

# The Railyard Local

Volume 6, Issue 9

-The Monthly Newsletter of the Danbury Railway Museum-

September 2007

## DRM Express Track

By Ira Pollack, President

This month I'd like to update you on some of the things going on at the Museum.

Work has continued on Track 34. We have been working on tamping and compacting the stone that we added weeks ago, with some limited success. New member Marc Enis was very generous in bringing a compressor and jackhammer with him and helping to accomplish this arduous task. We were able to compress about 25 feet of track several weekends ago, but unfortunately we have 125 more feet to go. This is not easy work for sure, but we will persevere. My intention is to place Track 34 back into service and use it as a destination point for the *Railyard Local*. Doing this work is very important for extending our train ride in the yard, as well as in trying to keep up with the growing list of track maintenance projects in the yard. I had hopes of getting Metro-North to help us with the tamping process while they were replacing the loop track next to the station. Apparently it was too much of a liability for them to help us out. We will persevere, and we are making progress. Work on the lead switch to the turntable and Track 42 will be next, and may commence even as we finish the final stages of putting Track 34 back in service. We will be doing trackwork of some sort every Saturday on a regular basis. Please come join the team!



Marc Enis and Ira Pollack tamp ballast using the air compressor and jackhammers that Marc brought. The backhoe was used to add more stone to fill in as the ballast was compacted.

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plus . . .

New Members and Pumpkin Patch Event

## Danbury Railway Day

Celebrating our turntable and a locomotive

Even with the months of planning that culminated in this event, we couldn't have come up with more perfect weather for this August 11<sup>th</sup> occasion. The main focuses of the day were the unveiling of the plaque recognizing our turntable's inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, and the celebration of our #1455 Boston & Maine 2-6-0 Mogul's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. We were privileged to have dignitaries and



notable guests present, many of whom participated in the ceremonies. But our railway day featured many special attractions. For the first time in many years, and to the delight of passengers, our *Railyard Local's*

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# New Members

We are delighted to welcome our new members this month. All members, as well as the general public, are welcome to attend the weekly meetings and free programs held Wednesdays, 7:30pm, at the Museum, 120 White Street, Danbury. We invite all members to become involved in Museum activities as soon as possible!

- |                  |               |
|------------------|---------------|
| John D. Greene   | Danbury, CT   |
| Marta Alfaro     | Danbury, CT   |
| Stephen J. Galli | Newington, CT |
| Sean Connolly    | Danbury, CT   |
| William Saturno  | Waterbury, CT |



# Railyard Local's Timetable

October is time for trains, pumpkins, cider

Yes, it is time for our very popular train rides to our turntable and pumpkin patch. Each year we find some ways to make the event different, and even better. The DRM will welcome visitors to this event on three weekends in October. It will be held Saturdays from 10am-5pm on October 13, 20, and 27, and on the Sundays of October 14, 21, and 28 from 12 noon-5pm. Trains will run hourly from 10:30am on the Saturdays, and from 12:30pm on the Sundays. As always, we will need extra volunteers to help with train crew, car hosts, tour guides, at the pumpkin patch distributing pumpkins, cookies, and cider, at the coloring station and applying temporary tattoos in the Museum building, at the Front Desk and Gift Shop, and operating the layouts. Those who have assisted before know from experience that our guests come ready to have a great time, and they do! Our Museum and railyard radiate a happy energy which is contagious, and there is great satisfaction in being a part of it. If you would like to help and share in this experience, please contact

Sue Thomas at the Museum (203) 778-8337.



# Ten Years Ago

By Stan Madyda

A fundraising idea used by other railroad groups was announced – the First Annual DRM Slide Auction to be held on October 29th. Members with duplicate and unwanted slides were asked to donate them to the auction which was to be organized by Dan Foley. On the night of the auction the slide would be shown and bidding would begin. A list describing the slides would also be available for \$2.00. All proceeds would be going to the RS-1 Fund.

Speaking of Dan Foley, there was an interview with him about his involvement with the DRM. Dan described his position as Accession Manager, looking for all types of equipment and artifacts that would enhance the collection, making sure anything added would be through donation rather than purchase. Dan got involved with the Museum through his friendship with Ed Blackman and Peter Cornwall. He felt in just a short time, the Museum had come a long way in adding exhibits and new members.

The DRM participated in the Newtown Labor Day Parade. Our wooden locomotive float was used and came away with the prize of Best Float. Local newspapers covered the event.



