

Maple Leaf 2003, Toronto, Canada by Roland Kelley

The Maple Leaf 2003, the National Model Railroad Association's annual convention in Toronto went quite well. After all the problems with SARS, the canceling of the NMRA Train Show because many of the vendors would not attend, and with somewhere between 350 to 500 attendees not showing the ones that attended had a great time.

The Canadian Group did an outstanding job. It was a great convention and you would not have know about all the problems it you hadn't ready and heard about them before attending. It was a shame that the train show was canceled, but the local group put together a smaller train show. Not many vendors there but Neil was there with a full display. Will say his son is getting big. The train show had a very large Ntrak layout running DCC and Aristocraft. Below is the picture of the model I would have picked as best of show. It is a car race track with the cars moving around the track.



Do miss not being able to have tours of the rail yards, etc, just a result of 9-11. Did get to ride a steam train and PCC trolley. Will show pictures and give more information about them in a later issue.

While there I did get to the Sky Dome and see the Yankee's play the Blue Jay's. I don't have to tell you who won! It is a wonderful ball park, but it is large when you compare it to Fenway Park. It does hold 55,000 for baseball on three levels.

Wish Ntrak and the NMRA could get together. Other than the Train Show Ntrak had no contests or clinics. It would seem to me that they could be set up by a national group of Ntrak members. This is an area that the Nation Ntrak board should put at the top of their calendar.

Danbury Rail Station Centennial Celebrated Story & Photo's by Dan Pawling, St.



Photo by David F. Pawling 5/23/2003

July 12th and 13th, 2003, were red letter days for rail fans in Danbury CT. The 13th was the actual 100th Birthday of the Danbury Union Railroad Station. Built by the New Haven RR in 1903, it consolidated the passenger facilities of three earlier railroads.

The celebration was organized by the Danbury Railway Museum, which operates the building and the adjacent rail yard. Present were state and local elected and appointed officials who made eloquent, congratulatory (and short) statements. Honored were the prime mover of the project, noted rail photographer and author, Peter Cornwall, and the restoration architect, Roger Whitcomb. Museum President Ira Pollack warmly expressed his appreciation to all who have contributed to the success of the museum through their time, volunteerism and financial aid. The America-Yankee Maid Chorus sang, train whistles were blown and the attendees demolished two birthday cakes and several gallons of punch. "Phoebe Snow" was there, too, although that woman, who was dressed all in white from floppy hat to long skirt to shoes, confessed that she didn't know of Phoebe, or Phoebe's story.

In 1852 the Danbury and Norwalk RR was the first to provide service to the town.



GE P32AC-DM #230 in New Haven Colors at the Danbury Railway Museum on MetroNorth Tracks. 7/12/03

It was followed by the Housatonic RR in 1874 and the Hartford, Providence and Fishkill in 1881. All three, or their successor companies, were acquired by the New Haven in 1892, but apparently separate passenger stations remained until 1903. At that time, the New Haven made other improvements in Danbury including the loop track, the stub-ended yard and servicing facilities inside. Not clear from the sources I have is when actual interchange of cars among the lines was first made possible. I suspect that it was earlier than 1903 as the movement of freight and passenger cars to NYC-bound steamships on Long Island Sound was quite profitable while it lasted.

In the 1990's MetroNorth found the old station too expensive to repair and maintain and its parking lot inadequate for a rapidly growing number of commuters. The loop remains as an effective interconnection with a new station with a large parking lot on the south side. The double tracks continue around



GE P32AC-DM MTA-Metro North colors on loop track with 6 passenger car train set. 7/12/03

the loop and serve as a layover yard for the commuter trains. But, what to do with a dilapidated RR station and an abandoned rail yard?

Briefly, a group of dedicated volunteers formed the Danbury Railway Museum and encouraged the City of Danbury and the State of Connecticut to help restore the old station. The City has leased the station and rail yard to the Museum since 1995. And all hope for the continued success of the Museum and its contribution to education and tourism for another 100 years, at least!



Illinois Terminal #451 no longer runs to the airport. Seen at the Connecticut Trolley Museum, East Windsor, CT. A car barn on the right, another is off camera to the left. 5/23/03