

Member since June 1988

NEXT MEETING
February 8th
1:00 pm
Invite a friend!

DO YOU WANT TO WIN?

Attendance & 50/50 prizes are drawn at every monthly meeting.

YOU MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN!

Bottles for Basics

Remember—you can return your bottles and cans directly at Spring Street Redemption, 120 Spring Street in Auburn.

Tell them you are from the "Train Club."

THE SIGNAL

The Great Falls Model Railroad Club



VOLUME 29 ISSUE 01

JANUARY 2025

UPCOMING EVENTS:

February Monthly Meeting: Saturday, February 8th @ 1pm

Modeler's Forum: Following the monthly meeting, February 8th

GFMRRC @ Maine 3-Railers Model Railroad and Dollhouse Show, Feb. 15th @ 10am at the Augusta Armory

March Monthly Meeting: Saturday, March 8th @ 1pm

Modeler's Forum: Following the monthly meeting, March 8th

GFMRRC Train Show (Topsham): Saturday, April 26th @ 10am

JANUARY 11TH MEETING MINUTES

CATHERINE KNOWLES FOR BRYN DOYLE, SECRETARY

The meeting was called to order at 1300 with the Pledge of Allegiance. There were 15 members present.

President's Welcome & Report: Jamie shared that, "the year is over, and were we financially successful? Yes, we were." He reported that some significant part of that success was new memberships. Jamie said that the sign-up sheet for donating toward utility bills has been posted on the bulletin board, and while these amounts do not cover all of the amount of these obligations, they help. "Op 'til You Drop" was well attended, and went pretty well – there was some adjusting to new features, and there were some things that needed to be fixed, but it was a good time. Regular operating sessions are not resuming as yet – stay tuned.

Secretary: Bryn was not present; the notes from the last meeting were in *The Signal*, and approved/accepted by the vote of those present.

Treasurer: Margo said that December's financial numbers came out really nicely, and ended \$7,000 ahead, a big help were membership dues paid in advance. Overall year totals – the biggest "hit" was the cost of electricity for the club building, which was over \$4,000 for the year, which was the biggest increase. Oil prices went down with the switch to a new supplier, \$2300 for the year, \$1,000 less than last year. We are \$12,000 to the good. Jamie added that we had some large donations including models and whole layouts that could be resold. Margo said our Certificates of Deposit (CD's) are coming up for renewal in February, and she is researching options.

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JANUARY MEETING MINUTES (CONTINUED)

Membership: Margo reported that a few members still haven't paid renewal dues and have had two reminders, and their memberships have already expired. Jamie read a very nice card received from Sandy Sondheim (Note: shared elsewhere in this newsletter.)

Library: Mitch reported that some positive stuff has been going on – the new computer has worked out well and the database is now a lot less wieldy. He and those working with him are culling large stacks of items, organizing the space, and have been finding things to sell. He shared a request for folks to not leave “mystery stuff” on the desk – if you come across things and want to bring it to the library, talk to Mitch or Jamie about it, or at least leave a note with it about what it is, where it was from, and who left it, so they can contact you – these items must be relevant to the club. Mitch shared their goal of making the library more useful and user-friendly, possible even having a “library month” or something similar, and he is open to feedback.

Media: No report.

G-scale: Ray sent the following report to Jamie for the meeting – There will be a work day on January 25th. We currently have 5 projects underway: 1)Pond & Waterfall construction at the east end of the layout (next to N Gauge room), involving transitioning from the upper line (Loop #3) to the lower Main St. scene.2) Complete flashing RR Crossings in and out of Main St., which is also on the east end of the layout.3) Replacing the retired Percy on the Thomas layout with a new model. This will require transferring the light and sound system as well. 4)Modifying the west-end winter scene to accommodate a new 1/35 scale Portland Head Light & residence diorama. 5)Experimenting with adding sound modules to several areas of the layout that could be activated by the kiddo's when they tour the clubhouse (See the article on sound elsewhere in this edition!) Also, we've welcomed back Scott Gould!

O- & S-scales: Steve and Nate report that the Guilford boxcar they wanted is finally off backorder and has been shipped! Steve has paid for it, and it should arrive this week. The lights in the village now work, and the water tower now works on the outer track. Wiring needs some work, and they're on it – it's a work in progress.

HO-scale: Shawn & Ellery sent this report to Jamie – “Op ‘til You Drop” was successful. There are some opportunities for folks to help out with work – there is a list downstairs of different things you can pitch in with. They're checking the handheld CABS, and 3 are being sent for repairs that were damaged during EX-TRAINaganza. There had been discussions about upgrading the NCE CAB throttles and radio, but they're not doing that yet as the cost for the CABS is \$106 each, and the radio system is not as popular and is outdated by newer, different technologies.

