



## MAINE 3 RAILERS

### M3R CLUB NEWSLETTER FOR SEPTEMBER 2023

**NEXT MEETING IS THURSDAY, September 14, 2023, at 7:00PM** on ZOOM. Watch for the email from Art Shean with the link to join.



#### **President's Message** by Gene Thayer

September is here and that means Summer is over which also means that it's time for the Maine 3 Railers to be busy again.

On 9/14 the Armory Show committee will meet at the Topsham Fair Cafe to start laying the groundwork for the show in February 2024.

On 9/16 we will be running trains in Poland at the Historical Society and on the same day Conrad Berthiaume is having an Open House at his home in Old Orchard Beach to display his layout. Then comes the Cumberland County Fair running from 9/24 through 9/30. We will need plenty of help to set up, run trains, and tear down the layout.

Now a little farther down the road is the possibility of the Club going back to L.L. Bean for a 6-week run from mid-November through New Years Day. I haven't signed a contract with them as of yet, but there has been some communication with them. I'm pretty sure it's going to happen.

It's Fall and we're heading into train season. Don't forget, we return to regular monthly meetings starting Thursday 9/14 at 7PM.

Keep'em Rolling, Gene

#### UPDATES



#### **M3R YouTube Channel Update** by Channel Master Carlton Spring

August was very quiet for the Portable Unit, with no events, therefore, no new videos were uploaded to our YouTube Channel during August. Our next event will be on September 16th when we run trains at the 2023 Poland Springs Heritage Days. The video will be published on YouTube as soon as possible before our participation at the Cumberland Fair the last week of September. Stay tuned!



#### **M3R Website** by Webmaster Tom Hartwell

Greetings from Bar Harbor!!! I have nothing of significance to report other than the website continues to work well. I have been clarifying syntax on the Upcoming Events page to highlight the event rather than beginning with "We're running trains at..."

Both our upcoming Club Cars are now showing on the site with the final drawings for the '24 car. Very happy about the way that car turned out. Peter Hanson is taking orders for both cars.

I'm also looking through the pages for messaging that's not as clear and concise as it should be.

If you have not visited our website, you can find it by searching for "Maine 3 Railers" on any browser search engine.



## M3R Activity Committee by Chairperson Bernie Pender

### Upcoming Events

Lionel Legacy Training presented by Rick Hills on September 29th, from 9am-Noon, Part 1 itinerary - Lionel Command Control Systems Evolution, Legacy Basics and Fun Capabilities You Might Not Know about. Club Members should bring their Cab 1 L or Cab 2 handheld remotes, bases, and power supplies to the first and second sessions plus their favorite Legacy engine for demonstrations. Rick will update devices to the latest software version. **Seating is limited, reservations are necessary.**

To sign up contact Dave Hodgkiss- text 207-318-1120 and email [dwh39@aol.com](mailto:dwh39@aol.com)

Try to participate in a layout tour and support fellow members.

Conrad Berthiaume will be hosting a layout tour September 16th, from 10am-2pm

Rob Osur will be hosting a layout tour October 14th, from 10am-2pm

Two layout tours on November 17th, both in Amherst, NH (Great opportunity for carpooling)

Jan Williams will be hosting a layout tour on December 9th, from 10am-2pm

For more information on these activities, type Groups.io into your browser and check out the Club's Calendar. Keep in mind there are plenty of opportunities to contact other members and get together for a visit.

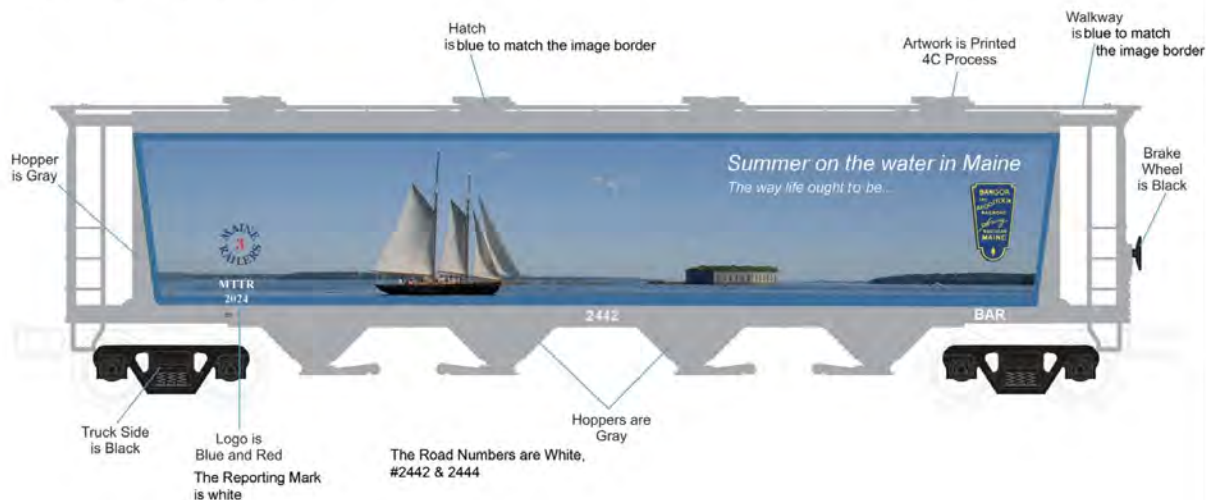


## Club Car Committee by Richard Ridolfo

The second in the scenic Maine series is a summer design. This is the same car style as the Fall car. We used the Bangor & Aroostook logo to feature another of Maine's Railroads. The car which will be the 2024 Club Car is presently due in January. As we all know delivery times have been known to slip.

The car will be sold to club members for \$60.00 if ordered before the cutoff date (yet to be determined). After that date the price will be \$65.00. The sale price for nonmembers is \$70.00. The car measures: 13 3/8" x 2 3/8" x 3 7/16", operates on O-31 curves, and will be produced in two road numbers. To order, contact Peter Hanson at 207-622-4256.

