



Member since June 1988

NEXT MEETING
February 16, 2023
7:00 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:

- ◆ Oct. — \$0
- ◆ Nov. — \$41.00
- ◆ Dec. — \$48.65

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

THE SIGNAL

THE GREAT FALLS MODEL RAILROAD CLUB



VOLUME 27 ISSUE 1

January 2023

MONTHLY MEETING FEB. 16 - 7 P.M.

Upcoming events:

- Maine 3 Railers Show February 18 in Augusta
- Topsham Train Show April 29, 2023

JAN. 19 MEETING MINUTES

PAUL LODGE — SECRETARY

President Mike Meserve opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. The Secretary's Report was approved as published in the newsletter. Jamie Robinson gave the Treasurer's Report for vacationing Owen Buck, and he noted that the club has a good foundation for the next year. The roof has been repaired. It was suggested that money be set aside and earmarked for special construction projects such as a new roof. The Treasurer's Report was approved as given. Bob Willard said that there will be a Modelers Forum meeting at 7 p.m. on January 26 and mentioned that all Great Falls Model Railroad members are invited to attend.

Reporting on the different divisions of the club layouts, Shawn Doyle reported that a new yard is being developed on the HO layout, and it was suggested that it be called Northern Maine Junction. Shawn is experimenting with working roll-up doors for one of the buildings. A new area for lumber-related businesses is planned to complement other industries on the layout. This may include plywood mills, dowel plants, and barrel-making companies. It has been decided that the O-scale layout will not have an upper level track, but a tunnel is planned for the back of the layout. Because of the "little hands" incident resulting in a locomotive going to the floor, Plexiglas will be installed on the front of the layout. The N-scale layout worked very well during the ExTRAINaganza and has not been worked on since. Shawn and Bryn Doyle noted that the Z-scale also worked well during the open house.

President Meserve introduced Ed Lecuyer from WW&F. Ed came to the meeting to invite the club to participate in the Convention of Narrow Gauge modelers planned for the second weekend in August: August 12 and 13. Space will be made available to display layouts, sell surplus inventory, or create other forms of railroad-related activities. The convention is in the early stages of planning, and the WW&F is feeling out the possibilities. A motion was made and approved to participate in the convention.

JAN. 19 MEETING MINUTES (CONTINUED)

It was noted that this event is the week before the Balloon Festival. George Pitchard left a lot of research materials about narrow gauge railroads in the United States. It was suggested that these materials be donated to the WW&F for their archives.

The retaining wall murals have nearly worn off. It was suggested that they be power washed and then repainted. High school art classes were suggested as a possible source of artists. Members agreed that the walls cannot be left bare because they will get tagged.

The April train show at Mt. Ararat High School in Topsham was discussed. After being asked by Owen Buck, Margo Robinson volunteered to be responsible for designing the set-up for the show. After having visited the new facility in Topsham, she noted that the new facility is not as large as the previous school gymnasium. There are concerns that there will not be enough room for vendors and display layouts. Notices have been sent to vendors, but there has not been a lot of response yet. With the cost of the venue and logistics, and having less room for vendors and displays, there is concern that the club could lose money. Mike Meserve is also looking to invite a Lego Train group for this show.

On Saturday, February 18, the Maine 3-railers are sponsoring the Augusta train show. We have rented three tables from which to sell surplus inventory. Travis Johnson plans to bring the club HO modular layout. The club cannot pay for truck rentals. Bryn volunteered to see if she has access to a trailer or box truck at her place of employment to help transport the modular layout. [Note: she was successful in obtaining the use of a large trailer.]

Jamie Robinson has conducted an internet survey of club members asking about the possibility of changing the monthly meeting day. It is understood that the by-laws would need to be changed, but that can be done following proper procedures. Jamie will draft a proposal for the next meeting so that members can formally vote on the suggested change. About thirty-five percent of those responding preferred the third Saturday of the month at 1 p.m. after the regular Saturday morning activities. It was also suggested that a pot-luck lunch could be made available.

A request was made for \$150 for advertising upcoming events. It was noted that newspaper advertising has been tried several times in the past, and it has not been a successful medium for us. Currently, the best advertising has been done by Bryn Doyle through social media and articles sent to the free publications targeted for the location of the event. News Center Maine on WCSH-TV publicizes events for local clubs and can be sent information for our events. Bryn offered to invest \$10 in Facebook advertising, and Jamie Robinson offered to match that donation.

At the close of the meeting, drawings for the Attendance Prize and the 50/50 raffle were both won by Paul Lodge.



DONATIONS

A number of folks signed up in December and January to sponsor Utilities for the club. There are still many vacancies: three for Water @ \$30 and eight for Power @ \$150.

Thank you to all those who have signed up. Please note that you can sign up at any time! These sponsorships are of great value to the club; as you all know, our dues cover less than 25% of our fixed costs and those costs

2022 IN REVIEW

BY MIKE MESERVE

To all members

I've never done something like this so here we go. Apologies for any rambling here.

2022 has been quite an incredible year for this club. COVID really messed us up for 2 long years and 2022 was the start to get back into our groove and rebuild our physical/digital presences. We started in April with the show in April at Westbrook, worked our way towards September with Oxford Fair (August was just a month), then a very action-packed November and December that concluded with the Surplus Assets Sale and the Franco Center.

Without question it was bleak at times for this club, but I knew we could do this and work together to do great.

Our membership has grown by a decent amount this year, more than any other year I can think of. We got some people who could help on the digital side of the club, and wow, this has been amazing. We need to make sure we use people with other talents as well such as painting and scenery on our layouts.

