



Member since June 1988

NEXT MEETING
March 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:

- ♦ Nov. — \$41.00
- ♦ Dec. — \$48.65
- ♦ Jan. — \$49.00

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

THE SIGNAL

THE GREAT FALLS MODEL RAILROAD CLUB



VOLUME 27 ISSUE 2

February 2023

MONTHLY MEETING MAR. 16 - 7 P.M.

Upcoming events:

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

FEB. 16 MEETING MINUTES

PAUL LODGE — SECRETARY

Jamie Robinson led the February 16 meeting of the Great Falls Model Railroad Club in the absence of President Mike Meserve. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Secretary's Report was approved as published in the newsletter. Owen Buck gave the Treasurer's Report, which was approved as given.

Members were reminded that Modelers Forum will meet Thursday, February 23, at 7 p.m. All GFMRRRC members are invited to attend.

The O-scale report includes planning for a trolley exhibit and installing Plexiglas around the outside edge of the layout. The N-scale layout is still functioning properly, and long trains run on it flawlessly.

Dick Clark invited the members to see how the G-gauge upper line has been changed so that two tracks run through the covered bridge even though it was designed for only one track. Member Ralph Lube donated the covered bridge and Ray Parent used a 3-D printer to create windows for the bridge. Plans are being made to have a name plate for the bridge, which states "2023," the year of the installation. (After completing this section on February 11, the G-gauge crew had asked Paul Lodge to paint the backdrop for the blank wall at the right.)

Jamie Robinson noted that the club's By-Laws need to be updated, and he will have suggestions ready for the monthly meeting on March 16.

Owen Buck reported that authorized names for checks and debit cards have been updated. Those authorized now include: Owen Buck, Mike Meserve, Jamie Robinson, and Rick James.

There was a discussion about membership, new and old. A new member application form has been devised that includes a section on who signed up the new member and how the dues were paid.

Paul Lodge reported that on Saturday, May 6, Maine Operation Lifesaver members will hold a meeting at the club. One of the purposes of the meeting will be to update OL members on current presenter information. In the past, we have provided a "pot luck" lunch, for which Maine OL

FEB. 16 MEETING MINUTES (CONTINUED)

will make a financial contribution to the club.

John Middleton's G-gauge switching layout has found a new home at the Amherst Railway Society in Palmer, Massachusetts. John's layout will be displayed at the [Northeast Large Scale Train Show](#) in West Springfield, MA on April 28 and 29, and then added to the Society's other displays at their facility in Palmer.

There was a question about our dues structure. We currently charge \$30 for a one-year adult membership. Members wondered if we should increase the dues by \$5. After some discussion, it was decided to keep dues at \$30 for now, with those who can afford it contributing to the Utility Team for sponsoring electric and water bills.

The club has never had a membership chairman. The topic has been approached several times over the years with various suggestions about the concept. Club members who have been active in other organizations suggested ways in which a membership chairman could benefit the club.

Thanks to Bryn Doyle, advertising for our April 29 train show in Topsham has been published by Turner Publishing in the *Country Courier* and will be in their other monthly editions throughout the state. Margo Robinson expressed concern about the small number of vendors who have paid for tables for the show. It was suggested that in the past some vendors have been approached at other shows, such as the train show in Augusta on February 18 [note: a concerted effort by Margo at the Augusta Show was very successful]. Margo has made detailed floor plans for dealers, noting those who need electricity. Because Margo has been taking the lead for organizing recent club events, a motion was made and accepted to officially recognize her as the club's Event Coordinator.

The club is still storing George Pitchard's model railroad collection. It was originally thought that we needed to store his collection for one year in order for any relatives to have time to claim it. At this meeting someone suggested that it needs to be stored for three years instead of one. This issue still needs to be resolved.

Roger Plummer reported that the long-time Portland Terminal Model Railroad Club has officially been dissolved.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Jamie Robinson won the 50/50 raffle and donated the proceeds back to the Club. Margo Robinson won the Attendance Prize and selected a coffee mug.

FUNDRAISING CHALLENGE

On Feb. 25, our heating boiler was found to be inoperative. The club had to spend an unbudgeted \$600 for immediate repairs with the outside temperature in the single digits and temperature inside the building well below 50°.