### M3R 2024 Club Car Concept mock up Rev 5 6/23/23





## All Hands Call for Help From Sam Carr, Event Coordinator

From September 24-30 we need your help to operate the M3R Layout and talk to our visitors at Cumberland Fair.

The layout is our largest of the year. It uses all the tables from our trailer and runs from 9am-9pm during all seven days of the Fair.

Every day we need 4 members to help, with two from 9am - 3pm and two from 3pm - 9pm. The signup sheet (See below) lets you pick which Days (Sunday through Saturday) and Times (9am-3pm or 3pm-9pm) you want to help at the layout. Pick a shift number and send it by email to me (Sam Carr, [secarr1@comcast.net](mailto:secarr1@comcast.net)). I will confirm your assignment or let you know the shift is taken.

We also need help to

- Set up the layout on Saturday, 9/23 starting at 8am - Shift Zero
- Pack up the layout on Sunday, 10/1 starting at 8am - Shift 99

Thousands of your friends and neighbors visit Cumberland Fair. The kids love to run our remote-control trains and press buttons to run accessories like the Gas Station, Fire Station, Car Wash, and Barrel Loader. And Monday is Maine Agriculture Day when hundreds of kids come via school bus to visit the Fair. They all have assignments to visit and ask about some aspect of the Fair. Adults are amazed by the multiple trains, houses, farms, equipment and animals on the layout.

If you have any questions, please send me an email or call me at 207-865-4467.

Passes for members who work on the Fair will be available during setup on 9/23 for each shift you choose to work.

If you cannot attend setup, I will send your passes via U.S. Mail

Sep-23		Sep-24	Sep-25	Sep-26	Sep-27	Sep-28	Sep-29	Sep-30	Oct-01
Unload, Set Up Layout	Shift Schedule	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Pack Up, Load Trailer
8am Start	9am-3pm	1 Rick Hills	5 Richard Ridolfo	9	13	17	21	25	8am Start
Shift 0 BernieP, Sam C.	9am-3pm	2 Rob Osur	6	10	14	18	22	26	Shift 99
RickH, JimK, RobO	3pm-9pm	3 Rick Hills	7	11	15	19	23	27	
	3pm-9pm	4 Jim Kenne	8	12	16	20	24	28	



## From the Editor by Art Shean

My wife and I recently returned from a trip to Alaska which explains why this month's newsletter is tardy. Besides seeing spouting whales, eagles flying, and salmon spawning, we experienced one of the best train rides in North America on the White Pass and Yukon Route with a grade exceeding 4%. I'll discuss our ride a little later in this newsletter. Also, we enjoyed one of the best gardens ever at the Butchart Gardens on Victoria Island, British Columbia. If you ever travel to the Pacific Northwest, don't miss either of these two sites.

On the downside, midway through the cruise I came down with what we thought was a bad head cold. My wife soon followed a few days later. When we returned home, we both tested positive for



COVID. A neighbor and a distant relative were on separate cruises around the same time as us and also tested positive when they returned. Ironically, my wife and I cancelled 3 separate cruises over the last 3-4 years to avoid Covid complications. If there are lessons from this, don't wait to complete your bucket list items and **MASK UP** when around lots of people.

## EVENT REPORT



M3R Outing, Swap Meet, and Informal In-Person Club

**Meeting at Joe Landry's Place** by Bernie Pender with Photos from

Dave Hodgkiss

On Saturday, August 12th, M3R members arrived at Joe Landry's house in Lewiston for a full day of fun, food, and trains. We were lucky enough to see Joe's new and improved layout.

### JOE'S UPDATED LAYOUT & COLLECTIONS



*Joe Added Lots of Menards' Buildings*







*New Buildings and Bridges*



*Urban Renewal - Making Room for More Menards Buildings*



*Joe's Wall of Engines*

Joe was a gracious host and at the top of his form when he shared some of the wisdom, he gleaned throughout his years in the train world.

He regaled us with tales of his experiences with International Paper and OSHA after he solved the mystery of excessive injuries on the night shift; how moving company homes for managers next to the plant with constant batteries of explosions brought sensitivity to management for workers' conditions and by so doing teaching the lesson that solutions reside with the workers and not always with management.

He recounted World War II's effects on the American railroad industry where railroad forward-looking executives saw that the war effort needed bigger and better steam engines. Joe also threw out multiple other railroad tidbits including how ALCO calmed the competitive natures of the railroads to acquire bigger engines; how railroad crews purified potentially contaminated water with whiskey; how a railroad station agent ran down the line with a red lantern to flag down the Pennsylvania RR midnight special for a couple; how those same red-lensed railroad lanterns ended up earning some shady neighborhoods labels as red-light districts; how myopic, bean-counting railroad executives ruined some railroads; and a reprise of how the steamer Bigboy was named.



For those of you who have not had the benefit of Joe's delightful company and historical narrative, you are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the next opportunity that he offers to club members. Those in attendance sincerely thank Joe and Irene for hosting. We all had a wonderful time!

### INFORMAL IN-PERSON CLUB MEETING

Gene reported that M3R still does not know whether we will return to L.L. Bean this fall (this is subject to change). The reason for the uncertainty is because the extensive reconstruction at the L.L. Bean store is still underway. Gene further noting that we would need to acquire two Lionel ZW-L transformers to operate the layout. That model transformer is a hot commodity. Jeff Jacobs mentioned that the ZW-L has superior firmware for handling shorts from derailments without shutting down all circuits.

The Club will celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> year anniversary this November. As part of the 25<sup>th</sup>, a new hat was introduced. It was suggested that we should have lunch/dinner together to celebrate the event.



### Maine 3 Railers Celebrate 25 Years

This fall the Maine 3 Railers will be 25 years old. Peter Hanson has anniversary hats for sale to replace your worn former hats.

