



MAINE 3 RAILERS

M3R CLUB NEWSLETTER FOR DECEMBER 2023

NEXT MEETING IS THURSDAY, December 14, 2023, at 7:00PM on ZOOM. Watch for the email from Dana Lindsey with the link to join.



President's Message by Gene Thayer

The Holiday Season is here and as we all know it's also the pinnacle time for electric trains. O gauge trains lead the way this time of year. When we were kids, it was Lionel running under the Christmas tree and when you went to the living room Christmas morning, you hoped there would be some orange boxes under the tree.

Lionel Trains were the big gift for boys. We would play with them during holiday season and beyond. These gifts would not only provide joy for years but would become valuable not only monetarily but priceless in memories. Remember Lionel boxes would say "Lionel Trains a Lifetime of Happiness". We're even luckier today because other train manufacturers also provide us with fun.

This is why we're running trains at LL Bean. They get it! Others do as well. You know it when you see quite a few TV commercials with an electric train somewhere in it. As an example, check out the Applebee's commercial with the electric train running through the village. The tender is attached backwards to the steam engine so they can get their logo to fit.

I wish everyone a Happy Holiday season.

UPDATES



M3R YouTube Channel Update by Channel Master Carlton Spring

November continued to be busy for the Portable Unit. On November 4th, we ran trains at the SMMRC Show at the Westbrook Community Center, and then on November 15th we ran trains at the Plant Memorial Home in Bath. Articles describing both events are found in last month's and this newsletter. The next event will be December 9th and 10th at the Ray & Robbins Hobby Center in Freeport. More information for this "Meet and Greet" event is also provided in this newsletter. Come join the train crew and see the portable unit's layout and enjoy visiting with each other.

LINKS:

SMMRC Show: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lcmeccUJL4>

PLANT MEMORIAL HOME: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YNUogx7Tr8>

PLEASE HELP:

If you have any suggestions for songs or enjoy a particular artist's music, please email me with your suggestions at youtubechannelmaster@maine3railers.org. I will check suggestions on iMusic for a version to use in a video.

Also, help is needed for the 2023 L.L. Bean video. When any of you visit the Bean layout in the camping section, please snap a picture or two and send them to me at

youtubechannelmaster@maine3trailers.org. I will keep a file of all the pictures and use as many as possible in the video. Your name will also be listed on the Photographers page as part of the closing credits. If there are people/children around, please avoid catching their faces.

Any help will be greatly appreciated! Thanks.



M3R Activity Committee by Chairperson **Bernie Pender**

Upcoming Events

Two Layout tours this month:

Description: **Jan Williams** will be hosting a layout tour. This is a great opportunity to see Jan's Wonderful Layout!

When: Saturday, December 9th, 2023, 10:00am to 2:00pm

Location:[Hiram, ME](#)

Organizer: M3R Activity Committee

Description: **Jeff Jacobs** will be hosting a layout tour. This is a great opportunity to see Jeff's recently reconstructed model railway layout. You'll think you are visiting Maine all over again.

When: Saturday, December 16th, 2023, 10:00am to 3:00pm

Location: West Bath, ME 04530

Organizer: Jeff Jacobs

For more information on these activities, type Groups.io into your browser and check out the Club's [for a visit](#).



Club Car Committee by **Richard Ridolfo**



Hannaford Trailer on Flat Car

This car is due at MTH on December 6th so they should arrive at Peter Hanson's about a week after. There are still a few cars left to sell, \$80.00 per car, (20-97657 Road # 2341 and 20-95658 Road # 2342). Orders along with payment should be sent to Peter Hanson 27 Norway Dr, Chelesa, ME 04330

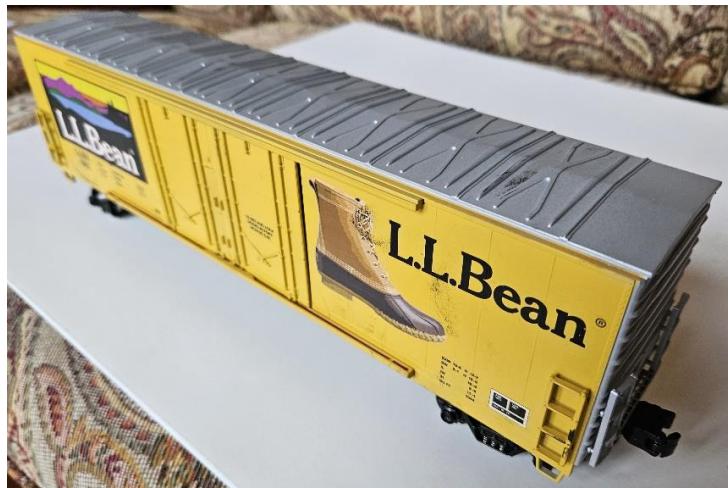
Bangor & Aroostook Cylindrical Hopper 2024 Summer Car



The 2024 Summer Car is scheduled for late Spring 2024. The price for members is \$65.00. The car will be produced in two road numbers. This is the second in the Scenic Maine Series. There is no limit on the number of cars members can purchase.

L.L. Bean Boxcar (Pre-production photo)

The club received permission to produce a limited quantity for 3-Railer's members only. The car is not to be marketed or sold to non-members. This car is due out in early Spring. Each member is allowed to purchase 2 cars (one of each road number) **NOTE: There are very few cars left to be sold.** The price of these cars is \$55.00 each. Orders should be sent to Peter Hanson.



If cars are to be shipped, add \$12.00 for the first car and \$2.00 for each additional. **Also, if outside of the New England Area an additional \$3.00 is required.**



M3R Club Store by Peter Hanson

Celebrate 25 years of the Maine 3 Railers!

This fall the Maine 3 Railers were 25 years old. We now have anniversary hats in stock for sale to replace your worn older hats. Write to me to get yours and be up to date. The cost is just \$15.

clubcar@maine3trailers.org



From the Editor by Art Shean

To Zoom or not to Zoom, that is a question that does not want to go away. Within the Maine 3 Railers there is a group that remembers with fondness the good old days before the Covid pandemic when the membership would gather at the Richmond Firehouse each 2nd Thursday of the month for the Monthly Club meeting. Members would meet and greet, drink coffee, and eat cookies and donuts while listening to our President talk about Club business and volunteer members lecture on model train craft. The entire ritual was very friendly, collegial, and predictable. The 30-40 members gathered weather permitting, exchanged stories, and occasionally delivered items they bartered from fellow members. What they don't remember is that the president, treasurer, and many members traveled 1-2 hours each way in the dark to attend a 40-60 minute meeting. Nor that we used the facility because our former president was the former Chief of the Richmond Fire Department with ready access to the facility and we made a routine donation to the Richmond Fire Department for using their facility.

During the Covid pandemic our Club adapted and survived using electronic technology to continue and enhance our ability to communicate. We introduced Zoom so that Club committees and our membership could continue to meet and conduct Club business without having to travel. We introduced informal Roundhouse Sessions using Zoom so that members could meet & greet in between formal monthly meetings. We enhanced our webpage topical coverage and user-friendly access to expand Club information available to our members and the public. We also resurrected and expanded the scope of our monthly newsletter.

Since the restrictions imposed by the Covid pandemic ended, we continue using the enhanced communication tools we learned to use. But other factors have emerged which provide new challenges. Our membership roll has significantly expanded to over 130 family/members. Many of these reside well beyond the bounds of Maine and New Hampshire. Before Zoom only a single family member would attend meetings. Now wives and others can listen into our sessions while in Florida or Ohio. Many of our members are ageing, which limits their ability to travel, especially at night. On the other end of the scale, many of our newest members are minors who cannot travel by themselves, nor should they be awake after 8pm on a weekday night.

Nostalgia aside, our Club offers many opportunities besides monthly meetings for members to meet & greet in person. We provide between 20-25 model train displays throughout Maine during the year. Each of these offers an excellent opportunity to drop in, meet fellow participants, and run your own engine or two. Likewise, our new Activities Committee has arranged for multiple visits to various Club member layouts around the state and even in New Hampshire. Again, each offers an opportunity to meet and greet fellow members. The Activities Committee has also introduced several training sessions where members gather to learn about model train craft. Again, excellent opportunities to meet & greet fellow members.

So where does this leave us? It's clear to me that Zoom should continue to be a large part of our Club communication tools. Even if we resumed in person meetings, Zooming the sessions would be essential to include our far-flung membership. Doing so will require equipment, technical expertise, and funding. Research is necessary to assemble the facts so that members can balance the benefits and costs of pursuing this option. The remaining question is who are the "Doers" willing to step forward to determine the necessary information?



The L.L. Bean Chronicles - 2023 by Jeff Jacobs

L.L. Bean Volunteer Calendar

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
11/20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Doug/Ken	Gene	Jeff	Sam	Dave H	Sophia	Sophia
					Amar/Anuj	Amar/Anuj
27	28	29	30	12/1	2	3
Jack D Jeff	Walt V Ken/Doug	Carlton	Gene	Rocko	Dave H	Jess D Ronan
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ken/Doug	Jack D	Sam Carlton	Joe M			

11	12 Jack D	13	14	15 Ken/ Doug	16	17 Jan
18	19	20 Jan	21	22 Jan	23 Ken/Doug	24
25	26	27	28 Ken/Doug	29	30	31



Sam Carr & Carlton Spring Cleaning Track Wednesday Morning

Jeff Jacobs, Thursday, 11/09: I forgot to mention last night that we need a place to store the packing boxes for the buildings over the next 6 weeks. There's a wagon-load and will be needed again on Jan 1st. After that they will go back to Hiram to Jan's. Let me know if you can help

Jeff Jacobs, Saturday, 11/11: On Thurs, Jim Kennie & I got the 6 track feeds installed and mounted the timer modules.

