



MAINE 3 RAILERS

M3R CLUB NEWSLETTER FOR JANUARY 2026

Our Next Meeting is Thursday Evening, January 8, 2026, at 7:00PM on Zoom. Watch for an invitation and link to join from our Club Secretary, Dana Lindsey.

CLUB HEADLINE NEWS

- Progress on 2026 Moxie Club Car
- Jeff Jacobs' Open House a Family Affair
- Free Model Vehicles at Jan Williams' Layout Tour
- Brian Inch Opens Door to His Shop in Augusta



President's Message by Bernie Pender

This year's theme is going to be PARTICIPATION. Don't stand by and hope someone else will help keep the Club running. This is the year we need more volunteers, have some fun, and get involved.

As we usher in 2026, it is with great excitement that I extend my warmest wishes to you, the Folks who make up our Club. Your commitment to preserving the hobby, history, artistry, and engineering of miniature railroads is inspiring. This year marks a time of growth and transformation for the model train world. We stand at the crossroads of tradition and modernity, as new technologies and design advancements offer us new ways to build, share, and enjoy our layouts. From intricate, historically accurate models to digital control systems that simulate real-world operations, the future of model trains has never been brighter.

As President, I am proud to see how this hobby connects people across generations, backgrounds, and locations. Whether you are a seasoned modeler or just beginning your journey, know that your contribution to this vibrant Club is invaluable. Through conventions, events, and online forums, we continue to build a strong network of support and learning for all who love model trains. I encourage you all to continue pushing the boundaries of what's possible, while staying grounded in the values of craftsmanship, patience, and **camaraderie**. Together, we can make 2026 a year of extraordinary creations, unforgettable experiences, and lasting **friendships**.

Bernie, President



Treasurer Update: Dues Due NLT 02/28/2026 by Rick Hills

As a reminder, your annual club membership dues are requested by the end of February 2026.
2026 Dues: \$20 Individual, \$25 Family, \$5 Youth

As of the moment, only 34/138 members have submitted. Please help us avoid the last-minute crunch and send your checks now to:

Treasurer, M3R
PO Box 31
Amherst, NH 03031



From the Editor **by Art Shean**

Dan Abbatiello from Raymond, ME emailed the following message December 11, 2025:

Hi Art,

Great newsletter as usual. I am amazed at how active the club is. I wish I was able to participate even a little, but time does not allow at this point. I do have a question regarding the Moxie club car I purchased. I sent the money and the check was cashed but I have yet to receive it. I was wondering on the timing. Any info would be great.

Thanks, and Merry Christmas, Dan Abbatiello

Thank you Dan for the kind words and you raise a good question. When you read farther into this edition of our Club Monthly Newsletter, Richard Ridolfo has some good news and some bad news regarding our Moxie Club Car. We now know what it will look like but we are not sure when it will arrive.

And Dan, regarding how active our Club is, you are absolutely correct! Last month in this column, I asked members to share their enthusiasm for model railroading with our Club members. Some did a bang-up job by double dipping. Jeff Jacobs, Jan Williams, and Brian Inch not only opened their doors to open houses, but they and their friends provided input to share with our entire membership with event reports filled with details and photos. The effort and detail these three embedded in their layout masterpieces are top notch and rival anything to be seen in model railroading. Thank you, Jeff, Jan, Brian, and your friends very much for your contributions.

In the same vein of sharing, Peter Mahoney and Dave Christie shared photos of their tributes to the holiday spirit on our Club email system. Thank you both. Peter also double dipped using two different model train scales, HO and O.



Peter's HO and O Scale Christmas Layouts



Dave Christie's Holiday Layout

Don't Forget to share your next railroading experience with your fellow Club members by emailing your photos to me at ArtShean@comcast.net !



M3R YouTube Channel Update by Channel Master Carlton Spring

December continued to be a quiet time for the Mobile Outreach Team with no events on the schedule. In mid-January the Team begins a busy schedule with our visit to The Highlands in Topsham. This month's topic is the table below listing the 18 venues visited by the MOT, the date of the visit, and the number of views through December 31st. There are a few surprises for the most popular videos and least popular.

