



The WestConn Manifest

The Monthly Newsletter of the
Western Connecticut Chapter of the
National Railway Historical Society



www.westctrhs.org

Since 1953

February 2007

Amherst Railway Society Big Railroad Hobby Show 2007

Photos by Robert Gambling



On Friday afternoon, Westconn Chapter volunteers set up for the two day show.



We had a successful show this year and we would like to thank the volunteers who took the time to help set up and man the Chapter table.

THE WESTCONN MANIFEST
is the official newsletter of the Western Connecticut Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society – (NRHS).

Articles which appear in

THE WESTCONN MANIFEST
do not express official NRHS position unless specifically noted as such.

Material from **THE WESTCONN MANIFEST** may be reprinted in other publications, provided the credit is given.

Please address comments, any contributions of material, complaints and exchange copies of other chapter newsletters to:

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The Western Connecticut Chapter of the NRHS is separately incorporated as a CT not-for-profit corporation.

The Chapter is involved in the preservation of American railroad history and artifacts.

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The Chapter meets monthly, usually on the 4th Monday, at the **United Congregational Church 275 Richards Ave. in Norwalk, CT** or at the SoNo Switch Tower Museum 77 Washington St. Norwalk, CT **at 7:30 P.M.**

Meeting dates for **2006:**

1/22, **2/26**, 3/26, Annual Dinner-TBA,
5/21*, 6/25*, 7/23*, 8/27*, 9/24*, 10/22*,
11/26 and 12/17.

*Chapter meeting to be held at the SoNo Switch Tower in South Norwalk, CT

The SoNo Switch Tower Museum is maintained and operated by volunteers of the Western Connecticut Chapter.

Western Connecticut Chapter - NRHS
Inc.

77 Washington Street
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www.westctnrhs.org
www.sonotower.org



We now have Western Connecticut Chapter
and

SoNo Switch Tower pins for sale in the
Museum Gift Shop or by mail.

Cost is only \$5.00 each and
members receive a 10% discount.



REMINDER

**If you have not paid your 2007 dues,
please do so as soon as possible.
The grace period ends March 31, 2007 at which time
unpaid members will be dropped from the NRHS.
Thank you.**

Welcome New Member:



David Stavans - Yorktown, NY

Gone forever!



Photo by Tony White

This photo was taken on November 4, 2006 of the former Mount Holly Springs Station.
The Station was demolished on January 15, 2007.

It was located in Mount Holly Springs, PA on the Lurgan branch
where passengers would have changed to go to Gettysburg, PA.

Interesting web sites from our members

<http://www.sy-country.co.uk/trains/china507.htm>

Take a look at this link! It is an accounting of a trip to China to see steam locomotives and, in particular, the last **QJ** class steam locos still in operation. Plus a little narrow gauge industrial railway with steam locos.

http://www.railroadmuseum.net/railroad_china.htm

Marvelous Railroad China is featured along with Pullman Car artifacts and commemorative china depicting railroad history

To Whom It May Concern,

Thanks for the Switch Tower Museum site. I enjoyed cycling thru the photos as they brought back memories. My Grandfather, Clyde Leshar, was a switch tower operator for the Erie Lackawana Railroad in Transfer, PA. I have fond memories of spending the day with him in the tower when I was a kid.



This picture was taken sometime around 1919-20. Grandpa and Grandma Leshar w/Shirley (my mother) on the tracks somewhere between the Transfer depot and the switchtower. We assume that it's original purpose may have been to transport the tower shifts from the depot in Transfer to the tower....some two miles....at a time when few people owned cars. Apparently Grandpa then bought the vehicle because my Mom's brother remembers riding it into town for groceries. He was born in 1930, and he wouldn't have "memories" until sometime around 1935-36.

Tim Duffie

US Marines Combined Action Platoons, Vietnam: <http://capmarine.com/>



The Pennsylvania RR had a fleet of rubber tired switchers, first built 1912, originally battery powered & later repowered with gasoline engines. They worked the dockside industries in Philly, Baltimore, & Jersey City.