On Friday we had a big crew. John Ash ran wires under the layout to feed building lights. Jim K returned and began connecting building lights to the feeds. Rocko Graziano joined us & painted buildings and ran lighting wires to the upper village. Gene Thayer arrived with the 2nd ZWL transformer and a test engine.

We verified that all 3 track loops are working fine.

John & Gene then loaded the storage boxes into Gene's truck and he drove them to Doig's house in Topsham. That made a lot more space to work.

Jay Westra and son Caleb came by and Caleb strung wires under the center of the display while Jay attached the ends to the buildings

By day's end, we had fixed damaged structures and powered up most of the lighted buildings. However the Menards Church lights have died so we are seeking a substitute there. Otherwise we will cut the church open (big challenge) and replace the bulbs

We are taking the weekend off, but will return at approx 9 AM Monday to start tree and vehicle placement and continue debugging burned-out lamps in some buildings. The Beans folks plan to work on white skirting around the table on Tues. The M3R crew will test and lubricate rolling stock and store it under the table.

By Wed we will continue testing and fussing with details.

Thursday afternoon is inspection by the LLB staff and Friday at 4 PM is the grand opening.

Next week is a busy one for M3R with a display at the Plant Home and 2 train layout visits on Friday, so pace yourself.

Everything will come together at Beans so don't miss the other activities.

Jeff Jacobs, Monday, 11/13: Today I was joined by John Ash who set up the crossing signals and then began the task of unpacking the trees and finding preliminary spots for them on the layout. (An email from Ken T indicates that more winter trees will arrive tomorrow)'

Soon we were joined by Jim Kennie and the business of fixing the church lighting was underway.

Next came Gene Thayer with many boxes of engines and rolling stock.

Soon, Sam Carr arrived with more rolling stock and the club tool kit and supplies.

By day's end, we had the electrical nearly all in place.

Karen and Gordon from Beans visited and took away the rolled up rug that was underfoot. Gene took the last of the boxes to Doug's storage shed.

Tomorrow I expect the Beans crew to surround the layout with white skirting.

Tues. I will be on hand from 9 AM onward, cleaning up details and putting spare items under the table. People that can help, will be asked to clean the area, stick down trees with tape and lubricate the rolling stock.

On Wed I will be helping at the Plant display then back at Beans assuring that things are ready for the Thurs inspection. (those who want training on operations should arrange with me to do that on Thurs also)

Opening of the train display is Friday at 4PM

After Friday, if you are not doing daily servicing of the trains, we have been asked not to be inside the display fencing but to stand outside if we wish to be on-hand discussing the trains with the public. picky picky

Jeff Jacobs, Tuesday, 11/14: Quiet day at the Beans display today

Jan Williams stopped by and repaired the signals on the Freeport station model and we discussed building lighting.

I spent the day painting and touching up plaster + some wiring and labeling of the controls.

Wed we will start at about 11:00 and work on lubing the rolling stock and testing engines + planting more trees.

Jeff Jacobs, Wednesday, 11/15: Walt Voskian helped today by opening the branches on our 18 new winter birch trees. These had been retrieved from Ken Thorsen on my way from the Plant Home set-up to Freeport. The trees are spectacular and realistic - thanks Walt.

Jim Kennie joined us again and he added streetlights beside the new Jan Williams Fire Station.

Jim & I tested the 3 track loops and their relays for several minutes and applied the new track cleaning fluid which made the engines run better and removed a black deposit from the new Lionel fastrak. I am hopeful that this may be even better than alcohol as a cleaner. Time will tell but use it sparingly by dabbing it on a paper towel then wiping the rails with damp towel. I will probably need to buy more if it proves out.

The Beans crew still have not applied the white skirting around the layout.

Thurs we will start about 9:30 and will stick more trees in place and clean wheels and lubricate engines. All locos will be run.

We are working on the 2023 version of the Operations Manual. The draft is nearly done. I will post an e-version here soon. A hard copy will be left at the control center with log page at the end of the book - please fill this out whenever you service the display.



Jeff Jacobs, Thursday, 11/16: I put some snow on the parts of the display that are most visible. Also made a loco cleaning cradle and taped some large trees in place. I learned that the Beans crew would add the white skirting so cleaned out all the construction supplies to give them a clean slate. Could not find the axle oiler so left lubricating for tomorrow. Ken Thorson is finishing up repairs to the figures (people) and will add them to the display Friday morning.

Gene Thayer visited the layout in the late afternoon and saw the skirting being applied. I am looking for the individual Polar Express cars that did not come with the PE set. I plan to be at the display at approx. 2pm Friday to lube the rolling stock and test once more before the unveiling at 4pm. Gene will be on hand as well. Let me know your availability to clean track and service the rolling stock in the days ahead.

Jeff Jacobs, Friday 11/17: Good evening from Freeport. We have close to 40 spectators at present. Been brisk from about 5 onward. The trains were started at 4pm by our youngest member Amar. Mother Sophie Mediratta brought cookies, always a hit. Thanks

Must be dinner time. Down to 2 people. But they might join up. Amas' Mom brought cookies, taste pretty sweet at this late hour. Thanks Sophie



Jeff Jacobs, Monday, 11/18: I went to the Brewer train show today and heard nothing from the LL Bean folks so I hope that things are running there OK. If anyone went by the store today can you confirm that the trains looked OK ??

Tomorrow AM, Jay & Caleb will clean the tracks and hopefully tell me if there are any problems

Sophia Mediratta, Monday, 11/20 to Jeff Jacobs: Hi Jeff! I can do Saturday 11/25.

Jeff Jacobs, Monday, 11/20 to Sophia: That would be great!

If possible, we like to do the cleaning in the morning before the trains start running at 9 AM It will take about a half hour your first time and about 15 mins once you've learned the ropes I will talk you through the steps when you arrive.

Basically, you get access thru the left hand top log of the fence, there is a Philips screw to loosen to do that. We leave a screwdriver just out of sight to back the screw off a couple turns and then the log slides out. The green garland is on an S hook and is simple to remove.

Once inside, the supplies are under the white skirting along the edge of the display nearest the fence. Cleaning supplies are nearer the left end , Look for a black and yellow tool box and paper towels. The cleaner is a plastic bottle called "Wahl Oil". I suggest wiping the tracks with a dry towel first, then applying a light coating of the oil on the clean tracks.

Again, I will talk you thru the procedure when you folks arrive.

Thanks for being active in the club.

Sophia Mediratta, Monday, 11/20 to Jeff Jacobs: Sounds good, I'll be there. I can get there at 8:30 as long as lol bean will let us in, we're up! If you need Sunday too we can do that.

Jeff Jacobs, Tuesday, 11/21: On Sun, Caleb & Jay serviced the trains at Beans and found a PE derailment in the tunnel. Mon service was provided by Doug & Ken who cleaned track and rotated the locos. Today Gene cleaned tracks and reported that all was well.Thanks to all who are or will be helping. Below is the latest update to the schedule - some holes left to fill so if you aren't signed up please consider it. Gene says parking is easy in the morning there.

Jeff Jacobs, Wednesday, 11/22: I am headed for the Freeport display shortly. will be there until 9AM when it starts the day. Anyone wanting to learn about exhibit ops or servicing is welcome to stop by.

Today's service was cleaning track, cleaning loco wheels and changing out a couple of cars. Plus I added a page to the ops manual = "Contacts" for problems with the display

An issue that Gene & I discussed recently is that when servicing the track, the club members' fingers get covered in black grime. Then when you touch a piece of rolling stock, your fingerprints remain on it or on the layout's white surfaces. Apparently we need to have some "handy wipes"

available for service people to clean their fingers. Any suggested products that work well ?? I will get some once we pick out a brand.

Remember that a Phillips screwdriver is on the north shelf in back of where the control tray pulls out. This is to back off the screw holding the top log in place for easier access to the trains. Also a cardboard box labeled M3R spare stuff is next to the tool box under the layout. Here you will find glue, more snow, and double stick tape to hold things (trees) in place, or to repair something.

Jeff Jacobs, Friday, 11/24: Today's note on the LL Bean display is that the white skirting around the edges of the display is extra tight this year. Also, there are no breaks in the fabric. Where the cloth drapes over the control table, it drags on the transformers as the table is rolled in or out. This has the effect of moving the transformer throttles without you seeing it. If you have moved the table out to power up a loco during cleaning, be certain that when you push the table back that the speeds of the trains are correct before you leave.

More folks needed for cleaning next week - M W Th Fr

Sophia Mediratta, Saturday, Nov 25 to Jeff Jacobs: We're on our way to clean the tracks. I'll call you if any issues.

Jeff Jacobs, Saturday, Nov 25 to Sophia: Sounds good, thanks! call 729-2252 with any questions or findings.

use plenty of paper towels to keep your fingers from getting sooted.

Jeff Jacobs, Saturday 11/25: Attached are some videos of Amar, Sophia, and Anuj cleaning track at LL Bean this AM. Dave Hodgkiss cleaned late Friday.

Thanks to all who are keeping the trains running smoothly thus far!

Jeff Jacobs, Tuesday, 11/28: The trains are still running at Beans !

