



Member since June 1988

**NEXT MEETING**  
**February 10, 2024**  
**1:00 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 monthly meeting

**YOU MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN!**

**Bottles for Basics**

- ◆ Oct. — \$0
- ◆ Nov. — \$20.00
- ◆ Dec. — \$20.00

**Remember—you can return your bottles and cans directly at Spring Street Redemption, 120 Spring St. in Auburn. Tell them you are from the “Train Club.”**

# THE SIGNAL

THE GREAT FALLS MODEL RAILROAD CLUB



VOLUME 28 ISSUE 1

January 2024

## MONTHLY MEETING FEB. 10 AT 1 P.M.

### Upcoming events:

- Feb. 17 — Maine 3Railers Show in Augusta
- April 27 — Spring Train Show in Topsham

## JANUARY 13 MEETING MINUTES

TANYA WHITLOW – GUEST SECRETARY

The meeting opened at about 1:05 p.m. Jamie Robinson led the group with the Pledge of Allegiance.

### Reports

Minutes of the December meeting as published in *The Signal* were approved by the membership.

Margo Robinson reviewed the Treasurer’s Report. The Club finished December with a profit of about \$2,092, and the fourth quarter of 2023 with a profit of about \$5,430. A comparison of 2022 to 2023 showed 2022 ending with a net profit of \$5696.32, while 2023 concluded with a net profit of \$19,834.54.

While considering these numbers, it must be noted that some very high quality collections were donated to the Club, and we were able to turn these around quite quickly.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the Treasurer’s Report, and it was approved by the membership with no further discussion.

Library - The Librarian was not present to give a library report.

G Scale – the guys were in for a work session the previous Saturday, did a bunch of cleaning and made a number of items available for sale. These have been priced and placed into our inventory.

HO Scale – Riverton has been removed from the layout and reconstruction of the area as Union Station is well under way. Some other projects are underway simultaneously (wiring in Thurstonville, construction in the new power plant area and rewiring in Grand Trunk), so there will not be any HO operating sessions until March 2. Shawn continues to catalog and update the rolling stock.

## JANUARY 13 MEETING MINUTES (CONTINUED)

N Scale – Daryl has been doing some cleaning and scheming about the next moves forward. Stay tuned...

Modeler's Forum – meeting immediately after the club meeting. Working on finalizing the guidelines for this fall's Square Footer contest. [Note: this is done. You can find the information here: <https://www.greatfallsmodellrrclub.org/extrainaganza/square-footer-contest-2024/>].

Modular – the modules are going to the Maine 3 Railers show in Augusta on Feb. 17 and to our show in Topsham on April 27. Ed and Travis have been adding Velcro strips to the outside of the modules to better accommodate the skirting.

Social Media – Bryn wasn't here to give a report, but her active leveraging of social media has resulted in a significant increase of visitors to the club. More and more people are indicating that they saw us on Facebook...

Facilities – Nate was tied up working due to the crappy weather. He has been doing a good job keeping our lot clear, and Travis is handling sanding of the lot. We do not have contractors on stand-by for this. The company we used to use for sanding does not do it anymore.

Once again – the same reminder we have used in the past: if the lot is covered in snow, please do not drive in it! It packs down the snow to the point where our tractor can't pick it up with the snowblower.

### Old Business

Mike talked about the Franco Center display. There were a couple of problems with the HO layout that we need to address. We also need to create a list of materials to be brought to these events, so that important items don't get overlooked.

Upcoming events:

3 Railers Show Feb. 17 – we have three tables. Ed and Travis will rent a suitable truck for the modules and whatever else will fit. **If you would like to contribute to the truck rental to reduce club costs, please contact [Travis](#)**. He noted that he would make a contribution toward the rental cost. Set-up will be Friday 2/16 from 11 to 4, and we will be able to get back into the building at 7 a.m. on Saturday.

Topsham Show April 27 from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. – Margo sent out 102 email invitations. There have already been several responses. This year we are offering the option of signing up online with payment by either check or credit card. All the club tables are already spoken for. The table vendor will deliver and set up the tables Friday, 4/26 beginning about 4 p.m. Dealer set-up is expected to begin about 6 p.m. The table vendor will be arriving at 4 p.m. on Saturday, 4/27 to begin removing the tables. We will need lots of help for this show! Contact [Margo](#) to make yourself available.