2025 YOUTUBE VIDEOS VIEWED

VENU	DATE	# VIEWED
BIG TRUCKS/BIG TRAINS DAY (Topsham)	April 25,2025	7200
THE HIGHLANDS (Topsham)	January 16, 2025	2500
TOGUS VA MEDICAL CENTER (Augusta)	May 22, 2025	1300
SABLE LODGE (South Portland)	June 17, 2025	1000
TOPSHAM PUBLIC LIBRUARY (Topsham)	February 21, 2025	841
THOMAS MEMORIAL LIBRUARY (Cape Elizabeth)	April 22,2025	769
MAINE VETERANS HOME (Augusta)	May 27, 2025	509
WOODS AT CANCO (Portland)	June 10, 2025	508
SMMRS SPRING TRAIN SHOW (Westbrook)	April 12, 2025	463
WILBUR'S CHOCOLATES (Freeport)	February 8+9, 2025	337
M3R TRAIN AND DOLLHOUSE SHOW (Augusta)	February 15, 2025	332
GREAT FALLS SPRING TRAIN SHOW (Topsham)	April 26, 2025	323

PATTEN FREE LIBRARY (Bath)	February 18+19, 2025	229
MOXIE FESTIVAL (Lisbon)	July 12, 2025	212
CUMBERLAND COUNTRY FAIR (Cumberland)	September 21-27, 2025	158
GREAT FALLS FALL TRAIN SHOW (Auburn)	October 11, 2025	151
BAXTER LIBRARY FALL BOOK SALE (Gorham)	October 17+18, 2025	144
BAXTER LIBRARY SPRING BOOK SALE (Gorham)	May 2+3, 2025	132
		17,108

Please note, when a video is viewed more than a thousand times, the system rounds to the nearest 100 views



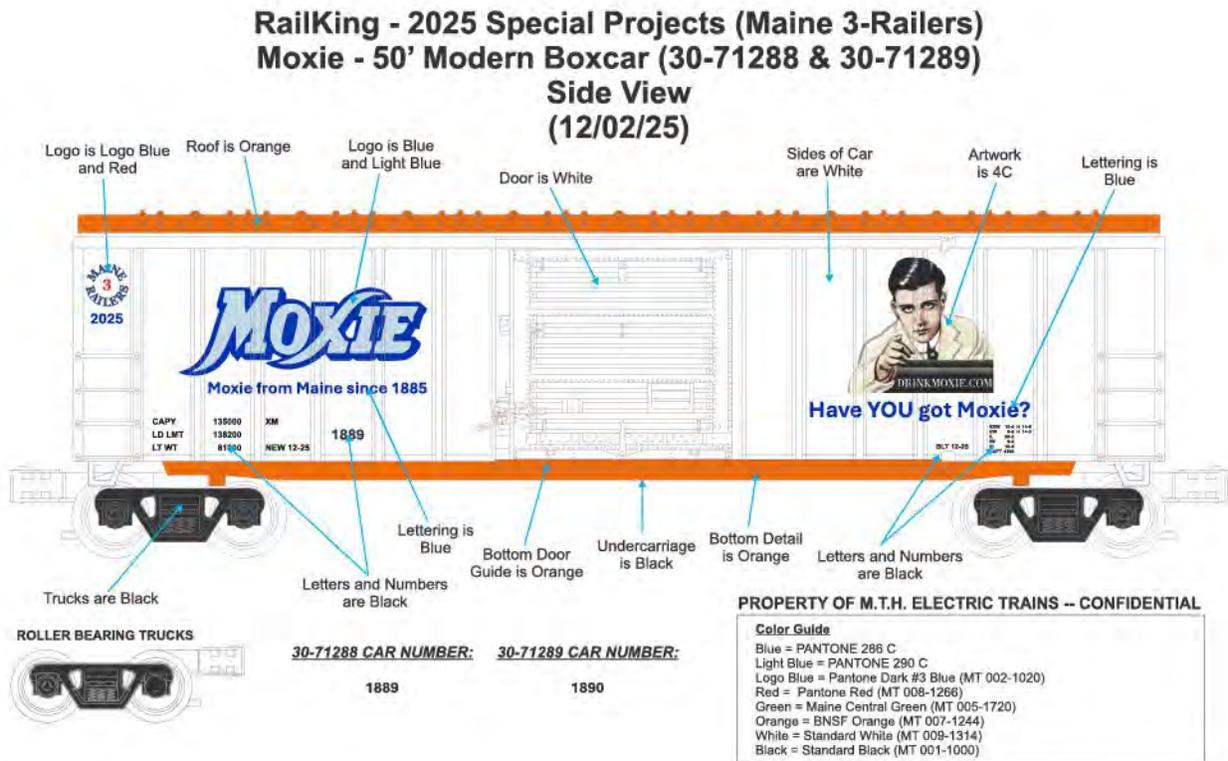
Club Car Committee Update - Some Good News and Some Bad

