

The Railyard Local

Volume 9, Issue 4

-The Monthly Newsletter of the Danbury Railway Museum-

May 2010

Families Greet Easter Bunny

The Museum's popular Easter Bunny Express event on March 21, 27, 28, and April 2 and 3 initiated our season of running the Railyard Local. Five days, proved to be a help in allowing more people to attend, and once again it was successful all around.

We hope the photos shown here portray at least some of the excitement and joy of this annual Danbury Railway Museum event. Some of the volunteers pictured regularly donate their time and skills; others make that extra effort to help when additional staff is needed for an event such as this. All are needed in order to make it a wonderfully memorable occasion for our guests. Looking at these photos, can you see why our volunteers find it particularly satisfying to assist on these days?



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LEGO RR Stay Is Extended

We are please to announce that Bill Probert, Steve Doerner, and Elroy Davis, creators of this Connecticut and Vermont LEGO Railway, have agreed to extend the exhibit until June 27th. Come see it!



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Plus . . . New Members and June Special Events

Volunteers Make It Happen

By Patty Osmer

The Danbury Railway Museum is staffed entirely by volunteers. We would like to give each and every one of you a huge THANK YOU! By far, our volunteers are our most valuable asset, and we could not maintain the Museum without each and every one of you. Every one of you makes a difference, whether you spend 1 or 1,000 hours helping here. While we know that not every volunteer records his or her hours (and of those that do, we know that many of you give



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Museum's Summer Hours

DRM to be open every day for season

In keeping with the schedule instituted last year, during the summer the Museum will be open seven days a week.

Memorial Day through Labor Day.

Monday-Saturday 10-5pm

Sunday 12-5pm.

On Memorial Day, July 4th, and Labor Day the DRM will be open 12-5pm. We found that this new schedule worked out well for the Museum last year, so we are continuing it again for this year.

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!

Emily Moser	Southbury, CT
Josana Greco	Brewster, NY
Chris & Linda Connolly	Brookfield, CT
Connie Carey	Oxford, CT
Michael Chu	Scarsdale, NY
Jim Vigar	Ridgefield, CT
Aaron Dzamko	Bethel, CT



June Special Events

Owney, the Railway Post Office Dog Day

On Saturday, June 12th, the Museum will celebrate and tell the true story of this mixed-breed mascot who traveled the nation in RPO cars. Imagine him touring the country in a car such as our magnificently restored RPO car. Guests will receive an "Owney" stamped souvenir and a **free hot dog** with each admission. Our Railyard Local will be giving **free train rides**, and the historic turntable will take you for a spin. The special LEGO train exhibit still will be entertaining everyone in the Great Hall within the building. All this will be in addition to our usual attractions. Admission will be \$8 for ages 3 and up, under 3 free. Come join us for this special occasion!

Father's Day June 20th

Kids bring your dad, or Dad bring your kids! Instead of our usual extra charge of \$3 for the train ride, fathers will ride our vintage consist free with a child's paid admission. We'll be running special caboose trains for the afternoon, and be open from **2** 12-5pm. Enjoy the amazing LEGO railway layout and the Museum's other attractions!

Ten Years Ago

By Stan Madyda

The May 2000 newsletter was the first one published under new editor, Peter Hanen. A member since 1996, Peter not only worked most of his career as an editor but also spent some time working as a Pennsylvania Railroad brakeman and iceman in the 1950's.

The lead story in the newsletter was that the DRM arranged a donation of a 1905 Pennsylvania Railroad bobber caboose. Belonging to the Empire State Railroad Museum, it was always their desire to restore the caboose. However, they never got around to starting the project. A group of our members travelled to the ESRM home in Phoenicia, New York to examine the caboose. It was in bad shape, but we decided it would be a worthwhile project for the DRM. The ESRM de-accessioned the caboose and donated it to the DRM. Patterns were made and the caboose was dismantled and shipped to Danbury on a flatbed tow truck. The caboose remained unassembled in our collection until last year when it was de-accessioned and given to a private individual.

April 8, 2000, marked the five year anniversary of the DRM receiving the five ex-Reading coaches and ex-New Haven gondola from the Housatonic Railroad. Peter McLachlan, then an employee of the Housatonic, volunteered his time as engineer to bring the train from Canaan to Danbury. The day started overcast with a prediction of temperatures in the 50's, but by the time the train reached Cornwall Bridge, snow was accumulating on the road and by Merwinsville the depth was about three inches. This didn't stop a number of DRM members (myself included) and railfans from chasing the train, which arrived in Danbury by mid-afternoon.



