

Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society  
19 *Incorporated* 71

# NEWSLETTER

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Visit the B&MRRHS on the web at <http://come.to/bmrrhs>

Meeting/Membership Telephone Number (978) 454-3600

September-October 2000

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### — B&MRRHS CALENDAR —

- SEPTEMBER 9, 2000** H. Arnold Wilder and Prof. John Goodwin will be at Lowell to do a presentation on the Stony Brook Railroad, which remains an integral part of the modern-day Boston and Maine.
- OCTOBER 14, 2000** Bob Poore will be presenting "Life on the Maine Central".
- NOVEMBER 11, 2000** November 11, 2000 Buddy Winiarz will do a presentation at the Lowell meeting from the slide collection of Don Robinson.

All Lowell meetings are held on the second Saturday of any given month in the BOOTT MILLS THEATER (2nd floor) at 3:30 PM unless otherwise noted. If you forget what the program will be please call the Society's phone line.

## PROGRAM CHAIRPERSON NEEDED

The Society is still in need of a Program Chairperson to plan presentations and arrange guests for the monthly meetings. This is not a particularly difficult job, but is so much better when it's done by one individual rather than by committee. Anyone interested should contact the B&MRRHS at Box 469, Derry, NH 03038 or via e-mail.

### —BALLOT ENCLOSED—

Enclosed with this Newsletter is the ballot for Society Officers and Board of Directors for 2000. Please fill out and return the ballot before the deadline indicated on the ballot.

## *Society Addresses*

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Which address should you use? For membership payments, use the membership box in Lowell. For any correspondence concerning the Newsletter, use the Newsletter box in Gloucester. Everything else should go to the Derry address. This includes catalog orders and correspondence with the Archives, Historian, Bulletin, and Board of Directors. As always, include a SASE or postage if you want a reply to your correspondence.

## **IMPORTANT MEMBERSHIP NOTICE**

### **IMPORTANT MEMBERSHIP NOTICE**

As of September 1, 2000 dues in the following categories will be going up. The B&MRRHS hasn't raised dues since 1988 and with the rising costs of printing and mailing we have to do it. At the May meeting of the Board of Directors it was voted on to do so.

Basic from \$25.00 to \$30.00  
Basic + from \$27.00 to \$32.00  
Foreign and Canadian from \$35.00 to \$45.00

At the same time, we are raising the newsstand price of the Bulletin to \$10 per issue.

The Board of Directors has voted to institute a \$28 charge for returned checks. This applies to all Society transactions. This reflects the expenses that the Society incurs when a check is returned.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Please look at your mailing labels of the Newsletter. If you see a BLUE DOT it means that you are on the verge of being deleted from the B&MRRHS Membership list.

A RED DOT means that this is the last item you will be receiving from the B&MRRHS.

These two dots refer only to those members from 1999 who have not renewed their memberships. Back in October and November of 1999 all members were sent a renewal notice. The only other notices to be sent are those that are to be renewed in the year 2000.

The Society did have problems with the Membership and now stands updated on the membership.

Dues payment **ONLY** should be sent to:

**B&MRRHS—Dept. M  
PO Box 9116  
Lowell, Ma.  
01852**

If you have a question on your dues you may e-mail me at:

**CPC835@JUNO.COM**

Or write me at:  
**B&MRRHS DEPT--M  
PO BOX 469  
DERRY, NH  
03038**

Please include a SASE or postcard for reply-thank you.

*Buddy Winiarz,  
Membership Sec.,  
B&MRRHS*

## ***SOCIETY NEWS***

The last Newsletter was mailed on July 28. This is late, as a result of multiple problems in the production cycle. We are going to try some things to improve the timeliness of the Newsletter, so please bear with us. If you have items to contribute that are time-sensitive, please send them early enough to reach the appropriate issue - I will run calendar items in more than one issue if received early enough.

## Lowell Folk Festival

One of the highlights of the Society's calendar is our annual open house for the 410 locomotive and railcar during the Lowell Folk Festival, held the last weekend in July. As many of you have not had the chance to attend the open house, I thought that I would share my thoughts as a first-time attendee.

Located on the spur track alongside Dutton Street in Lowell at the site of the original Boston & Lowell station are B&M 410, an 0-6-0 switcher, and a B&M combine, both of which have been restored to display status by our 410 committee. Due to safety considerations, the locomotive is not accessible to the general public, although it serves as a very popular photo backdrop. During the festival, we open up the combine and stock it with many items from the archives, including railroad hardware, pictures, and explanations of the history of the B&M. A special item this year was a number of model locomotives from Don Robinson's collection. All of this material is set up in the baggage portion of the combine. In the coach portion, we have a variety of railroad material to give away, courtesy of Guilford and the MBTA. We also sell Society merchandise and recruit new members.

We are fortunate to be located next to the end of the trolley run for our hosts and friends from the National Park Service. Every fifteen minutes, the trolley arrives with a carload of visitors for us.