by Richard Ridolfo

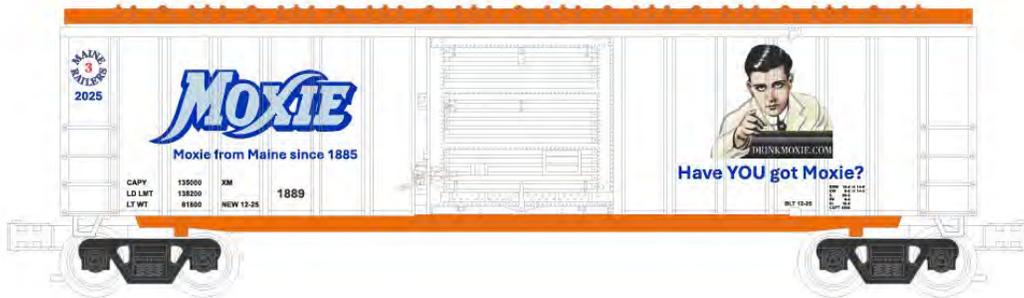
MTH has provided final art work for our 2025 Moxie Car. It is currently scheduled for March 2026, but I think it will miss that date. At present there are only a hand full of cars left to sell. Should you want one, the price is \$75.00 with \$12.00 Shipping. Payment should be sent to:

Rick Hills
 PO Box 312
 Amherst NH 03031.

Artwork and car details are as follows:



**RailKing - 2025 Special Projects (Maine 3-Railers)
Moxie - 50' Modern Boxcar (30-71288 & 30-71289)
Reversed View
(12/02/25)**



ROLLER BEARING TRUCKS

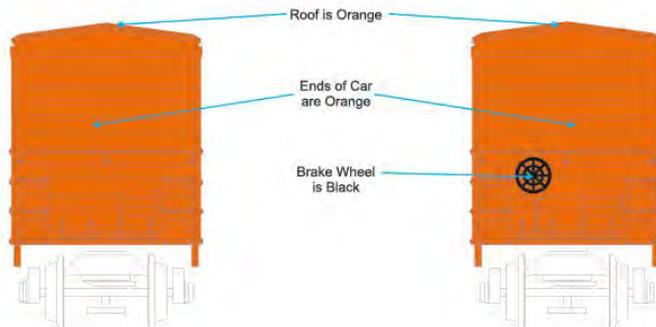


30-71288 CAR NUMBER: 30-71289 CAR NUMBER:

1889

1890

**RailKing - 2025 Special Projects (Maine 3-Railers)
Moxie - 50' Modern Boxcar (30-71288 & 30-71289)
End View
(12/02/25)**



ROLLER BEARING TRUCKS



The Maine 3 Railers have Club Clothing Available for Purchase by Dave Hodgkiss

Here are the current M3R clothing items for sale along with the newest pricing for them:



- Polo shirts -short sleeve - \$25 to size XL, \$30 for larger (dark blue)
- Denim shirts- Long Sleeve Blue- \$35 to size L, \$38 for XL, size XXL and XXXL \$43, Hats, with or without '25 years' - \$15



EVENT REPORTS:



Jacobs' Open House by Jeff Jacobs

On Dec 6th, six friends, seven M3R members, eight neighbors, and six relatives visited Jeff Jacobs' train display in West Bath. Brian Inch and I constructed the layout during covid to embrace scenes from rural Maine with a splash of urban buildings in a corner.



