

# Danbury Departures

Volume No. 15

March/April 2002

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Ira Pollack

I'd like to thank the past Board of Directors for all their service to the Museum and their dedication for all the hours spent trying to move our Museum forward. I'd also like to welcome in the new Board members and I'm greatly looking forward to working with them as we have a full agenda of plans to make and projects to complete.

I'd also like to thank Dan Foley for his service to the Museum and thank him for his dedication in the acquisition of the Pfizer #1. Dan's perseverance with this project has helped build our roster to the point where we now have spare motive power. Mike Miciukiewicz has also been a great asset in this acquisition and its subsequent move to Danbury. I must also praise him for his dedication to this project.

I'm looking forward to working on the many restoration projects this season in that we have spent the last year cleaning the yard and making it safer to use for our visitors and volunteers. I would like to be able to paint and letter one of the New Haven box cars and, additionally, paint and letter the 1402 RS11. These are pieces that are relevant to our museum and much time and expense has already been dedicated to them. We must bond together as volunteers and dedicate ourselves to these projects and get them done. As always, there are many projects waiting for us here at the Museum and your help is of course needed in any way that you can contribute.

We've reached a new level in our development by adding two newly designed training programs for safety and for operations, a new operations manual, a photographic display area, the N gauge layout which is starting to take shape as an ideal rainy weather tour of the yard, shelving and a new storage plan for the research library, and a more accurate inventory system for the gift shop. We must continue to move forward with these new ideas for the betterment of the museum by providing a more solid foundation and infrastructure for future growth.

With the coming of the warm weather, new shows and venues are being planned along with the projects already mentioned, so please become an active volunteer for your Museum. Wednesday nights and Saturdays are the most active days for volunteer work and making connections, so plan on joining us. Call me ahead of time or just show up with work clothes on and plenty of ambition.

See you there!

## **Mission....**

*The purpose of the Danbury Railway Museum is to organize and manage a railway museum in Danbury, Connecticut and to engage in any and all activities convenient to said purposes. The goal of said museum shall be to educate the public to the history of railroading and the role of the railroads, both as part of a natural heritage and as an institution in contemporary society. The corporation is organized exclusively for educational purposes.*

## **Officers**

**Ira Pollack - President**  
**Ron Freitag - V. President**  
**Steve Gould - Secretary**  
**Tony White - Treasurer**

## **Directors**

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Randy Natale  
Michael Salata  
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## **Change of address**

Please send change of address to:

Danbury Railway Museum, Inc.  
Attention: Frank Sullivan  
P.O. Box 90  
Danbury, CT 06813-0090

Or Via Email to:  
Drmmembers@aol.com

Danbury Departures is made possible by volunteers.

Comments and suggestions are always welcome.

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# The Yard Inside

By Wade W. Roesse

The past months work inside has focused on the display of photographs by well known photographer Peter Cornwall. I'm sure Ira will have said more in his column.

**HO gauge:** If you are one on the many who subscribes to and reads "Model Railroader" you may notice that Jeff Van Wagenen has started the H.O. program rolling with the introduction of the DRM Society of Model Engineers. Danbury Railroad Museum's own H.O. Club. For additional information contact Jeff at: (203)-263-3627 or [jjvanwagenen@yahoo.com](mailto:jjvanwagenen@yahoo.com). Meetings of the club are set for Wednesdays at the DRM at 7:30p.m.

**N gauge:** Yours truly, has finally delivered the gas ball (please no comments about gas appearing in this column). In addition, the earthen portion of the ramp to the coal shed is in place and will be landscaped in the near future. The Layout inventory of locomotives and rolling stock continues to grow. Thanks to all whom have contributed and the many whom are anonymous. We are currently marking all the building footprints which were in the layout's perimeter. We are also starting to add some scenery. The layout is starting to look like the real thing. Please come take a look.

**S gauge:** As stated in the previous "Departures", we continue to look for anyone out there with a spare locomotive that needs a home. Please contact Bill Britt at the museum. Thanks.