Potential Fall Show – need to recontact the folks at the KORA Shrine to move forward with planning.

Embroidered shirts – long sleeve polos still available at \$35; \$2 upcharge for your name to be added if desired. Margo will explore the cost of hooded sweatshirts for those interested.

Membership – remember that the membership year is Jan. 1 to Dec. 31. You should have received an email if you haven't renewed yet.

The new order of shopping bags has arrived. Still only \$3!

### New Business

Open house at Joe Landry's – Saturday, August 24 from 1 p.m. until 5 p.m. Bring the kids! Plenty of parking and things to see. Check out Joes newly rebuilt and upgraded O Gauge layout. And check out the previous version on YouTube [HERE](#): . Joes is working to have a new video created.

Westbrook Show April 13 – a motion was made and seconded to not attend. After a brief discussion, the motion was passed. The real issue here is the calendar proximity of this show to our own – we don't have the manpower to do both and at two weeks in advance of our show, our focus is on preparing for our own show. If the Westbrook show was in March, we might be able to attend.

Renewal of our CD – Our CD generated \$202.56 in interest in 6 months last year. It's up for renewal in February. A motion was made and seconded to approve renewing the CD. The motion was passed with little discussion.

On the heels of that came a discussion about interest rate changes, whether we should invest in a second CD or add value to the one we have. A motion was made and seconded to give Margo the authority to move forward in whichever direction she determined was best. The motion was passed with a bit of discussion, determining that two CDs was preferable to a single one.

Russ Dillingham from the Sun Journal visited the layout during "Op 'til you Drop" on New Year's Day. He took a bunch of photos and we got a spread in the paper the next day with two of the usual suspects featured prominently.

The current Sponsor List has been posted. There are still Water sponsorships available for \$30 and Power for \$150. These sponsorships help support our club.

Do you want a program every month? We need people to step up for this. Do you have photos/slides/ideas you'd like to share? Please reach out. That helps add value to the meetings. Everyone has things nobody else has seen...

The meeting adjourned about 2:30 p.m.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

First things first: **THANK YOU** to all the folks that made last year such a success for our Club! I'd hate to count the hours put in by dedicated people dealing with surplus assets, sales, shows, media, open houses, outside events, maintenance, and layout work in all scales. Every one of you contributes to our success. Much of that work is behind the scenes, neither readily visible nor applauded, but it all matters. We would not and could not be what we are without all those efforts!

Financially, we're in pretty decent shape. We had some really generous donations in 2023 that helped a great deal. We're still going to be frugal with expenditures, but there a couple of building-related items we need to deal with in 2024:

- Replacement of the double doors downstairs and all related framing as well as the addition of a roof over the door opening; and
- Replacement of the platform outside the library.

What would you like to see at member meetings? Would you like to put on a presentation of your own? In fact, we NEED you to! We can handle slides or electronic media.

Thoughts, comments, suggestions? Drop me an email: [jamie@greatfallsmodelrrclub.org](mailto:jamie@greatfallsmodelrrclub.org).

## DONATIONS

**2024 Water (\$30) and Power (\$150) sponsorships are available.** There are six Water slots and six Power slots still open. *In 2023, our average monthly water bill was \$36.49/month and the power bill averaged \$286.19/month.* Your sponsorships go a long way toward reducing the Club's cost for these necessary utilities.

Thank you Brent Tanguay for the generous donation of your father-in-law's HO trains and equipment on Dec. 13 and to Gabriel Hoy for bringing in three boxes of surplus HO items on Dec. 16. These generous acts help keep our club going!



## MODELER'S FORUM Jan. 13

BY JAMIE ROBINSON

More and larger photos are available on our website: <https://www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org/modelers-forum/>

6 hardy modelers turned out for the Modeler's Forum on this very sloppy day.

Bob Willard opened the Forum by showing a new micro drill he had purchased from Amazon. It has a self-contained battery, charged via a usb cable, and it came with a set of bits and a tiny drill press. It has a low speed, suitable for drilling into styrene.