Jeff with guests Ernie Vannah and Jeff's nephew Jack

The track is Atlas and power is supplied by a Z4000 transformer with DCS and Legacy controllers.



Trains running included the heavy weight Polar Express, the MTH CP Rail Holiday Train, a Pan AM business train, CSX local freight, and an MEC freight with about 20 cars. These consists made their way over many bridges and through several tunnels. The main line took approximately 2 minutes to traverse at prototypical speeds.



Ernie throws a switch for the approaching Pan Am train. Watching are son-in-law Sean and Grandson Alden.

Brian and I captured the essence of Maine with the juxtaposition of wilderness with industry and a touch of civilization. Our attention to detail and realism is on display in the following scenes. But don't ask as to how many trees we had to place to meet my satisfaction.



The local Bangor & Aroostook freight switches the sawmill



A wood chip yard supplies product to Maine papermills



Small Maine Village with Central Park and Hot Air Balloon Ride

Editor's Note: Jeff rigged the hot air balloon to rise and fall to add more action to the layout. Also note the grain elevator on the left side. Ingeniously Jeff built this around a support column he wanted to hide.



Waterfront Scene with Replica of the Bath Railroad Bridge that can be Raised and Lowered



My Nephew Jack Watches the CP Holiday Train Stop at the Portland Station



The Downtown Portland Corner



Lots of Family Stopped in for a Visit to the Train Room



A Christmas Open House Always Requires a Visit from the Polar Express



The Sawmill is a Favorite Viewing Spot. Sawyers at the Right Work Tirelessly to Cut a Log.



My Grandson Alden Gazes at the Pan Am Business Train Pulling into Town



A MEC Freight Passes Through Rugged Maine Scenery

We served light refreshments along with many holiday and train-related conversations. Thanks to all who visited!

Photography by Art Shean



Jan Williams' Open House, by Carlton Spring

Saturday morning, December 13th found me zipping up to Hiram, ME to visit Jan Williams' O gauge model railroad layout that I have heard so much about. Everything that I'd heard about Jan's impressive layout was so very true. Jan annually holds a public Open House in December and this year's well attended event was no exception. The layout covers two large upstairs rooms in the ell connecting the farmhouse and barn.



A featured event was a Layout Scavenger Hunt for children 12 years old or younger with prizes for the first 20 kids to find every location. The kids were tasked to find:

- The 4 Formal Gardens
- The 5 Historic Buildings
 1. Portland Union Station built in 1888 and demolished in 1962.
 2. Bangor Fire Department built in 1897. It is now a fire department museum.
 3. Portland Fire Department built in 1837 and is now a museum.
 4. Copley Plaza Hotel built in Boston in 1912 and is still going strong.
 5. Citgo Sign is another Boston icon. Built in 1940, updated in 1965, and is visible on TV during Red Sox games.

Let the following pictures tell the “rest of the story!” Look for the Scavenger Hunt Items along the way.



Jan Williams Comment: We had a great day at the layout today! Sometimes mobbed, several guys from the club, and lots of kids, of course.





Our VP, Neighbors, and Friends



Jan's Tribute to Sally

Look Familiar?



Another landmark building – Copley Plaza Hotel.



Note the detailed wharf and accessories in Jan's harbor.



Tunnels on top of Tunnels



Jan does a nice job of blending vintage animated accessories with custom built buildings and accessories.

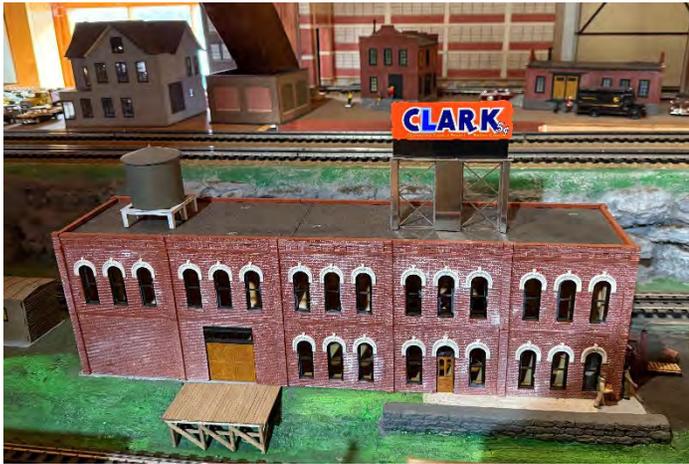


Jan's attention to detail is amazing. I tried to capture this thought in the following photos, but you have to see it in person to appreciate it.