Amar Enjoying the Layout

Yesterday, Jack & I cleaned and lubed and swapped rolling stock. I brought a "pick stick" from my layout and it helped me reach the track on the trestle easily. If you have one, give it a try. I folded a paper towel, then clamped that into the jaws of the stick.

Today, Ken, Walt & Doug cleaned & lubed. Everything seems to be running well (knock on wood). If anyone is curious what prompted us to try the Wahl Oil as a cleaner instead of the Denatured Alcohol we used before, let me know and I will publish a copy of the magazine article which started it.

Jeff Jacobs, Thursday, 11/30: tonite on the ZOOM we touched on the subject of track cleaning fluids. I have alluded to the attached article brought to my attention by our VP Bernie. It discusses the technical side of many potential cleaning liquids. You will see from the article where the inexpensive Wahl Oil idea came from. I want to be sure to give credit to the Hobbyist magazine and the author that published this info, it is NOT my discovery, but I am testing it out on the LL Bean display. This article, plus the fact that Fred Guth was once told by Lionel that they endorse Wahl oil led me here.

The heart of the article is the problem of "micro-arcs", an inevitability when an electric toy train runs on metal track and picks its power up from the same. Read the article carefully and note that the non-polarized liquids quell the micro-arching phenomenon thereby promoting better power pick-up by the locomotive and smoother performance. The coating which Wahl Oil leaves behind on the rails also inhibits surface oxidation so that when you come back for your next session, the tracks are in better shape than without protection.



The downside is the grime on your fingers because the Wahl Oil emulsifies (loosens) the dirt and makes it easy to leave the rail top. (and get on you!)

You be the judge, but I thought I would give you the benefit of the article.

Jeff Jacobs, Friday 12/1:

Rocko G reports that trains are running at LL Bean today.

Please recall that I told you that we would test out a different track cleaning process at LL Bean this year. So far I've been trying Wahl Oil and saying "the jury is still out". Well, the jury is now 'deliberating' and we may get a verdict yet !

Dave Hodgkiss tipped me off to a video which pretty much follows up on the article which I shared just a few hours ago. Here is the link & I suggest you watch it once (or more) it's 20 mins. It elaborates on the principles of the written article I gave you-

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBYxjcTWCB0&list=PL05wIKjXooC3B0HIpaeiC_J5ui0t8xAoc

Thanks, Dave, for finding this. Here are the key things I found in the video by Ron's Trains:

1 cleaning track with "scotch brite" scratches the top of the rail and therefore actually promotes the dreaded "micro-arching"

2 We aren't cleaning the tracks for appearance but rather to make the trains run well

3 Polarized cleaners promote micro-arching which causes rail deposits = BAD

4 CRC brand "QD" is too polarized = avoid

5 CRC "contact cleaner & protectant" inhibits "micro-arching" = GOOD

6 WD 40 'contact cleaner' is GOOD, but common WD-40 spray lube is NOT

7 No OX ID Special is a grease which if applied very thinly can be good but you have to clean your track 1st. Also it may not be good for your loco's traction tires

8 We may be cleaning the track at LL Bean too often. Since the trains run a lot, it may be better to:

A clean the track, then

B apply the Wahl Oil, then

C run the trains a bit before starting the process over again.

Maybe we've been cleaning the track each day, when if we had left it alone, it would have still run well for one or two more days. We (I), were simply trying to be proactive with daily cleaning. The video makes the case that once the anti-oxidizing coating (Wahl Oil for us) is applied, the rails are protected from micro-arching for a little while. HOW LONG ?? now that's the question!! We don't know yet.

I'm going to propose that we skip a day, maybe 2 when we have a place in the schedule with no volunteers, and then see if my phone rings from LL Bean with complaints.

As I said at the start of this season "we are going to try to get smarter about this maintenance thing for 2023" OR, maybe we shouldn't 'mess with success'. We have had good results for two weeks so far after all!

I welcome your thoughts. We're doing this as a club, just make sure your suggestions are based on facts and not guessing.

Paul Brown, Saturday, 12/2 : This is a guess with no paperwork behind it. but!

I have never been good cleaning track. I have always used an old worn out Scotch bright with a little bit of sewing machine oil on it, then polished it with a Cotton cloth. Then leave it forever until I noticed that the wheels are starting to get dirty on one car or another and then I'll wipe it with a cotton cloth again. Maybe it's been the sewing machine oil that makes it work. But I never have problems with Trains not running because of poor contact up or down grades.

Jeff Jacobs, Sunday, 12/3:

Many folks took a turn at cleaning over the past weekend and several other members "stopped-by". Many forwarded observations and reports which are appreciated. By sorting through these results, we can best formulate what to do next.

Since I was passing through Freeport myself this afternoon, I checked in to see how the upper loop train was doing. This engine has been running since we opened on Nov 17. It's done well, but it doesn't look "new" anymore!!

Tomorrow Ken & Doug have the service slot, so I'd suggest they switch this loco out for another and give the BAR unit a rest.

We are still trying to locate more of our "Williams" engines, but I fear they are in the club trailer from being on loan to the Cumberland Fair. If anyone knows otherwise, please advise.

Back to cleaning. Our current thinking is that the wahl Oil if applied too heavy can cause the traction tires on the locos to be less effective. Here's the latest format I'd like to offer for cleaning (some of you are already doing this) 1 Wipe the track down with a clean dry towel until you get no more heavy black residue 2 If you know the crew before you "oiled" the rails, don't add more - otherwise apply the thinnest possible amount of Wahl Oil to the rail tops 3 run the trains a few mins and observe. 4 If you see wheel slippage, wipe the track with a dry towel again and remove the engine and wipe its drive wheels clean (no Wahl Oil or chemicals) 5 set the throttles for slow but consistent running.

Let's try this for a few days.

As always, if you see a problem with an engine (or car) call me and we will make a fix or substitution.

Thanks to all, the crowds are loving our display.

Jeff Jacobs, Monday, 12/4: Today Ken, Doug & Lou did a thorough job of cleaning swapping & lubing things at Freeport. All trains were running smooth when they departed - thanks to all.

We are putting together a second tier of Polar Express cars and on Sat. Rick Hills will bring a couple of those cars to Jan William's open house in Hiram Me. If any of you are planning to visit Jan's (well worth the drive), please consider picking up the PE cars there for me and bringing them closer the Freeport display



Sam Carr, Wednesday, 12/6: B&M E7 A&B units pulling freight on the outer track. Carlton and I put the E7 units on the outer track this morning. They are running smoothly after a little oiling.

Jeff Jacobs, Wednesday, 12/6: Great! I have the MEC version in my car, all fixed. Will drop off on my way later.

EVENT REPORTS

Return to Plant Memorial Home by Sam Carr



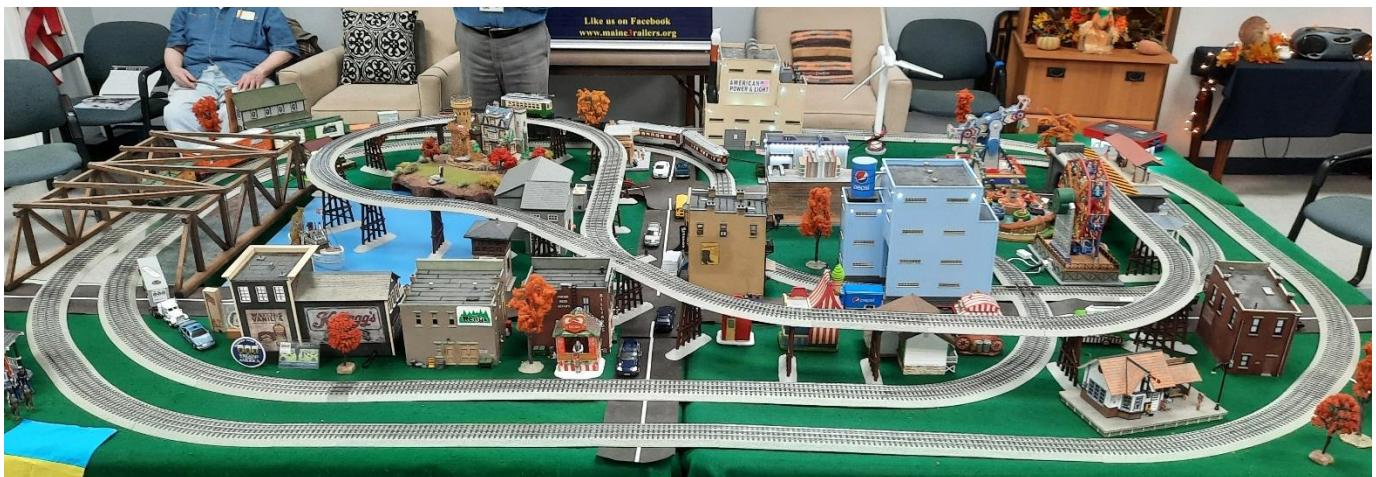
On Wednesday, November 15th, the M3R Portable Layout Crew made its annual visit to the Plant Memorial Home in Bath. Starting at 8am we unloaded our equipment, set the tables into place, placed the green table covers, and started laying track.



The Plant Home tables are "high mileage", so Jeff Jacobs used all the shims we had to level the tracks across low spots.



When finished the layout had an oval outer main track, a bent figure 8 inner track, and a raised trolley line with one station and a reversing loop.



The layout included a water feature, double track bridge, and tracks running through the Pepsi Bottling Plant, Electrical Generating Facility, and by several operating carnival rides.