You can check it out here:

[https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0B3MP2ZWK?psc=1&ref=ppx\\_yo2ov\\_dt\\_b\\_product\\_details](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0B3MP2ZWK?psc=1&ref=ppx_yo2ov_dt_b_product_details).

Bob brought along his O Scale trolley freight motor. It's a work in progress, but quite well

along. Bob used his new drill to make the necessary holes to attach the grab irons to it. Bob has also equipped it with radial couplers. He said he's not quite satisfied with their operation, but to a layman, they seemed to function quite well.



Kent Waterson was up next. He has set his Smaug vs. Laketown project aside for a bit and spent some well-earned time working on his layout. He's putting up benchwork and has built up his helix. Kent drew the helix in CAD and created it entirely from trapezoidal pieces. Pretty impressive in the photos (really don't understand why he didn't actually bring it to the meeting, though...). Kent described the method he uses for coving his backdrop in corners. The coves are constructed from sonotubes (used to form concrete supports) cut into quarters, then to the proper length. The tubes are very strong and can be mudded over to meld with the backdrop. Kent is also spending the necessary time to create bulletproof layout wiring by making sure that every individual rail has a power feed wire. This is sheer drudgery (believe me, I speak from experience on this), but pays huge (invisible) dividends in eliminating future problems. He's running 12 awg buss wires and 18 awg track feeders, connecting them with "suitcase" (insulation displacement) connectors. Connectors for these wire sizes are somewhat hard to find and certainly not inexpensive. Check an example here: [https://www.rshughes.com/p/3M-Scotchlok-567-POUCH-Brown-Tap-Connector-Tap-Connector-0-145-In-Max-Insulation-Outside-Diameter-14887/054007\\_14887/](https://www.rshughes.com/p/3M-Scotchlok-567-POUCH-Brown-Tap-Connector-Tap-Connector-0-145-In-Max-Insulation-Outside-Diameter-14887/054007_14887/).





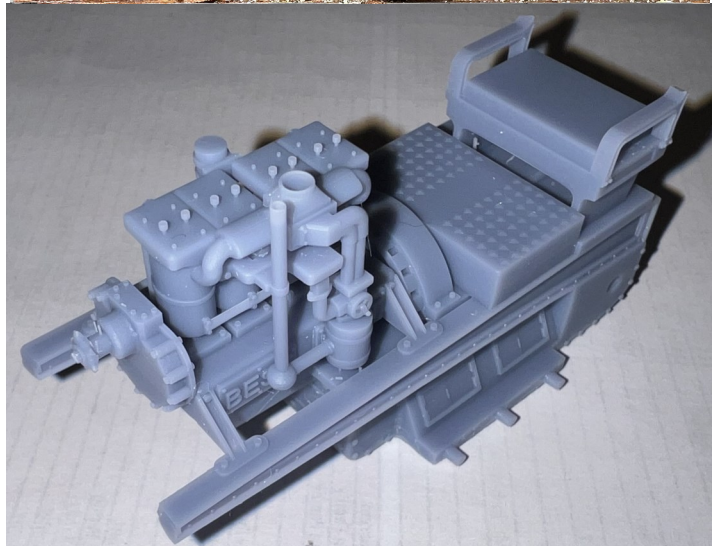


Mitch Kennedy asked some questions of the Forum members about pouring resin water, wondering whether or not it was necessary to secure elements in streambeds securely before pouring. Consensus was “definitely yes!” Mitch spoke about how his interests have been reinvigorated since joining the Great Falls Model Railroad Club and how much he appreciated it. He has been working on his layout and related how he has carved a waterfall out of fiberglass. He make sure to save the chips for use as scenic elements too.



Steve Doughty attended the forum, listening and contributing to the discussions. He didn't bring anything this month, but that's never a reason to stay away.

I (Jamie) brought a new O Scale model release from Sierra West Models. It's a 3d printed [Best 60 crawler tractor](#). Sierra West's 3d printed models are simply outstanding. The models come in small packages without instructions, but complete instructions are available online for download from the Sierra West website. This is a classic example of stash-building. In my experience, you need to buy things you want when they are available, even if you don't need them right now, because they may well not be readily available in the future...



