



CENTRAL CROSSINGS

NEWSLETTER OF THE
CENTRAL RAILWAY MUSEUM



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July /August / September 2020

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**NEXT
MEETINGS**

**WATCH FOR
LIVE
MEETING
INFO VIA
EMAIL**

FROM THE EDITORS:

There's no place like home, There's no place like home, There's no place like home...

The 1939 classic The Wizard of Oz coined that immortal phrase, The Good Witch Glinda telling little Dorothy to click the heels of her Ruby Slippers while saying "There's no place like home", would take her home from the land of Oz. Well, we have all been spending an awful lot of time at home for the last few months. I for one am getting kinda bored with all this home time.

Alas, the Covid-19 pandemic continues. When I put together the last issue of Central Crossings, I really did not think that we would still be dealing with this thing in such a big way. The public has had to make adjustments to their daily routines and habits to try and get this virus knocked down. Many businesses were required to close and some, including museums, still are closed to the public. This has forced us to put some events, like the Central Railroad Festival, our Saturday open houses, and our 'Getting Started' series on hold, however, many of our members have continued working on solo projects either at the Museum or at home. As a matter of fact, as you notice, this issue is a bit late. I honestly did not think that there was going to be a need for one, since everything is shut down. However, many of the members have increased the amount of stuff sent to me for the CC, as they all seem to be working on major projects.

In this issue, longtime member and resident track expert Bob Folsom talks about the signaling system on the HO Scale layout and the Signals that have been built for our specific era. I will have the honor of showing off some of the upgrades and restoration that Tom Langdale and Harry Kelley have done to the Old Caboose at the corner of Hwy 93 and Church Street. Then we head back to Bob's house, but this time for a video 'show and tell' of his home layout. Then we will take a tour Howard Garner's Cascade Western home layout. In many cases for our members, work on personal layouts continues, as there is always something to work on. John has been building mountains, I have been building benchwork and testing ideas, Sandy has just been building... Hopefully the photos folks have submitted don't wear everyone out.

Last but not least - enjoy seeing the work that our members are putting in at home and at the Museum to make things more interesting, cleaner looking and much more detailed, all for the benefit of our guests. See you soon!



FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK



Upcoming Events for the Central Railway Museum as well as regional shows and events.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

All events on hold until October 17th at the earliest.

After the latest meeting of our Board of Directors, we have decided to reopen the Museum to the public, with social distancing measures in place, October 17th.

As many of you know, that is the date of the Town of Central's Central Railroad Festival. We will have the Museum open from 10am - 3pm, as well as the newly repainted and remodeled Caboose.

After the CRF, we will evaluate what worked and what needs work to continue to stay open for our regular Saturday times from 9am - 2pm.

All this of course is based on what the State, County and Town have in place at the time.

MUSEUM CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC
AT THIS TIME, THE MUSEUM IS CLOSED
TO THE PUBLIC. WE WILL BE
REEVALUATING OUR OPTIONS AT THE
END OF AUGUST, HOPING TO RESUME
OPERATIONS IN SEPTEMBER 2020.

THE COST IS ALWAYS FREE!!

🔗 SCHEDULED EVENTS & SHOWS 🔗

CRMHA CALENDAR

Give it a [click!](#)

When the calendar opens click on an event to get more details and click on the arrows at the top left to move to another month.

If you would like to have your event added to our calendar, give us a shout at centralcrossings@crmha.org.

OPERATING SESSIONS
SECOND THURSDAY @ 7PM

ALL EVENTS ON HOLD UNTIL
OCTOBER AT THE EARLIEST.

The Central Railway Museum holds regular operating sessions on our museum HO layout from 7-9pm(ish) on the second Thursday evening of most months. This is when we use our unique "scenario card" system to assemble and run trains around the layout, setting out or picking up loads at industries, clearing the main for a crack passenger train to roll by, etc. etc. So if you're interested in realistic railroad operations, or if you just want to learn how to run trains on the museum layout, you're encouraged to attend these sessions. No experience is necessary; rookie engineers are routinely paired with experienced ones.