Check this site for more photos

<http://pr.railfan.net/RubberTiredSwitchers.html>

I bought a book as a teenager that had B&W photos and a lot of text about a dozen US railroads, e.g. Ann Arbor, WM, PRR, etc. and it carried a photo of this trackmobile which had a spoked wheel like that on a sailing ship to turn the wheels. This is the first time I have seen another photo of these odd vehicles. Note the rubber on the steel wheels.

Robert Briechele

Rails on Water

By: Anthony Gruerio, Jr.

Having already planned a trip to North Carolina's Outer Banks in November of 2006, the only remaining detail was the actual route. Taking Interstate 95 is simple enough, but the monotony of a familiar, though not favored path wasn't the ideal situation for a relaxing start of a vacation. Remembering an issue of the NRHS' The National Railway Bulletin (Volume 67, Number 4, 2002) that I had read a few years ago, the idea formed to travel down the Delmarva Peninsula where I could use the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel to access the Tar Heel state. Using this route would allow me to visit Cape Charles, VA; home of the Bay Coast Railroad. This railroad is one of a handful of operations that utilize a carfloat to move railcars.



This operation has roots that date back to the 1880's. An excellent synopsis of the Eastern Shore Railroad's history can be found in Tony Reevy's article in the above mentioned publication. An online version can be found at the following website: http://www.nrhs.com/spot/eastern_shore_rr. Initial searches of the internet revealed sad news. The Eastern Shore had ceased operations in February of 2006. Additional searches did prove more fruitful. The Bay Coast Railroad was the new company organized to run over this historic route. With this information in hand, I was ready to go!

Cape Charles, VA is accessed via U.S. Highway 13. Once you make your way south of Pocomoke City, MD, you will eventually see a set of tracks that parallel the highway. Follow these tracks straight into Cape Charles, which is located on the bay side near the tip of Virginia's eastern shore. The tracks and road continue into town where they have one thing in common; they stop where the water starts! Raillfanning this railroad is a pleasure as this company is very tolerant of visitors. Once you sign a waiver in the office, you are free to roam the property so long as you don't climb on the equipment. The Operations manager informed me that the carfloat was coming to Cape Charles around noon the following day.

Seeing railcars come in over water on a carfloat powered by a tugboat was a very exciting and unusual sight. As the carfloat comes close to shore, the floating dock is adjusted to match the height of the carfloat (based on the weight of the cars and the tide). Large wooden logs are used as pins to help secure the carfloat to the dock. The crew quickly decides the order to unload the cars as their weight is evenly distributed over the carfloat. Locomotive #400 a GP15-1 (which started life on the SLSF) never moves on the floating dock or the carfloat. Instead, it uses a string of cars to "reach" onto the carfloat and draw the cars off and into the yard. The operation is slow and deliberate, as the track on the dock is certainly not new. After unloading, this railroad operates as any other - building up a train for customers and/ or interchange with another railroad. The Bay Coast interchanges with Norfolk Southern in two locations. The first is Pocomoke City, MD and the other is across the Chesapeake Bay in Little Creek, VA.



Cape Charles is a very charming town to visit and is seasonal in regard to the population. Even though I was there off-season, there were a few places to eat and lodging is available year-round. If you vacation with the family on the beach, but still want to see a bit of railroading, the Bay Coast is the perfect solution!

For more on the Bay Coast Railroad, use the following links:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bay_Coast_Railroad

<http://www.delmarvanow.com/easternshore/stories/20060826/2322833.html>

Trains Along The Hudson River

By John Mount

With winter cold finally arriving, and sleet against my office window, I am reminded of a hot 2006 July Fourth weekend when I found that I could do both of my favorite things at the same time; watch trains and sail. I was invited by an old friend and his wife to accompany them on their Tartan 37 sailboat on a trip up the Hudson River as far as Newburgh, N.Y.