The exhibit requires a number of volunteers to cover both halves of the car, serving as interpreters of the exhibits and handling the sales and giveaways, as well as the setup and shutdown. Thanks go out to Jim Nigzus who puts in a full weekend running the open house. Jim's organization and experience make our presentation a wonderful demonstration to the general public and a treat for railfans, B&M or otherwise.

I would encourage any member who would like to volunteer for next year to contact Jim (through the

Lowell PO Box) and I certainly encourage all members to come see the exhibit. As a volunteer, I enjoyed showing off aspects of the Society to the public. I can't count the number of times that a parent or grandparent said of their youngsters, "They just love trains."

In addition, meeting some of the other Society members whose names I had only heard or seen before was a truly enjoyable experience for me, as I continue to learn so much from our veterans about the B&M and railroad-ing in general.

A special visitor this year was Robert Willoughby Jones, the author of two extraordinary B&M books, in from California. One of the highlights of the weekend was the proof version of his next B&M book (available before the end of the year), which served as the material for a session of "where are we now?"

Below is a note from Jim Nigzus to the volunteers

*I would like to thank everyone who helped this year at the Lowell Folk Festival society exhibit. Attendance this year was 2,132, an increase from last year, but the potential for even higher numbers was washed out due to heavy rain on Sunday! Total sales of society merchandise were \$272.21*

*Our exhibit continues to attract many visitors with very positive comments.*

*The B&M #410 Steam Engine looks in great form this year due to all the volunteers' hard work this year. The exhibit in the combine along with the restored locomotive is a difficult task to accomplish. We should be proud of the professional image we project.*

*Once again, thank you for helping this year and let us continue the effort, our society put forward an impressive display for the public.*

### Other News...

"New England lawmakers are pushing a plan to extend high speed train service from Boston to Montreal. New England legislators and governors want to extend 110 mile per hour train service planned between Boston and New York through Lowell, Nashua, Manchester, Concord, Montpelier, Burlington, to Montreal." (States News Service)

## 3713

The Lackawanna & Wyoming Valley Railway Historical Society is in the process of restoring the B&M 3713, known as the "Constitution" and located at Steamtown in Pennsylvania. In July, they sent a package detailing their restoration and fundraising efforts to (presumably the entire) B&MRRHS Membership list. As this is a item of particular interest to B&MRRHS members, we will provide updates on the process as we receive it. The Society has also donated money towards the restoration. Of course, we can dream of the day when 3713 returns to B&M rails...!

# NORTHERN VERMONT RR GETS NOD ON WRJ-WELLS RIVER LINE

MONTPELIER - The state has chosen Northern Vermont Railroad Co. to run freight and perhaps passenger service over the 40-mile stretch of track from White River Junction to Wells River.

A selection committee of transportation officials that reviewed proposals from three candidates made their recommendation to Transportation Secretary Brian Searles on Tuesday. Searles approved and announced the decision yesterday.

The state paid \$3.3 million to Guilford Transportation Industries Inc. of North Billerica, Mass., late last year for the stretch of track.

Green Mountain Railroad of Bellows Falls, Vt., and Boston & Maine Railroad, a Guilford subsidiary, also submitted proposals. The state now has 90 days to craft a contract with Northern Vermont that will outline such terms as the lease the railroad will pay to the state, which owns the track. The governor, the legislative joint fiscal committee and the federal Surface Transportation Board will have to sign off on the lease once it is negotiated. "The majority of the (selection) committee felt that Northern Vermont had a high level of sophistication," said Sue Compton, the state's rail program manager, and a member of the Selection committee.

Indeed, the Bangor & Aroostook System, the 900-mile rail network that includes the Newport, Vt.-based Northern Vermont Railroad, has become one of the bigger players in the growth of rail in the Northeast since it was created in 1994, the year before freight service stopped on the 40-miles of track north of White River Junction. Iron Roads Railway Inc., an Alexandria, Va., holding company that owns the Bangor & Aroostook System created a rail network that ties the shipping ports of Montreal, Searsport, Maine, and Saint John, N.B., to inland destinations in Quebec and Northern New England by purchasing seven smaller railroads between 1994 and 1996, according to Dan Sabin, the B&A's vice president and co-founder of Iron Roads Railway.

The Northern Vermont Railroad was the last of those purchases and is one of the state's newest railroads. It runs on 94 miles of track between Wells River and Richford, Vt., at the Canadian border. The addition of the line

south from Wells River links the three ports and the paper and lumber industries of Maine and Quebec to eastern and southern New England.

"It's the last piece of the puzzle to integrate our system with the rest of New England," said Sabin, adding that company officials "anticipate that this line will become a funnel for a tremendous

amount of traffic."

Extending service to White River Junction has been part of the company's business plan for five years, Sabin said. The line could also return passenger service to Montreal. Sabin said that he and others at B&A have been talking to Amtrak about hauling the federally funded passenger-rail company's express freight cars from White River Junction to Montreal. The express cars, a growing part of Amtrak's business, would travel between Boston and Montreal via Palmer, Mass., Sabin said. It would be a simple matter to attach passenger coaches to the express cars, he said.