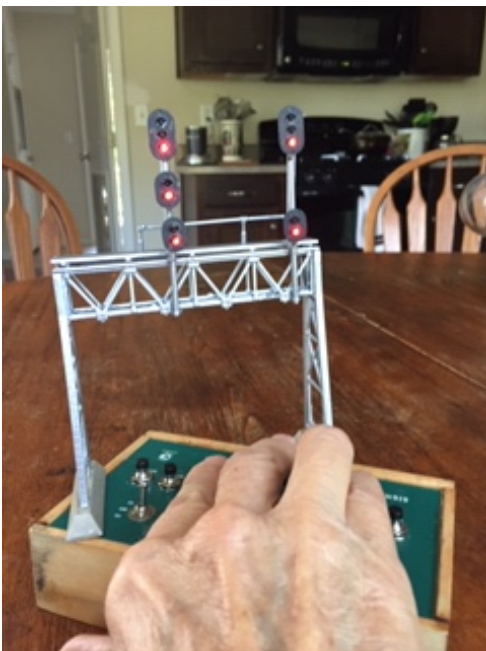
“Signal-making Epidemic”

By Robert 'Bob' Folsom

Before the Corona Virus social distancing began I was already working on building signals for the Museum HO Layout. Our layout may not be as big statistically as many layouts of renown, but has every bit as much detail and operational capabilities of most. In fact, our layout is much more packed with every attribute measurable per square foot, linear foot, or however you want to compare size than almost all model railroads, world wide. A signal system has been the one attribute that our layout has not had yet in its existence. A fully operational signal system, which behaves exactly as the prototype is a costly venture in time and money. The advent of computer chips has greatly simplified the functions of a signal system compared to generations ago, but does require programming; in fact very complicated programming of the logic necessary to make the signals do what they need to.

Much of the hardware needed to support a block signal system has been in place for years on the museum layout due to the physical efforts of Howard Garner and others who may have helped install detection devices along the way. Finally, there has been enough financial resource available to purchase the necessary circuit boards. Alas, the first generation of these boards proved to be unsatisfactory. But that problem is now being remedied and Howard is spending untold hours programming the boards as needed. Ken Greenwood has also spent untold hours preparing all the necessary wiring to interconnect logic boards with signal driver boards and the signals themselves.

To purchase commercially made scale models of the signals would be another costly project. I decided that I had enough experience building track that those skills could carry over into fabricating our signals, and literally save us thousands of dollars. My first attempt was to build some “searchlight” style signals very common on American Railroads in the year 1958, the period depicted on the museum layout. The prototype signals used a single light bulb and lens to project a beam of light significantly further than other styles using discreet colored lenses. The searchlight-type was more complicated because it needed an internal mechanism to change the color of the display from red to amber, green, or lunar white. Modeling this type of signal was made simple because of the existence of bi-polar LED’s which can display red or green, and even amber when the red and green alternate rapidly. The LED itself is about the right size for the housing box of a searchlight-type signal. It was just like modeling years ago when we had to be creative and make things out of whatever we could find. Nowadays such things as brass tubing, fine wire, and styrene that weren’t available 50 years ago make this kind of project easy.



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I decided to be fairly detailed on the signals since they had to measure up to the degree of detail and craftsmanship already demonstrated on this layout. However, since mine were to be hand-crafted, I knew they would not be as precise as ones made using jigs and other tools needed for mass production. I have hoped that my efforts pass the “six-foot rule” which means that idiosyncrasies noticeable up close will not be observable from six feet away. I am using Abraham Lincoln’s rationale: “you can fool some of the people all the time, and you can fool all of the people some of the time – but you can’t fool all the people all of the time” I seriously doubt if we will ever have rivet-counting visitors, even at operating sessions, and the camera will also be forgiving enough that these signals will be as much part of the scenery as actually governing train movements on the railroad.