Even his gardens are meticulously groomed and populated.





The kids may not have appreciated the details but the 'scavenger hunt' was a big success... Sally and Jan gave out about 30 O-Gauge vehicles. Accompanying parents were great at helping kids identify buildings on the layout. Sally took a series of pictures of the kids with their prizes.



Photography by Carlton Spring and Sally Williams



Open House at Brian Inch's Model Railscenes by Jeff Jacobs

Water St., Augusta, ME, December 20, 2025: Brian in blue shirt, explains his latest layout completed just prior to the open house. Camera on rolling tripod belonged to professional photographer, Eric who was recording the event. Brian's son, Riley is at center of the photo. And so the day unfolded...



Below: Smaller layout created by Brian and Riley Inch. Passenger trains on wall above.



Seeking to satisfy everyone's needs, Brian set up a flea market table for those wanting more train stuff.



Display of steam and diesel engines in local heralds.



Cabooses anyone?



And passenger diesels and construction/military cars



Pan Am Business train on the HO layout.



Overview of the workshop at Model Railscenes



Guests arriving – that's Sean and Alden mid photo. This layout measures 4' x 20' and is on wheels.



Ernie Vannah at the controls (far right), to his right are son-in-law Sean and grandson Alden

They say the devil is in the detail. So check out these apples:
Loved Brian's bridgework and the rapids below.



You need a magnifying glass to detect any flaws in Brian's detail.





If you look closely in the center of the below photo, there is a fisherman fly casting of the knoll above the river. Brian animated the fisherman so that he rotates and repeatedly casts his line into the river like a real fisherman. How does he do that?



Just another fine day in the life of the Maine 3 Railers!

Photography by Rocko Graziano and Jeff Jacobs



READY MADE TRAINS: Bargains Have Their Limitations

by Ken Thorson



The O Gauge Railroading Online Forum (OGF) has recently taken to promoting its supporting advertisers with email messages to its subscribers (I am one) featuring the products of those advertisers that sell O-gauge trains. Two such beneficiaries are Menards and Ready Made Trains (RMT). There have been a couple of OGF promotions featuring RMT that included photos and links to the RMT line of products, one of which focused on woodchip cars. These woodchip cars are attractively priced in the mid- to upper-\$30 range and there is a vast number of road names available (34), including BAR, MEC and B&M. I took the plunge for all three and was only partially disappointed.

The cars are nicely adorned with the attractive liveries of those roads (see pictures second and third row below). There is a lot of fine detail in the lettering on the bodies. RMT's website uses this language: "True FULL SIZE 3-rail O-gauge 1/48 dimension" freight cars. With RMT woodchip bodies just 10¼ inches long, the cars do not look scale (think MTH RailKing or Lionel Traditional). In 2003, MTH offered 20-97516, an MEC woodchip hopper car that measured 16 3/8 inches. Our Weaver Ultra Line Moxie boxcar is 13 inches. The MTH Premier MEC waffle boxcar is 14 inches. Again, the RMT cars do not look scale at just over 10".

Nested inside the RMT car, the simulated woodchip load seems crude (see BAR picture second row left) and not as well executed as Weaver's Ultra Line MEC woodchip hopper car some of us own (see picture first row right). The couplers are metal. RMT states trucks and underframe are diecast metal. There is more than sufficient detail on the underside of the car (see picture bottom row left).

Incredibly, RMT boasts as many as 300 different road numbers for each separate road name, not that they regularly produce such an output. How do they do this? The simple answer is they use numbers on stickers applied to the body of the car. On the MEC car, the sticker number colors are an excellent color match to the body lettering. The sticker background color is close, but not a perfect match to the body color. On the MEC car, the stickers on each side were not applied levelly, and it is noticeable. Road number stickers on the other two cars are level.

