

The Ghost Train Journal



Photo Credit: Turner Railroad Collection/Connecticut Historical Society



Adrian releases the straps on the Central Instrument House (CIH) from the CT DOT (Bob Hassett Photo)



Sadly, we had some unwanted visitors in the last few weeks. Please see the article for details. (Bob Hassett Photo)

Connecticut Eastern Railroad Museum
PO Box 665
Willimantic, CT. 06226-0665

Mark Your Calendar:

- 04/23/2017 – Monthly Meeting – Windham Hospital – 7:00 PM -- CHANGED**
- 05/01/2017 – Museum Opens – 10:00AM**
- 05/21/2017 – Monthly Meeting – Windham Hospital – 7:00PM**
- 06/18/2017 – Monthly Meeting – Windham Hospital – 7:00PM**

Vol. 24 No. 2 – February - April 2017

The next scheduled meeting of the Connecticut Eastern Chapter, National Railway Historical Society will be held at Windham Memorial Hospital on **Sunday, April 23, 2017 @ 7:00 PM**

Please note! If you have photos, short articles, or just want to make a comment – please forward them to:
James L. Key - Editor
@jameslkey@gmail.com

More Vandalism

Mark Granville

The museum was broken into three times at the end of February. Vandals cut the chain link fence near the new trail that runs along the South side of the property and smashed through the Section House door. Some hand tools were stolen and the doors of a metal cabinet were literally peeled back to gain access. The Willimantic Police have opened active investigations into the break-ins.

The museum has been broken into several times over the years, but it seems to have gotten worse in the past year. Volunteers are installing intrusion alarms in the buildings and additional cameras are also being installed. We plan to hire a monitoring company so that the police can be notified at the time of the intrusion.

It is a sad commentary on human nature that funds need to be spent on such security instead of restoration work. The tools lost were worth about \$200 but the building damage will cost \$1000. The Section House is a historic building and you can't just go out and buy materials. The work never ends for Duke York, our resident master carpenter.

The last break-in received front page attention in the Willimantic Chronicle. Local supporters, Dave Wollner and Karen Gilbranson have organized a fundraiser for the museum on Wednesday, April 12 from 6-9PM at the Willimantic Brewing

Chapter Leadership

President- Mark Granville
mfgranville@charter.net
860-456-3956
Vice President- Duke York
860-423-1878
Treasurer- Jeff Laverty
jeffrr@cshore.com
860-429-7961
Asst.-Treas.- Vacant
Secretary- Jean Lambert
860-942-1071
National Director-Ray Axelrod
860-228-3197
GTJ Editor- James L. Key
860-208-4748
jameslkey@gmail.com
Endowment Committee-
Howard Raphaelson
Adrian Atkins
Cliff Lund

Museum Website -

www.cteastrrmuseum.org

Like Us on Face Book

Company on Main Street (the old post office). It is a drop by event that is held once a month at WilliBrew to support a local non-profit or charitable organization. They are called "Fill-anthropic". Stop by, put some cash (suggested \$5) in the pitcher, sit for a spell and buy a drink and/or dinner if you have the time. It is a great gathering.

Tour the Meriden, Waterbury and CT River Railroad

Sunday, April 9, 2017 9am – 11am

The Cheshire Historical Society is sponsoring a bus tour narrated by Bob Belletzkie. Making station stops at Cheshire Street, the Hanovers, West Main St. in Meriden, West Meriden (Quarry) Jct., East Meriden Jct., Bee Street, Bullus, Highland, Smiths, Westfield (Berlin Branch crossing), West Cromwell, and finally Cromwell \$45

For more information:

<http://cheshirehistory.org>

cheshirehistory@che.necoxmail.com or
(203) 250-9350

Spring Walk Schedule

Ray Axelrod

Spring outdoors! CT Eastern RR museum and The Last Green Valley are involved in more programming. It's time to get us and our friends into shape, so come on out for a walk and learn some more railroad history or teach Ray a new anecdote. We are doing walks in the spring similar to Walktober, but earlier. Marcy from The Last Green Valley wants us out promoting tourism and marketing ourselves!
<http://thelastgreenvalley.org/explore-the-last-green-valley/spring-outdoors-2017/>

Where is Hop River?

**Friday, April 14, 2017 – Good Friday,
11 am – 1 pm**

Difficulty: Moderate. Leashed dogs, Especially for families with children
Address: Hop River Road, Coventry, CT. *Park at Rail Trail.*

Expect this! Walk the rails and learn about Hop River Village, once an important mill village. See two factory sites and the dam. This is a scenic walk on the Hop River Rail Trail to enjoy with your leader, Time/Distance: 2 hours, 2 miles.

The Three Bridges of Downtown Willimantic – and More!