Call or write to him to get yours and be up to date. The cost is just \$15.  
207 514-3629 [pvhan@roadrunner.com](mailto:pvhan@roadrunner.com)





## The View from Doug's Chair by Doug Pollock

What does COB mean? Cash On the Barrel? Come On Board? For crying out loud I wish former military guys and texting jockeys would stop using their fancy acronyms.

Well, it has been a while since I saw everyone. I'm sorry I missed Joe's party. Sounds like you folks had a good time. I can't wait till our next event – I'm having tootsie pop withdrawal but that will pass. I have been trying to organize some of the many items I have collected over the years. As part of this process, I started watching some old VCRs & DVDs. (There I go using some of those verbal short cuts) and in one there was the most beautiful scene, a steam engine with full steam blowing coming along a river with white mountains in the background. The reflection in the water was outstanding, and it was not a train movie. Wow! I also came across a stash of old train photos 5x8, 10 x12, and smaller ones. Most are Maine engines or in Maine. I also found many train VCRs and DVDs that are all on railroading or just trains. I also found some Great Railroading Books in my organizing adventure. So U Folks B Safe, Enjoy Each Day! Doug

## REAL RAILROADS



White Pass & Yukon Route Extracted  
from the WP&YR Onboard Magazine with photos and  
Comment from Art Shean



Born in the Klondike Gold Rush

Gold Flakes are Found 1896

Every railroad has its own colorful beginnings. For the White Pass and Yukon Route, it was gold discovered in 1896 by George Carmack and two First Nations companions, Shookum Jim and Dawson Charlie. The few flakes they found in Bonanza Creek in the Klondike barely filled the spent cartridge of a Winchester rifle. However, it was enough to trigger an incredible Stampede for riches. The Klondike Gold Rush.

A Man of Vision

The rush for riches was actually predicted by Skagway founder Captain William Moore. He was hired by a Canadian survey party headed by William Ogilvie who had been commissioned to map the 141st Meridian, the boundary between the United States and Canada.

Because the known route, Chilkoot Pass, was so rough and rugged Moore and Shookum Jim decided to head north over uncharted ground and seek an easier route to the interior. They reached Lake Bennett, near the headwaters of the Yukon River and named the new potential route, White Pass, for the Canadian Minister of the Interior, Sir Thomas White.

Moore had a 160-acre homestead claim in Skagway. He returned to his home and began to think about the changes he felt would soon come. The search for gold in northwest Canada and Alaska had been underway for the past two decades, and Moore believed that it was only a question of time before gold would be discovered. He built a sawmill, a wharf, and blazed the trail to the summit of the White Pass. Moore even suggested to his son that eventually there would be a railroad through to the lakes to prepare for the coming gold rush.

Gold! Gold! Gold! 1897

The headline of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer on July 17th, 1897, broadcast the news of discovery of gold in the Canadian Klondike. Under the headline "Gold!, Gold!, Gold!", the newspaper reported that "Sixty-Eight Rich Men on the Steamer Portland" arrived in Seattle with "Stacks of Yellow Metal".

The news spread like wildfire and the country, in the midst of a depression, went gold crazy. Tens of thousands of gold crazed men and women steamed up the Inside Passage waterway and arrived in Dyea and Skagway to begin the overland trek to the Klondike. Six hundred miles over treacherous and dangerous trails and waterways lay before them.

#### Choices to be Made

Some prospectors chose the shorter but steeper Chilkoot Trail, which began in Dyea. Each person was required to carry a ton of supplies up the Golden Stairs to the summit of the Chilkoot Pass. Others chose the longer, less steep White Pass trail, believing that pack animals could be used and would be easier. Both trails led to the interior lake country where stampedeers could begin a 550-mile journey through the lake systems to the Yukon River and the goldfields.



Both the Chilkoot Trail and the White Pass Trail were filled with hazards and harrowing experiences. Three thousand horses died on the White Pass Trail due to the tortures of the trail and the inexperience of the stampedeers.

Men immediately began to think of easier ways to travel to the Klondike. In the fall of 1897, George Brackett, a former construction engineer on the Northern Pacific Railroad, built a 12-mile toll road up the canyon of the White Pass. The toll gates were ignored by travelers and Brackett's Road was a failure.

#### The WP&YR Story Begins 1898

The 19th century was the era of railroad building, and easier motor transportation into the north was of interest to everyone. Two men appeared on the scene with essentially the same idea. Build a railroad to the White Pass. Sir Thomas Tancrede, representing investors in London, and Michael J Heney, an experienced railroad contractor interested in finding new work for his talents, joined forces. Tancrede had doubts about building a railroad over the coastal mountains while Heney thought otherwise. "Give me enough dynamite and snooze", he bragged, ". And they'll build a railroad to hell".

They met by chance in Skagway, talked through the night and by dawn, the railroad project was no longer a dream but an expected reality. It was the meeting of money, talent, and vision.

The White Pass and Yukon Railroad Company, organized in April 1898 paid bracket \$110,000: \$60,000 and \$50,000 in two separate payments for the right of way to his road. On May 28th, 1898, construction began on the narrow-gauge Railroad.

#### Against All Odds 1899

The White Pass and Yukon Route climbs from sea level in Skagway to almost 3000 feet at the summit in just 20 miles. It features steep grades of almost 4.1%. The tight curves of the White Pass



called for a narrow-gauge railroad. The rails were three feet apart on a 10-foot wide roadbed resulting in lower construction costs.



Building the one hundred and ten miles of track was a challenge in every way. Construction required cliff hanging turns of 16 degrees and building two tunnels, numerous bridges, and trestles. Work on the tunnel at mile 16 took place in the dead of winter with heavy snow, and temperatures as low as 60 below slowed to work.