Once a lease is negotiated, Northern Vermont will take over from Green Mountain Railroad, which was named interim operator of the line shortly after the state purchased it. Jerome Hebda, Green Mountain's president, said yesterday that he had planned to run excursion trains out of White River Junction late this summer. Green Mountain had been delivering raw materials to Twin State Fertilizer in Bradford in recent weeks after cutting brush and repairing washouts along the line this winter.

The state will reimburse Green Mountain the \$250,000 to \$300,000 it spent repairing the line. Compton said.

Hebda said he might appeal the transportation agency's decision. "We're extremely disappointed," he said. "We're still gathering our wits about this."

Byron Hathorn of Ely, a member of the Vermont Transportation Authority, which is in charge of passenger rail in the state, called yesterday's announcement "a huge, huge disappointment."

Northern Vermont was not interested in local economic development, hadn't contacted local business owners and looked at the line only as a way to move freight for big companies over long distances, Hathorn said yesterday.

"I hope it works out, but I'm not very optimistic about it," he said.

But Twin State Fertilizer owner Craig Trischman said that with Northern Vermont, rail cars coming from Canada should be able to move unimpeded through Wells River without having to change operators, Northern Vermont had called him once before, he said.

"I don't think there will be any problem," he said yesterday, adding that Green Mountain had provided good service.

Hebda said that he still expects to run some special excursion trains fund-raisers for the Montshire Museum in Norwich - before turning the line over.

*(By Alex Hanson, Valley News Staff Writer)*

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## FOR MILFORD-BENNINGTON RR FOUNDER, A DREAM COME TRUE

The allure of trains led one man to acquire his own track - and the job of transporting gravel and rock through the Souhegan Valley.

The first thing you notice riding the rails is that people don't keep their backyards as tidy as the front yards. Taking a ride on the Milford-Bennington Railroad line between Milford and Wilton enables you to take in views not usually seen by the motoring public. It's easy to be reminded of a simpler time when the big iron horses did all the moving and most people weren't concerned with the price of a gallon of gasoline.

Engineer Dave Raymond of Nashua says the trains are still an object of fascination for many people, and they follow the

train sometimes to ask questions or take pictures.

"Once a week someone is taking pictures, and they show up later in train magazines," Raymond says.

"People may romanticize trains, but they don't realize how much actual work is involved," he says.

You might expect that anyone operating a freight train - with all the accompanying detail over maintenance of track and ruling stock, not to mention the constant safety considerations would be a certified "train nut" but with Raymond and his boss, Peter Leishman, that's not the case.

Leishman started Milford-Bennington in 1987 because he saw the practicality of utilizing the existing rail system and the

## Milford-Bennington RR (Continued)

environmental advantages in using that particular mode of transportation.

Raymond came to the job with a background in transport, in his case, driving commodities all over the country via large trucks.

Presently, Leishman, 42, controls an 18-mile section of track between Milford and Bennington that was abandoned by the Boston & Maine Railroad in 1981. Guilford Transportation took over the track between Milford and Nashua.

"I had family friends who worked for Boston & Maine," he says, so he got to ride on freight lines as a kid, even traveling the line he now owns as far as Hillsborough.

Leishman worked for the B&M for two years as rail agent in Fitchburg, Mass., dispatching trains and also filling in on the train crews when necessary.

He saw a legal notice announcing the rail abandonment and began working to start his own railroad. "It was being done across the country and I thought I could make it work with a smaller crew, spending less money."

He arranged funding for track rehabilitation and to buy a locomotive, also taking advantage of a law calling for state government to purchase available rail corridors. His first train left the depot in 1992. Leishman says several companies along the line use rail service, and he and Guilford use each other's tracks to serve clients.

In Leishman's case, that means hauling tons of gravel and crushed stone from the Wilton quarry of Granite State Concrete to its Milford location, where the rock is further processed into cement, stone dust and other products. He also hauls rock for Quinn Bros. in Wilton. The nine car train makes three trips, daily over the 12-mile route between the quarries, with Raymond handling the throttle of the 900-horsepower diesel-electric locomotive. Leishman serves as flagman through intersections and also as Raymond's eyes when the train is heading caboose-first toward Wilton.

Along the way, sights that would be familiar along Route 101A take on different perspective from the vantage of the train tracks.

A common bridge carrying auto traffic is revealed to have secure Roman arches when viewed from a nearby railroad bridge.

The beauty of the winding Souhegan River is appreciated to a much greater extent when you aren't worried about crashing into the car in front of you.

And those backyards. If passenger service were to return on the old line, there would be some hurried cleanups.

The railroad carries lots of insurance, as any mishap involving a train is never a small one.

When the caboose is leading the way, Leishman watches the track ahead carefully, radioing to Raymond the status of each crossing. At a public crossing, he blows the air horn loudly and the train's bell clangs. At the more secluded private crossings, he's just required to ring the bell.

"You play with model trains and you can't hurt yourself" Leishman says, "If you ran over something with these, you wouldn't even know they were there."

Where 101 and 101A meet, Leishman jumps off with his flag to ensure there are no problems as traffic stops and the train moves through.