Residents started arriving around 10am, and several of them remembered our previous visits. We had a club car freight train on the outer track pulled by a B&M RS-2 switcher. There was a passenger train on the inner track pulled by a steam locomotive. We tried using Carlton's Maine Central Passenger Car Set, but it could not navigate the O36 curves on the inner loop. So, we replaced them with two, shorter Boston & Maine passenger cars.



By 10am everything was in place and running as expected

The new chef at the Plant Home gave us an excellent lunch, and the proof is that retired Chef Doug Pollock requested the recipe for one of the lunch dishes (Stewed Tomatoes over Asparagus).



After lunch when the visitors tapered off, the crew went into automatic mode without the need for anyone at the controls.



By a little after 2pm the residents were finished with their visits, and Plant Home management OKed an early pack up.



That was done and we were on the road around 3pm. Early enough to beat the afternoon BIW traffic jam.

Train Crew: Sam Carr, Jack Dexter, Jeff Jacobs, Doug Pollock, Art Shean, and Carlton Spring.



The Crew less Jeff Jacobs who left early for the events at L.L. Bean



Photography by Art Shean and Carlton Spring



Tour of Rick Hills' Amherst NH Layout and Club Trip to Trains on Tracks by Ray Dellovo and Rick Hills

On Friday November 17, seven members of the Maine 3 Railers Club drove three hours to see Rick Hills Layout and to visit Ray Dellovo at Trains on Tracks LLC, both locations in Amherst, NH. The Club members included Mike Benenate, Lou Bragaw, Mark David, Jim Kennie and his wife, LeeAnn, Bernie Pender, and Ernie Vannah.

Rick's Layout

Overview

Rick's layout started in 2013 when he retired from Fidelity Investments. He had been dabbling in O Scale for a couple of years before that and the release of TMCC remote control really interested him.

He had visions of a big layout for his grandchildren, now 4 girls and a boy. He went with Lionel as it brought back memories of when he was a kid, working at Eric Fuchs Inc., the largest train store in Boston, Mass in the 60's at age 13. Rick keeps a picture of Eric on his train room wall now which spurs him on.

Rick met Ray Dellovo of Trains on Tracks in 2011 and they have been great friends ever since. Ray likes to come over to Rick's house every once in a while, to "run" trains and has given Rick a lot of advice and encouragement over the years.



Layout Content

- Lionel Legacy Engines
- Legacy and LCS Operating Systems
- Meynard's Buildings
- Lionel and MTH accessories
- Maine Benchwork
- Maine 3 Railers, Lionel, MTH rolling stock

- Lionel Sound Cars, Dining cars
- Tinplate Track and Switches
- Woodland Scenics Landscaping Products
- Evan Designs LEDS
- Superstreets Operating Vehicles
- Power: 8 x 180 Watt /10 Amp Power Bricks with circuit protection
- Size: 500 Square Feet

Layout Design

- Main Line spanning entire layout
- High speed subway and passenger service elevated
- Mountain and Carnival Railroad with returning loop
- Two Superstreets Road Systems
- Emphasis on lights and sounds, toy-like, but with interest for an adult too.
- Always under construction.

Walking Tour

A lot of major layout work has been going on. Rick provided a “follow the numbers sheet” as a guide for visitors to walk around with. The room was labeled with view stations, and we were encouraged to try a few accessories. Rick mentioned that many of the club projects he presented in the Roundhouse meetings were located throughout the room and he was especially proud of the LED bridges and recent Woodland Scenics projects completed including street lighting and telephone poles. The layout viewing stations 1-25 were positioned as follows:

1. A reminder of the post war accessories Rick remembered as a kid
2. Barn with Sounds
3. A replica of Ernie Vanah in miniature driving a Maine Eastern GP 7 with very unhappy cattle
4. Operating Superstreets School Bus and Swat team
5. Operating Railway Station platform
6. Woodland Scenics Traffic Lights and Telephone Poles/Wires
7. MEC Custom Standard Coaches at hand-built station
8. Lumber town
9. Fire brigade, Logger Cabin. Bernie and Dave replicas in miniature cutting wood.
10. Dumping Logs
11. Original Lionel Transfer Table
12. Cola Loader
13. Joe’s Diner in miniature where we always got Club Pizza
14. Automated Fire station and Town
15. Operating Cantilever signals
16. Atlas 20th Century Signal Operating System
17. MPC Era Intermodal Facility

18. NY Grand Central Station (Rick's son, Jon, has a real business next door in NYC)
19. Refueling water tower with sound
20. Operating Fireworks
21. Operating Flag Man
22. Maine Lobster Boat in Industrial Area
23. Water Tower
24. Operating Crossing Signals
25. Rick's dogs, Riley and Peaches, favorite dog food factory

LCS Demo

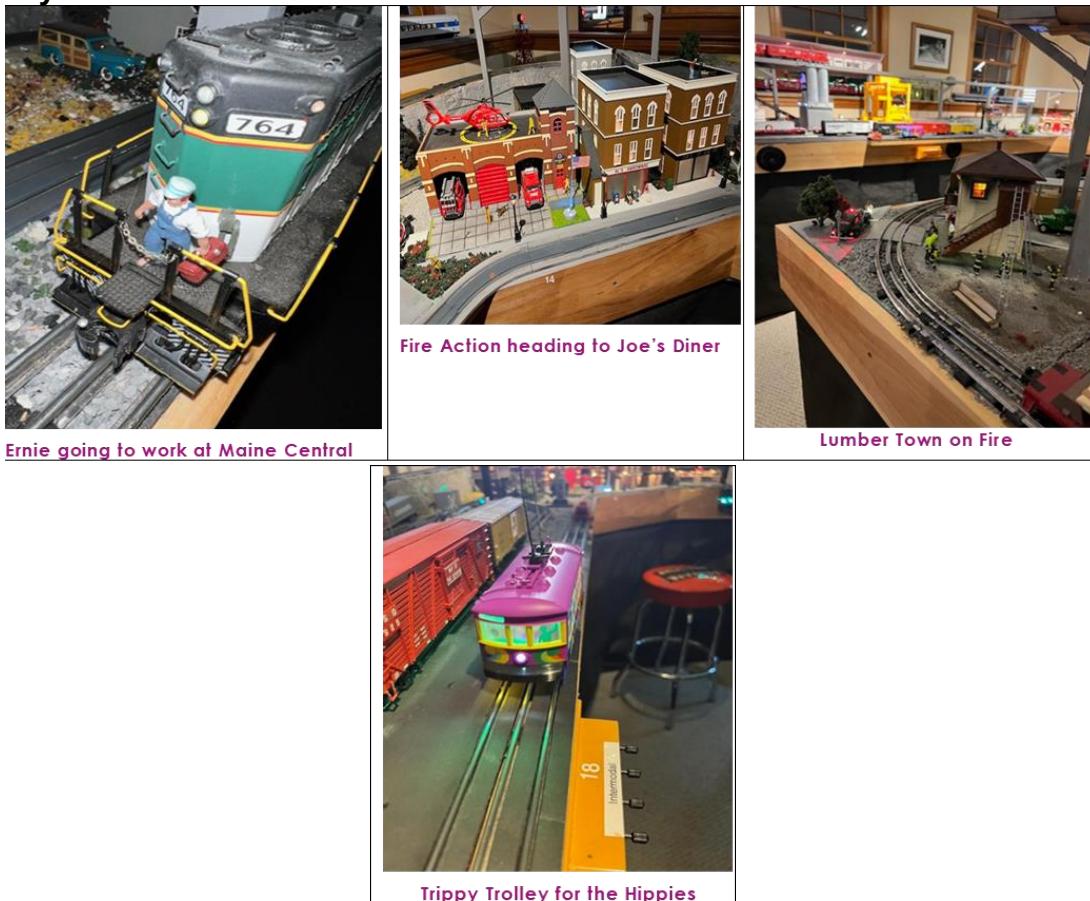
Rick provided an overview of his Lionel Layout Control System configuration on an Apple iPad used to run the trains which included:

- 1) Layout Design Schematic
- 2) Block Activation
- 3) Activation of Merry go Round, Swing Ride. Oil Derek remotely
- 4) Throwing Switches and Switch Direction

Lunch

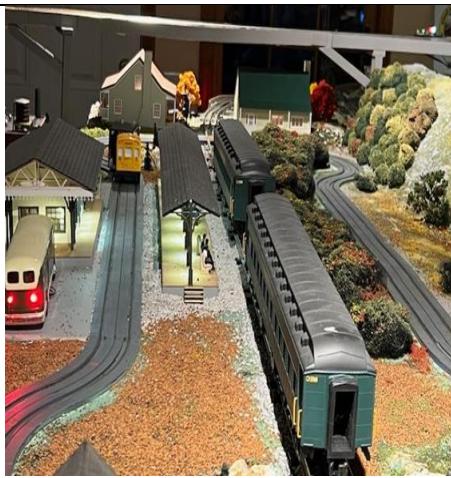
The team visited one of Rick's favorite lunch spots, the River House Café. Food included gourmet breakfasts, specialty sandwiches, and salads. We had a good time catching up. After lunch, everyone followed Rick to Trains on Tracks to meet with Ray Dellovo.

