



The Westconn Manifest

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



www.westctrhs.org

Since 1953

November 2005

Recent Visitors to The SoNo Switch Tower Museum

All photos by Robert Gambling



On October 15 Buck Neulinger hosted Steve and Debbie Lucas. Steve is son of Joe Lucas who worked the nearby drawbridge tower. Steve and Debbie now live in Florida and stopped by to reminisce as Joe would bring his little kid Steve to visit Benny Benson in SS 44.



October 22, 2005 - Dick Carpenter explains the new Model Board To a group from the New York Transit Museum



Also on October 22, Buck Neulinger had the pleasure of showing the Tower to Tom Nemeth, Editor-In-Chief of RailPace Magazine.



On November 19 a group sponsored by the Norwalk River Watershed Association paid a visit to the Tower in conjunction A visit to The Danbury Railway Museum earlier in the day.

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

Chapter Officers

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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 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.

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www.westctnrhs.org
www.sonotower.org

Western Connecticut Chapter election results:

President: Buck Neulinger
Vice President: Bob Westerfield
Treasurer: John Garofalo
Secretary: Roberta Ballard
National Director: Tony White

Congratulations!

Add Austin passed this along

Dear Friends of Amtrak:

David Gunn refused to be a puppet so today the Bush appointed Amtrak board fired him as CEO and President of this nation's only long distance passenger railroad. A man highly respected for his brilliance, expertise, experience, achievements and straight talk was given his walking papers because he spurned the ideologically driven attempts of the Bush White House to privatize or dissolve the company and spin off the northeast corridor from the national network.

Referring to the Amtrak board, Gunn told the media, "Obviously what their goal is, and it's been their goal from the beginning, is to liquidate the company."

This is nothing short of an act of arrogance by the Amtrak Board, a cabal of three individuals (there are three vacancies) all appointed by Bush with no experience in railroading whatsoever, plus his Transportation Secretary Mineta, who has conducted an incessant anti-Amtrak crusade for the past year.

David Gunn, heralded by Congress, known as the man who turned around the New York City subway system, among other notable transit achievements, stood up for rail passengers throughout this nation.

And this past September, when the Amtrak board secretly voted to spin off the entire northeast corridor while withholding information from Congress and the affected states, David Gunn had the courage to stand up to these cronies against their attempts to destroy the system.

David Gunn has long been credited with improving Amtrak's management, initiating frugal cost cutting measures, imposing financial controls and upgrading Amtrak's aging equipment including tracks, signals and electrical systems. The lead man who fired him, Amtrak Board President David Laney, earned his stripes by raising over \$100,000 for the President's election campaign. Now he's become the hatchet man in a coup that has been staged by ideologues hell bent on destroying the national passenger rail system.

This is yet another example of Bush cronyism and incompetence. Another Katrina. And this is how the game is played these days in Washington.

Inspiring and effective officials are summarily dismissed for their honest and forthright leadership because they refuse to play politics.

Make no mistake about it. David Gunn was not a loyal political hack.

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

Amtrak supporters are rallying to reverse this decision. Our best chances lie with Congress in both the House and Senate where David Gunn is highly admired. I strongly urge you to contact your representatives in both chambers as soon as you can and let them know that you want David Gunn reinstated.

The Congressional Switchboard number is: 1- 202-224-3121. Call and ask to speak to your representatives in the House and Senate.

I am also disappointed in the response offered today by NARP, the National Association of Railroad Passengers, of which I am a member. I urge all NARP members to read Mr. Capon's very tepid response and let them know that this is not good enough from an organization whose goal it is to represent rail passengers.

Regards,
Craig O'Connell
Friends of Amtrak
http://www.FriendsOfAmtrak.com

Photos by Steven Biffoni



Double header AEM 7's w/ corridor train
at South Norwalk



Naugatuck Trip 1998

Metro-North's Farewell to the FL-9 as seen from The SoNo Switch Tower Museum

Photos by Robert Gambling



Open House at Harmon

By Anthony Gruerio, Jr.