Owen Buck has volunteered to match member donations up to \$300 to cover this unexpected cost. Donations may be made by mailing a check to the club "Attn. Owen Buck" (please mark your check "Fundraising Challenge"), directly to any of the Club Officers by cash or check, electronically via Square (directly with Eric, Darin or Jamie), or online electronically via our PayPal link:

<https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/greatfallsmrrc>

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 seven for Power @ \$150. Thank you Chuck Hobin for adding your name to the [Honor Roll](#).

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 are increasing every month.

SODOR WHEEL COMING TO CLUBHOUSE BY RAY PARENT

What the heck is a Sodor, and why does it need a wheel? Well, as some of you know, **Sodor** is the fictional land on the Irish Sea between the Isle of Man and England where Thomas the Tank & Friends operate their mini railroad delivering goods and services to businesses and residents alike. For those of you who have followed Thomas through the years, you have probably noticed that there aren't very many tall buildings on their little island. That's why many residents (and visitors) have been clamoring for a large Ferris **Wheel** that would provide them with an excellent view of their beautiful and plush countryside.

Once the Big Boys with Big Trains (aka the G Gaugers) heard this story, we began to research how we could build such a wheel at a large enough scale to impress our many young visitors (as well as their Dads & Granddads). We found the perfect design created by a French Engineer outside of Paris, and obtained his plans. We are now in the process of adapting his design to build a Large-Scale Ferris Wheel worthy of being installed on our Thomas layout.

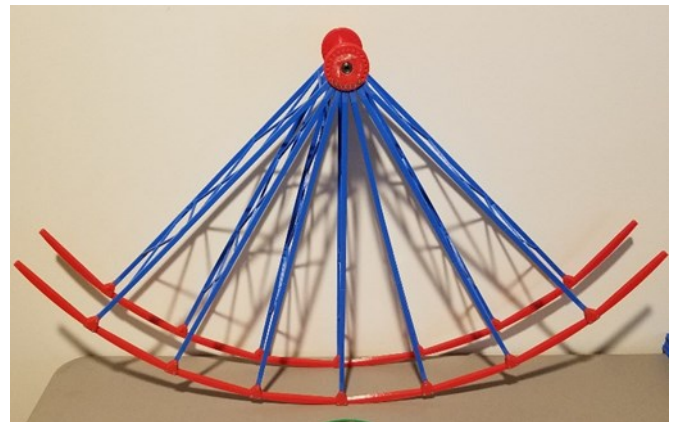
When finished, the **Sodor Wheel** will rest in the center of the layout and with its 40" height will tower over the upper "Percy" loop by nearly two feet! All 600+ plastic components are being made on a 3D printer with filament color

matching the three colors of the trestle system (Thomas Blue, Percy Green, and James Red).

Below are the three different pod designs that will total 24 separate cars. The pods are approximately 3 3/8" high X 2 3/4" in diameter.



All necessary excavation and site prep has been completed and construction of the wheel itself is now underway at a secret off-site location. We just completed the initial assembly of the first quarter section (see below).



It's approximately 18" high X 28" wide. We are conducting extensive strength (tensile, compression, torsion, etc.) testing to ensure that the wheel will be able to support all 24 fully loaded pods using this type of framework. Assembly of the other quarter sections will commence once the test results meet all of the Sodor structural code requirements.

We'll post more information and images in future [Signal](#) issues as the project moves forward...

[NOTE: If there are any club members who are into 1/32 scale slot car racing and happen to have painted sitting figures gathering dust, the G Gauge group would welcome any donations to help us populate the 24 cars/pods...]

CHARTER MEMBER LAYOUT DONATED BY PAUL LODGE

John "Jack" O'Connell, a charter member of the Great Falls Model Railroad Club, passed away in 2001 and his layout had lain dormant ever since. Jack was a Lewiston police detective and one of about twenty men who started the railroad club in 1987. In January 2023 Jack's wife contacted Paul Lodge and asked if the club would be interested in having his model railroad collection. Arrangements were made to pick up rolling stock and buildings. Paul visited Mrs. O'Connell to see the layout, which was in the basement of her one-story, ranch-style home. The stairs dropped into the center of the approximately twenty-five hundred square foot basement. The one-level layout went around the four walls with a peninsula down the middle. About one quarter of the layout was highly scened.



In the early days of the Great Falls Model Railroad Club, Jack's wife was the only woman who attended our meetings. She was pleased to learn that the club now has several women who are very active in club activities and are helping the club grow.