The workers reached the summit of White Pass on February 20, 1899, and by July 6, 1899, construction reach Lake Bennett and the beginning of the river and lake roots.

#### Construction Completed 1900

While construction crews battled their way north laying rail, another crew came from the north heading South, and together they met in Carcross on July 29, 1900, where a ceremonial golden spike was driven by Samuel H Graves, the president of the railroad. Thirty-five thousand men worked on the construction of the railroad, some for a day, others for a longer period, but all shared in the dream and the hardship.

The \$10 million project was a product of British financing, American engineering, and Canadian contracting. Tens of thousands of men and 450 tons of explosives overcame harsh and challenging climate and geography to create this wonder of steel and timber.

#### Life After the Gold Rush 1954

For decades, the White Pass and Yukon Route carried significant amounts of ore and concentrates to Skagway to be loaded upon ore ships. During World War II, the railroad was the chief supplier for the US Army's Alaska Highway construction project. The railroad was operated by steam until 1954. When the transition came to diesel electric motor power. White Pass matured into a fully integrated transportation company, operating docks, trains, stagecoaches, sleighs, buses, paddle wheelers, trucks, ships, airplanes, hotels, and pipelines.

#### 1982

World metal prices plummeted in 1982, mines closed and WP&YR suspended operations.

1988

In 1988, WP&YR reinvented itself as a tourist attraction. The line reopened in 1988 to operate as a narrow-gauge excursion railroad between Skagway and White Pass Summit. The active line was later extended to Bennett in the 1990s and to Carcross in 2007.

Today

With cruise ships well embedded in their operation, the WP&YR is a busy enterprise running numerous trains with double digit passenger car consists up and down the mountain. The WP&YR tracks run down to the docks in Skagway so that cruise passengers can walk straight to their trains.



*View of WP&YR Passenger Consist from My Stateroom Balcony*

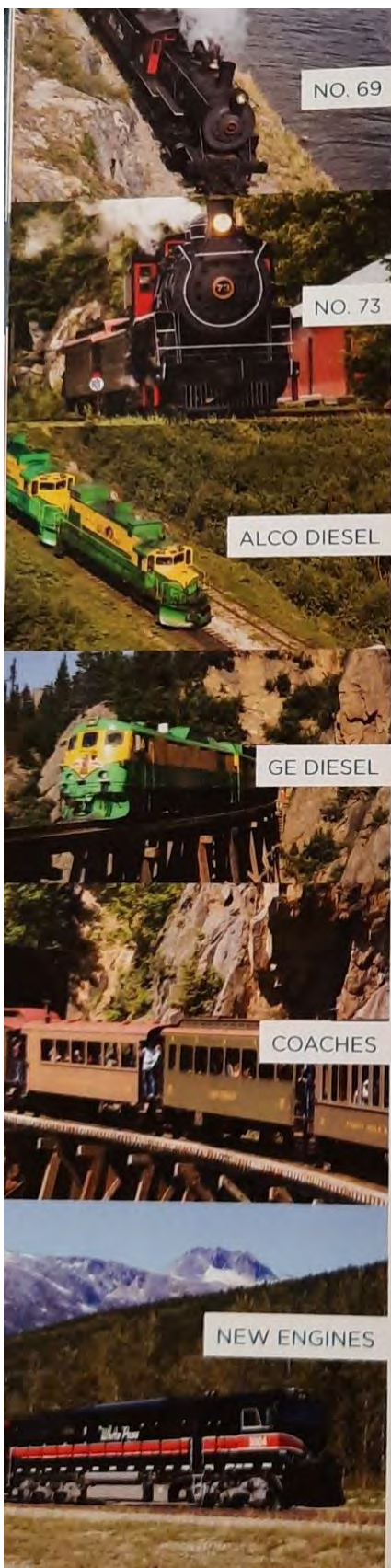
It is not unusual for an uphill run to stop and allow several downhill trains to pass through the mile 16 tunnel and trestle.



*Downhill Consist Approaching Mile 16 Tunnel and Trestle*



To handle the load, the WP&YR employs numerous engines.



## THE WP&YR FLEET

### STEAM ENGINES

No. 69 is a Baldwin 2-8-0, built for WP&YR in 1908. This mechanical workhorse spent the next 48 years helping to push and pull freight and passengers over the White Pass.

The pride of the fleet is Engine No. 73, a fully restored 1947 Baldwin 2-8-2 Mikado class steam locomotive. It has undergone an immense overhaul in 2018 to ensure her use in the years to come.

### ALCO DIESEL

The WP&YR rail fleet consists of 20 diesel-electric locomotives.

The Alco units date back to the 1960s and General Electric units from the 1950s, the latter of which have all been completely modernized over the last several years.

### PASSENGER COACHES

There are 92 restored and replica passenger coaches. The WP&YR coaches are named after lakes and rivers in Alaska, Yukon and British Columbia and are on average 44 years old. The oldest car, Lake Emerald was built in 1883 and is part of our legacy fleet. Lake Tutshi, vintage 1893, starred in the 1935 Universal Studio picture "Diamond Jim Brady." The Lake Lebarge car carried Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip on a royal tour out of Whitehorse in 1959.

### NEW ENGINES

The railroad welcomed six new engines to the White Pass fleet in 2020 from the National Railway Equipment Company in Mount Vernon, Illinois. Two engines are painted the traditional green and yellow livery and four in a modified paint scheme of black and red. We expect these engines to be pulling our fleet into the future.



In order to keep the WP&YR on track, the railroad has a maintenance shop in Skagway.

## MAINTENANCE SHOPS



From the very start of the railroad, White Pass & Yukon Route knew it had to be self-sufficient when it came to maintaining the rail fleet. Skagway's location in the Upper Lynn Canal, surrounded by steep mountains and over a thousand nautical miles from suppliers in Vancouver, British Columbia and Seattle, Washington means we need to keep many parts, supplies and equipment close at hand.