The train pulling the ex-Reading coaches arrives for a stop at Cornwall Bridge on this unexpectedly snowy day in April 1995. See the article and other photos by Stan Madyda on-line in the April 2005 edition of this newsletter.

DRM Express Track

By Ira Pollack, President

In this month's report I first wish you all a Happy Summer season. This is what we have been waiting for. Things have been pretty busy at the Museum, both in the building and in the yard.



To start with, we thought we would have only a few more days of the LEGO exhibit. Just before it was due to end, the exhibit's creators, Bill Probert, Steve Doerner, and Elroy Davis, graciously agreed to extend its stay at the DRM through June 27th. I must tell you that really incredible workmanship, extraordinary design and thought went into this grand display. My hat goes off to them for their beautiful display of these renowned building blocks. I would like to thank them for assembling this over the past several weeks, thereby bringing the Great Hall to life. I hope that you will have had a chance to see this work of art before its closing.



In the yard, work is progressing on the turntable. We have had a dedicated crew painting and staining both the deck and lower bridge girder. My thanks go out to Art Slothower for his handiwork on the main girder bridge, painting it a gloss black. Art painted the bridge with a rust converter last fall, but ran out of time because of the change of weather. I might add that this was done single-handedly by Art.

What grand dedication!

New member Chuck Sager has also been helping, staining the decking and railings a flat black. My thanks also go out to Chuck for his dedication in this project.

I have ordered 100 new timbers for the ring rail that supports the girder bridge. Many of these have rotted away to nothing and this rail needs some attention immediately. I plan to begin cleaning out the pit all around the ring rail, with all of the loose concrete, over the next several weekends, weather and volunteers permitting. My main goal at this point is to stabilize what is there now before it gets any worse. To me this is the center of our Museum; it is one of our more important artifacts which must be preserved, even if it is these small things at a time.

My long-range goals are to replace the carrier bearings, wood timbers that support the rail and deck, and to repair the concrete walls. These are all expensive and time consuming projects, but will happen as funds become available. Also, the operator's booth will be rebuilt shortly. We must remember that this artifact must remain safe for our guests and for our members operating it.

In other news, Wade Roese and crew are assembling a shed built of wood for storage of our G gauge layout equipment in the yard. He will be building another one for additional storage of our maintenance equipment.



I also would like to thank J.R. Mitchell for donating a 40-foot auto trailer for storage of our ever-growing inventory of parts and tools.

In closing my report this month, I am trying to keep projects moving in the yard. I will be calling you for help on Saturdays, or even better, call me if you can spare a few hours of your precious time. I would like to be able to set you up with a project so that you will be able to work whenever it may be convenient for you. Please call me at (203)744-0801 or (203)512-5103. See you in the yard!

