



The Westconn Manifest

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



www.westctrhs.org

Since 1953

September 2005



Dream to Reality

If you have visited the SoNo Tower Museum this summer, you have seen the latest addition to the 3rd floor. The Model Board is up and running and it is quite a hit. Former Tower Operators have said it is very accurate and even better than the original. Having a Model Board in place in the Tower has been a dream since the very beginning of the planning stages. The Board is a necessary and integral part of showing the operation and function of this Switch Tower.

Efforts to obtain and take possession of the original Model Board were unsuccessful. Because the original was not available, a decision was made to recreate it. With input from many sources, I was able to produce a full size, 10 foot by 2 foot 6 inch, CAD track and signal diagram represented by the Model Board.

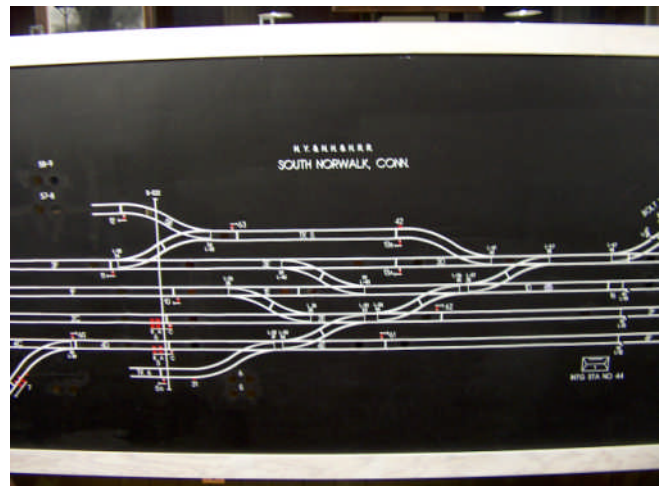
While on a visit to the Altoona Railroader's Memorial Museum, I saw a lit, static, Model Board behind a moving HO scale diorama of the Altoona Shop Complex. While discussing this display with Chapter members, it was felt an active simulation would be more desirable. Previously, we had been in contact with Chuck Catania of the South Bay RR Historical Society in Santa Clara, California. Chuck had provided us with a CD showing photos and wiring diagrams of their computer controlled train movement simulation on their Tower's Model Board.



Further discussion led me to bring my son Nathan Neulinger into this project. Nathan, a Computer System Analyst at the University of Missouri-Rolla, was very interested in helping us. Working closely with John Garofalo and myself, he was able to write a program to represent train movements and signals controlled by SS44. Garf explained to Nathan, in detail, how the Model Board actually worked. Nathan enlisted the help of Bryan Thompson, an Electrical Engineer at UMR, to design and build the low voltage electronics to make the system operational.

In April of this year, a scale mock-up of the Board was produced with light sockets, wiring and the Computer program. The next step was to prepare the metal sheet, provided by Garf, by locating and drilling the holes for the lights. The metal was then installed in a wood frame built by Jim Mescher. The actual lines showing rails, signals, lights and bridges were produced in vinyl by Stamford Signs. These vinyl pieces were applied, followed by the transfer of the lights and wiring from the mock-up to the metal sheet. The final step was to hook up the computer, power supply, and monitor and run the simulation. After a series of program fine-tuning adjustments, the Model Board was complete. It can be viewed on the 3rd floor of the SoNo Tower, weekends through October.

This entire project would not have been possible without the assistance of John Garofalo, for providing drawings of the Green's Farm Model Board as well as countless hours of help in many areas, Bob Gambling, for his photos of the original SS44 Model Board, Dick Carpenter for his expertise on the track layout, switches and signals at SS44, Nathan Neulinger for his computer abilities and Bryan Thompson for his electrical engineering. Also instrumental in the completion of this project were a grant from the Amherst Railway Society and William E. Wood Regional Vice President of the NRHS.



Buck Neulinger

Photos by Janet Neulinger

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 8 P.M.

Meeting dates for 2005:

1/24, 2/28, 3/28, 4/25, 5/23*, 6/27*, 7/25*, 8/22*, **9/26***, 10/24, 11/28 and 12/19.

*Chapter meeting to 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
Norwalk, CT 06854

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www.sonotower.org



A Special “**Welcome**” to new member:
Alice Trenholm of Newburg, New York.

The nominating committee is looking for candidates for the upcoming election. If you are interested in running for any of the following offices:

President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, or National Director

Please contact John Mount at: 203 226-2743



From Bob Gambling.....