Our Facebook page had been more of a placeholder with just occasional updates to it that I knew of. With new input, in just a single month many of the metrics increased over 200%. We got some TV time from ExTRAINaganza and

that boosted foot traffic too.

Just tonight as I type this [January 4, 2023], we had the most people I've ever seen on a Wednesday night with members working and guests visiting.

Many of the layouts had stayed the same in 2022, but we added another with our Z scale working. Many kids were impressed with this during our fall Open House. Most layouts have plans for 2023 to have some sort of work/track reconfiguration done to it

A huge majority of that work was in the HO layout. Project Hades which is a new track configuration was worked on, with it continuing this year, including a new modern-day bridge that I will be building.

I had 2 projects myself and completed those. I installed a signal system for a siding, and installed crossing lights and bell in the area.

We just recently replaced a troubling switch on our grand helix, and are in the process of completing a yard that was started.

For 2023 we are planning to be at the full schedule that we had in 2019 with events in Feb, April, July, August, Sept, Nov, and Dec. Half will be on site, and other off site.

We will be doing our summer party again in 2023 with more details to come soon, such as a date in the future.

I cannot thank the entire membership enough for all the work they have done during this year whether donations or just being there. It has been amazing, and I thank you all for this. If you haven't not been to the club recently, please make a visit, there is plenty to see and people to chat with.

Thank you

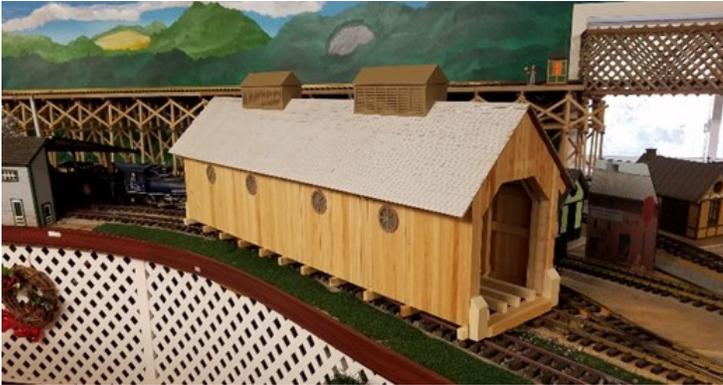
Mike Meserve

Prez

NEW TWO-TRACK COVERED BRIDGE FOR UPPER LOOP

BY RAY PARENT

A while back Dick Cosgrove donated a 4' covered bridge that he had purchased from the original builder, Ralph Luby, who is also a club member.



The bridge was modified to carry two tracks and is in the process of being installed on the G Gauge's upper loop. Here is a picture of the upper loop location prior to installation and of the bridge as delivered to the clubhouse ready for installation:



Day 1 (January 7): Installation began with a yard crew of 4, Gizmo (aka Dick Clark), Mark Christopher, Ray Parent, and Dick Cosgrove. Work progressed well as we disassembled the far end of loop 3 and began installing more robust shelf brackets to handle the weight of Ralph's heavy bridge.

After some fine tuning of shelf height and bracket positioning on the end wall we moved on to continuing the shelf installation to the front wall

that will carry the return loop back to the bridge.



This is where we ran into a major misalignment of the shelving between the end and front walls. That's when we discovered a well-known secret for some of you, but unknown to us: the wall between the G Gauge layout and the large gathering room is NOT PLUMB! We decided to return the following Sat. to shim the brackets as needed to compensate for the non-plumb wall. Below is a picture of the temporary positioning of the bridge as we left for the day. Note its 'perfect' placement to complement Paul Lodge's hot air balloons...



Day 2 (January 14): Our yard crew of 4 [this time Dave Kierstead replaced Dick Cosgrove] started the work to complete the return loop back into the bridge. Once we corrected the shelving for the non-plumb wall, we broke into two groups. Gizmo headed up yard crew A to begin 'stabilizing' the track that we laid last week to ensure adequate spacing through the bridge, while yard crew B (Mark, Dave and Ray) focused on completing the return loop. As is often the case, Dick was able to successfully complete his task under budget, ahead of schedule, and with little to no supervision!



In any case, the tired crew will be taking next Saturday off for much needed R&R as they contemplate how to best convert loop #3 from a temporary set up to one that will allow us to better plan the landscaping & structure projects for that end of the main layout. Work should return to the layout on January 28, so stay tuned...



Later the three musketeers joined forces to complete the more complex task of installing the return loop along with the required temporary trestle bents and short bridge. And it required all three pair of hands along with their combined intellect to accomplish the work, as well as the excellent supervision by the author...

The work session culminated with the traditional 'Driving of the Golden Spike' hidden from view in the picture (see Gold Arrow). But trust me the golden spike is there, or maybe it's a regular spike painted with some imitation gold paint – no one will ever know...

ALONG THE LINE





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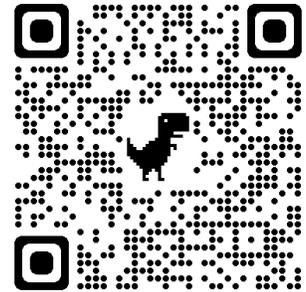
THE SIGNAL

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If your mailing or e-mail address changes please notify us at:
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Upcoming Events

February 18—Maine 3 Railers show
April 29—Topsham Train Show



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](#)
February 4 at 9:00 a.m.
February 18 at 9:00 a.m.
March 4 at 9:00 a.m.
[Regular Monthly Meeting](#)
Thursday, February 16 at 7:00 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, February 23 at 7:00 p.m.
[Executive Committee](#)
Thursday, February 9 at 6:30 p.m.