**O gauge:** Bob Westerfield has indicated that the O gauge layout is also now in need of an operational locomotive ( steam or diesel, new or old, preferably operational, yeh, yeh, yeh now were getting picky). Since I prepared this article back in February we have received a donation of some O gauge equipment. We have not gone through everything, but I think there was a locomotive in the collection. Thanks to the contributor whose name will appear in the next "Departures"

A number of model manufacturers, publishers, and rail associations are sponsoring "The Worlds Greatest Hobby" program. This program's aim is to encourage young and old into the hobby of model railroading and provides information of all scales. DRM has obtained introduction pamphlets and stickers which are available in the museum. Please contact me if you have any questions or would like to participate.

## **If you haven't visited the Gift Shop lately, you might be in for surprise the next time you do!**

The old trusty cash register is being replaced by a more modern computerized system, and we are coming down the home stretch of bar-coding every item in the shop. One week this spring, we will close the gift shop while we do inventory, and when it reopens, the new register system will be in action.

This hasn't stopped us from keeping our shelves stocked, and the next time you visit, you will find several new items, including new books, videos, garden sculptures, and mugs. We also have a number of photos for sale which were taken by Peter Cornwall, and can order prints of any of the photos currently on display in the museum.

Sue Thomas, founder of the Gift Shop and long-time museum supporter, has turned to new ventures, and Kathie Fay and Patty Osmer have become the new Gift Shop Co-Managers. Thank you, Sue, for all your hard work and dedication ... and we hear that we will still see you at the shows! And also thanks to Tony White and Charlie Albanetti, for installing the new register system.

Please stop by and visit us. And, if there is that special item you think would be an asset to the Gift Shop, please mention it to us and we will try to find it. Watch this space for new additions to our inventory, and for "specials of the month", a feature we will be implementing soon. As always, thank you for your support.

## PFIZER CHEMICAL SW-8 #1

By Dan Foley

On March 20, 2002, members Dan Foley, Skip Kern, Mike Miciukiewicz, Ira Pollock and Tony White made a trip to Groton, CT to meet with officials of the Pfizer Company. The purpose of the meeting was to formally accept the donation of **Pfizer SW-8 #1** on behalf of D.R.M.

Dan had initiated contact with Pfizer in 1999, when it was reported that they would be discontinuing rail operation in the near future. Further communications led to a tentative offer of donation in 2001, and a final agreement several months later.

SW 8 #1 is a 1953 800 hp EMD SW-8, one of 371 built between 1950 and 1954. The SW-8 was the first EMD switcher built to replace their 600 hp SW-1; the additional horsepower was needed due to larger and heavier freight cars. #1, bn 42453, was originally built for the famous **ROCK ISLAND LINE** as their #838, and was sold to CHROME CRANKSHAFT, a well-known mid-western used locomotive dealer and re-builder. In 1989, Pfizer wanted to replace its aging GE 80 tonners, and bought this SW-8 from C. C. The unit was overhauled and painted by CHROME CRANKSHAFT before it was moved to Groton.

The Groton plant, on the east bank of the Thames, is a sprawling industrial complex, built in the 40's, and at the peak of rail service, had over eight miles of track.

Recently, its mission has evolved from producing bulk products needing rail shipment both in and out, to making medicinal type products where rail was superfluous, and most of the trackage has been removed. #1 remained in regular service until mid 2001, and has been maintained operational ever since. She was fired up and run for our inspection and sounded quite good. We will now await **PROVIDENCE & WORCESTER** to move the unit from Groton to Danbury, hopefully within the next several weeks.

This is an important accession for D.R.M.; not only does it provide a badly needed operational backup unit owned by D.R.M., but it is a fine and relevant example of Connecticut's industrial rail usage, which is disappearing all too fast.