Photos of Layout Detail

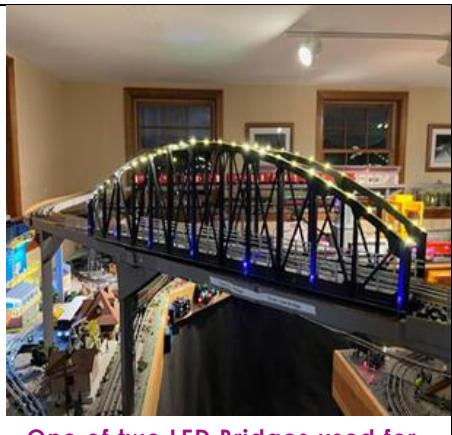




Accessories from when Rick was a kid,
Mountain Railroad Camelback with
M3R Passengers and E Comm
Caboose, trudging up Mountain



Maine Central Station with
Superstreets Bus and Swat
Vehicle



One of two LED Bridges used for
High-Speed Rail



Second Custom LED Bridge



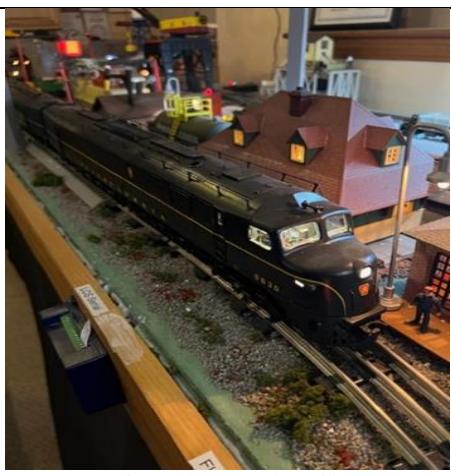
Lionel Legacy Subway on High-
Speed Rail (Ray's favorite)



LED Dairy Queen



Long Island Commuter and M3R
Freight waiting for orders



Mark's favorite engine finally
warming up



Bernie and Lou Cutting Wood



Better View of Maine Central Station and Superstreets



Carnival City with Mountain Train Loop Service



LCS Design and Operation Demo

Trains on Tracks Store Visit

40 years ago, Ray Dellovo started in the Model Train Business by selling Lionel Trains and repairing them as a separate entity or DBA in his father Sal's fruit store, the Elegant Farmer, in Chelmsford, Massachusetts. He honed his business skills and learned how to manage people at the store. Ray also graduated from Shawsheen Technical as a Construction Supervisor. When Sal sold the fruit business, he and Ray expanded Ray's business which became Trains on Tracks LLC.

Ray is very proud of 1) his relationship with all his vendors including Lionel, MTH, LGB, Piko, Bachmann, Woodland Scenics, 2) his growing customer base in New England and across the country, plus 3) being Lionel Service Center 119.



The store we visited was compact, decorated for the holidays, and included every model train scale available. As you come in the door, there is a nice all scale demonstration layout on the left behind the front window, four isles of HO, N, O scale products, a wall of G Scale, and many HO/Lionel starter sets.



There is a counter to the right where customers congregate and have coffee, and behind that hundreds of new parts and upgrade kits to solve any problem. In the back of the store there is a shipping/photo desk where pictures of products for sale are posted on the web. There is an extensive repair shop with classic parts and unique tools for railroad repair.

At the end of the visit, we posed for a picture as a group and discussed how much fun we had on our trip.



Rick, Ernie, Mark, Lou, John, Ray, Bernie after lunch

Photography by Rich Hills



The View from Doug's Chair by Doug Pollock

Catching up on a few loose ends from some previous M3R model train displays:

Cumberland Fair - Not sure if I told this or not but Ken & I were doing Cumberland Fair together. Towards the end of our shift, Ken left for a few minutes and a group of teenagers came in. They acted like they wanted to raise heck, but they didn't. One girl sat on the floor and all the others kept bending over to her. I had no idea what was going on until I saw a French fry in one guys hand. That was all they did and had a great time.

Baxter Library Fall Book Sale - Gorham train show was great. The people were wonderful. It was all about family helping family. Saw an older brother making sure his younger brother or sister got to run the train remotes like he had done. The look on his face at the joy he brought to his brother or sister was spectacular. This happened with 2 or 3 different families. Maybe this is what our hobby is all about. We should learn from the younger generation and the world would be a better and safer place for us all.

The library folks seemed to have a lot of books left this time, not sure why but it could be just me???? We all had a GREAT TIME

Really liked this monster truck Art & I passed on our way to and from the book sale.



Plant Memorial Home - It was a good day at the Plant Home. The residents and staff really enjoyed us. One lady talked to me about the crew cars or trucks that run on the tracks. I think someone in her family used to drive one. I could not pick up everything she said. All in All, a good time/ good food/ new friends. Jack Dexter, our new member, was really having a good time. He also is a good guy.

B Safe, Doug



RAILROAD HISTORY

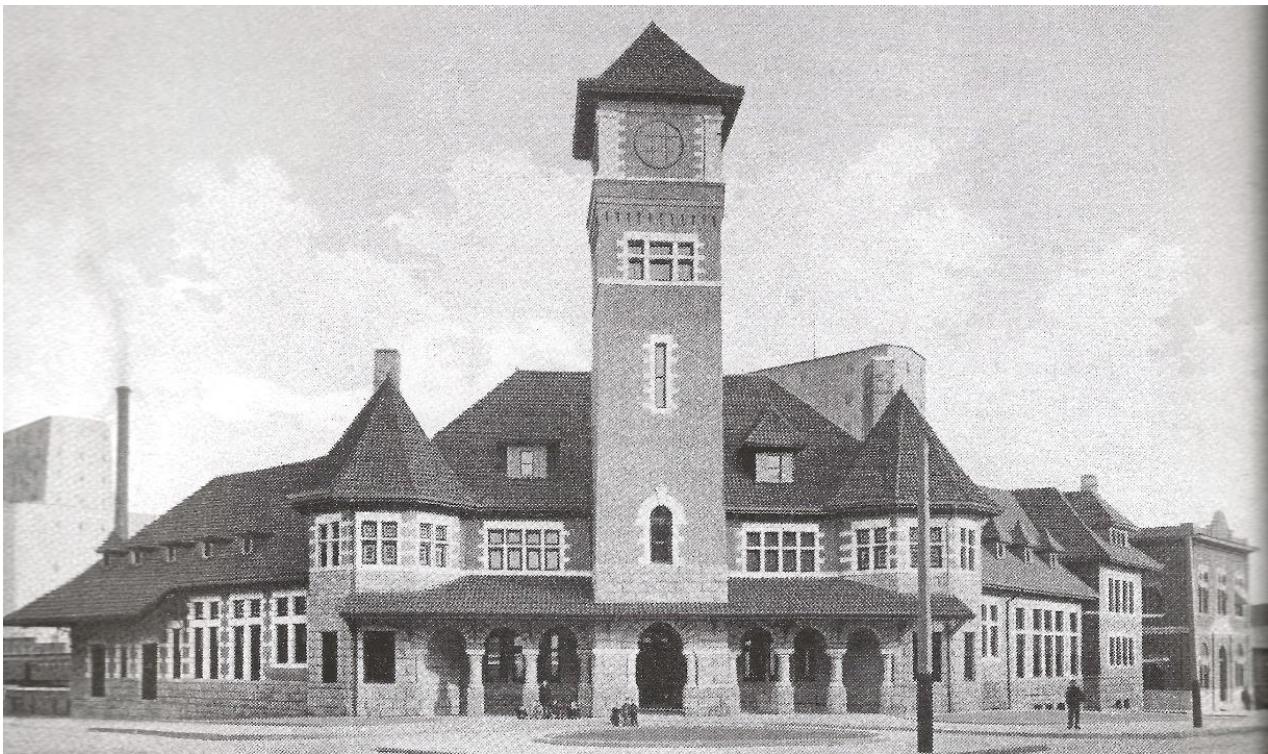
Maine's Grandest Train Station by Art Shean

I was browsing through a copy of "Along the Rails: A Survey of Maine's Historic Railroad Buildings" edited by Kirk F. Mohney and in Chapter 11, *Railroad Passenger Stations in Maine* I saw a great number of functional buildings but also some very elaborate structures. I always assumed that the Portland Union Station had to be the grandest of them all but upon review I am not so sure.



Union Station, Maine Central Railroad, Portland, c.1915

Upon review there seems to be multiple brick and mortar contenders for the title, "Grandest". In Portland alone the Grand Truck Station as seen below was a worthy competitor.