The signals fall into two categories; those used on the Central Railway which dominates the museum layout, and those used on the Southern Railway. Fictionally, the Central Railway adopted the searchlight-type signal. There are 47 signals on the Central Railway including dwarfs which sit on the ground, and signals using masts which have one, two, or even three searchlights mounted on them. Some of the signals are also mounted on cantilever structures to give the engineers better visibility. All the signals on the Central Railway are painted black. The signals on the Southern Railway are painted aluminum except for the face-plates which are black. The Southern Railway signals use a discreet bulb for each color needed in a display. There may be one, two, or three bulbs in each display known as a “head”. Due to the compactness of the museum layout, there are no signals on the Southern which have only one head. All these signals require two or even three heads because of their function. A two-headed signal usually has five light bulbs, so these signals are somewhat more complicated to make compared to the Central’s searchlight-type signals. On the museum layout, all the Southern Railway signals are on the lower level. There are 32 signals on the Southern including 5 that were purchased ready-made. Since the museum closed, that has meant I could spend more time working on signal building at home. As a result, 45 of the 47 searchlight-type signals are completed at the time of this writing. Four of the Southern signals have been built protecting a junction called “Southern Crossing” in Seneca.

To sum up, I am so grateful that I have a hobby such as this, especially in such trying times when you can’t get out and do what you want. Actually, at my age, there isn’t much else I can do even if I did get out! So while the Corona Virus Epidemic is spreading around all over, I am having my own disease right here at home – SIGNALITIS!!!



The Old Red Caboose

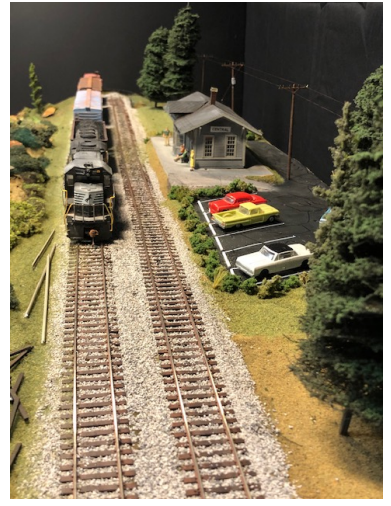
As many of you know, last November, the Old NW Caboose at the corner of Church Street and HWY 93 in Central had its exterior repainted. At that time, the plan was to hold over the funds that were remaining from that project and continue adding funds to help restore the inside of the caboose.

Every year, we open up the caboose during the Central Railroad Festival, so the public can see the inside of the long gone mainstays of railroad equipment. Sure, you can still catch the odd caboose working on a local in some of the bigger areas, but not around here. Many of our members remember fondly waving at the Conductor and rear Brakeman riding at the tail of the train, but those days are history. Opening the caboose and sharing the history of them and the folks that rode in those rolling offices is how we keep that part of railroading alive.

Thanks to the generous donations by the family of Doy Davis and many of our membership, we were able to get to work on the inside of the caboose much quicker than expected. Tom Langdale and Harry Kelley have taken this 'little' project on by the horns and done an incredible job. Something else that they have done is built a diorama for display inside the caboose showing off a small train that has a similar style Southern RR Caboose attached going over the old 1918 underpass for Pepper Street under the NS Mainline tracks in front of the old Central Passenger Station. I gotta say, this is a beautiful diorama that they built. Not sure where they will display it in the Caboose, but it will be there.

Here are some photos taken while they were working as well as of the diorama they built (on the next page).





Home is where a lot of work is getting done...