N-scale: Mose reported that they've replaced turnouts – 3 old Atlas turnouts need replaced, and once done, they would be able to use a section of the yard. They are going over track to address derailments, etc.

Modeler's Forum: Bob said they're discussing new contest ideas for this year, and shared a reminder that modeler's forum has moved, and are now starting immediately following the monthly meetings.

Modules: Ed said that they found one module that was constructed using caulk instead of nails or screws, and they've stripped it and are rebuilding it. Other modules are being cleaned and repaired.

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MEETING MINUTES (CONTINUED)

Facilities: Nate said that there's really no news, but reported that they are waiting for the wall-mount bracket for the television for the meeting room; Jamie replied that he has it, and is planning to bring it to the club, and discussed with Nate what prep work needs to be done for it. Nate also reported that the tractor needs a new battery, the old one is no longer holding a charge. He will buy the new one, and bring the receipt to Margo.

Old Business

Events:

The Maine 3-Railers Show on Feb. 15, from 10-3 – Margo said they are strictly limiting set-up and take-down times to Friday the 14th between 12-3, and Saturday the 15th set-up from 7-10AM, and take-down/move out right at 3pm at the end of the show. We will have a 10'x8' space, with 3 tables for selling items.

For our **Topsham show** on April 26, Margo said she still isn't sure if we can get in early on Friday as she is not getting answers to her questions quickly, so it looks like the usual 3pm set-up. Margo is considering a fee to vendors who bring their own tables, and charging them for access to electricity because she has noticed that some vendors who had requested it weren't using it, but wanted to set up on the outer walls. Vendor charges for tables remain at \$35 as long as it will cover our costs.

Bryn sent some information to Jamie about the **Cumberland Fair** Sept. 21-27, including that there will be at least 2 other clubs there including Maine 3-Railers, and we can sell things there. If we do anything, maybe just one of the small layouts, but that would require members to be present every day, open to close; the building will be locked overnight. There was some discussion among those present because of the scheduling of other obligations at that time, and availability of members. Also, it was mentioned that the 470 club may have a new space there, and that the Fair organizers limit passes and how those get handed off among members.

Balloon Festival (August 16-17) hours will be shortened to 10-4 based on previous attendance numbers at all events. (This will be applied to all in-house events going forward.)

Margo is still getting information for our **October show** – she had requested October 18th as the date – and is waiting for confirmation and costs. It will likely be held at the school if all works out.

Security Cameras: Jamie presented the estimate of \$3500, including labor and with some discounts factored in, for a new system with 16 new hi-resolution cameras, internet capability with alerts sent out via an app or similar, some cameras will have 360 degree view. In full disclosure, he noted that this estimate was from his son. Because of expectation of challenges with running wiring, labor may go over and be billed at an hourly rate. There were questions and quite a bit of discussion including: Have we gotten other estimates? No. There hasn't been time, and Jamie doesn't foresee having time to have that done (requires a walk-through and measurements, etc., with the vendor.) Can club members help with some of the wiring to reduce the possibility of additional labor charges? Jamie replied that this might be possible. Bob Willard presented a motion to allow the Board of Directors to determine course of action, but he withdrew the motion after the discussion and questions/answers. Ernie Pike then presented a motion to accept the proposal and go forward with purchasing and installation. The motion was seconded and voted on, and the motion carried.

New Business

Balloon Festival: (see Old Business)

NCE CAB repairs and radio upgrade: (See HO-scale report, previous page)

For those interested, **Norm's O-Scale Store** may be closing or reducing inventory and hours. It is highly recommended that you call first if you plan on going to the shop, and Norm has posted his phone numbers, **preferring that you call his cell phone, which is 207-310-0150**. The store phone number (Not recommended!) is 207-655-2550.

Jamie said that a gentleman contacted him who has some **Marx** trains he will be selling. Jamie has the information if you're interested.

Door prize: Wayne Jr. won and chose one of the hats.

50/50: \$24 - Steve won and donated his share back to the club.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 1440.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Well, another year is in the books! Were we financially successful? Yes. It should be noted, though, that some of this year's surplus was generated by memberships. Many folks took advantage of the "Buy 4 years, get 5 years" membership plan in advance of the 2025 dues increase and dues intake this year increased about 30% over last year. The cautionary note there is that dues may contribute somewhat less to the bottom line for the next few years.

Speaking of the New Year, there are still opportunities to sign up to sponsor Water (\$30) or Power (\$150) for 2025. These don't cover the full cost of the utilities, especially on the Power side, but they do help.

We kicked off the new year in traditional style with an "Op 'til you drop" HO operating session on New Year's Day. It was reasonably well attended, with a few new members there too. The new features of the layout performed well and everyone appeared to have a pretty good time. With a few glitches to fix and some details to finish, the HO layout should be able to resume regular operating sessions very soon.