The float, when new, in a photo from the Still River exhibit at the DRM. Now, as very noticable display near the rear railyard gate, it desperately needs rebuilding.

An ambitious event schedule was announced for October which included a weekend train show and the Haunted Rail Yard weekend. The Fall Show would feature an excursion train originating in Poughkeepsie and traveling to Danbury on Saturday, and three short runs on the Maybrook on Sunday all starting from Danbury. The thought behind the Poughkeepsie train was a way to attract visitors from outside the immediate area to visit the Museum. A stop at Hopewell Junction was also included.

September 24th was announced as the official opening of the Library. At the time, the major collections being worked on were from John Flower, Nathaniel Greene and Peter Cornwall along with many smaller donations.

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## DRM Express Track, *Continued from Page 1*

I'd like to congratulate Bill Britt and Art Slothower for their determination in the restoration of the RPO car. They have turned this piece into a mini-museum on the history of the RPO's. Please take the time when you are at the Museum to visit the car and see the workmanship that was involved in bringing this car back to its original condition and splendor. In the future I would like us to promote the RPO and include it in one of our events, or even better, center an event around the car and its restoration. My hat goes off to this devotion.



In other yard news, John Ivansco and crew have begun dismantling the Segar Street pump house for movement to the DRM, and eventual placement on the center platform. For your information, this structure, with pump included, was donated to the Museum several years ago by Leahy Gas Corp., and is all that remains of the water tower that existed on that site. Some extensive stabilization of the building was done years ago. We have determined that it is now time to move this historic structure into our yard before it further deteriorates, or is vandalized. This also might provide the impetus for re-erecting the Botsford water tower, which was given to us years ago, on the same center platform. How fitting to have these artifacts together. What a display that would make! I will update you as this pump house project progresses.

As always we have many projects before us at the Museum. There certainly is no shortage of things to do. I would like to once again list some of these things that need attention. I realize that some things here can't or won't happen for either lack of funding or lack of volunteers, but this is on my mind always. We have found that some of our members have contacts with people and/or companies that have helped us immensely with some of our projects. Please consider if you can help us out, or know of any potential sources of help, and let us know. Thank you!

For your information, here is a list of some of these projects, followed by a listing of our active project leaders and contacts.

### Projects:

- 1) Put doors on a yard storage trailer
- 2) Rebuild an REA wagon
- 3) Fix roof leak in Sperry 135
- 4) Weld forklift transmission case
- 5) Straighten turntable house
- 6) Paint Museum building overhang sheds
- 7) Roof walk for C627 caboose
- 8) Seal container roofs
- 9) Install grab irons on NH boxcar
- 10) Tune up the lowboy dump truck
- 11) Clean the ballast regulator
- 12) Seal the windows of the FCD railbus
- 13) Rebuild the DRM float



### Project Leaders and Contacts:

- New York Central wooden caboose - Gerry Herrmann
- Pennsylvania Rail Post Office car - Bill Britt
- Welding - Bob Pitcher
- Woodworking - Gerry Herrmann and Bill Britt
- Lettering and painting - Ira Pollack
- Track work - Ira Pollack
- Lawn maintenance - Dave Roberts
- CN #660 event car - Jim Teer
- Vehicle maintenance - Bob Andrews
- Rolling stock maintenance - Justin Chapin
- Training program - Don Konen
- Safety program - John O'Hern
- New Haven forge - Glenn Miller
- #1455 Boston & Maine steam locomotive - Carolyn Taylor
- Model trains and exhibits - Wade Rouse
- Miscellaneous construction projects - Ira Pollack
- RS11 #1402 locomotive - J.R. Mitchell
- Wednesday night programs - Dan Foley
- Reference and Research Library - Gerry Herrmann and Stan Madyda
- Front Desk staffing - Rich Shubar
- Gift Shop - Patty Osmer

# Danbury Railway Museum's Beginnings

Historic article illustrates how far we have come in thirteen years



The News-Times/Wendy Carlson

Members of the board of directors of the Danbury Railway Museum Inc. confer over an old railway map at their new, temporary headquarters on Ives Street. From left are John Holbrook, Jerrold Davis, Dennis Elpern and Charles Bardo. Hopes are for a grand opening next Memorial Day of the old train station at the corner of White Street and Patriot Drive, which will be restored with federal funds.