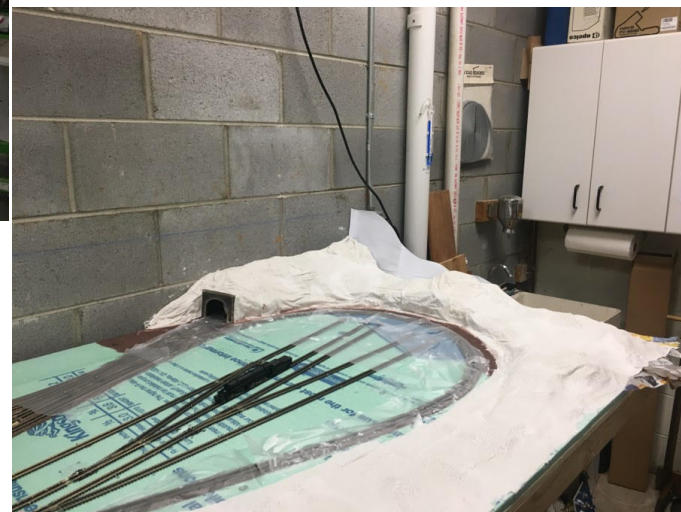
In the month of July, Cameron Turner was kind enough to host and record a Zoom meeting that the main focus was a 'walk through' tour of Bob Folsom's amazing personal HO Scale train layout. This was the first time that many of the members had been 'together' for any function since the February Train Expo.

Now, I have yet to figure out how to embed a YouTube File here in the PDF, but I will post the link and ya'll will just have to follow it to see the tour.

This is the link to Bob's: <https://youtu.be/9LIcFWa7f7Q>, hopefully you will enjoy it as much as we did.

About a month later, we did the same thing, but over at Howard Garner's Cascade Western layout. Here is that link: <https://youtu.be/K6qCQjvNnf4>.

As I said before, John Johnston is building the Appalachian Mountains in his basement...



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More from Home...

Now, Sandy has been building - like a lot of building, the I moved into a new home and get to rebuild my layout and expand it too kind of building. But, he can tell the story way better in his own words...

The Final Move: Layout Planning

By Sandy Eustis

The Old Layout:

I decided to change from HO to On30 in 2010, in order to pursue a Maine 2 foot narrow gauge modeling theme. I started my On30 adventure with a single 30" wide hollow core door. It had room for only a passing siding and a pair of industry sidings facing in opposite directions; one served a fishing dock and the other a barrel and crate maker. Hollow core doors are sturdy, portable, and can be easily become modular components ("doorminos") to make a bigger layout later on. I had visited Maine in 2010, looking for 2 footer remnants, and we stayed for a couple of nights in a B&B in Winter Harbor, Me. Winter Harbor is small fishing village with an even smaller summer resort population. It lies on the Schoodic peninsula, just across Frenchman Bay from Mt Desert Island and the much larger and more famous summer resort town of Bar Harbor.

Anyway, I named my first On30 module "Winter Harbor", and it would become the eastern terminus of my Acadian Coast Eastern (ACE) model railroad. I rationalized that a plausible 2 foot narrow gauge line might once have been built to connect Winter Harbor with the rest of the world - via an interchange with the Maine Central's long gone Calais branch at Hancock, where the MC's crack Bar Harbor Express from Boston terminated at the Mt. Desert Island ferry dock.

I quickly realized that my passing-siding-on-a-door needed longer tail tracks on either end to facilitate switching, and so I added a narrow gauge turntable/roundhouse scene to one end, and a 90 degree turn around the harbor to the other end, both built on hollow core doors. These 3 modules had filled one end of my 14' x 12' train room by 2012. Over the next 7 years, I attached more doorminos and expanded into the rest of the room, but scrapped everything except for those first three doors 3 times for major rebuilds. FWIW, my old GoDaddy website is still up at www.sandysacerr.com, and if interested, you can go there and see the Acadian Coast Eastern (ACE) as it became after the second major rebuild. In 2017, the final rebuild included adding a 9' x 6' open grid "peninsula table" in the middle of the room, with a self-contained oval for continuous running and a "branch line" leading upwards toward a planned upper deck from a wye connection with the Hancock to Winter Harbor main line.