Jamil

TREASURER'S REPORT

Bottle Returns: \$0

Monetary Donations for December:\$0

Power/Electric bill:

Michael Ricci
Steve Doughty

Water/Sewer bill:

Bob & Wanda Wright

Supporters:

Joe Moser
Stephen Anderson
Steve Doughty
Croteau Family

Train item Donations:

Nell Ancil

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

December New members:

Ron Aseltine
Marc Burkhart
Croteau Family
Fournier Family
Howlett Family
Jack McCarthy
Ernest Pike
Russell Family
Thomas Thorndyke



The Signal will be published every-other month beginning this month!

The next edition will be sent out in March!

OP 'TIL YOU DROP 1/1/25

The “Op ‘Til You Drop” event on January 1st was well attended and, aside from a few minor issues (and when does any layout operate “issue free”?) everyone had a good time, the food was great, and weather cooperated in the end.

Note: The photos on this page were taken by **Leigh Stevens** and used with his permission.



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OP 'TIL YOU DROP (CONTINUED)

The following photos were taken by the editor:



**WOMEN IN MODEL RAILROADING
NMRA GROUP @ SPRINGFIELD**

While my own experience is that our club has been very welcoming, not all women are as lucky. The old stereotypes, including the “my wife...” humor, and other attitudes, can create an uncomfortable and unwelcoming atmosphere for women. Women in model railroading are still a small minority, but maybe, with more support and positive experiences, that could change for the better. With numbers of women in the hobby increasing, NMRA has created a “SIG” or Special Interest Group for women.



At the upcoming Amherst Railway Society’s show (January 25th & 26th) the Women in Model Railroading SIG is holding two special events, just for women. What follows is from Amherst Railway Society’s website and includes contact information if you’re interested in participating: <https://www.railroadhobbyshow.com/latest-news.php>

Women are playing an increasing[ly] important role in the model railroad hobby. According to a recent survey by UK-based model manufacturer Hornby, women now make up 28% of the model railroad community. And, that number is growing.

In recognition of this developing trend, the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) established a special interest group (SIG) in 2022 - Women in Model Railroading (WIMRR) - with the goal of introducing, encouraging, and connecting women interested in the hobby. Women in Model Railroading will play a significant role at the 2025 Railroad Hobby Show.

On Saturday evening, January 25, 2025, WIMRR will host a special model railroad operating session on the Dry Hill Model Railroad in the Mallary Building.

The event will give women (of all ages) a chance to learn more about the hobby, meet other women that share their interest, and just plain have fun running trains. The event will run from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm, and there will be refreshments.

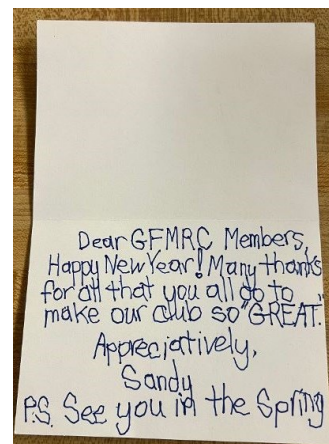
Then, on Sunday morning, January 26, 2025 at 10:30 am, WIMRR will sponsor an educational session in the Clinic Room in the Young Building. The Women In Model Railroading SIG will be explained, plus there will be an opportunity to meet women that are leaders in the railroad and model railroad industries.

If you are interested in participating in either the operations session on Saturday evening, or the educational session on Sunday morning, or both, please contact Michelle Kempema at: michellekempema@gmail.com or 970-590-7661.

I plan on attending both sessions, and if any women from the club will be there, look for me! I will report back what I learn about the SIG.

- Catherine

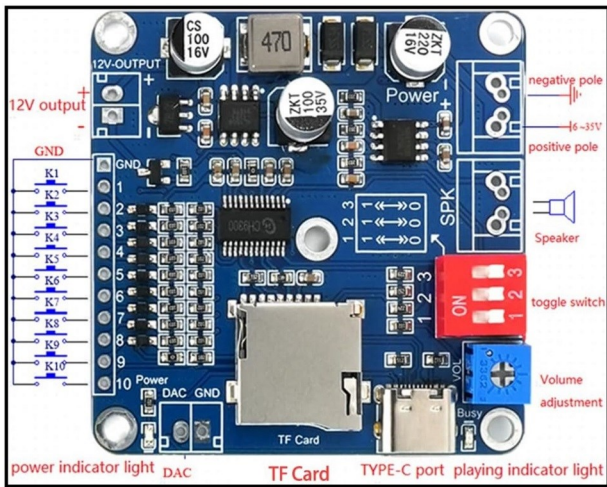
As reported in the January meeting notes, Jamie received this lovely note from Sandy Sondheim!