The tram travels about 5 miles an hour through the residential zones, but out in the woods, speed can increase to 20 mph.

Leishman says the tracks in the region were built by three different 19th-century railroad companies - all now defunct - and much of the infrastructure has held up well after more than a century.

He points out meticulously arranged stone walls along the tracks in the middle of the woods. "Think what it took to haul this rock out here and build these by hand."

"You couldn't afford to build this today," Leishman says,

His company is responsible for maintaining his section of track, replacing rails and railroad ties where necessary and keeping embankments and signal systems intact, as well as keeping the vegetation away from the tracks.

Each run made by the Milford, Bennington Railroad with its nine cars full of stone means that 27 dump-truckloads stay off the highways - and that adds up to more than 80 truckloads in one day's work.

Leishman says it takes traffic of 3,000 to 4,000 rail cars each year, on his track to make the operation viable. His crew has been as large as five full-timers, and he contracts for specific services, such as signal maintenance and work on crossings.

Leishman hopes to eventually expand rail service to the Monadnock Paper Mill in Bennington. He also has hopes that industrial land in Greenfield will be developed, bringing more potential rail customers. "Years ago, there were several rail customers in Greenfield," Leishman says.

There's also a move afoot to get him to start a dinner train. Riders would relive the rail era by embarking from downtown Wilton and dining while viewing the countryside.

Including more than a few backyards.

*(New Hampshire Sunday News, Gil Bliss)*

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## ACTIVITY ON THE ROTTERDAM BRANCH

Tonight, 6/11/00 at 6:45 PM we had a full eastbound freight on the Rotterdam branch {used to be main line } This is the first mixed freight that I have seen out of Rotterdam Junction since the Conrail strike. We did have all the coal trains until the CSX takeover of which all coal is routed thru the D & H Mohawk yard now, we had one coal train a week just to keep our line open until a few months ago that too ended, only a lonely engine comes up the Rotterdam branch a few times a week to service Schenectady International [chemical] and the Navy depot industrial park. Oh but tonight gave me memories of the old NY-10 and BM-17, as I rushed toward the track and left the burgers on the grill to burn. Nice to see a train again since our dreams of Guilford as a savior turned to nightmares.

*Steve Myers, Scotia, NY*

## PORTLAND SERVICE PROGRESS: SLOW BUT STEADY

A few months' delay in starting passenger rail service from Portland to Boston won't make much difference in a project that started more than a decade ago, observers say.

Amtrak had planned to begin offering four daily round trips by the end of January. Now, with "Big Dig" construction holding things up at Boston's North Station, the start date could be as late as April 13.

Still, construction of new stations and upgrades to tracks, bridges and crossings are expected to be finished in December as planned. With it will come a new era for the long-delayed and often frustrating effort to restore the Boston-Portland link.

Rail officials are talking about offering specialty weekend service before regular trips begin, complete with volunteer greeters and a proposed shuttle service between Boston's North and South stations.

When regular passenger service finally starts, many will be hoping it succeeds.

"I don't think the delay will have any effect of the long-term viability of the passenger line," said Charles Colgan, professor of public policy at the University of Southern Maine. "What's going to matter is what happens over the next five years."

This being New England, some say a spring start makes more sense than beginning a new transportation program in the dead of winter.

"I think spring is a much better time to begin service to avoid any potential problems with weather," said Peter Morelli, director of economic development in Saco, where construction of a \$1.2 million passenger station is scheduled to begin in September.

Work is expected to begin in August on a \$1.9 million station in Wells at Exit 2 of the Maine Turnpike, and a \$1.7 million rail/bus terminal in Portland on Sewall Street.

Rail officials hope the Maine stations will be largely completed by December. The train also would stop in Old Orchard Beach in July and August.

The push for Amtrak service to Boston began 12 years ago. The most recent delay came at the request of the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority. Highway construction near North Station has disabled two of 10 tracks, leaving no room for extra trains during peak commuter hours.

However, rail officials have asked the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority to allow Amtrak to provide specialty service during off-peak times when tracks are available. The goal is to provide passenger service for weekend trips to Boston or Maine for shopping or recreation. The MBTA is considering the idea.

"It just wouldn't be the daily, four round trips a day," said Michael Murray, executive director of Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority.

To accommodate Amtrak's faster passenger trains, the rail system is getting an estimated \$60 million upgrade. While most freight trains travel about 40 mph, Amtrak's trains will travel close to 80 mph.

Guilford Rail System, which owns the tracks, is replacing 71 miles of jointed rail between Plaistow, N.H., and Portland with continuously welded rail, which allows for a smoother,

safer, faster and quieter ride.

"It means the clackity-clack will be gone," said Wayne Davis, chairman of TrainRiders Northeast, a group founded in 1989 to push for passenger service to Boston.

So far, Guilford has installed welded tracks as far north as Wells. About 55,000 of 190,000 tons of crushed-granite ballast has been added.

Of 47 bridges along the line, 31 will be fixed or replaced, including timber trestles over the Nonesuch and Dunstan rivers in Scarborough.