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New Layout Givens and Druthers:

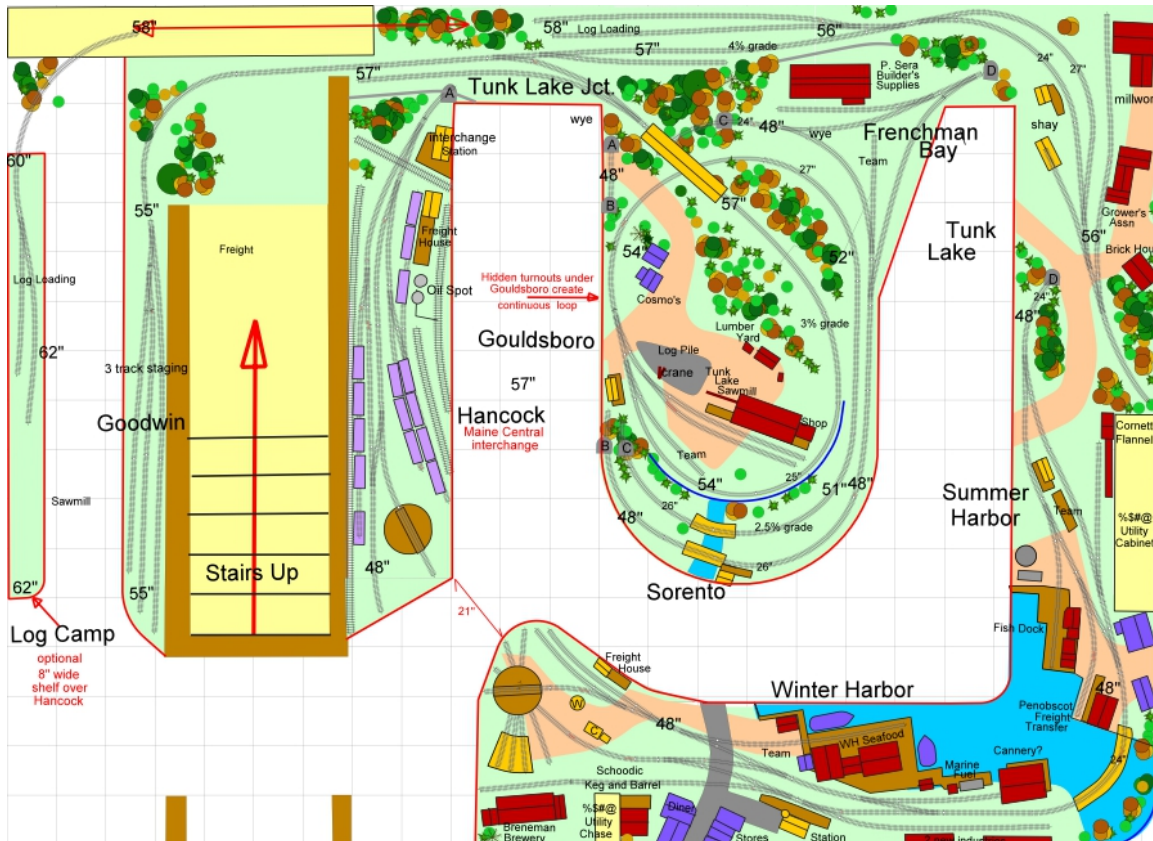
In December of 2019, we moved to a newer home in our same community – hopefully the final move, which means I won't have to be as concerned about portability as I have been. Also (hooray!), my new train room will be a bit bigger than the old room – 17' x 16' vs. 14' x 12'. I'll also have room for a hidden staging yard under an adjacent stairwell (“Hey Honey, can I just gonna cut this one little hole through that wall?”) So the new ACE will eventually occupy almost 300 sq. ft., whereas the former version filled about 170 sq. ft. With 60% more available square footage, I can figure on needing roughly 60% more turnouts, 60% more freight cars, 60% more locomotives, and 60% more structures. Hopefully, I'll also get at least a 60% increase in play value.