We sailed out of City Island, NY, early Saturday morning July 1, to catch the outgoing tide through Hell Gate. Train watching began as we approached the Hell Gate Railroad bridge. From water level the bridge looked just like the Lionel bridge from days of yore. Many of you will remember that Lionel replicated Hell Gate for their train set.

Going down the East River, passing under the several bridges, you could hear (and sometimes see) the rumble and rattle of subway trains crossing the bridges. After passing around the tip of Manhattan and starting up the Hudson River, I could see Amtrak Empire Service and Lakeshore Limited trains with Genesis units at the head south of the George Washington Bridge.

Once past the Spuyten Duyvil Creek and the Amtrak bridge, Metro North's Hudson Line trains joined the mix, making for a lot of rail activity close to the bank of the river. Continuing upriver we passed Yonkers, Hastings-On-Hudson, and other towns south of the Tappan Zee Bridge. Just south of the bridge, on the west side, we passed Piermont Pier, the former Lackawanna float terminal.

The day ended at Haverstraw Marina, not too far from the west side rail line. You knew that there was a major rail line nearby as trains were whistling for the grade crossings in town all night long. My crewmates were not all that pleased with the sounds, but I loved it.

Sunday was a day to remember. The west side rail line is virtually on the riverbank from just north of Haverstraw all the way to Newburgh. It crosses Iona Island, under the Academy at West Point (yes I said under) West Point. We passed by the West Point RR station where the Corps would board trains for such football classics such as the Army Navy Game.

For a Sunday on Fourth of July Weekend there were a lot of trains going north and south on the single track every half hour throughout the day. CSX, and UP were the usual motive power for double stacks, single stacks, TOFC, what looked like unit trains (including garbage) and general freight.

A powerboat could get close enough to the bank to get fantastic photos that would rival the many shots our members have gotten at Iona Island. Unfortunately, our sailboat had a 6' keel so this was not possible.

At points along this portion of the line, clusters of four or five houses with a boat ramp share the narrow strip of land between the rocky hills and the river with the railroad. I remember one spot where there was an iron truss bridge over a stream almost against a sheer rock face, literally a few feet from the river. While the line on the east bank of the river was busy with passenger service, the west bank was where all the action was, day and night.

In Newburgh we docked in a marina that had a number of excellent restaurants nearby AND, of interest to railfans, was located about 150 yards from the west side railroad line. That night I slept on deck under the stars and heard whistling for a grade crossing about a mile away, all night long.

Monday July 3 we started south for home. The trip south was equally active on both sides of the river.

I did not take as many pictures as I would have liked because the weather was cloudy, hazy, hot and humid. And a sailboat with a 6' keel does not allow you to get close enough for good pictures.

Any power boaters interested in a spring or fall trip?



A train coming thru from the marina in Newburgh (taken from the dock)



This shot was taken from the parking lot of the marina.



This is in reference to the photos that were in last month's Manifest (Jan 2007 issue), the one with the clock face cover.

On Jan 9, 2007 I was in Canaan and took some photos of the station reconstruction. Looks good at this point. There is more work needed to install the siding and doing the interior. The building seems to be well enough along so we don't have to worry about the project dying. The window molding is reproduced exactly like the existing ones. An architectural purist may wince at the "Tyvek" but once it is covered, who is to know. I peered into the window and can see that the framing is complete but the interior sheetrock has yet to be installed. However at the time I was there, there was no construction activity going on. I was there on a weekday early afternoon at around 1:30 and there were no workers, vehicles or tools present. I was told by a local that further funding needs to be approved. I know that governments work at glacial speed in this respect. The station looks great at this stage but I hope that the impasse does not last too long.