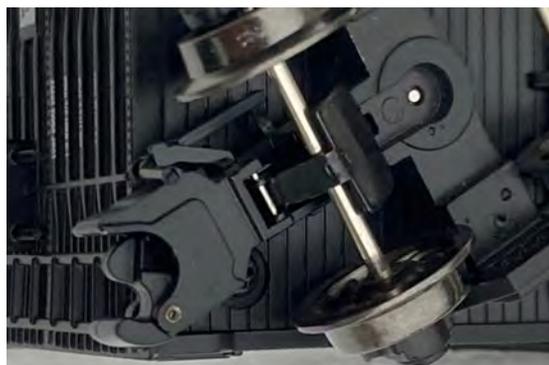
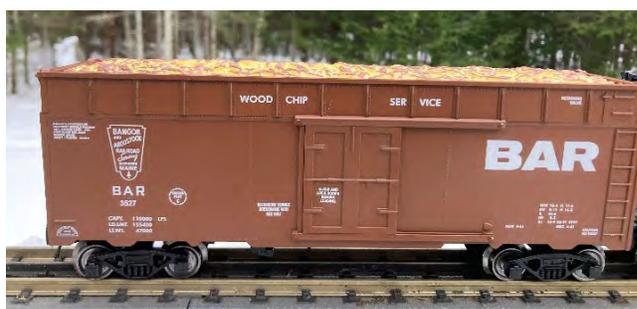
While there are prototypical examples of boxcars converted to woodchip service including MEC (see picture upper row left), it seems to me that there are more practical examples of hopper cars with raised sides converted to woodchip service. The RMT edition is a converted open-roof boxcar with sliding doors and raised sides (see B&M picture second row right with doors open).

When I took the MEC car out of the box, I thought the coupler release was of unusual design. The mechanism looked flimsy and might break easily. And it did! The activation of the coupler release is

not obvious (see picture bottom row right). The first time I tried to open the coupler release with my finger, it malfunctioned. I have not investigated what happened, and I may find it is an easy fix.

If you are not particular about your cars being scale and durable, you can richly populate your consists with RMT products at bargain prices. Besides the woodchip cars, RMT recently produced tank cars, 3-bay hoppers with coal load, wood sided reefers, ore cars, and PS-1 box cars.

I understand that the only M3R member retailer that carries RMT is Trains on Tracks. There are many other unrelated retailers that carry RMT, at least one of which offers discounts on the already low MSRP. The Trains on Tracks website is also offering discounts on RMT non-New England Road lines.





The View from Doug's Chair by Doug Pollock

Hope U all had a Great Christmas and Happy New Year. So, some friends brought me some parts of a wooden train set which needed work. I thought that I could do something with it but what? Still thinking on that.

Did some train related decorating this year. A Walmart special with a tall nutcracker guy that a glass train goes around - very nice. I also put out Dana Sullivan's Christmas tree lot which was a kool addition to our room. We had a good Christmas and hope U had the same.

Japan's Fast Train - Who Knew: The top speed on the Chuo Shinkansen line is 314 mph. The technology that makes this possible is superconducting magnetic levitation. Electromagnets within the guide rails and superconducting electromagnets on the train repel each other, causing the train to levitate about 4" off the ground once it hits sufficient speed. This eliminates friction and allows for a faster smoother ride.

Reporters and the public stood by waiting to catch a glimpse of Japan's fast high-speed train on the new rail line, and if any of them blinked, they missed it. Those who stayed focused on the track for the fraction of a second it took for the train to speed by were left in stunned silence, mouths agape, until all they could do was laugh.

According to Supercar Blondie, what the reporters witnessed was a test run for Japan's next-gen rail system, currently in development. The railway will eventually connect from Tokyo to Osaka with a ride of about 1 hour, compared to the roughly 2.5 hours it currently takes on conventional high-speed trains.