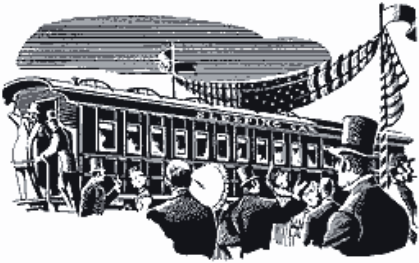
Maybe Metro North could use some pointers for crowd movement. I must say it might be a bit difficult to read a New York Times in that throng. Plus all those people on the outside would have to get off at 125th Street due to problems they might have with the Park Avenue Tunnel. Perhaps, in the photo, all those people on the roof are rail fans admiring that wonderful signal installation. Pity the poor conductor who has to collect all those tickets. Our conductor member Andrew McClellan would have his work cut out for himself.

Corrections to last months newsletter.

The author in last months book review should have read as Geoffrey H. Doughty.

From the Board of Directors Meeting report Glenn H. Mays is the RVP that retired from the S. Central Region.

This Month in Railroad History - September



- **September 1, 1859** First Pullman sleeping car left Bloomington, IL on overnight trip to Chicago; first Pullman conductor was Jonathan L. Barnes.
- **September, 1829** The Tom Thumb, an experimental locomotive built by Peter Cooper of New York, was given a trial run on a newly-built railroad in Baltimore, Md. This little engine, weighing about one ton, was the first American-built locomotive to run on a common carrier railroad in the U.S.
- **September 22, 1851** First recorded use of telegraph for train dispatching

took place at Harriman, NY.

- **September, 1848** Rail route opened from Cincinnati to Great Lakes at Sandusky.
- **September 20, 1850** President Millard Fillmore signed first Federal railroad land-grant act; last grant to aid in pioneer railroad development made in 1871; land-grant rate deductions on government traffic and mail continued until October 1, 1946, resulting in savings to the Federal Government of \$1,250,000,000 from the time of the first grants in 1850.
- **September, 1855** Horse and buggy flat car services, presently termed "piggyback" services, became popular transportation for farmers en route to market in Nova Scotia; 1885 marked the inauguration of farmers' truck-wagon trains on Long Island.
- **September 20, 1865** Railroad opened between St. Louis and Kansas City.



- **September 17, 1832** First locomotive in Mississippi valley, the Pontchartrain, made its initial run from New Orleans to Lake Pontchartrain.
- **September 22, 1865** First railroad in Nebraska opened westward from Omaha, 10 miles.
- **September 30, 1877** First locomotive and train entered Arizona Territory, at Yuma.
- **September 8, 1883** Entrance of first rail route from Great Lakes into

Washington Territory celebrated; many American and foreign notables attended the spike-driving ceremony; extended to Puget Sound via Cascade Mountains, July 1, 1887.

- **September 9, 1929** First air-conditioned Pullman car operated between Chicago and Los Angeles.
- **September 2, 1945** V-J Day ended World War II; during 45 months of war, the railroads moved 90 percent of all Army and Navy freight and more that 97 percent of all military personnel in organized groups within the United States; the latter included the operation of 113,891 special troop trains.

Martin, we miss you!

Tony White, National Director

Martin O'Rourke was honest, caring, and sharing with a fantastic sense of humor. He could see potential in people and was able to get that potential from all those he was involved with. He had a very large impact on me and many others. Martin was a genuine person. The real deal!

I met Martin during the 2000 New Haven Rails convention through one of our RailCampers, Charlie Albanetti. He asked us to go onto the Dover Harbor during the last trip. He treated Charlie not as a young teen, but as a person with whom he had lots of respect for. The admiration between these two was apparent.

Thereafter whenever we met, he had time to chat. We shared discussions about the Dover Harbor, the NRHS, the DC and Westconn Chapters, the future of trains, life in the USA and Charlie. Even when working as the Chief Mechanic on the Dover Harbor, he had time to share his knowledge about railcars and the railroads especially Amtrak with other car owners and myself who was often on another railcar.

Martin spoke most fondly of his experiences with RailCamp. He truly enjoyed the challenges that the teens presented. Those who knew him, will remember how he would almost 'light up' when he was talking about certain things and RailCamp one of those topics. He had his hands full keeping teenagers in line, but always lived up to the challenge.