Saturday, April 22, 2017, 10:30 am -12 noon

Difficulty: Easy. Especially for families with children
Address: Main St. (Rte. 66) at Jillson Square, Willimantic (Windham), CT. *Park in lot by First Baptist Church.*
Expect this! We will review the great historical photos at Liberty Bank downtown and then explore the Victorian Footbridge, Frog Bridge, and Bridge of Flowers. Lots of history and beauty to behold with your leader. 2 miles. Time/Distance: 2 hours, 2 miles.

Opening Day at the Railroad Museum!

Saturday, May 6, 2017, 10 am – 3pm

Difficulty: Easy.

Address: 55 Bridge St., Willimantic (Windham), CT. *Follow the railroad*

tracks down a dirt road for about 1/2 mile to the parking area and entrance gate.

Expect this! Opening day for this interactive outdoor museum for kids of all ages! Enjoy blacksmiths, train rides, music & more. Truly a hidden gem in our region!

Mother's Day at the Railroad Museum

Sunday, May 14, 2017, 10 am – 4 pm

Difficulty: Easy. Especially for families with children. Address: 55 Bridge St., Windham (Willimantic), CT. *Drive in about 0.5 miles on the gravel road beside the tracks to the walk start point.*

Expect this! Take Mom for a walk on the new rail trail up to the Railroad Museum, then tour the museum, all the railroad cars, the roundhouse, and turntable! Mom's take a train ride for FREE with regular admission. Entry fees apply to all.

Next Stop: Hampton Station on the Air Line Trail

Sunday, May 28, 2017, 11 am – 1 pm

Difficulty: Moderate. Leashed dogs. Address: Estabrooks Rd., Hampton, CT. *Rte. 6 to Potter Rd. (Goodwin Forest), right on 11th Section Rd to Estabrooks Rd.*

Expect this! Starting out in the beautiful Goodwin State Forest with wonderful views, we will explore this section of the Air Line Trail, going to the Hampton Station Site. Lots of train tales will be told, including the tales of the Ghost Train.

Chaplin's Air Line Rail Trail

Monday, May 29, 2017 – Memorial Day, 2 – 4 pm

Difficulty: Easy. Leashed dogs, Especially for families with children. Address: Chewink Rd., Chaplin, CT. *Rte. 6 to Chewink Rd., park at lot where the Air Line Trail crosses road.*

Expect this! Enjoy a walk on this beautifully scenic piece of the Air Line Trail. Learn about the history of the trains in the northeast CT and about the route of the Ghost Train as you walk with railroad historian Ray Axelrod!

Air Line Lore Along the Lebanon & Columbia Line

Saturday, June 3, 2017 – CT Trails Day, 11 am – 12:30 pm

Spring 2017

Difficulty: Easy. Leashed dogs, Especially for families with children. Address: Pine St. (Columbia) becomes Leonard's Bridge Rd (Lebanon), CT. *Rte. 66 to Pine St. in Columbia to trail head over the Lebanon town line where street name changes to Leonard's Bridge Rd.*

Expect this! No goosebumps, but hear about the Ghost Train, the line construction of 1912-1913, and CT railroad lore with rail historian Ray Axelrod on this nice section of the Air Line Trail.

The River, Rail, Mills & Trails and Open House

Saturday, June 10, 2017 – CT Open House Day, 11 am – 12:30 pm

Difficulty: Easy. Restrooms nearby, Especially for families with children. Address: 55 Bridge St. Windham (Willimantic), CT. *Drive in about 0.5 miles on the gravel road beside the tracks to the walk start point.*

Expect this! Walk the new rail trail up to the Railroad Museum, talking & learning about railroad history & current service, the river that powered the mills. Optional: Stay longer and tour the museum or take a train ride after for an additional small cost.

Father's Day Rail Flea Market

Saturday, June 17, 2017, 10 am – 4 pm

Difficulty: Easy. Address: 55 Bridge St., Windham (Willimantic), CT. *Drive in about 0.5 miles on the gravel road beside the tracks to the walk start point.*

Expect this! Dads and the whole family will love this fresh air flea market! Railroadiana, toy & model trains, train papers, books, railroad artifacts. Sellers are welcome for \$3 additional with regular admission. BYO table, chairs, tent, etc. Any railroad merchandise acceptable. Details at www.cteastrmuseum.org. Entry fees apply to all.