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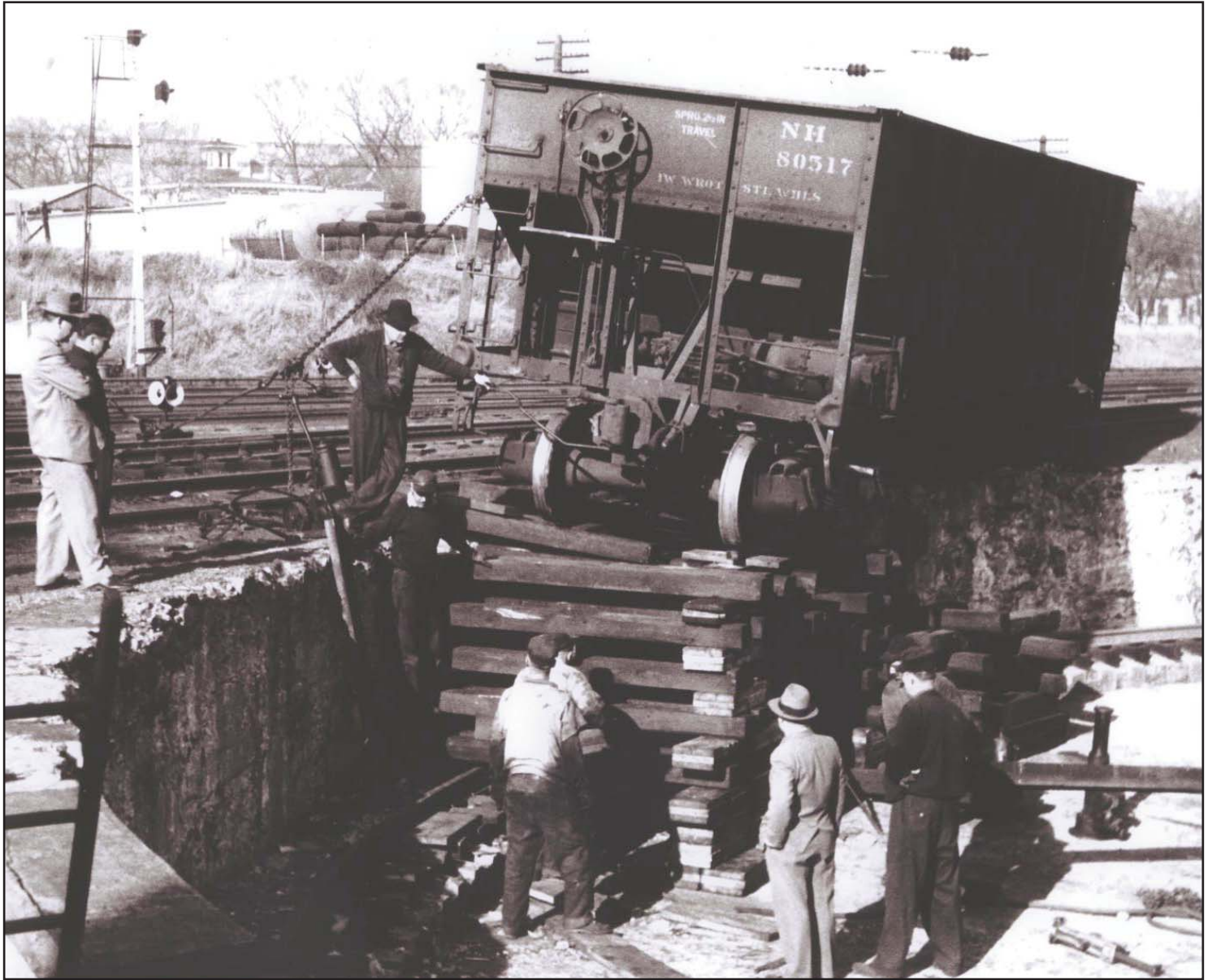


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Rescue at the Danbury Railyard Turntable Pit - March 1957

Article and photo by Peter McLachlan



On this eventful Monday in March 1957 the car in the photo had brought in a load of stone from Tilcon in New Haven, was empty, and going to be heading back for another load. At the time it derailed, it was in a cut of about 20 cars, but fortunately when it slipped off the track, it broke away on both ends and went into the pit. It derailed while being pulled off the coal pocket track. (Notice how close the set of rails is to the edge of the turntable pit.) The rear set of trucks went down into the turntable pit while the front trucks hung on the ledge. Fortunately the car was empty and did not turn over, or this rescue procedure would not have been possible.

When New Haven, CT was notified, they were going to send the wreck crane to pull the car out of the pit. However, in the morning, when General Foreman (of the engine house) Joe Mortis looked at the car, he said his crews could jack it up out of the pit without the crane from New Haven. The car was blocked on the far end so it would not move forward, and the hand brake was engaged before starting the rescue. On the left side of the photo, notice the cable holding the car to the rail so the car would not tip over. Starting at about 8am, the car department crew and section gang men slowly started the procedure of jacking up the end in the pit, then inserting ties and heavy planking under it. Then they kept repeating this process of jacking it up some more, and inserting more ties and planking to hold the car. This took most of the morning, until, as you can

Rescue at the Danbury Railyard Turntable Pit
- March 1957, Continued from Page 6

see in the photo, with a couple of more tie layers, the car would be ready to pull. A jack is on the bottom right of the photo. It was placed on the top layer of the inserted ties and used to jack up the rear set of trucks, preparing for another layer of ties. I was there on duty as Turntable Operator at the time, with camera handy.

They inserted heavy planking between the ties and the coal pocket track. When ready, the day yard switcher engine 0972, an Alco, went to work. With the switcher on the east end of the car with cables, and using rerailers, it SLOWLY pulled the car back until it was away from the pit. The car was completely rerailed with the help of planking and rerailers.