### ALL TIME DIESEL ROSTER - PFIZER CO. GROTON, CT

#	TYPE	BUILT	FORMERLY	ACQ.	DISPOSITION
-	GE 45 ton	194-		c1948	19-- RET.
-	" "	"		"	19-- RET.
-	GE 80 ton	1940	US NAVY 6500430		c1992 to VALLEY
-	"	1943	US ARMY 7874		19-- RET
-	"	1945	NEKOOSA PAPER 9		19-- RET
1	EMD SW-8	1953	ROCK ISL 838	1989	2002 to D.R.M.
2	" "		SOUTHERN PAC	1990	2002 to CONN E

Photos taken by Tony White



## THE VIEW FROM THE RDC

By: Nancy Sniffen

It is hard to believe that it has been over a year since the 32 made her debut run in November 2000. A lot of work has been done since then.



The seat restoration project was the main focus during all of 2001. Work started in January and we had someone working on seats every Saturday and Sunday, for at least 6 hours, through November. When we brought the seats to Danbury we had a secure place to keep them, thanks to Sperry Rail for providing space. The baggage car was our work shop and due to limited space, we could only bring 10 seats at a time out of storage. About every 2 weeks Bob Andrews was called upon to use his truck to lug seat frames from storage to the DRM. Every 2 weeks Bob and John Andrews, and Randy Natale would lug seat frames down the 2 flights of stairs and load them on the truck.



For those of you who remember, these seats are the walk-over type. Well when we got them they had been welded and no longer changed direction. So our first job was to cut the welds. After the welds were cut each frame was then disassembled and cleaned, parts were straightened back into proper alignment, and then reassembled. Some seat frames required multiple disassemble/reassemble to get working correctly. The cleaned frames were then moved from the baggage car to a storage area at the DRM to make room for the next 10. This process was repeated until all the seats were cleaned and working. With the wood stove in the baggage car providing plenty of heat, Joe Ward, John Andrews, Randy Natale, Christian and Sean Hilmar and David Silver all worked till spring when the 43 frames were all cleaned and working. Now, you might ask, aren't there 44 seat frames in a Budd Car? Yes, we were missing one bulkhead frame. One seat had been removed nearest the bathroom so that a retention tank could be put in. But with seat frames that we found in one of the MU's, Mike Miciukiewicz was able to create a seat frame. All the other frames were complete except for one support piece, which Gary Herrmann made for us.

Once the weather warmed up, the next two stages of the project began. Laying the tile floor in the RDC and painting the seats. The floor had to be in and ready for the seats to go in because the only place we had left to put the finished seat frames was in the RDC. So as Joe Ward started painting the seats, again 10 at a time, Bruce Van Wyk, John Geigle, John Andrews, with help from Roberta Ballard, Andrew McClellan, and Mike Harrington, started the messy task of spreading the cement underlayment that levels the floor in preparation for the tile. We were able to find 9x9 tile in colors that were indicated on the original Budd blue print. The actual laying of floor tile is a very precise job, so that was put in the very capable hands of Bruce Van Wyk. With assistance from John Geigle, the floor in the RDC became a masterpiece which everyone has admired.



Now back to Joe Ward, remember he was painting seat frames, well the floor was finished well ahead of the painting, but that was not a bad reflection on Joe, there was just so many frames. Each frame needed to be sanded, primed and 2 coats of paint applied. By September about one third of the seat frames were done and being bolted into place. We had been very lucky that we only had a few problems with broken bolts when the Amtrak seats were taken out of the RDC, way back when, but for the few holes that were a problem John Andrews skillfully retapped them and the new bolts were put in place. The final phase started around September when we brought all the seat cushions and pedestals (these are the stainless steel legs that support the seat frame at the aisle), out of storage and stacked them in the RDC pending cleaning. Two months, 88 cushions and 44 pedestals later, with help from Andrew McClellan and Rueben Thomas, our cushions looked like new and the pedestals gleamed. By December all the seats were in place, and the cushions installed.

The major restoration of the interior, which started a mere 6 years ago, has transformed the RDC back to her original appearance, as delivered to the NYNH&H RR in March 1953.



Come take a ride back in time.

Thanks again for a fine job by so many talented people to bring the RDC project to this stage.