Very recently a friend of DRM President Ira Pollack presented him with a news article contained in the June 21, 1994 Danbury *News-Times*. There still are active members who vividly recall the days of the Museum's beginnings. They remember the excitement of being part of a community effort to make a this dream come true, the nights at 16 Ives Street, and working together to create a Museum dedicated to the trains they love. These members have continued to be an important part of the process of making the Museum what it is today.

The accompanying article is reproduced on the facing page. Both the photo and article are included here with permission from *The News-Times*.

DRM President Ira Pollack relates some memories of those times: "These were the early days of our Museum. We would meet every Wednesday night at our storefront on Ives Street. There were many great expectations as to when we would occupy the yard, when the station was going to be finished, and would this project be a success. During this time we would visit the station and wonder, would they be able to replace the floor, or would the roof hold up, or was this actually going to turn into a reality for us? Also during this time of construction there were three train stations in Danbury: one was our building, the office trailer station, and of course the new Metro-North station that was still under construction on the other side of the loop. Talk about confusion! You think it's bad now! This era was our infancy. I still remember those Wednesday nights with the birth of our Gift Shop: Sue Thomas trying to sell coffee mugs at the meetings. At these meetings we would fill the storefront and inevitably the crowd would spill out on to Ives Street. We all had many dreams and plans, and it was hard

**4** to believe that this was turning into a reality. Imagine a railway museum in our own town! It could not have been any better.

# Museum chugging along

## Plans for city rail facility moving at lightning speed

By Brad Gourley  
SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-TIMES

What took years of negotiating was finally carried off in a few months. Everyone is chalking it up to overwhelming community support.

Last February, hopes were dashed for a Danbury railroad museum after meetings between the Saybrook firm behind it and city officials collapsed. Determined to rescue three years worth of work, local businesses and train enthusiasts quickly formed the Danbury Railway Museum Inc.

The dilapidated train station on the corner of White Street and Patriot Drive is being restored to its original, 1903 condition with federal funds. A grand opening for the museum is slated for Memorial Day of next year.

"This is moving faster than any project I've seen," said Harold Meeker, one of the museum's board of directors and owner of Meeker's Hardware. He said regular train excursions to Brewster will begin opening day.

About \$2.5 million in state funds

is waiting for the museum once it delivers a detailed spending plan to the Department of Transportation. Meeker attributed the museum's lightning-fast success to "the phenomenal group of people on the museum's board of directors."

The board includes Felice Plain of Danbury CityCenter, Terri Stramiello of the Scott-Fanton Museum, city planning director Dennis Elpern and Mayor Gene Eriquez, an honorary member.

"This is a grass-roots effort, run by the people of Danbury," Meeker said. The group already has grown to about 80 people by word-of-mouth alone, with an average of five new enthusiastic members every week.

"A gentleman came into my store a short while ago and offered to relocate to Danbury," Meeker said, "just to be closer to the museum."

The use of a storefront at 16 Ives St. has been temporarily donated and furnished by local businesses for the museum group's meetings. This short-term headquarters will open June 29 and

remain there until renovations on the Danbury train station are complete.

Train enthusiasts and interested people can reach the Danbury Railway Museum at 778-8337.

"It's a stop-gap so we can have a physical place to be seen and talked to," said Peter McLachlan, a museum member and locomotive engineer for about 37 years.

The railroad museum has to become semi-official before it can be official.

"We'll have museum exhibits, and when we get our sales license shortly, we'll sell train memorabilia and other collectibles," said Peter Cornwall, president of the museum group. Cornwall, an airline consultant who has written a few books on trains, said they should be able to move into the station sometime next spring.

For now, the storefront is an essential meeting place with an answering machine. The board of directors convenes almost weekly, giving slide shows and soliciting exhibits, and its first newsletter already has been printed.

"We have all sorts of people involved," said Edward Blackman, a museum member and employee of Metro-North in Danbury. "We have model railroaders interested, some people into train photography, and people who just collect old timetables."

The group also is planning bus tours to the Pennsylvania Railroad Museum in Strasburg on July 9 and the middle of August. The trips came about after a downtown travel agent, Coach Tours Limited on Crosby Street, became interested in the group.

Meeker said he has had an awe for trains since his childhood, when his class took a ride from Danbury to Bethel. It is this sort of impression he wants to pass along to children today.

"One of our members is in the Danbury school system, and we're working on a program to get classes involved," he said.