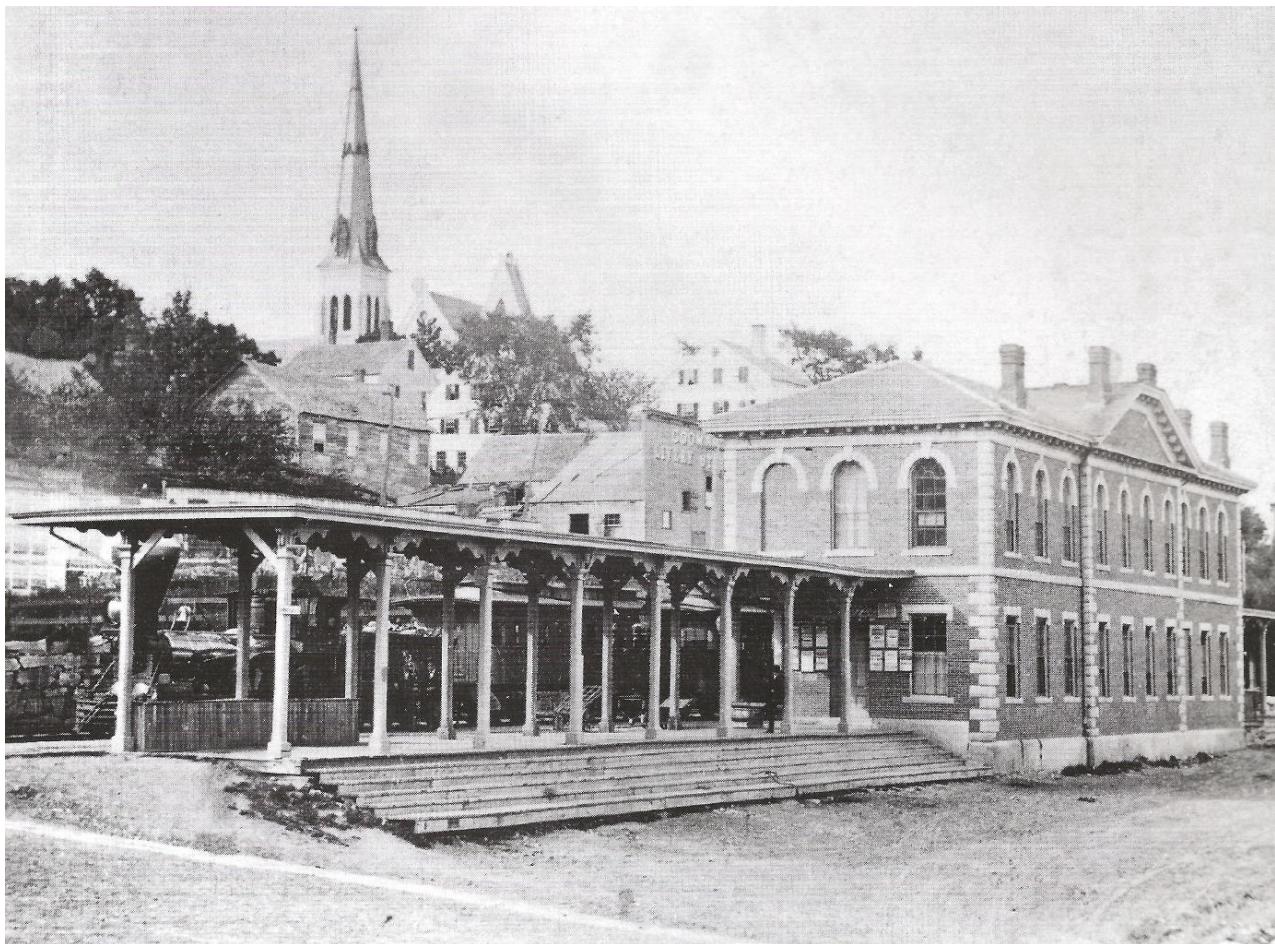


Grand Trunk Railway Station, Portland, c.1905

Another serious contender from outside Portland is Union Station in Bangor, c. 1913.



Other non-Portland contenders include: The Augusta Maine Central Railroad Station, c.1870



Lewiston Maine Central Station c.1917 with its expansive ornate windows:



And the Waterville Maine Central Railroad Station c.1875



To be fair, we may need to introduce a second group of brick-and-mortar stations, "The Grandest Mini-Stations". Candidates might include:

The Grand Trunk Railroad Station in Yarmouth, c. 1906



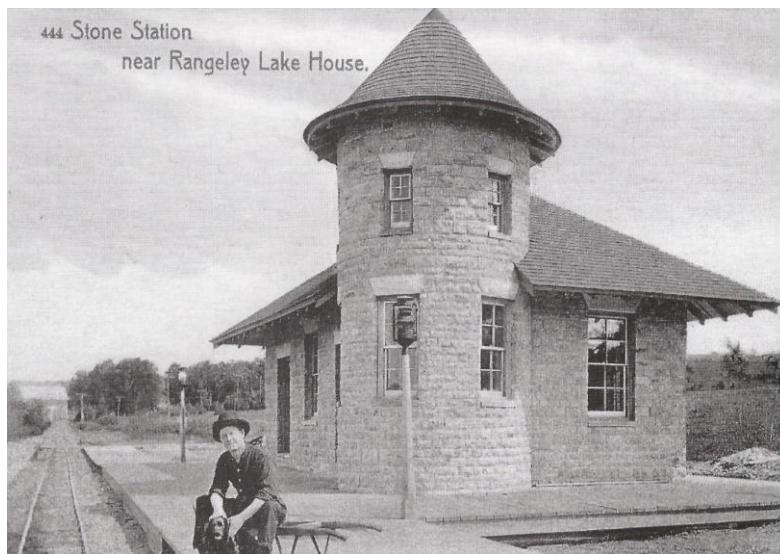
The Maine Central Railroad Station in Bath, c. 1941



The Maine Central Railroad Station in Gardiner, c.1911



And the mini-mini Philips & Rangeley Railroad Station at Rangeley, c. 1906



In the end, the decision may depend more on where you reside in Maine and/or your personal preference in architectural design.

Photos from “Along the Rails: A Survey of Maine’s Historic Railroad Buildings” edited by Kirk F. Mohney and the Web.

MODEL RAILROADING



Progress on the Grand Hotel by Jan Williams

Here is the status of the Grand Hotel project as of Thanksgiving Weekend. This is starting to look like a building. I’m pleased to be finished with the mess from sanding clay. One of the challenges with this building of course is all those windows...

Pictures 1 and 2 show front and back facades.



Picture 1 Back Facade



Picture 2 Front Facade

Picture 3 shows the application of window frames cut from mat board. Cutting and gluing these was tedious, but I like the way this cleans up the window openings.



Picture 3 Window Frames

Picture 4 illustrates my intended approach to the arched windows. I'll begin with sheets of clear acrylic plastic. The window with gold stiles is a prototype I made to study the problem. The page with arched windows is a pattern for the windows: I'll take this to the local photo copy shop and have six or seven copies made on 60 pound paper. I only need 15 windows, but I like to have backups. The remaining drawing is my pattern for adding muntins (using chart pak tape) to the windows.

I'm undecided about interior lighting and detailing. Probably should... LOL

Enough for now!

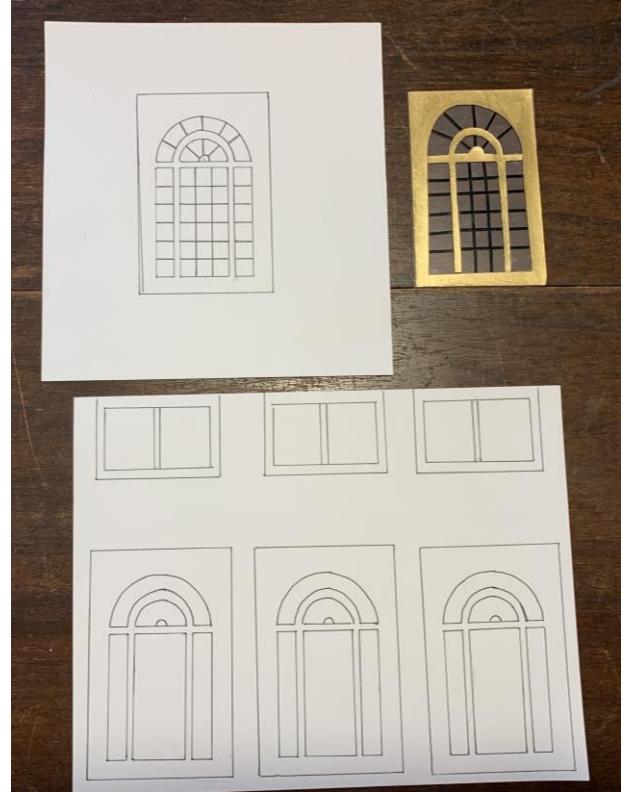
Know Your Tracks by Art Shean

Based on our demographics, the Maine 3 Railers' members have gathered a great deal of experience over their years regarding model trains and their operation. When you have seen a lot, then you are qualified to offer your opinion on things based on your experience. However, experience can be complicated. Having the same experience 20 times may lead to a different perspective than experiencing 20 different scenarios one after another. Sometimes we get locked into an opinion based on one set of facts and wrongly assume they apply to a totally different situation. In the end, truth can only be realized through a sound approach such as the scientific method. In short, develop a hypothesis, test it, then draw a conclusion based on the observed data.

As an example, I keep hearing from some Club members that we should avoid using small track pieces because they increase the voltage drop along the length of a track section. Likewise, I hear and have observed power drop across turnouts. I mentioned to several members an idea to test this hypothesis by setting up multiple test tracks and measuring the voltage drop along them. One track with all 30" pieces, one with a variety of 1 3/4", 1 3/8", 4 1/2" and 5" pieces, and one with several turnouts in between 30" track pieces.

Several days after floating this idea I got an email from Sam Carr. He wrote that he was testing a locomotive that came with a donation from Fred Arlo in Gorham. Since he had his test track set up, he did an unofficial test of the voltage drop hypothesis.