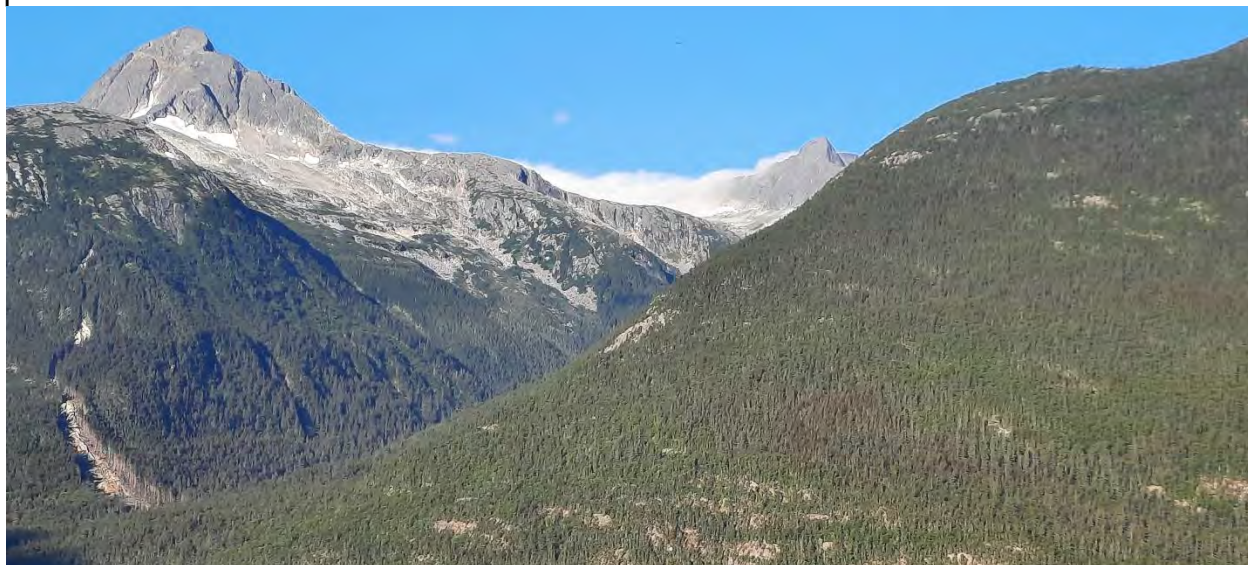
Over the years, WP&YR has had thousands of pieces of equipment with each of its own needs. Our maintenance buildings are divided into a car shop, locomotive shop, electrical shop, machine shop, paint shop and gas shop. In a typical summer operating season, we have 45 employees working nearly 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide the necessary service to our fleet and tracks.



We currently have 2 vintage steam locomotives, 20 diesel engines from various decades, 92 passenger cars and an array of track maintenance equipment. The in-house talent that the company employs is dedicated to keeping the history of these pieces alive and maintaining the next generation of locomotives to keep our excursions running into the future.



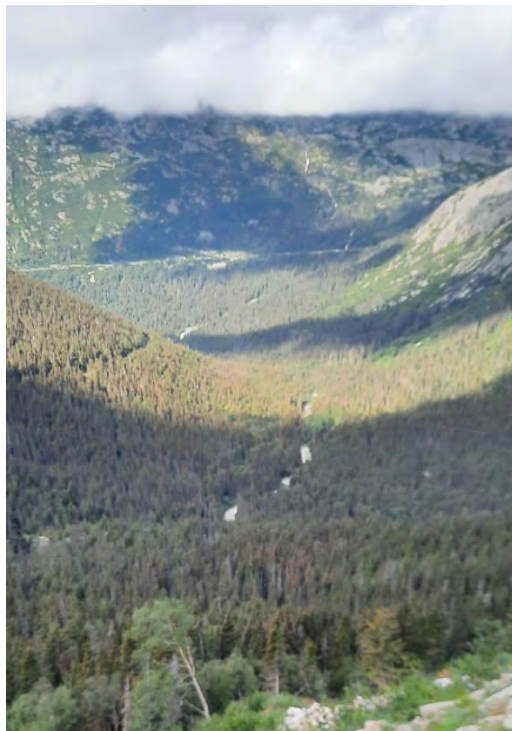
Through the inside windows or the passenger car platforms, the scenery as we climb the mountains was spectacular!



*Our Train Passing Through the Mile 16 Tunnel*









WP&YR displays in downtown Skagway were also interesting:



Our return to the docks after our trip north up the mountain.









# MODEL RAILROADING



## MTH Digital Control System (DCS) ProtoSound 3 (PS3) by Ken Thorson

Final installment of series on MTH engines and how they operate

### PROTOSOUND 3 FEATURES THAT MAY BE UNKNOWN TO YOU

I think almost everyone knows that MTH DCS command control allows different engines to do different things, even when they're on the same track. For example, two engines can run at different speeds, go in different directions, or make different sounds all while on the same track. You can even combine several engines into a "lashup" (see ¶2 below) working together under a single throttle.

