

The Westconn Manifest

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



www.westctrhs.org

Since 1953

March 2006



Photo by Dana Laird of member Andy McClellan on duty.
It's official - Andy is now a Metro-North Conductor!

Photo by Dana Laird taken from her "secret spot"!



Australian Bulldog B61 from Robert Briechle who
saw some of these in 1994 when still in active
use. They look and sound just like their
American counterparts.

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
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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.

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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:

1/23, 2/27, **3/27**, 5/1 (Annual Dinner),
5/22*, 6/26*, 7/24*, 8/28*, 9/25*, 10/23,
11/27 and 12/18.

*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
Norwalk, CT 06854

203 246-6958

www.westctnrhs.org
www.sonotower.org



Welcome New Member:

Stewart J. Werner - White Plain, New York

Dues Renewal

**Just a friendly reminder that 2006 dues must
be paid before March 31, 2006.**

**If you have not sent in your dues, please
send them A.S.A.P.
Thank you!**



Photo credit Teddy Hancox, Queensland, Australia

This engine, 3801 is looked upon as Australia's most famous engine. It is streamlined in the style of the New Haven I5 class although a 4-6-2 instead of a 4-6-4. There were 30 in the class but only numbers 3801 to 3805 were streamlined. They were a product of World War II and were painted grey initially but after the war were given their nice green livery. 3801 has just had some mechanical work done and has emerged in grey - perhaps for nostalgic reasons. Here are some very nice photos that have just arrived. Incidentally, look at the one on the Como bridge. You may discern a lattice girder bridge lower and on the far side. This is the old railway bridge, replaced some years ago now, and it had a gauntlet track on it. I remember seeing and noting that in past years.

When initially in the grey livery they were known as a "grey nurse" - the name of a shark found off eastern Australia and which had a reputation as a man-eater, although its man-eating role has been questioned and some authorities believe that it has not been responsible for shark attacks for which it is credited. Yes, shark attacks are fairly prevalent on the east and south of Australia, with various types being responsible - such as the bronze whaler and the great white.

Sent to Bob Briechle by Teddy Hancox, Queensland, Australia

A very special thanks to Bob for sharing this with us.

It happened under the NYNH&H Railroad

By Robert Gambling

One morning I was taking my dad to the Darien RR station on my way to high school. Dad took train #365 from Darien, which was a long train, which made one more stop at Noroton Heights, then express into New York. This train left Darien at 7:47. The train was so long that the last car usually was beyond the platform and was on the bridge over the Boston Post Road. I dropped dad at the station and then headed directly to school. I had just enough time to get to my classes. As I left the station, turned onto West Avenue, then turned right onto the Boston Post Road, going under the railroad bridge, I heard a loud "BOOMP-KAPLOP" on the hood of my car. Oh oh!! Someone on the last car flushed a toilet and left a large deposit on the hood of my car. It went between the open decking of the railroad bridge. It was about a foot behind the hood ornament. You have to remember that this is 1956. Railroad coaches had open hopper toilets then and just dropped the contents onto the tracks, Or, in my case, through the open decking of a railroad bridge, and onto the hood of my car. There were no EPA and HAZMAT back in 1956. I had no time to deal with it so I just drove on. My homeroom teacher was a stickler for attendance so I had to keep going on. A police officer on the corner eyed me, and hood of my car and gave me a funny look.

I got to the school parking lot and found a space against the building right under Mr. Bibbin's algebra classroom windows. I figured I will wait until after school to deal with the mess. The odor of the deposit started to waft into the open windows of Mr. Bibbin's classroom being it was June and was a hot day. This caused somewhat of an uproar in the class. One student looked out the window and said "hey! Look at Gambling's car". At about 10:00 I got summoned to the assistant principal's office. Mr. Crandall was the epitome of discipline and order. As I was nervously eyeing the big wad of detention slips on his desk he asked me what was going on. He said, "Bob Gambling, you have "waste matter" on your car. What is the meaning of this?" Being he was prim and proper and a pillar of the school community, he did not say the "S" word. So, here I am educating the assistant principal on the ways of railroad rolling stock and the structure of railway bridges. After about ten minutes, Mr. Crandall was convinced of my explanations. He then asked me to move my car elsewhere. I said, "OK but I may miss my next class looking for a parking space. He then gave me a permission slip and told me I can park in the teachers' parking lot. I was told to not park next to the building. So I moved to car to the teachers' parking lot on the other side of the building and found a space along the perimeter near the woods.

I then went back to my classes. By this time I think the whole school knew what was going on. When I was having lunch in the cafeteria a kid brought me a roll of toilet paper. Good thing my sense of humor was in overdrive. I said that tomorrow I will bring clothes pins to put over your noses. After school I went back to the car to see closely that the dropping was huge. Like it came from an elephant. Now that it was dried out, I got a stick and just flung off into the bushes. I came to the conclusion that brown and light blue makes for a lousy color scheme. I got home and washed the car and all you can see was a very faint stain on the light blue paint on the hood.

When I told my parents later what happened and after they recovered from their laughter I asked my father, "Who rides in that last car on the train?" He said that there were many important people, mostly captains of industry and commerce. He added that there were many high ranking Republicans that ride that coach. Well! That explains the dropping from the elephant bit. You are probably wondering, what does this have to do with the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad. Well! This did happen on the New Haven Railroad, or should I say under the New Haven Railroad. Actually it could have been a lot worse. If I was in an open top convertible and was about ten feet further on I could have had a really bad hair day.



Photo by Robert Gambling

This is a recent photo showing the actual bridge where the "incident" accrued.

The Rails of Pittsburgh

By: Anthony Gruerio, Jr.