Mike Miciukiewicz is documenting the RDC project on his website - [www.mikes-stuff.com](http://www.mikes-stuff.com).  
Please take a look.

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## LIBRARY NEWS

By Stan Madyda

Work continues in the Library. The new shelving is in and the books, magazines and newsletter have been rearranged. We also went through the books that we had and pulled out duplicates. We will de-accession them from the collection and put them on sale.

We also have for sale a Samigon Light Box for slides. It measures 8½"x12" and is in excellent condition. The price is \$50. The Library recently received a cabinet for slide storage which includes a light box. Please see Stan Madyda or Gerry Herrmann if you are interested.

Continuing with donations received in the Library:

- George Peacock magazines, books, calendars and newsletters
- Michael Sweeney headlamp
- John F. Davis railroad manuals, timetables, maps, articles and correspondence from the New Haven
- Estate of George Triebel trackbooks, briefcase and photo albums
- William Pundy books and magazines
- Cecil Ashdown postcards, railroad sheet music, flyers and highball glasses
- Nicholas Sinchuk novelty railroad clock
- Arthur Rickerby union newsletters and railroad company brochures
- Gertrude King metal string art of a locomotive
- Charles Robe cardboard train kits
- Robert McDevitt wooden trains, Conastaga wagon, topographical map of Danbury
- John Christy interlocking box from MNCR CP-58 and Milepost newsletters
- Howard Heed mechanical department newsletters
- Jim Towey books, magazines, timetables, pictures
- Don Silberbauer 30 slides of the Museum
- Patrick Yough magazines, hats, calendars, books, videos, timetables and manuals
- Bob Westerfield magazines
- Joe Moore Metro North commemorative coffee mugs, Budd Company manual, Car Builder Cyclopedia
- Bruce Malone magazines, books and National Railway Historical Society Bulletins
- Harry Burke posters, blue print, post cards, videos and assorted paper memorabilia
- Estate of Louis Calamari newsletter, timetables, books, maps, videos, magazines, railroad hats, lanterns and a New Haven Conductor's uniform
- Stan Schoonmaker magazines and books
- William M Dox, J. Keystone Manufacturing child's riding locomotive
- Albert Brecken 2 blue prints for overhead power, electric locomotive roster, magazines and one book.
- Ronald and Kathleen Cococcia reproduction poster of the "Exactitude"
- David Cybulski books, manuals, date nails, ammeter and voltmeter
- Christopher McDonough Amtrak timetables and magazines

In addition to items listed above, we also received a number of donations anonymously information on the Cos Cob Power Station, a pair of tie tongs, timetables, newsletters, magazines, calendars, annual reports, correspondence and newspaper articles.

With funds raised through our book sales, the Library purchased a postcard of Danbury Union Station, eight photos showing New Haven trains in the yard and on the Maybrook, a blue prints showing car and track clearances and 14 payroll registers from the Central New England Railroad.

If you'd like more information on any of the donations we have received, please stop in the Library when it is open or contact Gerry Herrmann or Stan Madyda to make an appointment.

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## **N&W J #611: THE SILENCE WAS DEAFENING**

By Steve Gould

This past November, I had the opportunity to visit the Virginia Museum of Transportation in Roanoke. Located in a former factory right next to the Norfolk Southern in downtown, it is an excellent museum, with many fine exhibits. Outside in the rail yard, there are 66 pieces of equipment, including a Washington, DC PCC; an N&W "redbird" GP9; a GG1; a Virginian rectifier; and an NKP Berkshire. But the pride of the Museum, thankfully under shelter, is N&W J-class 4-8-4 #611. As I stared at this beautiful example of Roanoke Shops workmanship, I realized that this was the first time I had ever seen the J dormant! Over the years, I had ridden behind or paced #611 five times but never had seen her as a museum piece. The silence was deafening!