Dick Holman came to the Forum too. Though he didn't bring any models, he brought ideas for the 2024 Square Footer Contest.

All the attendees participated in a vigorous discussion of the 2024 contest. All the necessary decisions were made and the rules decided upon.



## MODELER'S FORUM (cont.)

There will still be two classes of entrants: Novice and Master. Anyone winning their category as a Novice will be automatically elevated to Master status for future contest entries.

For 2024, the contest will be themed "In the Woods" and entries must be on a round base, sized by scale: N Scale – 2" diameter; HO – 4" diameter; O Scale 8" diameter. The only element that will be allowed to overhang the base is foliage. For the complete rules, go here:

<https://www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Square-Footer-Contest-2024.pdf>

or check out our website post here:

<https://www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org/extrainaganza/square-footer-contest-2024/>.

The next Modeler's Forum will be on Saturday, February 10 following the club meeting (probably around 2:15 ish). Please come join us!

## OP 'TIL YOU DROP 1/1/24







## PROJECT HADES



The last mainline turnout has been finished. This is the entry to the Warehouse District, along with a sidetrack switch just off the main line. The Northbound main line is in place and awaiting wiring to be useable once again.

## UNION STATION (formerly Riverton)



The station takes shape (above); bridges below







144 Mill Street  
Auburn, ME 04210

<https://www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org/>  
Facebook: [Great Falls Model Railroad Club](#)

### An Educational Foundation

### OFFICERS:

President:

Jamie Robinson

[prez@greatfallsmodelrrclub.org](mailto:prez@greatfallsmodelrrclub.org)

Vice President:

Eric Long

[vp@greatfallsmodelrrclub.org](mailto:vp@greatfallsmodelrrclub.org)

Past President

Mike Meserve

Secretary:

Bryn Doyle

[secretary@greatfallsmodelrrclub.org](mailto:secretary@greatfallsmodelrrclub.org)

Treasurer & Membership

Margo Robinson

[treasurer@greatfallsmodelrrclub.org](mailto:treasurer@greatfallsmodelrrclub.org)

Librarian/Archivist:

Rick James

[librarian@greatfallsmodelrrclub.org](mailto:librarian@greatfallsmodelrrclub.org)

Directors:

Darin Long

Guy Lovell

Shawn Doyle

Webmaster:

Joe Marshall

[braintriggers@gmail.com](mailto:braintriggers@gmail.com)

Assistant Webmaster:

Jamie Robinson

[jamie@greatfallsmodelrrclub.org](mailto:jamie@greatfallsmodelrrclub.org)

Social Media Editor:

Bryn Doyle

[socialmedia@greatfallsmodelrrclub.org](mailto:socialmedia@greatfallsmodelrrclub.org)

Storekeeper:

Eric Long

[sales@greatfallsmodelrrclub.org](mailto:sales@greatfallsmodelrrclub.org)

Event Coordinator:

Margo Robinson

[margo@greatfallsmodelrrclub.org](mailto:margo@greatfallsmodelrrclub.org)

### THE SIGNAL

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Editor—Jamie Robinson

[gfrsignal@greatfallsmodelrrclub.org](mailto:gfrsignal@greatfallsmodelrrclub.org)

**Address Changes**  
If your mailing or e-mail address changes, please notify us at:  
[gfrsignal@greatfallsmodelrrclub.org](mailto:gfrsignal@greatfallsmodelrrclub.org)



## Upcoming Events

Maine 3 Railers Show — Feb. 17  
Topsham Train Show — April 27

## Recurrent Activities



[HO Operating Sessions](#)  
March 2 at 9:00 a.m.  
March 16 at 9:00 a.m.  
[Regular Monthly Meeting](#)  
**Saturday, Feb. 10 at 1:00 p.m.**  
[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](#)  
Saturday, Feb. 10 at 2:15 p.m.  
[Executive Committee](#)  
**Concurrent w/monthly meeting Feb. 10**



Grab your Great Falls shopping bag at the Company Store and show us off at the supermarket!



[Check us out on Facebook.](#)