Guilford also is fixing or adding gates and lights at 37 public crossings, including 14 that currently have no gates, and adding locked fences at 20 private farm crossings.

Guilford also is adding 8 to 10 miles of passing track, which is necessary because its twin line was removed in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

On any given day, Guilford has 140 employees working on the line, preparing to take on passengers by the end of the year.

"We're on target," said David Fink, vice president of Guilford. "The majority of our work will be done in December."

Rail officials remain hopeful that the Federal Railroad Administration will designate the line as a high-speed corridor for travel over 100 mph. Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts applied for the designation two years ago.

Colgan said the future of a high-speed line to Maine depends on the success of the initial Portland-Boston line, as well as the success of Amtrak's high-speed service from Boston to Washington.

"If both are proven winners, there'll be a lot of interest in extending the high-speed rail north, perhaps within the next five to 10 years," Colgan said.

*(Kelley Bouchard, Portland Press Herald)*

### *Fallen Flags*

#### **John J. Nee**

John J. Nee of Roslindale and Falmouth, a former vice president and general counsel of Boston & Maine Railroad, died Friday. He was 74.

Mr. Nee spent most of his career at Boston & Maine, acting as the rail line's general counsel from 1973 until his retirement in 1986.

Prior to his employment with Boston & Maine, Mr. Nee worked in the Suffolk district attorney's office.

Mr. Nee, a World War II Navy veteran, was a director of several corporations, including Northern Railroad and Boston & Maine Transportation Co., and was affiliated with many legal associations.

He leaves his wife, Eileen (Kenny); two daughters, Mary Connell and Eileen Mooney, both of Walpole; two sons, John J. Jr. of Winthrop and Thomas of Arlington; a brother, Thomas, of Dedham; and eight grandchildren.

## HISTORIC VERMONT RAILROAD STATION SET FOR RENOVATION

Fairlee, VT - The town of Fairlee, VT recently received a grant of \$165,000 to renovate the Town's historic railroad station building. The 150-year-old building, possibly the oldest surviving structure of its kind in the state, is on the National Register of Historic Places. Once renovated, the station

will be open to the public as a tourist attraction and information center, and will serve as the headquarters for the local historical society.

Built around 1850, the Fairlee station saw significant use during the late 1800s and early 1900s, when railroads were a vital part of the economy in the Upper Connecticut River Valley. The building continued in use until 1972, when the rail operator, the Boston & Maine Railroad, decided the building was no longer needed. As there were no surviving heirs of the original property owner, ownership of the station and the surrounding five acres reverted to the local school district. Eventually, the town assumed ownership of the building and property.

The planned renovation work will upgrade both the building and the surrounding property. The estimated cost of the rehabilitation project is \$206,000. Once renovation work is complete, the station will act as an information center for visitors to the area. Area historical societies will also have a portion of the building for their exhibits. Barrett adds that the town would like to lease a portion of the building to a private retailer.

In the future, it is possible that the building will once again act as a train station, too. In late 1999, the State of Vermont bought a section of abandoned railroad track that runs from White River Junction to Wells River.

That track passes through Fairlee, directly behind the old station building. The state's goal is to rehabilitate the track, and lease it to a rail operator. If all goes well, freight, and eventually passenger traffic will run on this track.

As Fairlee sits about halfway between White River Junction and Wells River, a stop in Fairlee for passenger and excursion trains is likely, said Barnett. The opportunity to visit a renovated, historic train station would be an attraction for tourists riding an excursion train, he said. Adding to the excitement of a possible excursion train operating in the valley is the likelihood that the train operating might be the famous Flying Yankee. That train, a well-known passenger train that operated earlier in the twentieth century, is now being rehabilitated, and prepared to run again. Having this train carrying passengers, and stopping at the historic Fairlee station, would be a boon to the region's tourism, and a treat for the many area railroad enthusiasts.

*(Unravel the Gavel, 3/16-4/20/2000)  
by Frank Orłowski*

## TRAIN MAY STOP IN MILLERS FALLS

GREENFIELD - Franklin County may be on track to get passenger rail service for the first time in decades.

Maureen Mullaney, transportation program manager for the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, said last night that Amtrak is considering changing the route of its Vermonter train, which now connects Montreal with New York City, and have it go instead to Boston. Should the change be made, the Millers Falls section of Montague, which now is just a pass-through point for the train, would become the elbow in the redirection to Boston.

Mullaney said that there are sufficient numbers of Franklin County residents who travel to Boston daily, and who would be able to switch from car to train, if the Vermonter changes its destination to Boston, makes a stop in Millers Falls, and runs at times appropriate for a morning trip east, and an evening return.

The Vermonter stops in Brattleboro to the north and in Amherst to the south. If the decision is made to head east, the south leg would be dropped, ending service to Amherst, said Mullaney.

By DAVID A. VALLETTE  
Thursday, June 8, 2000  
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## DELAYS, DELAYS, DELAYS

No date announced yet for the completion of the restoration on the Flying Yankee. Rumor has it that progress is steady and we should see the streamliner running sometime in 2001.