His first test track setup included a Lionel FasTrack power track, two 30" Lionel FasTrack pieces, and a Lionel FasTrack bumper. His voltage readings were as follows:



Picture 4 Window Patterns

Volts Where

- 14.8 Lionel CW80
- 14.7 Power Track with Lionel CW-80 connected
- 14.7 at joint between two 30" straights
- 14.6 Lighted Bumper

Then he took out the second of two 30" pieces of FasTrack and added multiple short pieces to check for voltage drop. His voltage readings were as follows:

Volts Where

- 14.8 Lionel CW-80
- 14.8 Power Track with Lionel CW-80 connected
- 14.8 at end of 30" straight
- 14.8 1 3/8
- 14.8 1 3/4
- 14.8 4.5"
- 14.8 5"
- 14.8 Half O-36
- 14.8 Half O_36
- 14.8 Lighted Bumper

Based on this limited data, we can only conclude that **contrary to popular belief, there is no appreciable voltage drop when using short Lionel FasTrack pieces compared to 30" pieces alone.**

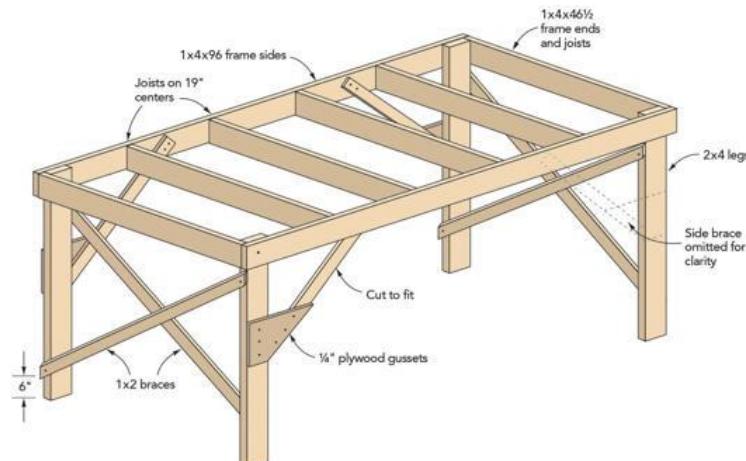
Sam did not test the voltage drop across turnouts nor the drop across other manufacturers track or track style. So, our conclusion only applies to Lionel FasTrack pieces.

Types of Model Railroad Benchwork Story by B. Sleppy from Trains.com

One of the first things that you must do when building a model train layout is decide which style of benchwork you will build for the layout.

Simple Tables

A common starter style of model railroad benchwork is just a 4 x 8 sheet of plywood on a tabletop. My first layout was on a 4 x 8 sheet of 3/4" plywood on top of an old dining room table. To make a more permanent layout, or if you don't have an extra table laying around, you could create a simple grid and leg base for the plywood.



This illustration shows the basic construction of a 4 x 8 grid table. Materials are listed below. Rick Johnson illustration© Provided by Trains.com

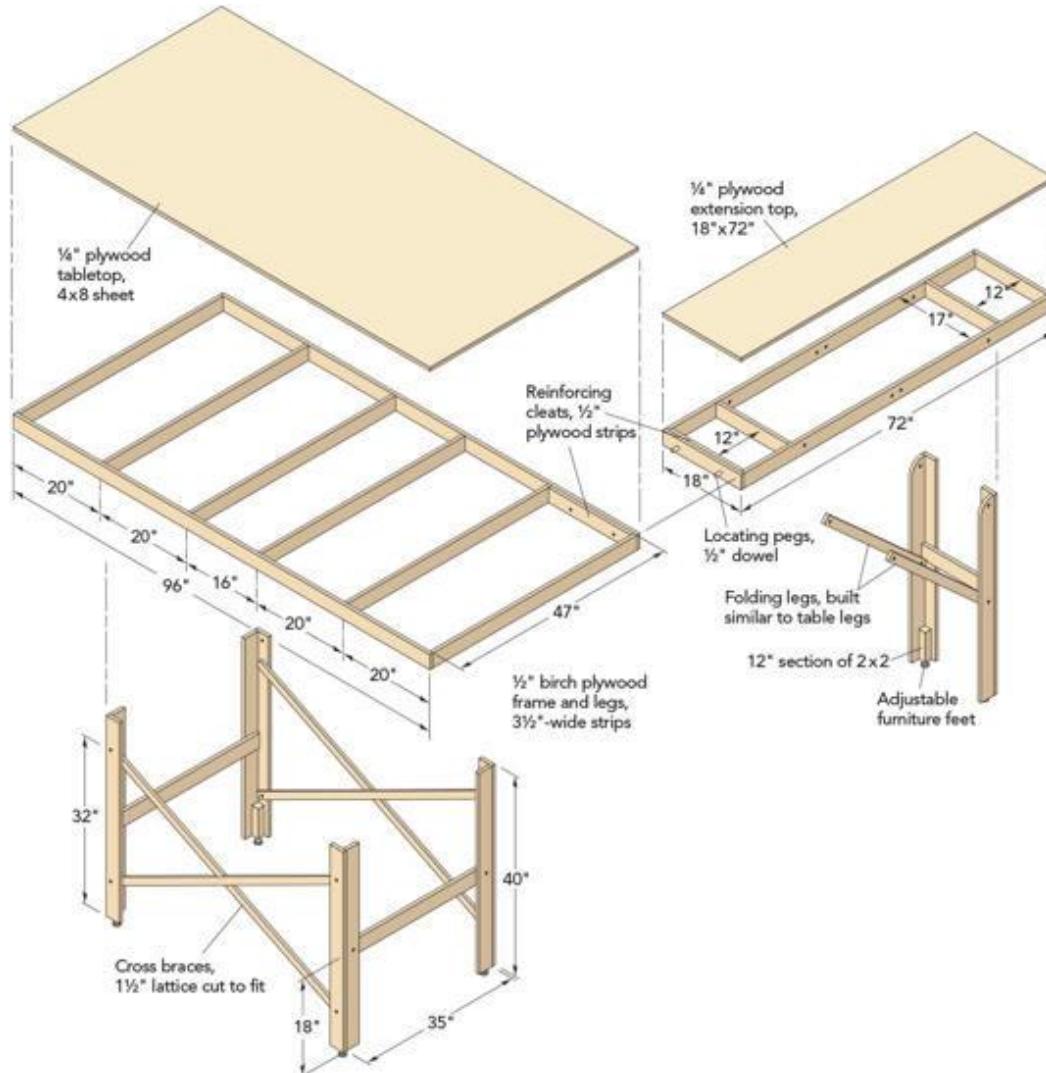
Materials

Lumber

- 1 x 2, 8-foot, 4
- 1 x 4, 8-foot, 5
- 2 x 4, 8-foot, 2
- 1/2" plywood, 4 x 8 feet, 1
- 1/4" plywood, scraps for gussets

Hardware

- 1/4" x 3" carriage bolts, nuts, and washers, 4
- 8 x 1-3/4" screws, 54
- 8 x 1-1/4" screws, 12
- 8 x 3/4" screws, 12
- T nuts with threaded feet, 4

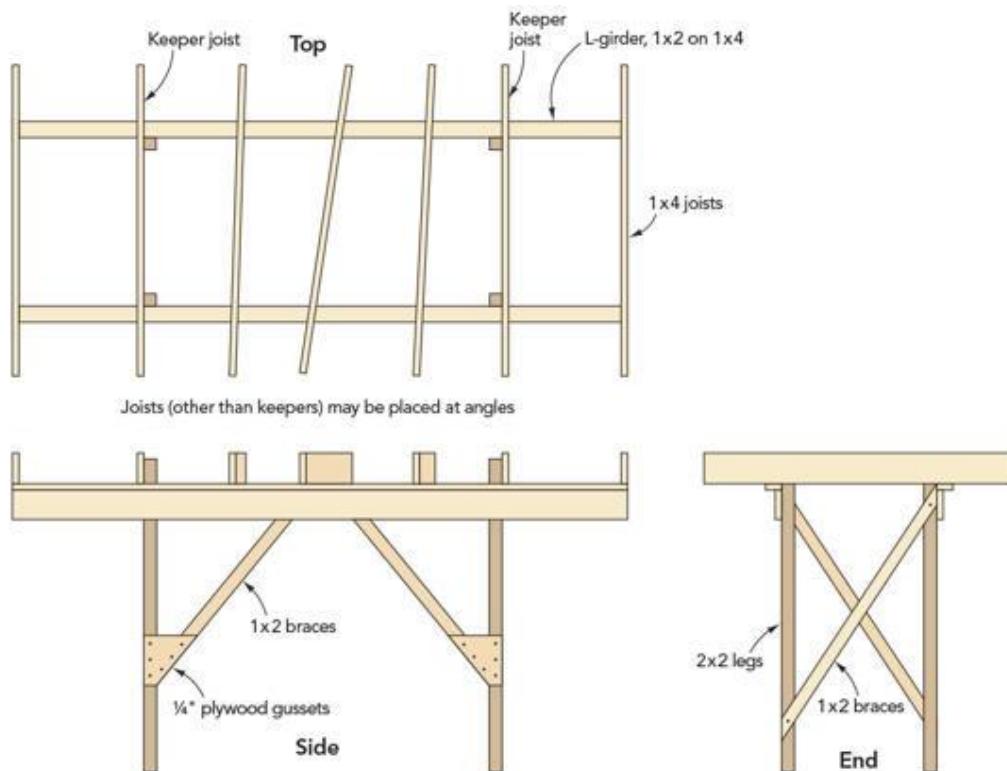


If you'd rather create the frame and legs by ripping plywood, here's an all-plywood table option. Rick Johnson illustration© Provided by Trains.com

L-Girder Benchwork

L-girder benchwork was developed by former *Model Railroader* editor Linn Wescott in the 1950s. It's sturdy, easy and quick to assemble, and economical in wood use. You can use it for tables,

or complex-shaped model railroads, and it can support long spans (up to 22 feet) with just four legs.