My first view ever of #611 (and, at the time, thought to be the last) was in 1959. I was a student at American University in Washington, DC at the time and my college railfan buddy Bob Kessler and I decided we would buy tickets for a Washington Chapter NRHS fantrip to Norfolk, VA over the RF&P, ACL, and N&W. We scratch our heads today as to why but we decided to take dates on the trip! Two tickets pretty much wiped out a twenty dollar bill and then some (\$11.50 each). It was not a smart move on our part because the girls were bored and we were hardly with them. (I wonder how many times they have told the story about the most unusual date they ever had?)

We boarded at Alexandria, VA and made a quick dash via the RF&P to Richmond's Broad Street Station. As we moved around the loop track, we made an emergency stop to replace a broken air hose on an older RF&P 400 series coach. The delay was short and soon we were crossing the magnificent arched James River bridge, in the charge of ACL E5's. At Petersburg, the star of the day was waiting to be placed on the head end, and #611 wasted no time blasting us out of the station. Shortly up the line at Poe, VA, at the junction with the mainline, we stopped for a photo runby on a curve. The normally clean-burning J blotted out the sun with thick, black smoke as the train roared by. Our dates stayed on board, having no interest in viewing a dirty steam engine!

After getting underway, the train entered a stretch of 55 miles of tangent track, and soon, telegraph poles were whipping by like posts in a picket fence. The J was timed by more than a few passengers at 100 plus miles an hour, as the 4-8-4 made easy work of hauling the 14-car special. Soon, we slowed and were approaching our destination. The train stopped at Lamberts Point and riders had the choice two tours: the N&W Lamberts Point coal piers or the Norfolk Naval Base. We stayed with the train to get more pictures.

Departure from Norfolk was at 3:30 PM but within a half an hour, we were slowing to stop at the site of the second photo run of the day, at Gilmerton, on the edge of the Great Dismal Swamp near Suffolk. Once again, the J's crew did something they never would have done in regular service by generating that thick, black smoke that fans seem to crave as the train raced past. We quickly reboarded only to make a short stop in Suffolk as requested by the local mayor.

The run back to Petersburg was fast but uneventful. At Poe, we left the mainline at dusk for Petersburg where #611 was cut off. I remember wiping my engineer's hat on one of the main rods to collect some grease. We watched as the J disappeared into the twilight, wisps of smoke seeming to hang forever in the air, knowing full well that six days later, the engine would run for the last time on another fantrip from Roanoke to Williamson. Of course, it would take two decades to re-light the firebox and allow the miracle from Roanoke to roam the Virginia countryside once again.



Photo by Steve Gould

611 at photo run location Gilmerton, VA on Return trip to Petersburg.

## **MUSEUM CALENDAR**

***Starting Sunday February 17 thru Saturday May 18 - L.Peter Cornwall Photo exhibit  
"The Way It Was"***

<b>Wed. April 3</b>	<b>7:30 P.M. - Sue DelBianco - By Rail Through the Pequonnock Valley</b>
<b>Sat. April 6</b>	<b>Railyard Local</b>
<b>Wed. April 10</b>	<b>7:30 P.M. - Steve Mayerson - Weather or Not #6</b>
<b>Sat. April 13</b>	<b>Speeder and Track Car Day and Railyard Local</b>
<b>Wed. April 17</b>	<b>7:30 P.M. - J.W. Swanberg - West Coast RR - Cajon Pass</b>
<b>Sat. April 20</b>	<b>Railyard Local</b>
<b>Wed. April 24</b>	<b>7:30 P.M. - Dan Gallo - The Ghost Railroads</b>
<b>Sat. April 27</b>	<b>Railyard Local</b>
<b>Wed. May 1</b>	<b>Ron Smith - The Mason-Dixon Line</b>
<b>Sat. May 4</b>	<b>Railyard Local</b>
<b>Wed. May 8</b>	<b>Pete McLachlan - The New Haven and Others</b>
<b>Sat. May 11</b>	<b>Railyard Local</b>
<b>Wed. May 15</b>	<b>Harold Mayer - Movin On</b>

## **Spring RailFair 2002**

**Saturday May 18**

*Displays, Demonstrations, Photo-ops, and more.....*