On October 15, 2005, Metro-North sponsored its annual Open House at the Croton Harmon shops. This ever popular event was characterized by the usual events: freebies, equipment on display, and the opportunity to photograph it all! What made this year's version all the more special was that I was able to be there with my three year old nephew. I don't know who was more excited to be there! My nephew Gregory is a budding railfan (I don't know who influenced him...) and he was very happy to see all of the rolling stock and activities that Metro-North had on display. His uncle was also busy documenting this on more than a few frames of film.

The railroad did its part in providing a great day for those who ventured out despite the weatherman's forecast of possible rain that day. What was great was that the weather actually improved and by the early afternoon, the sun shone brightly. Many opportunities were on hand that allowed a personal and in some cases a one-on-one experience with a 12 inch to the foot gauge railroad. There were also many railcars, locomotives and multiple-unit sets on display to touch and explore at your own pace.

Exhibits were held showing the signaling, power distribution, and repair systems employed by Metro-North. Welded-rail formation, key fabrication, and free train rides were all available to visitors to watch and experience as the railroad "went about its business". Hopefully, those attendees at the event came away with a better understanding of just what goes into getting people from here to there! I know I appreciated the chance to obtain a few more photos of the old shop and surrounding grounds.

Metro-North has hinted for the past few years that this event will be interrupted by the rebuilding of the main shop building. So far, this has yet to occur. Therefore, you shouldn't miss unique chance to get up close and personal with your favorite pastime. Look for it to occur in mid October of 2006.

Photos by Anthony Gruerio, Jr.



Anthony with NYC FL9



Brookville Mining Unit at Harmon



New Haven diesels in Croton Harmon Shops.



Gregory in Bomb car



Weld rail demonstration



MU comparison at Croton Harmon



2027 at West Cornwall

Photo by Dana Laird

Westconn Schedule of Events

Monday - Nov. 28 - 8PM - Chapter meeting at **The United Congregational Church** 275 Richards Ave. Norwalk, CT.

Saturday Dec. 3 & Sunday Dec. 4 - **The SoNo Switch Tower Museum** at 77 Washington St. Norwalk, CT will be open
Special Holiday Hours - **Noon until 5**

Saturday Dec. 10 & Sunday Dec. 11 - **The SoNo Switch Tower Museum** at 77 Washington St. Norwalk, CT will be open
Special Holiday Hours - **Noon until 5**

Monday - Dec. 19 - Chapter meeting at **The United Congregational Church** 275 Richards Ave. Norwalk, CT.



The Western Connecticut Chapter, NRHS Inc. supports Operation Lifesaver

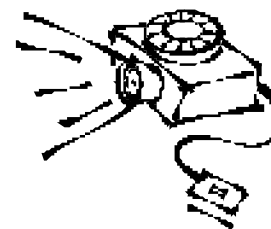
**Our Next Chapter meeting will be
Monday, November 28, 2005 - 8:00 P.M. at:
The United Congregational Church
275 Richards Ave. Norwalk, CT**



Entertainment will be provided by:

Jim Mescher

Bob Gambling will provide refreshments.



The SoNo (Railroad) Switch Tower Museum is officially closed for the season.

Watch for special Holiday hours.

Tower Operator Volunteer Hours for October 2005

Bob Gambling: 51 hrs.	John Garofalo: 51 hrs.	Bob Westerfield: 12 hrs.	Tony White: 21 hrs.
Roberta Ballard: 18 hrs.	Anthony Gruerio: 12 hrs.	Buck Neulinger: 27 hrs.	Janet Neulinger: 27 hrs.
Dick Carpenter: 23.25 hrs.	Steve Biffoni: 12 hrs.	Dana Laird: 3 hrs.	Anthony Maida: 3 hrs.
Jim Mescher: 6 hrs.	Roy Heget: 6 hrs.	Bavet Heget: 6 hrs.	Kevin Feeny: 6 hrs.

Thank you Tower Operators for all your help.
Also, a special thanks to all those who have volunteered their time for both the
Tower and Chapter activities.

Your help is always greatly appreciated!