It was obvious that more help would be needed to remove the track and gather the many buildings and rolling stock. Dick Clark and Jamie Robinson were asked to help and a date was set.

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It took a few hours to remove the track and buildings and transport them to the club. Jeannette asked that one portion of the layout be left untouched so that it could be used as a memory and tribute to her husband.

Jeannette has a hobby of her own: she is an artist. She gave Dick, Jamie, and Paul a tour of her home/museum where her beautiful paintings are displayed on all the walls. Jeannette had sold some of her pieces at art shows and won awards with others that are now in her home.

Women usually don't like to talk about their age. Jeannette was born in 1923 and is proud of the fact that she will turn 100 years old in June. She is still painting and jokingly laments that she has run out of wall space to exhibit her works.

CLUB HOSTS MAINE OPERATION LIFESAVER BY PAUL LODGE

Maine Operation Lifesaver held its winter meeting at the Great Falls Model Railroad Club in Auburn on January 27, 2023. GFMRRRC members John McMullen and Paul Lodge attended the meeting. Paul has been an OL presenter for many years; John is preparing to take the training to become an OL presenter as well.



John McMullen (left) with Operation Lifesaver members

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Operation Lifesaver railroad safety activities have been limited the last few years. There will now be an effort to recruit and train new Operation Lifesaver presenters. The national Operation Lifesaver organization is currently working on a new presenter curriculum that is heavily dependent on



Norma Griffiths (right) & other OL members

modern technology. Because most people are able to get information online, more railroad safety material will be available for those interested.

At one time, the Great Falls Model Railroad Club had seven presenters. This was approximately twenty-five percent of state of Maine's total Operation Lifesaver volunteers. The GFMRRRC benefits from our association with Operation Lifesaver by having railroad-related items and safety information to hand out at our special events. Railroad safety should be everyone's concern, especially for a club which promotes railroads, including model railroads

Anyone interested in becoming an Operation Lifesaver presenter should contact Paul Lodge so that you can be notified when training classes are available.

The Maine Operation Lifesaver board has asked for permission to hold their next meeting at the Great Falls Model Railroad Club on Saturday, May 6, at 10 a.m. The club has hosted similar meetings in the past. We have sometimes provided a "pot luck" meal and, as a result, have received a good financial donation for the club.

TRAIN & DOLL HOUSE SHOW AT AUGUSTA

BY PAUL LODGE

About 20 members of the Great Falls Model Railroad Club helped out or visited the annual Model Railroad Train and Doll House Show that was held on Saturday, February 18, 2023, at the National Guard Armory in Augusta. The Whitefield Lions Club, who had sponsored the winter show for many years, had asked in 2022 that the show be taken over by some other organization. The 3-Railers sponsored the show last year, but we did not participate. Many of the 3-Railer club members expressed their thanks to us for taking part this year. The show was well attended by eager modelers who are looking for meaningful activities since the decline of COVID-19. For many of the show goers, this is one of the few times each year they have a chance to visit with railroad friends and acquaintances.



The Great Falls Model Railroad Club's Modular Division took the modules to Augusta on Friday, February 17 and set up the modular display. The modular group had planned to transport all the necessary modules in a trailer obtained by Bryn Doyle. Since the racks for the modules did not fit into the trailer, the modular team rented a truck which had sufficient clearance for the racks.

TRAIN & DOLL HOUSE SHOW AT AUGUSTA CONT.



A few of the show attendees came to our modular layout to see if a locomotive they wanted to buy was in working condition, but the "Test Track" which we usually bring to the show had been left at the clubhouse by mistake...

The club sold surplus inventory of model train supplies from the three tables we rented, including several books.

After seeing the large turnout for this train show, we are looking forward to the train show we are sponsoring on Saturday, April 29 at the new Mt. Ararat High School in Topsham

MODELER'S FORUM Jan. 26

BY KENT WATERSON

The Modeler's Forum met again January 26th after a two-month absence. Nine modelers braved the messy weather conditions to share what was on their workbenches another month. Attending that night were Paul Lodge, Tom McAvoy, Jamie Robinson, Carmen Anastase, Shawn & Bryn Doyle, Steve Doughty, Bob Willard and Kent Waterson.

Bob started off the discussion with a demonstration of how he paints his figures. Bob cuts off the base of the figure (if there is a base), then drills a hole through a foot to insert a piece of 0.030" wire. From there, the figure can be mounted in a pin vise (preferable one with a heavy base) to act as a handle for painting.