GIFT OF RAIL CHAIRS, SIGNAL POSTS AND CIH

Adrian Atkins

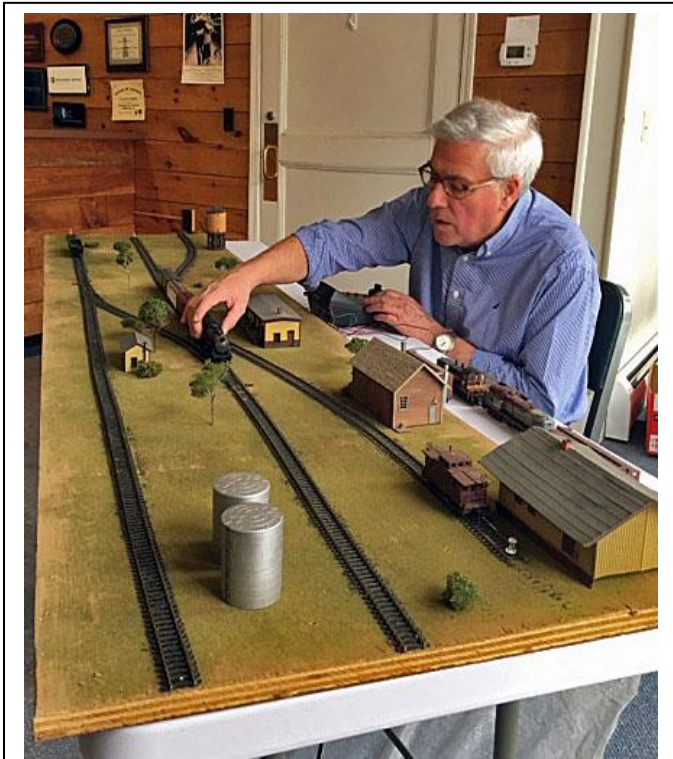
The state DOT offered us some materials coming off the Amtrak upgrading of the New Haven-Springfield line. They would

offered to deliver them to the museum. Finally, we now have all the items on the grounds. The rail chairs are racks storing replacement rails and were found along the tracks in former years. They consist of a post that sets in the ground with a "T" head. They come in pairs and form a stand to store extra lengths of rail. There are a pair of them in the ground outside our fence in the vicinity of the gallows tower. In the days of pump car maintenance, the section gang had a couple of spare rails spaced periodically along the track. Today, maintenance crews bring replacement rails with them on high rail boom trucks. In the spring, we will install these antique rail chairs along our main line at an appropriate place. We received 3 round pipe signal posts with bases that will be bolted to concrete foundations. Unfortunately, no signals. Andy Fischer this is your opportunity! The last item is a Central Instrument House (CIH). This steel building is about 8' x12' and is painted aluminum color. G & W has a smaller version of a CIH where our driveway leaves Bridge Street. We thought we were just getting an empty metal building where we could store "stuff". When we opened the door, we had a wonderful surprise! The inside was loaded with heavy duty steel shelves loaded with all sorts of electrical signal controls, switch heater controls, and who knows what. Everything is clean and organized. Many of the controls are under glass. Once we find someone who can explain what we have this could become a great display. Start thinking of a contact person! We may now have a dilemma: do we use this structure as a tool storage area in light of the rash of recent vandalism or do we keep it as a signal control display? I don't know of such a display anywhere. One possible solution is to obtain another CIH. I am presently working on that with the Amtrak Project Director for the New Haven-Springfield project.

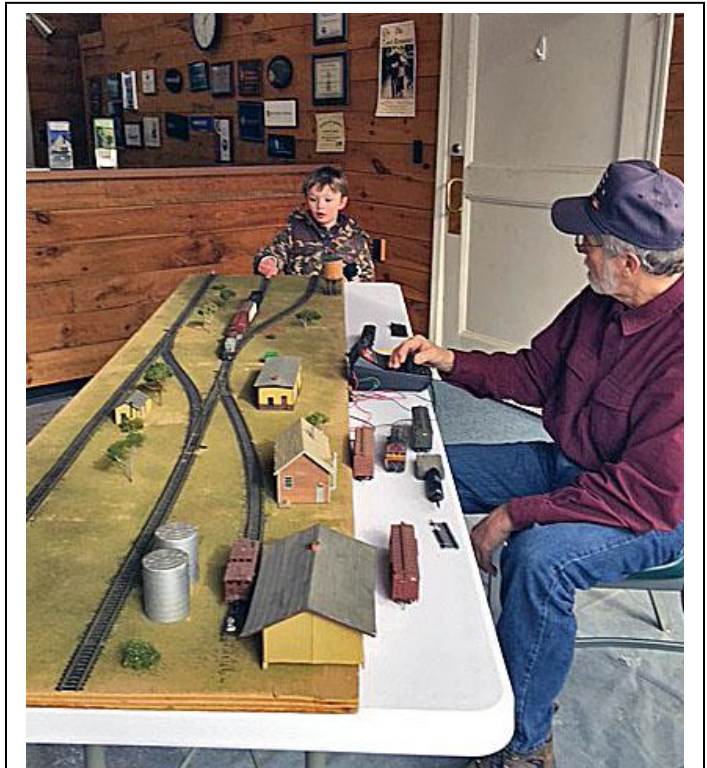
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Photo Credit: Turner Railroad Collection/Connecticut Historical Society



Cliff Lund pretends to demonstrate train operations during the Chocolate Festival but it's just an excuse to play with his trains. (Photo by Janet Atkins)



Mark Granville takes his turn at the throttle here at Sumner and Sumner during the Willimantic Chocolate Festival. (Photo by Janet Atkins)



Adrian Atkins explains about the museum to a Chocolate Festival participant. (Photo by Janet Atkins)