Other features most model railroaders are aware of include passenger station sounds, freight yard effects, what are known as atmospheric sounds such as crew conversations, dispatcher communications, conductor announcements and chit-chat with passengers, the woosh of a steam engine opening its cylinder cocks, the clank of remotely operated couplers opening, variable smoke output for steam engines and diesel engines, synchronized chuff sounds and smoke puffs for steam engines, brake sounds, prototypical rule 17 lighting, speed control that keeps the engine moving at whatever speed is selected regardless of hills and curves, extraordinary slow speed capability down to three scale mph, a quillable steam whistle, a doppler effect as the engine passes a point. And, of course, the old standby whistle and horn including the proper toots for moving forward and reverse. What you might not realize is that the sounds of operating engines are generally actual recordings of the real prototype. The most relevant example of that to us is our M3R club Maine Central GE 44-ton switcher where MTH located an operating 44-ton switcher engine and recorded the horn, start-up, idling, moving and shut-down sounds of the prototype diesel and incorporated them into the MTH production models of the 44-tonner. Ain't that somethin'? It sounds great!! Many of our members were able to acquire these little gems. One drawback, because the model is true 1:48 scale and the prototype is small, there was no room to put a smoke unit in our engine. Drats! Here is the list of other significant DCS features. First, I have to say that initiating these neat features is, for the most part, exceedingly complicated, as are some of the operations within these features. The complexity is beyond treatment in this newsletter article. BELIEVE ME: You really need to have the *DCS Companion* handbook (MTH Part Number 60-1386 or 60-1386E described in the last newsletter; also see mention of the handbook at the end of this article) to take you through the necessary step-by-step procedures, especially if you are doing it for the first time. Once you do it regularly on your layout, it will be second nature.

1. **All Engines Operation** - During an All-Engines operating session, DCS engine commands issued by the DCS Remote are executed by all of the DCS engines that are participating in the All Engines operation. The DCS operator can have any number of DCS engines operating at the same time, and can simultaneously control their speed, direction, bell, whistle or horn, passenger or freight yard sound effects, or other operation as if they were one engine. They will all move in the same direction and at the same speed.
2. **Lashups** - Lashups combine multiple engines, all coupled together, that are run as a single engine. DCS allows the operator to combine multiple DCS engines into lashups (up to ten engines per lashup) that are controlled as a single engine (the engines do not have to be of the same model, e.g., all F-3's or all RSD-3's, so the operator can mix and match engines, the exception being steamers that do not have an operating coupler at the front unless the steamer is at the front). Once the lashup is correctly completed and named, it will remain in the remote and can be called up later for action. [NOTE: The set-

up process requires the operator to identify each engine in the lashup as either Head, Middle or Tail engine. Ordinarily, with multiple engines, they would all be coupled together at the head of the consist. Interestingly, because there are no tethers or cables linking the MTH engines and the TIU sends signals to all engines independently of where the engine is located, I believe that the operator could place one engine at the head, a pusher engine at the tail end of the consist, and one or more helper engines at various locations in the midst of the consist as is often done prototypically. This is my creativity working overtime. Such an arrangement is not envisioned in the Broskowitz handbook. Someday I will have to try it.]

3. **Subways and Trolleys** - There are amazing features for MTH's subways and trolleys not available in any other sectors of the MTH product lines. By the way, this discussion does not apply to simple bump-and-go trolleys. All they do is go back and forth when they strike a bumper at the end of the line, at which time the headlight also reverses.

DCS subways and trolleys have much more extensive sound sequences that are triggered by prearranged station stops. They are programmed sequences that allow the operator to determine exactly which stations are included on a subway or trolley route. These Transit Station Announcements are very different from Passenger Station Sounds and are actually more similar to the Record/Playback function (see ¶6 below) allowing the operator to set up automatic operation using a series of pre-programmed subway or trolley routes.

Every DCS subway or trolley engine has in its DCS board memory a series of 9 or more station stops that are based on the route of the prototype subway or trolley. The prototypes are real city routes like actual Chicago trolley lines, as well as other cities. The DCS operator can choose any or all of these stops to create a custom route where the subway or trolley automatically stops at stations on the layout. The subway or trolley memorizes a route on the layout by counting motor revolutions using the timing stripes on the motor's flywheel as the engine proceeds along its route. Each time the engine is stopped a station name is selected and remembered in the engine's DCS board memory. When the route is completed the entire sequence of motor revolutions and station stops is saved as either an out-and-back or looped route.

Out-and-back routes cause the subway or trolley to proceed in one direction making stops. After the last stop, the subway or trolley reverses direction and proceeds back along the route making stops at the same stations, ending at the original, first stop.

Looped routes cause the subway or trolley to proceed in one direction making stops until it arrives back at the original, first stop. Upon completing either the out-and-back or looped route, the subway or trolley automatically repeats the route until stopped by the operator.

As the engine approaches each programmed station, the engine will announce the station name and stop at the station. When the subway or trolley stops, the engine will make sounds of doors opening and station activity, followed by the doors closing. The subway or trolley will then proceed to the next stop. This will be repeated for all stations programmed in the route. The operator can choose between having the engine stop at all of the programmed stations or only at some of them, where the stations are chosen on a random basis. In other words, the entire route will be run, however, only some, but not all stops will be made. Simply said: simply amazing.

In general, the auto mode feature that allows subways and trolleys to run pre-programmed out-and-back or looped routes is very accurate, however, it is not 100% perfect. Small variations can occur for several reasons:

- Minute variability in the DCS subway or trolley gears



- Slippage of wheels on rails over the course of a route
- Changes in voltage or areas of poor traction due to track work problems

Larger variations can occur for other reasons, such as including grades on the route. As you might expect, the steps to set up these routes with all the variations (some of which I have not mentioned), you need the DCS Companion handbook to guide you through the maze of steps.