Next, Bob presented some more of his O-Scale vehicle collection. Included was a Model T dump truck put together from a base vehicle with resin cast fenders and cab along with a scratch-built frame and bed. He also showed one of his first kit-bashing efforts of a boom

truck that started out as a toy truck with the components added. An REA truck that started from the same toy truck was modified with a body built from styrene.



Kent followed Bob with a variety of giveaways from Dexter's collection and then an update on his diorama based on a photo of a post-WWII traveling display of German military items including a V1 Flying Bomb and a Flak37 gun. The flatcar is scratch-built and mostly done, a base has been created and the V1 and Flak37 down to the painting stage. The goal is to have the model complete by the April Southern Maine Scale Modeler's contest.

Jamie was up next and showed a section of Proto-48 track mounted on a Masonite spline as his test track.



MODELER'S FORUM Jan. 26

CONT.

However, the highlight was his new tank car. The all brass Proto-48 3-dome tank is new from Tangent Scale Models and was a beautiful model. Jamie upgraded the truck springs using Ka-dee O Scale draft gear and knuckle springs. This was successful in allowing the truck to flex and equalize, but the weight of the brass car caused the springs to bottom out and required modifying one of the original springs and adding it back in.

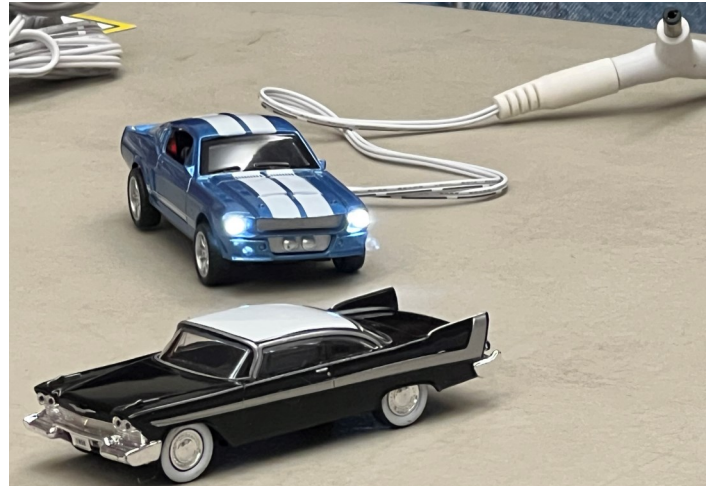


Carmen then presented a series of questions regarding a light rail scene he is working on. The building he is modeling has a series of louvered windows. His questions centered around the best way to model these windows. One suggestion was to use clapboard siding. Adding to the scene were a series of dumpsters (what colors would be appropriate?) and a garbage truck. His question of how to model garbage in the back of the truck was interesting since details like this are often overlooked.



Shawn and Bryn were up next and bounced back and forth describing various projects they are working on for the HO layout. Shawn described his work on Northern Maine Junction while Bryn showed some structures and sought help on creating the cornfield scene.





Steve closed out the evening showing an O-Scale building front he is putting together. Figures have been mounted in the windows and the building will eventually have lighting added. Also shown were some vehicles from Menards including some firetrucks. Added to the vehicles were lights that work, powered by a lighting system he found.

To see how different people approached their projects is always an eye-opening experience. The variety of experience and questions is beneficial to all. We welcome anyone to join us and share your experiences as well. We meet again on February 23rd (the 4th Thursday of the month), we hope to see you there.

[NOTE: Modeler's Forum was cancelled on 2/23 due to the weather; it will return on 3/23, weather permitting. Also note that there are many more photos on our website here:

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





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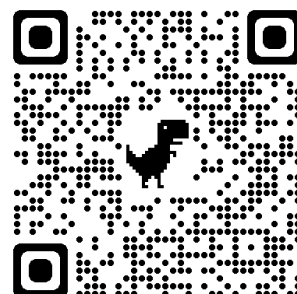
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www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org

Upcoming Events

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](#)

March 4 at 9:00 a.m.

March 18 at 9:00 a.m.

[Regular Monthly Meeting](#)

Thursday, March 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, March 23 at 7:00 p.m.

[Executive Committee](#)

March 16 concurrent w/Monthly Mtg.