The Boston-Portland passenger service has been delayed again, to Spring 2001 (see story elsewhere in Newsletter)

The reroute of Amtrak's Ethan Allen Express onto B&M tracks through Eagle Bridge has been delayed to 2001 as well.

## KUDOS TO THE HISTORIAN

In our last B&M Bulletin, Harry Frye completed his listing of the railroads that became part of the Boston & Maine. We received a copy of the following note that speaks for many members.

*Dear Harry,*

*This is a brief note of thanks and praise on the completion of your exhaustive seven-part compilation of predecessor railroads that became our favorite road. Your usual thoroughness shows and will provide a firm foundation for researchers and scholars for years to come.*

*Well done and thanks for your valued counsel to our Society over many years.*

*Peter T. Victory*

## CHELMSFORD SEEKING STOP

CHELMSFORD Accepting they can't stop a commuter rail train from someday passing through town, residents at a Board of Selectmen public forum last night said the town should take what it can from the proposed project.

"It seems to me if the passenger train is going by we ought get something out of it," said Jeff Stallard of Tyngsboro Road.

Most residents said the town should lobby for a rail stop.

During a show of support only about nine people from a crowd of about 125 raised their hands to oppose a rail stop.

A station could slow down the train from traveling too fast in town, improve property values and help alleviate congestion on the roads if it is placed properly, residents said.

There was a strong turnout from advocates of Southwell Park and residents of the Williamsburg condominium complex, which are in an area that has been mentioned as a possible rail stop. Both groups could have been expected to oppose a train station.

Selectman Thomas E. Moran, who has been a voice of support for a rail station, was surprised at the strong pro-station turnout.

If people go to a public meeting ... the expectations are they are opposed to something, Moran said after the forum. Most people who want something to happen don't come out.

New Hampshire officials want to open a commuter rail link between Nashua and Lowell using federal money. There are already rails running between the two cities used for freight trains that would need upgrading for commuter service.

Selectmen Chairman Philip M. Eliopoulos said the federal government will have final control over the project. That will limit Chelmsford's ability to halt the project but could leave it with the ability to petition for a train station, he said.

The government has already committed \$2 million for the project. Sen. Bob Smith, R-N.H., is lobbying to get \$21.5 million earmarked in the next fiscal budget to cover the projects estimated cost.

Until 1965 there were five daily trips to Boston from Nashua, Town Manager Bernard F. Lynch said. Then there was a single daily trip and from 1980-1981, there were two round trips to Manchester before service was stopped, he said.

Now that the board has a sense of community support, it can work with state Sen. Susan C. Fargo, D-Lincoln, and state Rep. Carol C. Cleven, R-Chelmsford, following a feasibility study for the overall project, Moran said.

The study should show such things as who will ride the train, the types of services it could offer, the state involvement in the project and the relation to the new Tyngsboro bridge, he said.

I know its going to be a reality but we have to work out the logistics, if its going to be in town, where it will go, Selectman Bill Dalton said.

Sam Poulten, of Berkley Drive, likened the idea of opposing a train stop to running a water pipe through a desert without leaving a faucet for desertdwellers.

If we are going to have to put up with the train and noise I would like to be able to get on and off the train in town, Poulten said. So I am 100 percent behind it.

Dick Johnson, of Old Westford Road, was among those supporting a stop north of Vinal Square. It would draw traffic away from the congested area, he said.

Rose Sergi, who lives in the Williamsburg I condominium complex, said she supports a rail stop. In the past couple of

weeks Sergi spoke with about 100 of the complex's residents and only one opposed the suggestion, she said.

George Merrill, of Dunstable Road, who grew up on Middlesex Street in the 1930s and whose mother operated a telegraph at the Boston & Maine's old rail station, said noise and whistles are not a big factor.

I never heard one of them, he said. If you listen for them they can be a distraction but if you leave them in the background its not much.

Jan Spence of the Williamsburg condominium complex on Wellman Avenue opposed the train stop. It may improve property values in other parts of town but will hurt hers, she said.

She challenged selectmen to ride a train and report what they see.

Then you tell me if you see a middle income or upper income (home), Spence said.

Safety is also an issue, she said. The freight trains that pass through town now are slow but commuter trains travel faster, Spence said.

*(Jack Minch, Lowell Sun)*

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### *Notes from Along the Line, via our members*

#### **WORCESTER, MASS., UNION STATION OPENS AFTER \$35 MILLION RENOVATION PROJECT**

Numerous shortcomings couldn't dim the enthusiasm of Boston-bound commuters riding Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority trains out of Worcester, Mass., on June 19 as they strolled for the first time through the restored Union Station. The 89-year-old landmark reopened June 19 after a \$35 million renovation project. So far only MBTA (or "T") commuter trains serve the station, leaving it union in name only. In pre-Amtrak times, the station served trains of New York Central's Boston & Albany; the New York, New Haven & Hartford ("New Haven"); and Boston & Maine.

For now, Amtrak remains in its cramped quarters a few hundred feet east down the old B&A tracks (now CSX), and has no immediate plans to shift its operation to Union Station. Amtrak wants the Worcester Redevelopment Authority to buy its station, the Telegram & Gazette of Worcester reported.

