The mission of the Amherst Railway Society is education regarding and the promotion of hobbies related to railroading.

Switch List

Midsummer Movie Night
July Clubhouse Hours
Conway - Railfans' Weekend
Two-Foot Tour
Brightline - A First Look
Lionel Operators - National

Membership Dues
Memberships expire on the anniversary of your membership term.
Regular adult memberships are $60 for one year, $150 for three years, and $240 for five years.
Student, Prospective, and Family memberships are also available.
Click here for the complete list of membership options.

ARMS meeting: July 11, 2018 7:30 pm

Midsummer Movie Night

For July, we are turning "meeting night" into "movie night."

On Wednesday, July 11, we will choose one or more videos from our extensive library collection, or a member favorite. So, if you have a favorite railroad movie, bring it along. It may be the winner.

Videos will be chosen by those in attendance.

Amherst Railway Society meetings are open to the public.

Events in August

Annual Amherst Railway Society Grant Program
Silent Auction

next meeting:

Wednesday, July 11, 2018 - 7:30 pm
Amherst Railway Society clubhouse, Palmer, MA

Notice of meeting changes or cancellations are posted on:
Amherst Railway Society web site - amherstrail.org
Amherst Railway Society Facebook page
July Clubhouse Hours

In July, the Amherst Railway Society clubhouse will be closed on Saturdays while repairs are being made to the lower level.

The clubhouse is located at:
1130 South Main Street
Palmer, Massachusetts 01069

mark your calendar...

Railfans’ Weekend
September 1 & 2, 2018
Conway Scenic Railroad

Special demos, freight cars, cabooses, and other railroad equipment will all be part of Conway Scenic’s special Railfans’ Weekend - September 1 & 2, 2018.

On Sunday, September 2, there will be a special Notch Train to Hazens’ Crossing in Whitefield, in addition to the regularly scheduled Valley Train.

For more information, visit: https://www.conwayscenic.com/blog/railfans-weekend.

Two-Foot Tour
July 21, 2018
Maine narrow-gauge steam trip

On Saturday, July 21, 2018, the Massachusetts Bay Railroad Enthusiasts are sponsoring a one-day trip to Maine to ride behind and photograph two recently restored classic narrow-gauge steam locomotives.

The first stop will be the Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway Museum in Alna, Maine. The tour group will be able to ride both the 10:30 and 12:00 trains behind WW&F #9. The tour group will also have full access to the museum grounds, stations, car barns, and shops.

From Alna, the group will head back to Portland, arriving in time for the 3:00 Maine Narrow Gauge train with Bridgton & Saco River #7 in charge. The group will also be part of an exclusive 4:00 pm departure that will include photo stops and run-by opportunities.

For trip details, visit; http://www.amherstrail.org/ARS/community-trips.php
Brightline is the only privately owned passenger railroad in the United States, and the first to be privately operated since the Denver & Rio Grande Western discontinued the Rio Grande Zephyr in 1983.

Brightline began operations in January with service between West Palm Beach and Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and extended the service to Miami in May. Brightline will eventually run from Miami to Orlando International Airport.

Amherst member Isaiah Manuel was recently in Florida and rode Brightline from West Palm Beach to Fort Lauderdale and return. He shared some initial thoughts with Eight & Sand.

“When I arrived at the West Palm station, it became clear very quickly that this was a different passenger train experience. First, the station was immaculate - the cleanest railroad station I’ve ever seen. And, it was very modern - kind of like a private airport.”

Isaiah also saw that security is an important part of the Brightline operation.

“The Brightline stations are built on two levels, and I think they are all going to be that way. All passengers enter on the lower level. There, you show your ticket (I bought mine ahead of time online), check any baggage, and go through security. Once you are checked-in, you take the escalator to the second floor passenger lounge where you wait for your train.”

So, you cannot just walk out on the platform and wait for your train?

“You cannot. You have to wait in the passenger lounge for your train to be called. For a rail-fan and photographer like me, this is a little inconvenient. But, I understand why they do it that way. And, that’s true when get off the train, too. You have to leave the platform.”
And, the trains?

“The trains are beautiful - inside and out. Very modern. Spotless. They look awesome. Inside, everything is basically white, or light colored - white lighting, white glass doors. Big windows. There is a high-tech feel about them, a fun feel.”

And, the ride?

“Incredible! The smoothest passenger train I’ve ever been on. Ever. At times, you don’t even feel like you are moving - even at 79 miles per hour. Whoever designed the suspension system, really got it right.”

Any down-sides?

“The day I rode, the train ahead of us was involved in an accident so we were delayed by over two hours. And, Brightline didn’t handle it very well. Nobody told us why we were delayed or what was going on. I think they need to be more customer-friendly in that regard.”

“I also think reliability has to be a high priority. There were people on my train that were connecting to cruise ships in Miami. The delay became a problem for them. If Brightline wants to attract passengers connecting to airlines in Miami and Orlando, reliability is going to be important.”

“I’d like to go back and see how things work on a normal day.”

Any conclusions?

“It was really a fun experience, and I’m glad I did it. And, I hope they can make it work, because there are probably other parts of the country that could use trains like Brightline.”

photos: Isaiah Manuel

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EIGHT & SAND - what it means

Eight & Sand is a railroad term used to wish train crews a quick, uneventful journey. The term comes from notch 8 - the highest power setting on modern locomotive throttles - and the ability to apply sand to prevent wheel slip.
Lionel Operating Train Society
National Convention
July 8 - 14, 2018
Manchester, New Hampshire
details at: https://www.lots-trains.org

Reader contributed railroad stories and articles can be considered for publication in EIGHT & SAND.

Please discuss article ideas with EIGHT & SAND editor, Greg Maas.

Greg can be reached at: greg.maas@icloud.com.

From the Treasurer

As Amherst Railway Society Inc. is a 501 C(3) tax exempt organization, your donations (of either cash and/or property) may be deducted on your Schedule A, Form 1040 of your Federal income tax.

Consider the Amherst Railway Society in your estate planning. Your gifts can be restricted or non-restricted (you can pre-determine how you want your donation used). Upon request, and proper documentation, the Treasurer will issue a letter to be used as justification for your tax deduction.