4. **Routes** - The Routes feature allows the DCS operator to set up frequently used switch track routes on a layout. Each Route is a script that when run, instructs TIUs to throw switch tracks connected to AIUs according to pre-programmed instructions. Routes allow the operator to program multiple switch tracks to throw sequentially with a single command. Each Route can contain up to 250 switch tracks and each DCS Remote can contain up to 15 Routes. In addition to the TIU, you must have an Accessory Interface Unit (AIU) and each switch track in a Route must first be connected to an AIU. Once created and activated, the TIU and AIU do all the work for you. No missed turnouts, no derailments at switches because they were in the wrong position, you are the dispatcher supreme.
5. **Scenes** - The Scenes feature lets you set up several accessories that can be activated together, rather than having to select them individually from the Accessory list. Each Scene is a script that, when run, instructs TIUs to turn on accessories connected to AIUs according to pre-programmed instructions. Each Scene can contain up to 250 accessories, and each DCS handheld can store up to 15 Scenes. Accessories, remote control tracks or lights must first be connected to an AIU. Again, you need the DCS Companion to find your way through the setup.
6. **Record/Playback** - DCS has a terrific feature that allows trains to run automatically, going through pre-scripted operations. Passenger trains can pull into stations, make announcements and pull out again. Freight trains can stop in the yard and go through maintenance routines before moving back out onto the mainline. A train might stop at a cross track so that another train can pull through, sound a whistle or horn at a railroad crossing, or clang the bell to alert rail fans to get out of the way.
7. **Z4K tracks and Super TIU's** - I am not going to discuss these features because they are only rarely used, are designed primarily for very large layouts with multiple (MTH Z4000) transformers separately connected to multiple discreet track sectors, or multiple TIU'S controlling multiple discreet sectors of track. Moreover, the set-up and operation are exceedingly complicated, which is another way of saying, at this point, I cannot explain them in the limited space available. Maybe someday I will take up a discussion of these features. Complete descriptions are found in *THE DCS COMPANION*.
8. **THANKS FOR STAYING WITH ME ON THESE FASCINATING, COMPLEX SUBJECTS.**
9. This summary tracks the discussion of MTH DCS in *THE DCS COMPANION*, 3rd Edition, by Barry Broskowitz, ©2015, ©Rev. 2017, pp.242. Hard copy/soft cover MTH Catalog Product number 60-1386 (\$34.95), as well as a download pdf digital version MTH Catalog Product number 60-1386E (\$14.95)

### CLEANING UP LOOSE ENDS

#### AVAILABILITY OF MTH'S EARLIER ENGINE MODELS

When we started this series, I suggested that bargains were to be had buying older MTH engines with LocoSound and ProtoSound 1 if you are willing to accept fewer features than those available in PS2/PS3, you are willing to familiarize yourself with unique aspects of LocoSound and ProtoSound1 and put up with the inconveniences of older control systems, and you are cautious about your purchases. In July, Trainz.com ran a "clearance" sale of older trains made by many manufacturers,

including MTH. I spent some time running through the MTH offerings and found many LocoSound and ProtoSound 1 engines priced attractively. There were even a few ProtoSound 2 engines. There were descriptions of the conditions of each engine. The website claims everything is priced 40% or more off the original list price.

I am not guaranteeing that Trainz.com deals are fair or reliable, but they have been in business for a while. I have made a purchase or two from Trainz.com and found the items acceptable. Be wary. My purpose in presenting this information is merely to give an example of one opportunity to purchase older MTH engines. I will let you be the judge of whether you feel comfortable. Ebay is another source of older engines, but Ebay is riskier dealing with unknown sellers.

### **CURIOUS PROBLEM WITH PROTOSOUND 1 ENGINES**

**PROBLEM:** A model railroader came up to me at the M3R Augusta show this year and said he had purchased an MTH Proto-Sound (ProtoSound 1) engine and had a problem with it. When he powered up the track, the engine sounds would come alive, but he was unable to cause the engine to move forward or in reverse. **CAUSE:** The problem was caused by the fact that when he put power to the track, he initially moved the transformer power control to almost full-on position (e.g., 18+ volts) and he energized the track with more than 9 volts of power. The practical effect of this was that the engine remained “locked” in neutral. This is a design feature that prevents the engine from unintentionally taking off at high speed. **THE FIX:** Turn the power off completely for at least ten seconds and reenergize the track to a level of power not exceeding 9 volts for five seconds. This activates the engine and prepares it for motion. You can then reduce the power to 0 volts and then raise the power to the appropriate voltage for the speed you desire. When you turn the power back on that second time, the engine will proceed forward. This procedure is set forth in the owner’s manual that originally accompanied the engine, but the manual was missing when he purchased the engine. **If you do not have the owner’s manual for an MTH engine, it can be downloaded from the MTH product webpage associated with that engine.**

**Here’s to straight rails and strong ties! Ken**



### **Pine Tree Power – 4<sup>th</sup> Installment** by Jeff Jacobs

With Summer over and Fall upon us, many quiet train layouts will be coming back into service. This month I veered away from powered O scale equipment and took a look at some service units – in particular track cleaning cars. Yes, these humble, sometimes plain cars, can play an important role in getting your 3-rail track tuned up for the busy modeling season ahead.

O scale track cleaning cars are varied but, in the end, they work similarly - a heavy frame with some abrasive attachments scour the top surface of the tracks while being pulled or pushed by a powered unit. Let’s have a look at some of the variations I have acquired and see how each goes about its humble task.

First up is a local cleaning car prepared by M3R’s own Bill Haley.





These nicely loaded depressed center flats gain downward force from the diecast tractors placed over the scrub pads. The pads which Bill says will last a long time have “texture” to them and, with enough passes, will scour even tough spots from the rails.



No fluid is added, and the friction requires a healthy pull from the engine. My recommendation is to put the cleaner car directly behind or in front of the locomotive for this reason.

Next up is a (somewhat locally designed) car by Don Stubbs of Northeast trains. These cleaners have 2 floating pads and are also “dry” method cars. NE Trains sells replacement pads, indicating that they are a wear item. The photos show that the cars come with differing items on the car deck simulating various work train units. The pads are free to float up and down as the car is pulled along.



The next car is a Rail Cleaner #O-1 from Centerline.



The weight of the brass body ensures that the car will follow the engine regardless of what the central roller is up to. This is a fluid-based unit, meaning that you squirt a dose of juice on the roller. The roller has removable caps which allow addition of coins whose weight forces the roller to scrub and wash the track as the car drags it captively along in the center cutout. The roller will become grimy and must be replaced. Small paint rollers can be cut into suitable lengths as alternate replacements. The operator must select the cleaning fluid of their choice. The tracks become dampened during this operation with the risk of the moistened grime transferring to the wheels of the towing loco since several passes around the loop are needed to remove the track debris.