The Boston section of the Lake Shore Limited, as well as two "Inland Corridor" trains linking Boston and New York City via Springfield, Mass., and Hartford, Conn., stop at Worcester.

Meanwhile, no office tenants have been found for the 90,000-square-foot building, and no intercity bus lines have been attracted to the station yet, either, which was supposed to be an intermodal center. Nonetheless, the station itself and its renovation drew praise from commuters.

*Bob Warren*

#### **MORE CARLOADINGS**

When GRS put CWR in on the Lowell freight line west of CPF LJ they removed the switch to Brockway Smith off Dascomb Road in Andover. That switch has now been put back in. The siding has been rerouted to a new warehouse being built for California Products. They are in the artificial athletic surface business.

*John Collins*



# HISTORIC VERMONT RAILROAD STATION SET FOR RENOVATION

Fairlee, VT - The town of Fairlee, VT recently received a grant of \$165,000 to renovate the Town's historic railroad station building. The 150-year-old building, possibly the oldest surviving structure of its kind in the state, is on the National Register of Historic Places. Once renovated, the station will be open to the public as a tourist attraction and information center, and will serve as the headquarters for the local historical society.

Built around 1850, the Fairlee station saw significant use during the late 1800s and early 1900s, when railroads were a vital part of the economy in the Upper Connecticut River Valley. The building continued in use until 1972, when the rail operator, the Boston & Maine Railroad, decided the building was no longer needed. As there were no surviving heirs of the original property owner, ownership of the station and the surrounding five acres reverted to the local school district. Eventually, the town assumed ownership of the building and property.

Until the past few years, the structure served as a retail antique shop for various business owners. The property, which is bordered by the Connecticut River and Vermont Route 5, is also home to a seasonal flea market. The station is within walking distance of Fairlee's businesses.

After achieving placement of the National Register of Historic Places in 1998, town officials decided to apply for funds to renovate the building.

The railroad station last saw a major renovation in the early 1900s, and is in need of repair work to stabilize and upgrade the building. Despite the need for renovation work, the building itself is in overall good shape considering its age and history, and is in a reasonably well preserved state. A modified post and beam structure, the station is similar to other railroad stations built at that time.

Jay Barrett, a local architect, railroad buff, and chairman of Fairlee's selectboard, said the planned renovation will give new life to the historic structure. Barrett terms the station "a very significant building," and believes the station will be an attraction to visitors and tourists to the area. Having undergone few changes since the early 1900s, the station has "pretty much remained frozen in time," said Barrett.

The planned renovation work will upgrade both the building and the surrounding property. The estimated cost of the rehabilitation project is \$206,000. The grant of \$165,000 the town received for renovation is from the federal Scenic Byways program. This program provides grant money to municipalities and property owners that live along designated scenic byways for projects to protect or upgrade significant buildings and property located along the designated route. A large portion of Route 5 in Vermont, running along the Connecticut River, is a designated scenic byway. The \$165,000 Scenic Byways grant will add to another grant the town already received for work on the building. That grant, totaling \$39,000, came from The Freedom Foundation, located in Stowe, VT. The combined grants mean the town only needs to come up with \$3,000 (which can include in-kind services) to complete in, project. Renovation work should begin on the station in the spring, said Barrett.

The first project will be installing a new foundation and basement under the station. Once this work is complete and the building is stable, interior projects will begin. Some planned changes to the interior include new electric wiring, new plumbing, and the installation of a heating system.

Other interior upgrades planned include cleaning and refinishing the beautiful tongue-and-groove paneling and wainscoting found in the building.

The building will also receive a new roof. All of the planned construction work will take into account the historic nature of the building, and will protect its architectural integrity.

Several projects will improve the grounds surrounding the station. Parking will be upgraded, and a picnic area is planned. Also planned is a dock on the Connecticut River, with a path and stairs leading to the station from the river. This will encourage boaters and canoeists on the river to visit the station, and the town. The well-established seasonal flea market that takes place on the station's property (where folks pick up their copy of the Gavel during the summer) will continue to operate, and a local farmers' market will likely move to the site.

Once renovation work is complete, the station will act as an information center for visitors to the area. Area historical societies will also have a portion of the building for their exhibits. Barrett adds that the town would like to lease a portion of the building to a private retailer.

In the future, it is possible that the building will once again act as a train station, too. In late 1999, the State of Vermont bought a section of abandoned railroad track that runs from White River Junction to Wells River. That track passes through Fairlee, directly behind the old station building.

The state's goal is to rehabilitate the track, and lease it to a rail operator. If all goes well, freight, and eventually passenger traffic will run on this track.

As Fairlee sits about halfway between White River Junction and Wells River, a stop in Fairlee for passenger and excursion trains is likely, said Barnett. The opportunity to visit a renovated, historic train station would be an attraction for tourists riding an excursion train, he said. Adding to the excitement of a possible excursion train operating in the valley is the likelihood that the train operating might be the famous Flying Yankee. That train, a well-known passenger train that operated earlier in the twentieth century, is now being rehabilitated, and prepared to run again. Having this train carrying passengers, and stopping at the historic Fairlee station, would be a boon to the region's tourism, and a treat for the many area railroad enthusiasts.