If you are up in Canaan to see the station, there are other points of interest there. There is a great hobby shop (Berkshire Hill Hobby Supply) open Tuesday through Sunday from about 11:00 to 5:00. Closed Mondays. Rolf Schneider is the proprietor and is very friendly. I liked the store because of its oddball stuff that you won't find in a generic mall type hobby shop. I found some German trolley timetables so I got them. Also there is a nice eatery right next to the station. It is Collins Diner which is open for breakfast and lunch. Below is a Website for the diner giving the precise hours. According to the Website it may have extended summer hours. I had a light lunch of a hamburger and coffee and the hamburger was delicious. I would consider this a "railroad oriented" eatery due to its proximity to the Housatonic RR and the Canaan Station. The diner and station shares the same parking lot. Another point of interest is the Housatonic Railroad, a busy shortline, which is headquartered in Canaan.

<http://www.collinsdiner.com/>

Bob Gambling



Photo by Dana Laird

Slateford Junction Tower is a poured concrete structure built by the Delaware Lackawanna & Western Railroad circa 1908-11 when the Lackawanna Cutoff was built.

This tower was manned until the 1950's; Conrail ceased operations on the cutoff in 1979 and ripped out the rail in 1984. The "Old Main" still sees quite a bit of freight traffic; and this tower is a fine surviving (although not pristine) example of a well designed structure.

Dana Laird



Photo credit Add Austin



Gulf Coast RR Museum in Parish, FL. has the use of a steamer for the month of Feb. It is a 1930,47 ton 0 4 0 tank Vulcan. Saturated steam, slide valve, goes squish, squish, not chug, chug. Was restored from a complete derelict. Gets around for use by assorted tourist lines. Really brought out the crowds. Photos taken at a mostly unknown dirt grade crossing on a road that then dead ends in a farm. Parish, FL is inland a bit from Bradenton, all south of Tampa. Add Austin



An easy way for you to help your Chapter.

If you do on-line shopping you can earn money for The Western Connecticut Chapter
 By going to either www.westctnrhs.org or www.sonotower.org and clicking on the Shop for Charity Day banner.
 or www.shopforcharityday.com/4052

This will take you to their site and as long as you stay within this link - your purchases will earn a percentage of your purchase for the Chapter.

They have over a 1,000 stores listed. Just look for the store you want to shop from or browse through the list. The prices are the same and our chapter benefits from your purchases.

This is just a few of the stores listed on the site:

Ebay ecost Eddie Bauer MacMall Macys Museum Store Company Thompson Cigar Lillian Vernon
 Target Gap Kalmbach Publishing Buy.com USA Kohl's Sierra Trading Post Old Pueblo Traders
 Sharper Image Brookstone eBags Flowers USA 1-800-PetMeds and many more!

This site does not require you to give any personal information, nor are there any hidden charges .

Thank you!

Please contact Roberta Ballard at: 203 792-8558 or editor@westctnrhs.org if you have any questions or concerns.

Use goodsearch.com and earn \$\$\$\$\$\$ for our Chapter.
 Just go to www.goodsearch.com and type NRHS in the "Who do you Goodsearch for?" box - you should see Western Connecticut Chapter - NRHS appear.
 Every search will help our chapter.
 You can add the toolbar to your browser.

Westconn Schedule of Events

- Monday Feb. 26: 7:30 pm Monthly Chapter meeting** at The United Congregational Church Norwalk, CT
- Sunday March 18: Westchester Model RR Club Train Meet** - Greenwich Civic Center 90 Harding Road Greenwich, CT
- Monday March 26: 7:30 pm Monthly Chapter meeting** at The United Congregational Church Norwalk, CT
- Friday March 30 & Sunday March 31: East Coast Large Scale Train Show** York Fairgrounds, York, PA
 Friday 9:00 am to 8:00 pm - Saturday: 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.
 One day admission: 10.00 - Two day admission: 18.00 Children under 12 free



The Western Connecticut Chapter, NRHS Inc. supports Operation Lifesaver
 Our Next Chapter meeting will be held at **7:30 PM** on
Monday, February 26, 2006 at:

**The United Congregational Church
 275 Richards Ave., Norwalk, CT**

Entertainment will be provided by:

Buck (Alias Tom Cruise) Neulinger

DVD - Railfanning in Harrisburg, PA and Enola Yard

Bob Gambling will provide refreshments



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