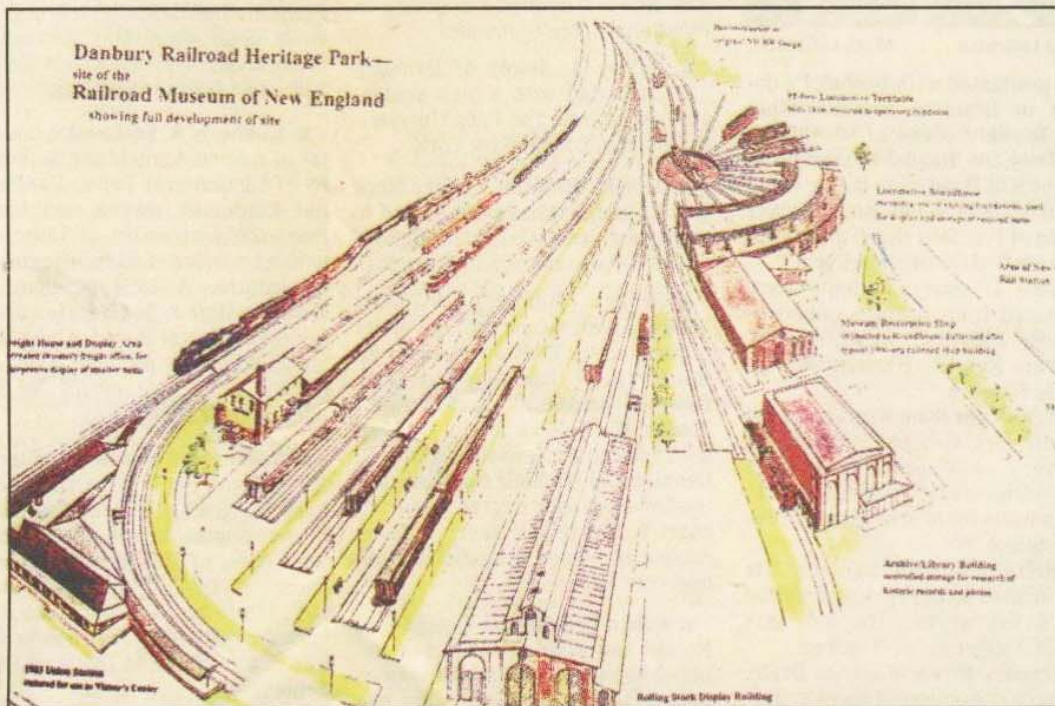
"We must make the coming generations aware of the historical importance of railroads in Danbury." The railroad was influential in Danbury's development during the 1880s when it helped spur a doubling of the population, he said.

Since the cost of old locomotives runs around \$100,000 to \$200,000, the board of directors is looking into a number of different arrangements.

"Some people would like to put their cars on display, others might donate them, and we could even lease," McLachlan said. "And there are lots of retired certified engineers with experience who would gladly operate them."

Cornwall said a few immediate prospects include five or six passenger coaches owned by the state of Connecticut, and two steam engines owned by the Housatonic Railroad.

"More important than getting locomotives or museum exhibits though, is just getting a place to put it all," Cornwall said. "And even more important are all the people who are behind getting it. They are our greatest asset."



An artist's rendering of the proposed railroad museum in Danbury.

## Danbury Railway Day, *Continued from Page 1*

vintage locomotive headed a consist of three cabooses, making it a caboose train. The Pennsylvania Rail Post Office car was open for tours for the first time. Garden scale model trains, always a hit with our guests were operating on the Track 18 platform. The food concession was conveniently located next to it. Further down the same platform, those attending could see demonstrations where our volunteers had the New Haven forge fired up, and a variety of hit-and-miss engines were chugging with their signature rhythms. The interior of the Museum greeted visitors with a special birthday celebration greeting. The O-gauge Lionel model of our #1455 was operating on our layout for the first time. Our well-stocked Gift Shop also offered DRM Library duplicate items for sale. Children and adults sported newly applied temporary tattoos and visited our coloring table. Freshly printed posters showing a labeled cutaway of a steam locomotive were available for the first time that day. Several children came dressed as a conductor or engineer, therefore qualifying to receive a free souvenir.

DRM President Ira Pollack and industrial archeologist Bruce Clouette, both of whom were instrumental in securing historic designation for the turntable, delivered short speeches prior to the unveiling of the plaque. Senator David Capiello also attended and joined in for the ride on the only original operating turntable in CT.