Earlier this year, I went out to the Steel City to visit one of our younger Chapter members, John Ireland. He is a freshman at Carnegie Mellon University. His frequent reports of a cornucopia of rail activity had peaked my interest and the long President's day weekend fit my schedule perfectly.

Let me tell you one thing, this kid ain't kidding! Pittsburgh is full of all kinds of rail activity, and my weekend only scratched the surface of the photographic opportunities available to the railfan. This city is served by Class 1's CSX and Norfolk Southern (NS) as well as other shortlines including the Union Railroad and the Allegheny Valley. I was interested in seeing primarily NS, so this trip was heavy on the current operations on the former Pennsylvania Railroad. As the weather was best on day two, we decided to shoot other rail operations on day one.



Old PRR Herald on the Trainshed at the Station



NS freight 14G heads east under the shadow of the USS Bldg. and the Pittsburgh skyline.

Pittsburgh was of course built on the creation of steel and although the many foundries that used to operate here are gone, United States Steel (USS) does operate a foundry just outside of the city in Braddock, PA on the Monogahela River. Served by the Union Railroad, the Edgar Thomson plant is bustling as raw materials are transported in and new steel is brought out for shipment to other USS plant facilities and customers across the country. My tour guide (who assured me that his studies were up to date) instructed me where to guide my vehicle to gain ideal vantage points of this massive facility. The clouds assisted the sun in a game of hide and seek, but the sun did come out in the afternoon and I was able to burn a little film.



Union Railroad is transporting coke in and steel slabs out of the Edgar Thomson steel works



CSX local L121 is dwarfed by the massive USS Edgar Thomson foundry

The next day was perfect as the sun was out and the clouds were still in bed. We headed out on the Fort Wayne line to some of John's favorite locations. First stop was Leetsdale, PA where a set of Pennsy signal bridges provided excellent props for the multitude of freights traveling over this route. After an uncharacteristic lull in the action, the scanner came alive as detectors, crews, and dispatchers participated in this day's edition of busy mainline railroading. NS operates this line using the massive Conway yard which literally goes on for miles and is a crew change point for trains traveling both east and west. As John showed me the various places he had been to, the day was rapidly coming to a close. We ended the day at the Amtrak station in Pittsburgh which is served by the Pennsylvanian and the Capital Limited.



NS freight 11J heads west under the PRR signal bridge at Leetsdale, PA



The former PRR station in Pittsburgh



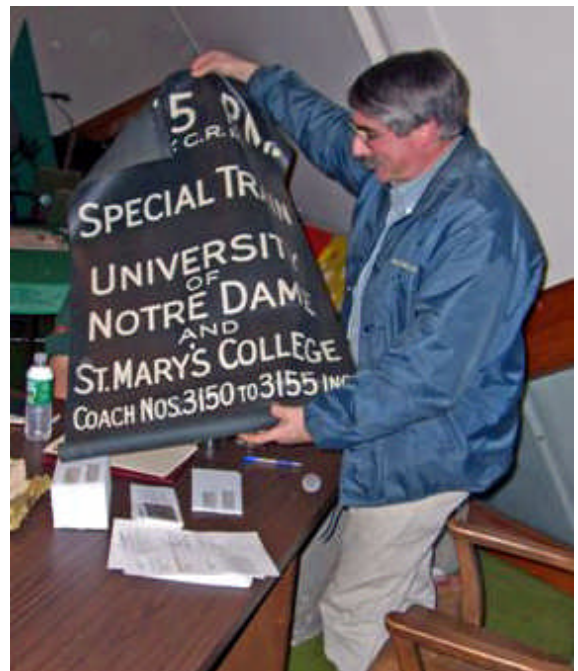
Amtrak's trackage station entrance

Although the "glory days" of this area are gone (in terms of industry and passenger rail) there still exists many areas to capture all aspects of railroading, both big and small. The past is alive in the remnants of the PRR and the B&O while the operations of today are impressive in their own right. If you get the chance, a trip to the area is well worth your while. You can see more of Pittsburgh through John's pictures online at: <http://www.railpictures.net>.

Photos by Tony White



Anthony Fitzherbert presents John Garofalo a special trip roll sign during the meeting prior to his very exciting and educational slide presentation on the history of Metro-North Railroad.



John Garofalo unrolls the sign and is truly surprised and happy since his Collage and Graduate school towns are shown.



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.

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 as if you went their directly. The only difference is that your chapter benefits from your purchases.

So, before you make your next on-line purchase, please take a minute to see if the store you are making purchases from is listed.

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

Office Max Viking Office Products Lillian Vernon Target Vermont Teddy Bear Hallmark
CompUSA Springhill Nursery Breck's Bulbs Michigan Bulbs Gift Tree 1 Stop Florist

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.

Westconn Schedule of Events

Monday March 27, 2006 - 7:30 pm - Chapter meeting at **The United Congregational Church** 275 Richards Ave. Norwalk, CT.

Saturday April 29 - SoNo Switch Tower Museum opens for the season - 12:00 - 5:00

Sunday April 30 - SoNo Switch Tower Museum - 12:00 - 5:00

Monday May 1, 2006 - **Annual Chapter Dinner** - The Waters Edge at Giovanni's II 2748 Post Road Darien, CT 6:60 PM
Only \$40.00 per person - payment must be received by April 21, 2006. Call 203 246-6958 for information.



The Western Connecticut Chapter, NRHS Inc. supports Operation Lifesaver

Our Next Chapter meeting will be
Monday, **March 27, 2006 - 7:30PM** at:

The United Congregational Church
275 Richards Ave. Norwalk, CT

Entertainment will be provided by:

Tim Shields
New York, Boston and Albany

Bob Gambling will provide refreshments.

