

The Ghost Train Journal

Photo Credit: Turner Railroad Collection/Connecticut Historical Society



The Steaming Tender Restaurant located in Palmer, Mass. has completed its second phase by converting the old waiting room into a full service eatery and bar. See story inside about a great place to eat and watch trains. (R. A. LaMay Photo)



Will auto racks be passing through Willimantic in the near future? Read Rich Cizik's second article inside entitled [The New England Gateway](#). (R.A. LaMay Photo)

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The New England Gateway

By Rich Cizik

As the Johnson City Test Coal Trains continue to roll through Willimantic, yet another plan in the works. This too involves the P&W along with the Gateway lines involved in the test coal trains. Activity has taken place along the Willimantic – Versailles section of the line in preparation of reactivating the tracks for a possible contract involving auto racks moving along this line.

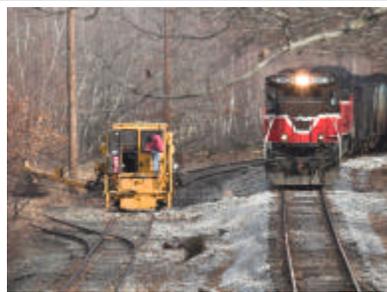
Currently the southern end of the line between Versailles and Plainfield sees regular activity. West of Versailles the line is overgrown and the last train to travel this line was a special train trying to drum up business on this line in the late 1980s.

Once the auto racks start moving along this route the door may be opened to allow double stacks to travel this route also. Intermodal service is big today and getting bigger everyday. The NEC Stage I upgrades allow for auto rack clearances and the Stage II upgrades plan for double stacks. One major obstacle in the way is the tunnel located at Bellows Falls, VT. Will have to see how this turns out.

Here are a few more important stats – According to the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in their Transportation Energy Data Book, 22nd Edition, published 9/02 (data collected 2000), the average energy used by the trucking industry amounts to 3,200 Btu per ton mile, whereas the railroad industry needs only 352 Btu the same amount freight the same distance. By these numbers Class 1 railroads can move just over 9 times the load for the same amount of energy. According to the American Association of Railroads (ARR), if only 10% of the current interstate highway freight was moved to rail use, fuel consumption in the U.S. would decrease by almost one billion gallons per year. Many thanks to all who contributed information to this article.

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As the northbound loaded coal train approaches Willimantic a work extra can be seen clearing brush along the Willimantic – Versailles Line. (Tom Nanos Photo)

The Nuts & Bolts of a Museum

By Robert Hassett

A place for everything and everything in its place as the old saying goes. A railroad runs on rails except when you go into the section-house and can't find a nut, bolt, screw, or a nail for a particular

The next scheduled meeting of the Connecticut Eastern Chapter, National Railway Historical Society will be at Windham Community Memorial Hospital, 112 Mansfield Ave., Willimantic, CT on **Sunday, Mar. 19th @ 7:00 PM.**

Please note: The monthly business meeting will be held on Dec 4th at the same location. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend!

project being worked on. One of the items on the weekday work crew

Ghost Train Journal

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Calendar of Events

- Mar 5 – Business meeting – 7PM
- Mar 19 – Membership meeting – 7PM
R. LaMay – Turbos & SPVs slide show
- Apr 2 – Business meeting – 7PM
- Apr 23 – Train Show – Windham High School from 10AM-3PM
- Apr 23 – Membership meeting – 7PM

agenda list this winter is to straighten up the section-house inventory. This will be on on-going project as everything will be moved at least twice, per current practice.

Over the past few years we've accumulated drawers, bins, and cabinets. It was time to put all these together and start. Currently our collections was contained in boxes, bags, cans and jars and all of these were found in drawers, shelves, and on the floor in just about every

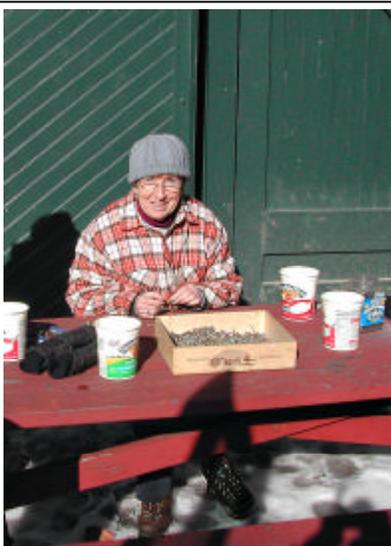
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imaginable location. A stand was made for a drawer unit donated by the Stripling/Cumberland Farm Project on Main St. All of the fasteners were put in labeled drawers inside the section-house. Not knowing a sheet metal screw from a sheetrock screw it's proving to be and will continue to be a learning experience. For some.