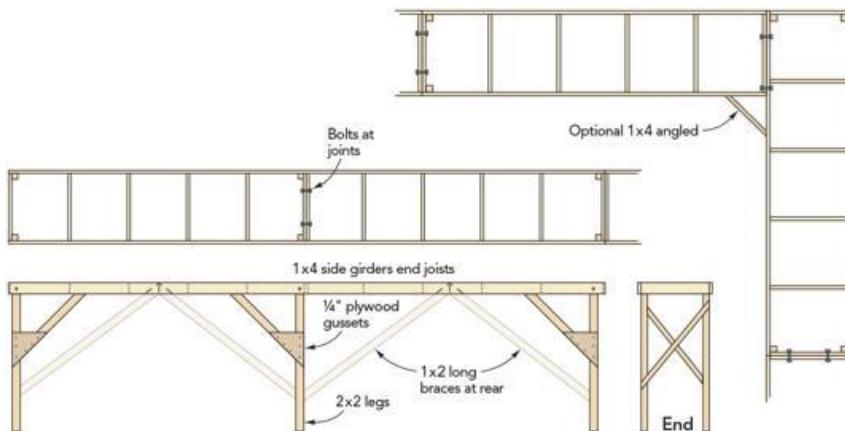


L-girder benchwork can be easily adapted to create complex shapes for a model railroad. The basic framework is shown here.
Rick Johnson illustration© Provided by Trains.com

To calculate girder spans, 3/5 of each L-girder should be between the legs, while 1/5 should be on either side. The vertical section of each girder should be a 1 x 2 for lengths up to 10 feet, 1 x 3 for up to 14 feet, and 1 x 4 for lengths up to 22 feet.

Open-Grid Benchwork

As opposed to L-girder, where the layout surface is supported by joists above the girders themselves, open-grid benchwork is closer to the basic benchwork noted above. When designing a layout using open-grid benchwork, a good way to look at it is as a series of interconnected boxes, each of which can be a rectangle, square, or odd shape. Linking all of the boxes together creates a solid base, and the system is also extremely versatile.



Open-grid benchwork works great for linear designs such as around-the-walls layouts but can also be adapted to fit virtually any shape. Rick Johnson illustration© Provided by Trains.com

For a more in-depth look at building benchwork, you can find Jeff Wilson's *Basic Model Railroad Benchwork Second Edition* on the [Kalmbach Hobby Store website](#). A downloadable product with plans is also available [here](#).

Treasures From the Scrap Heap by Art Shean

Over the past few years, our mobile layouts have included a trolley line of some sort. To add dimension and some drama, our recent layout designs have elevated the trolley line using trestles. This raises several issues: on trestles the track moves when the trolley cars reverse at the bumpers occasionally disconnecting track and a reality concern that passengers don't have an obvious way of ascending to the raised track level. We resolved these concerns by creating a simulated concrete raised trolley station with two variations – “End Of Line” (EOL) and “Through Traffic” (TT) (See pictures below). Both versions rest on arched platforms with track fastened to the top adjacent to a covered passenger platform. The EOL version includes a fixed bumper while the TT platform uses a Lionel Special Trolley Announcement Track (STAT) which momentarily stops the trolley car whenever it crosses the platform. Both trolley platform versions were made of $\frac{3}{4}$ " lumber for the arches, $\frac{3}{8}$ " hardboard for the top platform, and $\frac{1}{8}$ " hard wood for the trim. The combination has sufficient weight that the trolley stopping and reversing does not move the platforms.

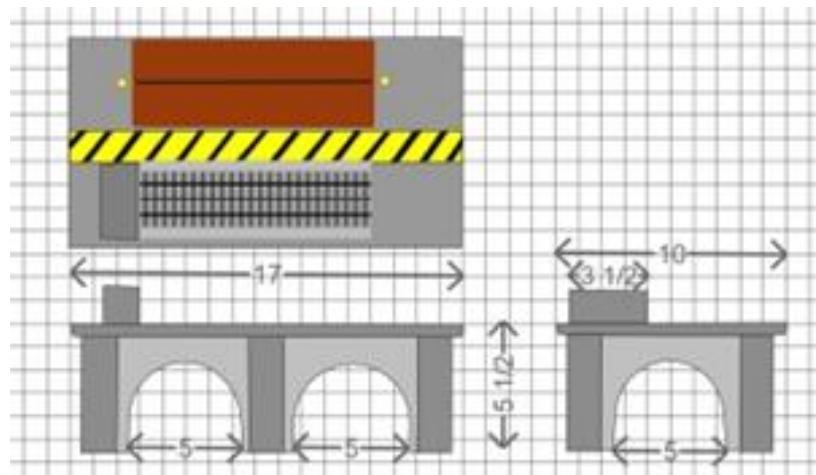


End Of Line (EOL) with Bumper

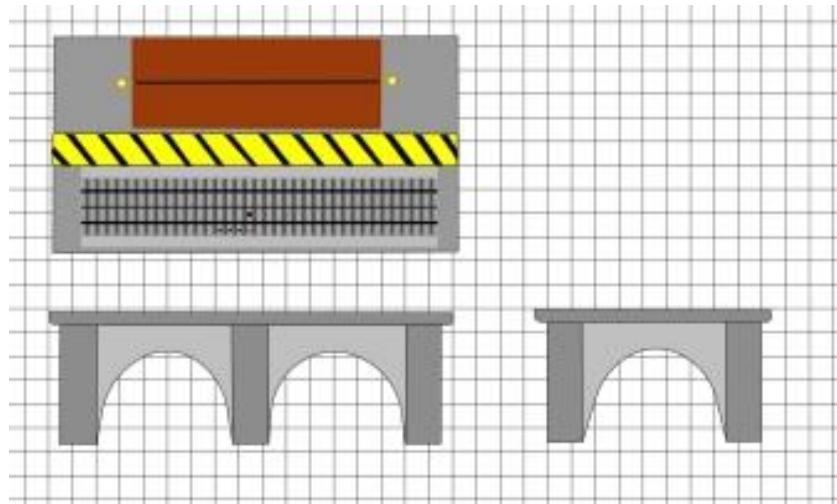


Through Traffic (TT) without Bumper

The construction drawings below show the dimensions for the EOL version. They are identical to the TT version except the TT version does not include the $3\frac{1}{2}$ " bumper which was fashioned from a scrap piece of 2x4. The drawing shows an Atlas #66902 Covered Passenger Platform resting on top which does not have to be attached because the weight of the EOL limits any movement. The black & yellow striping tape purchased from The Home Depot is applied as a safety barrier between the passengers and the track.

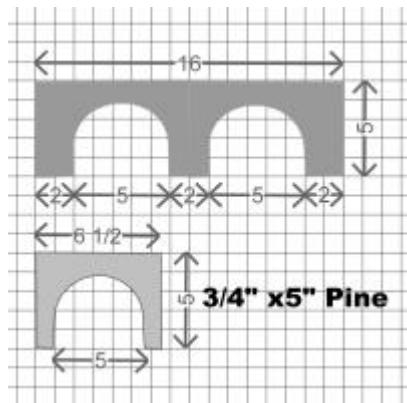


Construction Drawings for the EOL Elevated Trolley Platform



Construction Diagram for the TT version

First step in construction was creating the arch sections of the base. I found that the quickest and easiest method was to use a 5" diameter hole saw as shown below. Then trim the inner sides using a sabre saw to be perpendicular to the base. Be careful during cutting to assure that an end piece does not break loose as I experienced in the picture below. After cutting the arches, I routed and sanded the inner arch surfaces to provide a more architectural appealing appearance. Two side pieces and two end pieces are required.



Arch Base Piece Dimensions and Cutting

After fabricating the arch pieces, I assembled the base with the two end pieces sandwiched between the side pieces. I used a Ryobi Pin Nailer with 1 3/8" pins and wood glue to fasten the pieces together. Next step was cutting the 17" by 10" top. Before installation, I routed the lower outer edge to again improve architectural interest. To install the top, I centered the top on the base with $\frac{1}{2}$ " overlapping the base on all sides. Then fastened it to the base using the Pin Nailer and wood glue. Finally, I adhered $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 1 1/2 " strips on the corners and between the side arches using wood glue and 1" pins as architectural detail. Paint as desired. I used a flat gray spray paint to replicate a concrete finish.

At this point, you must choose between using the base as an EOL or TT platform. To use as an EOL add a bumper and attach a 10" piece of track with the pins removed on one end. I used a scrap piece of 2x4 for the bumper, but a FasTrack bumper will work as well. For a TT platform, fasten a Special Trolley Announcement Track to the middle of the platform.

- END -

Maine 3 Railers Upcoming Schedule of Events

Future Maine 3 Railers Events

- Nov 17- **L.L. Bean Model Train Village**, Camping Department, 1st Floor, 95 Main St., Freeport, ME 04032. Layout operating 9am-9pm daily with M3R on call support. (Special Projects)
- Dec 09 **Open House – Jan Williams’ Home**, 6 Hiram Hill Road, Hiram, ME 04041, 10am-2pm. (Activity Committee)
- Dec 09-10 **Ray & Robin’s Hobby Center**, 65 Gray Rd, Falmouth, ME 04150. Setup Dec 8th at 1pm. Trains run Saturday 9am-5pm and Sunday 11m-4pm. Move out Dec 11th at 10 am (Portable)
- Dec 16 **Neighborhood Open House** - Jeff Jacobs’ Home, 300 Houghton Pond Road, West Bath, ME 04530, 11am-3pm.
- Jan 01 **L.L. Bean Move Out Day**, Time to be determined
- 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):

- Dec 11 Executive Board Meeting
- Dec 14 Regular Monthly Club Meeting

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

- Dec 21 Roundhouse Session, Topic: Show us your holiday train display and custom holiday rolling stock, 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, 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.