Martin was extremely good to the NRHS, private railcars, railroad history, and those who had contact with him. He fostered good will and caring. As a principal of RailCamp, he fostered interest in the NRHS. He championed the DC Chapter and its members. I know, because I am a proud member of the DC Chapter also. Through his work on the Dover Harbor, he kept railroad history in the limelight by making sure that all riders on that car experience the golden years of railroading.

I last saw Martin in DC while on the Chapter's Amtrak Ivy Shops tour. As usual it was a great time chatting about all sorts of things. He was in fine spirits and looked well. I will always remember our times together.

Roberta Ballard – Chapter Secretary and Editor writes: "I was introduced to Martin O'Rourke by my nephew, Charlie Albanetti. Marty had a charismatic personality and you couldn't help but like him. I always looked forward to seeing him at the conventions and directors meetings. He always had interesting topics of discussion and one of his favorites was RailCamp. He gave a lot to his Chapter and the National and I know all who knew him will miss him as I do."



Photo by Tim O'Malley / Kenny Ganz - Cooperstown & Charlotte Valley Railroad Milford, NY July 25, 2000

Andrew McClellan – Currently an Assistant Conductor, Metro-North Railroad wrote: "Well Charlie and I called him "Uncle Marty." Marty was definitely someone for all of us young whipper snapper rail fans (although I AM NOT a foamite) to look up to, seeing as how hard he worked for the NRHS and maintaining that nice private car..."

Charlie Albanetti – Senior, State University at Albany wrote: "I first met Marty during Basic Railcamp 1999. A group of 22 or so similarly interested kids meandered about for the week, but for some reason, by the end, the most true friend I had made was an elderly man full of wisdom and humor, who scared most of the other young participants. At the time my hair style was what was really scary – rather large spikes – resulting in Marty affectionately referring to me as "Drac" for most of the week. I named him "Boris" in return, and from that point on good-natured insults, railroad gossip, and other tidbits about our lives were shared. I'm sure I never had the opportunity to tell Boris how much he had taught me, or how I was so honored to be able to know him and consider him my friend. Now I can just hope he knows. I'll miss our not-frequent-enough email correspondence that always included amusing, insulting, but interesting and wise comments and advise about life. Because of his infectious personality, I'm sure there are many other people that enjoyed his company as much as I did, and for that reason, I know he will be well missed by many. The loss of a true friend results in an emotion that no person should have to feel. But, we must remember the good knowledge, feelings, and experience we shared with our friend, and with Boris, they were always good. Thanks so much for everything."

Martin Francis O'Rourke - 1935-2005

Martin Francis O'Rourke of Fairfax, Virginia died June 14, 2005. Martin was the son of Hugh Martin and Frances Ann Shugart O'Rourke of Westernport, Maryland. He was born in Keyser, West Virginia. After serving in the United States Air Force, he spent the majority of his career working in the Washington, DC area. He ended his career with Bell Atlantic Corporation and retired in 1994.

Before his retirement and up until his death his favorite organization was the Washington DC Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society which he joined in 1979. In 1988 he became the Chapter Secretary and served in that office until 1996. In 1997 he became the Chapter's Senior Vice President an office he held until he became President in 2001. He remained president until his death.

Along with his duties as a Chapter Officer and President, he was instrumental in the restoration of the Chapter's 1923 Pullman railroad car, the Dover Harbor. Since 1983, he accompanied the car on many trips over the east coast and across the country as the Dover's mechanical officer. He was preceded in death by his parents and infant brother Malachi O'Rourke.

He is survived by his wife Barbara High O'Rourke, Fairfax, Virginia; a son Martin Francis O'Rourke Jr., and his wife Donna, Skiatook, Oklahoma; a daughter Stephanie Sutherland, Sterling, Virginia; a daughter Susanne O'Rourke and husband Brian Critchley; and a son Christopher O'Rourke, Vienna, Virginia; two grandchildren Sarah and Ian Adamson, Herndon, Virginia; brother Frank O'Rourke of Princess Ann, Maryland; brother Dennis O'Rourke of Nevada, Missouri; and sister Emily Rice of New Boston, Virginia.

Martin was cremated and interment will be in the Columbarium, Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia, Monday July 18, 2005 at 3:00 pm.



Timetable file photo (C) David Splitt, 2005

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to the Washington DC Chapter, NRHS c/o 3527 Launcelot Way, Annandale, Virginia, 22003 and the Capital Hospice, 9300 Lee Highway, Fairfax, Virginia 22031.