ADDING SOUND TO A LAYOUT BY DICK COSGROVE & RAY PARENT

This is a quick review of how we can add whatever sounds we want to any diorama on our layouts. We are currently working on a relatively user-friendly way to add sound to our G Gauge dioramas: *Main Street & Portland Head Light*. *Main Street* has existed since the early days of the layout, while the *Portland Head Light* is currently under construction.

Dick has been working on the electronics, while I have investigated ways of creating the needed MP3 sound files. (NOTE: We will be demonstrating this sound system at the clubhouse on Jan 25th during our next morning work session.)



Electronics:

The key is in the control board **CH9311-TF** (pictured above) which we purchased from Amazon. All you need to add is a 20 Watt speaker, a stable 12 Volt power supply, an MP3 sound file, an on/off button, and you're in business! The board has the following capabilities:

- ◆ MP3 music player loaded via either:
 - TF card 32GB OR
 - USB downloadable from separate computer or smart phone
 - Volume control
 - Eight playback modes activated with on/off button

MP3 Audio File:

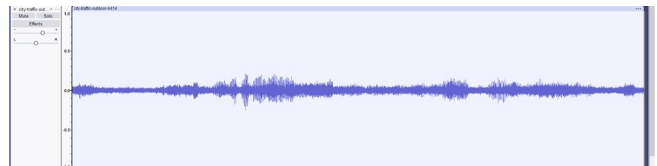
There are several ways to generate the audio file:

- Record your own
- Use audio files already on your computer/smart phone
- Download from the internet

We chose the latter option using the [pixabay.com website](http://pixabay.com). It is very user-friendly, free, and has a wide range of audio files.

Once you have the desired file (or files), you'll need editing software to fine tune the file for playback through the control board's MP3 player. We found a free user-friendly software on-line, called Audacity, to edit the files we downloaded from pixabay. Audacity has the capability to record audio files as well, although we have not tried it.

To date we have generated two audio files: *Main Street* (see below) and *Portland Head Light*, which is a bit more complex since it has timed sequences of wave action, seagulls, and foghorn in one audio file.



Our ultimate goal is to have the sounds activated by push buttons operated by young visitors to the club.

Alternatively, you might consider using a reed switch to automatically activate the sound with a passing locomotive or rolling stock.

Let us know if you have any questions.



O SCALE NEWS

Steve Doughty reports that the 50' Atlas Guilford Maine Central box car ordered way back in **June 2023** is arriving—or has arrived—and will be on the layout soon (if not already there)!



2001135
 O TM 50'6" BOX CAR GUILFORD (MAINE
 CENTRAL) 20066, 20102 (GRAY/ORANGE) -
 3RL

OPERATING SESSIONS ARE BACK!

Operating sessions have started once again on the HO Layout! Never run trains in an ops session? We can show you how.

Sessions start at 9:00 on the first and third Saturdays of the month.

MODELER'S FORUM

There was no Modeler's Forum in January, and the Forum team want to remind you that they will be meeting on the Saturday afternoons of the monthly meetings, immediately following the meeting, usually around 3pm.

Bring your questions, new acquisitions, problems, projects and aspirations! Share with the group and get some helpful input from experienced modelers.



FREE DUST COLLECTOR!

No, not a knick-knack from Nana, or another action figure like the one you had in 4th grade — **Mose Price** has this from his workshop, doesn't have a need for it anymore, and is offering it for free to a club member who can use it. He said that he no longer has the hoses and tubing needed, but those should be fairly easy to replicate to your own specs. **If you have questions or would like it, reach out to Mose at the club.**





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An Educational Foundation

More information on our website
<https://greatfallsmodelrrclub.org/>

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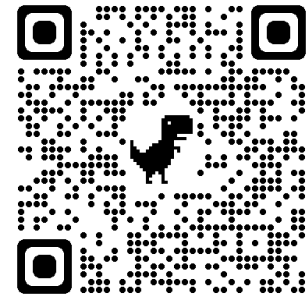
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The SIGNAL

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If your mailing or email
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Upcoming Events

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Recurring Activities

February Monthly Meeting: Saturday, February 8th @ 1pm
Modeler's Forum: Following the monthly meeting, February 8th
GFMRR @ Maine 3-Railers Model Railroad and Dollhouse
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GFMRR Train Show (Topsham): Saturday, April 26th @ 10am

For up to date event listings, use this link to
the calendar on our website

<https://www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org/calendar/>



[Check us out on
Facebook...](#)

And on

[Instagram!](#)



HO Operating Sessions

Operating Sessions are back!

1st and 3rd Saturdays at 9am

Monthly Meeting

February 8th at 1pm

Work Sessions

Every Wednesday 6:00pm to 8:00pm

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

Modelers Forum

Following the monthly meeting,
Saturday Feb. 8th at 3pm

Directors Meetings

Concurrent with the Monthly
Membership meeting