Ray Axelrod donated a large wooded storage unit that was hanging around inside the roundhouse. The item was just waiting for this project. It was relocated to the back of the roundhouse between pits 4 and 5. This cabinet will be used to store larger items such as spikes and bolts over 1/2 inch. The numerous nuts (yet another learning experience) will most likely get organized on the shelves in the section-house.

The goal is to save time looking for something that we may or may not need for and save money by not buying an item we already have... PS – Don't buy any roofing nails we have almost 100 lbs.



Carolyn Stanich inventories nuts, bolts, screws, and other assorted items. (Robert Hassett photo)

If you'd like to become a member of the Weekday Work Crew or learn other projects available please contact Bob Hassett at bobspratt@aol.com

The Steaming Tender Restaurant

By Robert A. LaMay

Where can one go today to enjoy a delicious meal and watch trains? Located at 28 Depot St., just north of the Rt 32 cutoff, lies The Steaming Tender Restaurant. A 19th century train station which has been converted into a full service eatery. Outside along the main driveway sits a 1915 Porter steam engine complete with tender. Along the edges of the parking lot are numerous picnic tables which become great places to have a snack or lunch.

Currently 4 different railroads pass the restaurant on a regular basis. On the southwest side of the station the New England Central Railroad. If the Johnson City coal contract is signed you can add P&W to this list. On the northeast side lies the CSX-Amtrak main line between Boston, Springfield, and Albany. A local line Mass. Central (now owned by the Finger lakes RR) exchanges cars with the other freight carriers.

In 1987 Blake and Robin Lamothe purchased the building and have been meticulously restoring it since. From the ticket window inside the main entrance, shoe polishing chairs, time clock, hundreds of photos telling the stations story as to who visited, to the beautifully period bathrooms. The restaurant in the dining room with its high ceilings and detailed woodwork.

Recently the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has recognized the restaurant on two occasions. First the House of Representatives recognized the auspicious Grand Opening of the 2nd Phase of restoration on 10/12/05 and second the State Senate gave an

official citation in recognition of the rehabilitation of the Palmer Railroad Station. Last but not least – The Phantom Gourmet visited the restaurant sometime in July 2005 and described it as 'The Hidden Jewel' and a must place to eat.

So, if you want to view trains and enjoy a great meal (from lunch to dinner) please be sure to stop by and sit either inside or outside. To quote the owners 'Come by and sit inside this station steeped in tradition that offers you a tempting menu for a reasonable cost'.



Trains and more trains is what you see when you visit the Steaming Tender Restaurant located in the old depot next to the railroad track in Palmer, MA. (Robert A. LaMay Photo)

New Tool Rack

By Robert A. LaMay

A new tool rack was added to the inside back wall of the roundhouse. Numerous wrenches have been donated by Pratt & Whitney Aircraft of East Hartford, CT. Also a special wrench was built and donated by the Howell Cheney Technical School in Manchester, CT. This wrench was used to loosen the nuts for the pin of the rocker mechanism located on the turntable bridge.



Tool rack inside roundhouse. (Robert A. LaMay Photo)



Heritage Metal Fest – May 6, 2006-03-05

Don't forget – museum opens its 2006 season with demonstrations and music throughout the day. Come down from 9AM to 5PM. (Thomas Nanos Photo)

Don't forget – Spring Model Train and Die Cast Toy Show – Sat. Apr 23, 2006 from 10AM to 3PM at the Windham High School on 355 High St. Operating Layouts, Dealer Tables, and Model Exhibits.



Photo taken June 1949 shows excursion train moving of the wye which connected the Air Line and the Hartford Line at Columbia Junction. The museum would be located just behind the passenger cars of the special. (Photo by T.J. McNamara)



Trackmobile inside Pit #1 on new rail. (R.A. LaMay Photo)



Stu Coleman works on new brackets for the museums ballast dump car that being built at the