Thanks and Cheers,
Mark Piotrowski

This article was provided by Add Austin.

Why America Needs Amtrak

Source: PRNewswire

PRESS RELEASE

Publication date: 2005-09-08

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif., Sept. 8 /PRNewswire/ -- Transportation writer Daniel B. Zukowski has published a new e-book, "Why America Needs Amtrak," available now at Amazon.com.

"As Congress reconvenes, it will address the fundamental need of providing a healthy national rail passenger network for a secure American future," says Zukowski. "The experience of both September 11, 2001 and Hurricane Katrina tells us that we should strengthen the third pillar of our transportation system."

This year has seen an unprecedented attack by critics of the nation's passenger railroad in an attempt to shut it down under the guise of reform, according to the author, who is a former New York Editor for Ward's Auto World and a freelance Op-Ed contributor to newspapers such as the San Francisco Chronicle, Newsday and the Roanoke Times.

As the e-book notes, "Amtrak critics contend that everyone either flies or drives. But, these competitive transportation modes are both facing severe challenges. They can not sustain themselves under their current operating model and may not be viable options to handle the expected 40% growth in passenger travel over the next two decades."

The author recently rode Amtrak's California Zephyr and spoke with passengers about their reasons for taking the train and their views toward Amtrak. He found that, "Travel by train represents the best of America: a diverse, egalitarian culture where everyone can sit together in the dining car or lounge car to meet, talk and enjoy our beautiful country."

"Why America Needs Amtrak" describes the success stories that Amtrak's critics try to hide and provides a compelling argument for Amtrak to become a strong, well-funded national passenger railroad. The author concludes, "To save our freedom of travel and our freedom of choice, America needs Amtrak now more than ever."

Daniel B. Zukowski is a freelance transportation writer and life-long train rider. He has appeared on national cable networks and been quoted in the Washington Post. Zukowski was also a high-ranking public relations industry executive serving automotive and transportation clients. Growing up in New York City, the author rode subways, buses, commuter trains and intercity trains. Now residing in Southern California, he continues to rely on Amtrak and Metrolink. He publishes a Web log at <http://www.danzukowski.com/> focusing on transportation, trade and media issues.

Westconn Schedule of Events

Sunday - Sept. 25 - Annual Chapter picnic at the Bear Mountain boat dock. Rain or shine.

Monday - Sept. 26 - Chapter Meeting - SoNo Switch Tower Museum - 8PM
Entertainment - Ed Blackman

Friday Sept. 30 - Sunday Oct. 2 - Western Connecticut Chapter Fall outing to North Conway, NH. Ride the dome railroad car to Crawford Notch on Saturday and ride the Cog on Sunday. Only \$315.00 per person (based on double occupancy). For information contact Jim Mescher at (201) 391-7362

Monday - October 24 - Chapter Meeting - SoNo Switch Tower Museum - 8PM
Entertainment - Dan Gallo



The Western Connecticut Chapter, NRHS Inc. supports Operation Lifesaver

**Our Next Chapter meeting will be
Monday, September 26, 2005 at:
The SoNo Switch Tower Museum**

77 Washington Street
South Norwalk, CT

Entertainment will be provided by:

Ed Blackman

Bob Gambling will provide refreshments.



The SoNo (Railroad) Switch Tower Museum

is only open on Saturday's and Sunday's
April 30 thru October from noon until 5 PM.

Please help us show the Tower and how it operated to the public.

To volunteer, contact John Garofalo at:
(203) 246-6958

or sign up at the Tower.

Thank you, your help is greatly appreciated.

Tower Operator Volunteer Hours for August 2005

Bob Gambling - 54 hours
John Garofalo - 42 hours
Buck Neulinger - 24 hours
Janet Neulinger - 24 hours
Jim Mescher - 24 hours

Bob Westerfield - 20 hours
Roberta Ballard - 18 hours
Tony White - 18 hours
Beth Siegelbaum - 10 hours
Anthony Gruerio - 10 hours

Bev Shea - 10 hours
Gary Shea - 10 hours
John Ireland - 10 hours
Dana Laird - 9 hours
Dick Carpenter 7.5 hours

Kevin Feeney - 6 hours
John Mount - 5.5 hours
David Squires - 3 hours
Anthony Maida - 2.5 hours

Thank you Tower Operators for all your help.

Also, a special thanks to others who have volunteered their time for both the Tower and Chapter activities.
Your help is always appreciated.