During the day, officials from New Haven had come over to view the derailment, and kept swearing that they would have to call for the crane eventually. They were totally amazed that Joe and the crew did what they did right before their very eyes. In rerailing the car this way, it saved the New Haven Railroad a lot of money. The officials from New Haven are the men in suits. They were as fascinated with this as I was. Joe Mortis is the person leaning on the car beside the pit.

After the car was rerailed, some minor repairs were made to the car, and it went on its way that evening. No one knows why the car derailed. Fortunately all the engines were out of the house, so no delays were incurred on any of the runs that day. Joe Mortis took no credit for the rescue. He gave it all to the crew.

Ten Years Ago, Continued from Page 2

Library News reported on the progress being made with our first very large collection donated by the estate of Nathaniel Greene. The collection included books, magazines, some photos, timetables, information on railroad excursions, newsletters, railroad material, blueprints, a few artifacts and newspaper articles.

Restoration work continued on RDC #32 with work being done on the floor and windows. Maintenance work was needed for the inside of our ex-Reading coach #1547. The Central Vermont flatcar #7625 was also in the process of being restored and the ex-Canadian National FB4-B was being prepared to be painted as a New York Central unit.

The newsletter had a two page spread of photos of the 1455 being moved to Danbury as well as a list of people who had donated money to the fund.

Member profiles were on Joe Sacca and Tom McCullough.

Volunteers Make It Happen, Continued from Page 1

more hours than you record), the recorded hours for 2009 showed that 64 volunteers donated over 13,000 hours to the Museum. We know that more volunteers have assisted us, but some have not recorded their hours, and we would like to acknowledge their valuable contribution, too.

Several volunteers devoted over 700 recorded hours.

Those for whom we have recorded hours in 2009 were: Joseph Alves, Bob Andriola, Saulo Aranjó, David Barboza, Frances Barboza, Bob Bell, Ed Blackman, Suze Blackman, Lucy Boland, Bill Britt, Harry Burke, Justin Chapin, Don Collier, Sarah Cuk, Al Emanuele, Nick Ernst, John Fegley, Dan Foley, Franz Gerencir, Steve Gould, Sean Harte, Gerry Herrmann, Ed Holowinko, Ron Huppert, Jackie Juliano, Don Konen, Dave Kopycinski, Michael LaGue, Dana Laird, Ken Landsiedel, Jerry Lawlor, Greg Lirot, Dave Lowry, Stan Madyda, Kyle Markward, Lindsey Markward, Tom McCullough, Jim McGeorge, Peter McLachlan, John O'Hern, Patty Osmer, Robert Pitcher, Ira Pollack, Jeremy Rice, Dave Rist, Dave Roberts, Wade Roese, Zach Rudnick, Marty Scatola, Richard Shaboo, Dave Simington, David Stavans, Judyth Stavans, Carolyn Taylor, Jim Teer, Sue Teer, Jeff Van Wagenen, Joe Ward, Bob Westerfield, Kenn Williams, Dave Wilson, Carol Wilson, Robert Wohlken and Carl Zencey.

We know that many other volunteers should be on this list, but unless you give us your hours, we can't record them!

In order to keep track of volunteer hours (which are often required for grants) the Board of Directors is asking everyone who volunteers to fill out a volunteer log, either at the Front Desk, the Library, the Office, the Crew Trailer, or with the Project Manager. Or, you can just write your hours on a sheet of paper. However you record your time, just leave a copy of your hours for the month in the Volunteer Hour Mail Box in the Office. Please note the project you worked on, or if you worked on the restoration of a specific piece of equipment, please note that also. If you have any questions, Patty Osmer or Jerry Lawlor will be happy to answer them.

Again, thank you all for helping us to restore and maintain a vital part of our history. We couldn't do it without you! And PLEASE, PLEASE ... help us out by recording your hours!

Thanks go to Jerry Lawlor for his conscientious work of entering the recorded volunteer information into the computer in an organized fashion.



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MUSEUM CALENDAR

May	26(7:30pm)	Slides; TBA - Ed Blackman
June	2(7:30pm)	A Midwesterner's Look at New England - Al Baker
June	9(7:30pm)	Days on the Housie - Pete McLachlan
June	16(7:30pm)	Railroad Chicken Cars - Al Hoffman
June	17(7:00pm)	Board Meeting - Open to Members

**PLEASE NOTE CHANGES IN MUSEUM HOURS
MEMORIAL DAY - LABOR DAY**

Museum hours: Mon-Sat 10-5pm; Sun 12-5pm

See the newsletter in color at www.danburyrail.org!



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