I didn't get a photo, but member Fred Guth gave me a similar effective cleaner car which he made by adding trucks to a large chunk of brass with the center area milled out. If you are mechanically inclined, you can build such a device yourself.

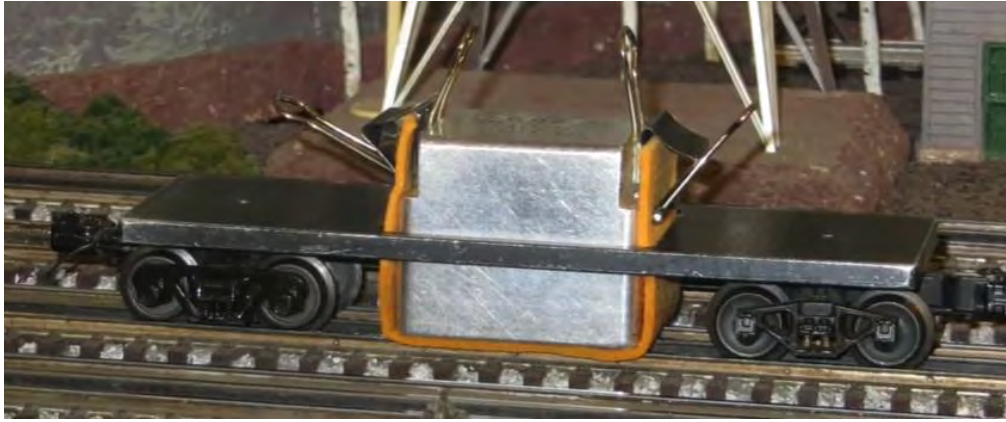
Now we come to a car with a heavy pipe as the weight.



This car made by R&L Lines, was reviewed in OGR Run 237 in 2009. Note that it uses 2 rollers, but they are "skewed" instead of at right angles to the track. They are soft and washable foam and so somewhat reusable. These rollers are the same as "trim painting" roller covers. The height of the rollers is adjustable to change amount of engagement with the track top. The 30-degree angle of the rollers causes them to turn and scrub at the same time. OGR liked the performance of the car and advises that dish soap and water is adequate to clean the rollers (dry thoroughly after though).

In 2000 I mentioned that I visited the San Diego 3 Railers and was impressed by a cleaning system which they made for themselves.





It was a wet method car with a central cutout. In that cutout a weight was wrapped in cleaning pads and lowered to the track. The pads were made by cutting a large piece of chamois material into rectangles which were wrapped around the weight and clipped to it by paper clamps. The cost of the pads was therefore small, and they were swapped out frequently to ensure thorough cleaning. Go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eogOa-eacsw> to watch the whole operation. The presenter talks about Goo Gone vs alcohol as a cleaning solvent. Their advice was that Goo Gone should be used only sparingly and followed by alcohol cleaning immediately after. Here are the components of their system:



Also note that the SD 3 Railers do not sell their invention to the public. It is not hard to copy however.

For all cleaning cars, multiple passes around the track will be needed, and once the worst grime is removed, a pass with clean rollers or pads will leave your mainline ready for service. An obvious advantage to cleaning cars is that they can cover trackage that is not easy to reach by hand.

- End -

# Maine 3 Railers Upcoming Schedule of Events

## Future Maine 3 Railers Events

- Sep 16 **Poland Springs Heritage Days**, Poland Springs Bottling Museum, 123 Preservation Way, Poland Springs, ME 04274. Hours 10am-3pm with setup 7:30-10am. (Portable)
- Sep 16 **M3R Member Model Train Layout Tour**, Conrad Berthiaume's Layout, 10:00am to 2:00pm, 19 Date Street, Old Orchard Beach, ME 04064
- Sep 24-30 **Cumberland Fair 2023**, 197 Blanchard Rd., Cumberland, ME 04021. Setup 9/23 at 8am. Trains Run 9am-9pm daily. Move out 10/1 at 8am. (Trailer)
- Sep 29 **Lionel Legacy Training – Part 1 presented by Rick Hills** 9:00am to 12:00pm, 243 Neptune Dr., Brunswick, Maine 04011
- Oct 13&14 **Baxter Library Fall Book Sale**, Swan Gym, Gorham Recreation Center, 75 South St., Gorham, ME 04038. Trains run Friday 9am-6pm and Saturday 9am-1pm with setup Thursday 2-5pm (Portable)
- Oct 14 **M3R Member Model Train Layout Tour**, Rob Osur's layout, 10am to 2pm, 26 Hazel Lane, North Yarmouth, ME 04097
- Oct 30 **Sunnybrook Retirement Community**, 340 Bath Rd, Brunswick, ME 04011. Trains run from 10am to 3pm with setup 8-10am. (Portable)
- Nov 17 **M3R Member Model Train Layout Tour**, 2 Locations in Amherst, NH
- Dec 09 **M3R Member Model Train Layout Tour**, Jan Williams' Layout, 10am-2pm, 6 Hiram Hill Road, Hiram, ME 04041
- Feb 17 **Annual Maine 3 Railers Model Train and Dollhouse Show**, Augusta Armory, 179 Western Ave, Augusta, ME 04330. Run trains 10am-3pm. Move in on Friday Feb 16 8am-4pm. (Portable)

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

- Sep 11 Executive Board
- Sep 14 Regular Monthly

## Roundhouse Zoom Sessions (All sessions start at 7 pm):

- Sep 21 Roundhouse Session, Topic: What Train Related Things Did You Do This Summer? Host: Art Shean
- Sep 28 Roundhouse Session, Topic: Live from the Cumberland Fair, Host: Art Shean

## 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" (Lou Bragaw, 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, Lou, 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](mailto: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.