For me, increasing my play value means (1) getting to build more scenery and structures, and then (2) moving more freight and/or passengers around – basically just providing realistic railroad services to a few more layout customers. I particularly love figuring out how to get a string of freight cars from here to there. OK, OK, I confess; I love switching puzzles, and of layout features short trains and maximizes local switching. The ACE will still connect a few tiny Maine towns and their equally tiny industries – fishing, logging, farming, manufacturing wood products, etc., etc., it'll just be slightly bigger and badder than ever. Bring it on!

Track Planning:

I really enjoy track planning, and over the years, I've developed several dozen track plans in various scales. This time around, I had two major chunks of an existing railroad to start with -- the Winter Harbor trio of doorminos, and the 9' x 6' peninsula that goes in the center of the room. This gave me a great head start in developing an expanded track plan. For almost 3 months after moving, I did nothing but draw track plans, making dozens of changes big and small to my slowly congealing track plan, trying to salvage as much as possible from the old ACE.

I strongly recommend using a track planning CAD program at this stage of your own layout planning process. I view my AnyRail plan for the expanded ACE as a “working” plan, not as a “final” plan, simply because I've never started laying track without seeing ways to tweak (and hopefully improve) whatever I set out to build. I'm pretty sure that industry sidings will come and go as I go along, and I haven't yet committed fully to the exact track arrangements shown for the standard gauge interchange at Hancock, nor for the branch line terminus at Tunk Lake. But my working plan does show accurately the routing of the main line and the location of all passing sidings and towns, and that's enough detail to start building the bigger and badder ACE. My progress just might be the subject of a future article.



Comments on the Working Plan:

The biggest decision I had to make in developing this plan turned out to be choosing which wall to attach that central peninsula to. I had originally attached it to the wall on the right hand side of the plan, partially blocking the utility cabinet, and had even started rebuilding the Winter Harbor doorminos along the bottom wall. Then our propane dealer showed up for the annual clean-out service of our tankless water heater!! I suddenly realized I would need full access to the doors of the utility cabinet, and that any structures or scenery in front of them would need to be removed once a year. I was forced into a major change – running my main line straight across the front of the utility cabinet, cutting the bottoms of the cabinet doors off to just clear the track, and attaching the peninsula to the bench work along the top wall.

Now I saw that Winter Harbor, Frenchman Bay, and Hancock should all be on the lower level of the layout, while the new hidden staging yard and a branch line to the area in upper right corner of the plan (Tunk Lake) can fill an upper level run along the top wall of the room. The spiral to the upper level had to cross over itself about 10” elevation, so that became the elevation of the upper level. Visually, that's a pretty big vertical separation, so I think I'll eventually need tunnels in a few locations – not terribly prototypical in a relatively flat part of Maine, but hey, my miniature Maine has a couple of substantial hills to climb. I opted to not expand the ACE into a full double decker by carrying the rising spiral up through a full helix. Basically, I think my new train room is plenty large enough to keep me happily occupied, modeling and operating on a single deck for the rest of my modeling days. I'm now 73; I have lots of other interests in life, and I would like to reach a “visually finished” state before I'm done.



CLOSING THOUGHTS...

Now, I started putting this issue together in July. Yes, about three months ago. As I said on page 1, I really did not see the point of putting it together and dwelling on the fact that so many things have been affected by Covid. I failed to see what was happening within the Club and with its members. I guess not seeing everyone and being around my friends and peers had a bigger impact on me than I imagined. I have slacked at home, and not really even worked on my layout, other than some little things.

My fellow members of the Club over the past few weeks have really shown me what can be accomplished, even during tough times that no one likes.

There are a couple articles that are continuations from the past issue, such as my Making Tracks series and Sage's Railroad Stories that are going to take a break this issue. I have too much typing on mine to do and I don't have Sage's set up yet and I want to get this out. Those articles, along with several others WILL be in the next issue, which will be coming out at the beginning of October.

Currently, the Central Railroad Festival and our reopening are both scheduled for October 17th. The Town will be making their final decision mid September, so we will know for sure in a couple weeks.

Enough from me for the day.

Be healthy and keep running those trains,

Wayne