Throughout the day, the #1455 steam locomotive celebrated with white flags flying, its headlight and numberboards lit, and recorded sounds of steam locomotives. It's bell rang to signal ceremony time. Ira Pollack, project leader Carolyn Taylor, guest speaker Carl Byron of the Boston & Maine Historical Society, and the Hon. Mark D. Boughton, Mayor of Danbury delivered brief speeches. The occasion also marked the dedication of the locomotive to L. Peter Cornwall, the late, former President of the DRM, some of whose relatives were able to attend. Even a locomotive deserves a birthday cake, but of course we had to open wide and put mouthfuls into our own fire boxes instead of the locomotive's!

We appreciate the coverage of the event by the *Danbury News-Times*. DRM Vice-President Wade Roesse videotaped the ceremonies for the Museum.

In a departure from recent years, it was decided to hold the Members Picnic immediately following Danbury Railway Day, partly because we already had the cooking facilities set up, and many members already would be on hand from assisting at the event. There was no charge, however contributions to help defray costs were gratefully accepted. Our train crew graciously supervised the train rides, which for many represent the highlight of the picnic. The consensus is that timing the picnic after this event worked out well.

Thank you to those who did the necessary preparations, and those who were on hand to conduct this special event. Based upon the public response, and that of the member participants, we are encouraged to make the Danbury Railway Day an annual event, with different special attractions each year.



Above, the caboose train. Right, Bruce Clouette, then Ira Pollack addressing the audience. Below left, Carolyn Taylor, Ira Pollack, Senator David Capiello, and Bruce Clouette. Below center, the unveiling. Below right, overall view of the ceremony.



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Above, Ira Pollack, who spoke first. Above left, Carl Byron relating the history of this locomotive. Above right, City of Danbury Mayor Mark Boughton. At left, members of the audience preferring the shade, with Wade videotaping, and the birthday cake.

## Library News

By Stan Madyda

Recently, Sue Thomas, going through part of her railroad collection, came across some accounting records of the Housatonic Railroad from the 1800's.

The earliest document is a payroll record for January 1863. The next oldest payroll record is from March 1872 for employees based out of Danbury, Brookfield, New Milford, Merwinsville, Kent, Cornwall Bridge and West Cornwall. The records show the names of the employees, their occupations, wages owed, and signatures. In several cases the signature is an "x" with the notation "his mark" and the name written in by the payroll agent. Wages involved with Freight, Passenger and Road Repair are then shown.

We have a Conductors' Payroll from 1879, and two vender invoices from 1881. One invoice is for stove parts and the other is for lumber.

By 1888, the Danbury & Norwalk Railroad was leased to the Housatonic and we have a number of accounts payable documents from that year. One record shows payment to the "Connecticut Western News" for advertising announcing the annual stockholders meeting. Other records from April show payments to local individuals (landowners or farmers?) for railroad ties. From July, we have payroll records for the stations along the Danbury & Norwalk Division. Employees receiving wages are station agents and track workers. In Branchville, train service and station workers are added. In Ridgfield, there are wages for the agent, an engine wiper and track workers. The records for Danbury are more extensive.

Anyone wishing to view these documents should make an appointment with the Reference and Research Library.

## Ten Years Ago, *Continued from Page 2*

The Museum was also visited for the second time by a group of antique auto enthusiasts on a touring trip. This year the group consisted of mostly Ford Model A's and T's.

Another notable summer event was the Members Picnic held in August and attended by 100 members and family. There were two photos of the event.

A call for track work help was made with work needing to be done in the turntable area. The newsletter also had a photo of the turntable in operation as part of the Railyard Local train ride.

Non-DRM news included a couple of paragraphs about the Genesee and Wyoming Railroad, with headquarters in Fairfield County, and that Amtrak was beginning to study expanding rail service into Maine.



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## MUSEUM CALENDAR

Sept 19(7:30pm)	Slides fr His Collection - Ron Smith
Sept 20(7:00pm)	Board Meeting (Open to Members)
Sept 26(7:30pm)	Slides - Bob Gambling
Oct 3(7:30pm)	Slides: Tax \$ at Work - Dan Foley
Oct 10(7:30pm)	Video - Gary Gurske
Oct 17(7:30pm)	Membership Open Forum - DRM Pres. Ira Pollack and BOD
Oct 18(7:00pm)	Board Meeting (Open to Members)

Be sure to look for the full color version of this newsletter on our website: [www.danbury.org/drm!](http://www.danbury.org/drm!)



### Contact Information

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### **Change of Address**

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