*by Frank Orlowski  
(Unravel the Gavel, 3/16-4/20/2000)*

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## WEB SITE SETS NEW RECORD

The Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society web page was visited by 563 unique visitors during the month of July. This was an increase of about 100 people since our last record in February.

In addition to the web site, there are a lot of good questions being posed in the forum. If you don't have a computer at home check your local library. Align your web browser for <http://come.to/bmrrhs>, and all aboard the Internet Express...

*Jonathan Miner  
President, Concord Model Railroad Club  
Member, Boston and Maine Railroad Historical Society*

## THANKS

Thanks this issue go to: Michael Lennon, Irv Thomas, Jim Nigzus, Samuel Sayward, Buddy Winiarz, Richard Muse, Peter Victory, Richard Langworth, Steve Myers, Bob Warren, John Collins, Jonathan Miner, Don LeJeune

## NEXT ISSUE

The deadline for the November/December Newsletter is October 7, 2000. Please send all items to the Newsletter address or E-mail. News items, especially local items not likely to be reported in Boston, will be greatly appreciated.

## FAREWELL TO ANOTHER B&M LANDMARK

Lowell Tower will be razed within the next few weeks. (Another piece of former B&M History will be gone). MBTA owned the property sold to the Power Co. The north leg of the wye is coming out. South leg to remain intact.

Meadowcroft St. old Bleacher yard area is the new location for the MBTA's Lowell Engineering Dept. Presently a trailer is positioned there with more to come to round out the operations.

## \$399,000 COMMITTED TO DEPOT AND BRIDGE RESTORATION

*We received the following press release from the Contoocook Riverway Association.*

Nearly \$400,000 is now budgeted for restoration of Contoocook's historic town depot and covered railroad bridge. Contoocook Riverway Association and the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources have received a grant of federal Transport Enhancement Act (TEA) funds from the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) to support a \$399,000 renovation of both structures.

Built in 1850, Contoocook Depot is one of the oldest original country railroad stations in New Hampshire—and the only one adjacent to a covered railroad bridge. Depot restoration will cost \$311,500 of which Contoocook Riverway will supply \$62,300 and federal grant funds \$249,200. Contoocook Lions Club recently painted the second (eastern) side of the building in authentic Boston & Maine colors after a restoration of original features by local donors led by the Dunning Home Group. The original white-on-cobalt blue porcelain sign, on permanent loan from Gene and Lorraine Miller, is back on the building for the first time in nearly 40 years.

Although the building is structurally sound, major repairs are necessary, starting with the roof, which will be returned to the original red cedar shakes. The project also includes new heating, plumbing, wiring and air conditioning, plus a complete restoration of the original south elevation (facing route 103), which has been considerably altered over the last four

decades. This side of the building was repainted in the original color scheme last year by the Hopkinton Rotary Club.

The New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources proposed to provide \$17,500 as its share of the \$87,500 restoration of Contoocook's historic covered railroad bridge—the longest of only seven survivors—which is state property. Budget for the bridge includes fire detection and sprinkler systems, lighting, painting the exterior siding with historically correct linseed-base stain used originally by the railroad, a State historic marker, repairs to the foundation and roof, tree pruning and landscaping.

Anyone interested in considering a tax-deductible gift that will preserve your name forever as a major supporter of historic Contoocook Depot may contact John Moffatt at 746-6443 or e-mail to [moffattj@aol.com](mailto:moffattj@aol.com) for full information.

*They added the following note to us:*

"We are in need of experts on B&M country depot interiors to help us with the interior engineering plan and in restoring original features. We have accurately documented the original exterior elevations on four sides, but the interior needs complete restoration. The good news is that the B&M's wainscoting is intact, under acres of 1960s knotty pine paneling."

## ITEMS OF INTEREST

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|-----------------|---|
| October 15      | Pepperell Siding Model Railroad Show. North Middlesex Regional High School, Rte 119, Townsend, MA. 10am-4pm. Adults \$4, seniors \$3, children \$1.   |
| October 21      | North Shore Model RR Club Show. Americal Civic Center, Main Street, Wakefield MA. 930am - 330pm. Adults \$3, children and seniors \$1.  |
| October 28      | Ammonoosuc Valley Railway Association Model Railroad Show. Littleton National Guard Armory, Littleton, NH. Exit 42 off of I-93, East on US 302. 10am-4pm. Adults \$2, students \$1, under 6 free. |
| November 12     | The Great Train Show, Hub Division NER/NMRA. Marlborough High School Fieldhouse, Rte 85 Bolton St, Marlborough, MA. 10am-4pm. \$4 adults, \$3 seniors, \$1 children.                              |
| January 6, 2001 | Wenham Museum Model Railroad and Raiffan Meet. Winthrop School, Bay Road, Route I A, Hamilton, MA. 10am-4pm. Adults \$3.50, Children (6-14) \$1.00  |