willard) suggested an additional site, [clevermodels.net](#) for other printable items.

Bob also showed a structure (still in the box) he picked up at a show in Maryland, Motrak Models "The Clam Box".

Kent next updated his status on the O-Scale flatcar. The frame is mostly done, a coat of primer was sprayed on to show up any defects and that is what is next in the process. Some of the brake components have been assembled and will be mounted after all the corrections are done.

Kent also brought an assembled version of the servo calibrator he had shown on a breadboard a few months ago. He will be using the servos for turnout controllers and use the calibrator to determine the exact position of rotation. The servos will be installed on the layout and the calibrator will attach to the servo in place and adjust it while watching the

turnout for when the turnout changes position noting the displayed servo position.

Paul was up next with some of the tools he used for building his structures. The first was a simply homemade graph paper with a 1' grid in HO scale (someone noted that a "print your own" graph paper can be created at [blocklayer.com](#)). Using the graph paper and a HO scale ruler, building measurements can be transferred and used as templates to cut out various pieces. Paul also showed how he used some cheap plastic license plates from Mardens and a "score & snap" method to form various pieces.

Paul then showed a pair of structures he had built. The first, modeled from a picture of the building, featured doorway columns made from chop sticks and porch windows made from a single sheet of clear plastic with the mullions scored in from the reversed side. The effect was very realistic. The second structure was the West Minot Train Station. Paul was able to take measurements and pictures of the structure (at the time it was built) to accurately model the building. Photographs taken at various distances and the printed provided the authentic signs for the building.

John next gave an update on his structure building. He currently has 60 some structures built with more to come. John also came with a few questions and an idea suggestion. The questions concerned the difference between dry transfers and decals. Explanations were given as well as tips for using each. John's suggestion was to use Scotch tape over clear plastic to create a frosted glass look. Simple but effective.

Finishing off the evening was Dick with another collection of his excellent HO vehicles. Dick showed a variety of vehicles including a tow truck, a boom truck with tailer and tracked vehicle, a cab and gravel trailer, a cab and tank trailer, a flatbed truck with an antique car (a rusted hulk) on the bed, and a pair of other trucks. Dick does a great job with these vehicles.

It was another night of seeing the various skills and interests on display. Part of the value of this club is the sharing of knowledge and assistance we can all provide one another. We welcome all to come and share or simply listen, we will all benefit. The next meeting is September 22nd, we hope to see you there.

Unfortunately, space precludes inclusion of the photos. For a full spread of the photos, please go here:

<https://www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org/modelers-forum/>



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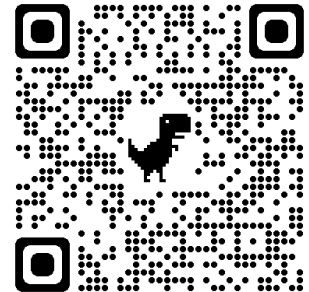
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www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org

Upcoming Events

November 19, 20, 25, 26 and 27—
ExTRAINaganza

December 10—Surplus Assets Sale



Grab your Great Falls
gear at the Company
Store, and join the
Blu Cru!



[Please check us out on Facebook.](#)

Recurrent Activities

HO Operating Sessions

October 1 9:00 a.m.

October 22 9:00 a.m.

Regular Monthly Meeting

Thursday, October 20 at 6:45 p.m.

Spikey's Station

NONE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Work Session

Every Wednesday 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Every Saturday 9:00 a.m. to Noon
(unless there's an Operating Session)

Modelers Forum

Thursday, October 27 at 7:00 p.m.

Executive Committee

October 8 at 6:30 p.m.