Until we meet again, B Safe and keep the tracks clean, Doug

-THE END-



Maine 3 Railers Upcoming Schedule of Events

- Jan 15 The Highlands (**Public**), 30 Governors Way, Topsham, ME 04086. Set up 8-10am, Run Trains from 10am-3pm. (MOT)
- Feb 14 Annual Maine 3 Railers Model Train and Dollhouse Show (**Public**) 9:30am-3pm. Move in 8am Friday Feb 13, 2026. (Train Show Committee)
- Feb 18 Patten Free Library (**Public**), 33 Summer Street, Bath, ME 04520. Set up Wednesday 8-10am, Run Trains from 10am-3pm. (MOT)
- Feb 20 Vacation Week Model Train Display (**Public**), Topsham Public Library, 25 Foreside Road, Topsham, ME 04086. Set up Thursday, Feb 19th, 3:30-6pm & Friday, Feb.20th, 8-10am. Run Trains from 10am-2pm. (MOT)

M3R General Meetings (All meetings start at 7 pm on Zoom):

- Jan 08 Monthly Club Meeting
- Feb 12 Monthly Club Meeting
- Mar 12 Monthly Club Meeting

Maine 3 Railers Group Email:

The Maine 3 Railers have a group email account in which all members are enrolled. This is the primary channel of communication for club meetings, events, and activities. This also enables members to send emails to other club members. Like club forums, this service allows members to ask questions, provide advice, help other members solve model train problems, buy, and sell items, and pass along model and prototype railroading news of interest.

This is a free service for each member. The group “owners” (Dana Lindsey, and Art Shean) will add your name and email address when you join the club. You will then receive an email with a link to accept the invitation. Follow the link to confirm your account. You may not receive emails if this step is not completed. We restrict the use of this service to M3R members. Because the site is not moderated, Dana or Art will review your first two posts to assure you are a member. The URL for our group is: <https://groups.io/g/M3R>.

Once subscribed you can email all other M3R members by addressing your email to m3r@groups.io, email individual members by using the Directory, update your personal profile, change how you receive emails, or unsubscribe. If you have any questions, contact Dana Lindsey, M3R Secretary.

Maine3Railers Elected Officers and Appointed Positions

Elected Officers and Executive Board Appointed Positions and Committees
2025-2026

President



Bernie Pender
president@maine3railers.org

Vice President



Dave Hodgkiss,
vp@maine3railers.org

Secretary



Dana Lindsey,
secretary@maine3railers.org

Treasurer



Rick Hills,
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PO Box 31
Amherst, NH 03031
treasurer@maine3railers.org

At Large



Jeff Jacobs,
jeff@maine3railers.org

At Large



Ernie Vannah,
ernie@maine3railers.org

Recent Past President



Gene Thayer,
pastpresident@maine3railers.org

Club Car Committee: Richard Ridolfo, Chair
Members: Bill Halley, Rick Hills, Dave Hodgkiss, and Jeff Jacobs.

Club Car and Merchandise Sales:

Dave Hodgkiss,
clubcar@maine3railers.org
Maine3Railers, PO Box 31, Amherst, NH
03031

Event/Outreach Team:

Sam Carr, Coordinator
Members: John Ash, Frank Folker, Jeff Jacobs,
Doug Pollock, Art Shean, Carlton Spring, and Ken
Thorson

M3R Activities/Training Committee:

Rick Hills, Chair
Members: Mark David, Dave Hodgkiss, Brian
Inch, and Jeff Jacobs

Property Manager:

Dave Hodgkiss

Train Show Committee:

Co-Chairs: Jeff Jacobs and Gene Thayer
Members: Paul Brown, Sam Carr, Dave
Hodgkiss, Dana Lindsey, Doug Pollock, and
Richard Ridolfo

Special Projects Manager:

Jeff Jacobs

Event Layout Design:

Jeff Jacobs (Special Events)
Art Shean (Mobile Outreach Events)

Webmaster:

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YouTube Channel Master:

Carlton Spring,
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M3R Club Greeter:

Doug Pollock

Newsletter Editor:

Art Shean
artshean@comcast.net

The IRS recognizes the Maine 3-Railers as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

Maine3Railers
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