

# The Railyard Local

Volume 10, Issue 6

-The Monthly Newsletter of the Danbury Railway Museum-

August 2011

## Celebrating Owney Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>

### One-day special stamp cancellation

Each year since the DRM's restoration of the former PRR Rail Post Office car we have had an additional reason to celebrate! This year the U.S. Postal Service has issued a "Forever" stamp of Owney, the former mascot of the Rail Post Service. In anticipation of our event, we have created a limited number of special "Owney" envelopes in four different photo designs. Each also features the new "Owney" postage stamp and may be purchased for \$1.00. U.S. Postal Service staff will be attending to perform the one-day-only special cancellation.

This cleverly designed Owney event sign greets Museum guests as they enter. It was created especially by Eileen Mitchell, who has generously lent her talents to make many signs to highlight special DRM events.



The Museum will sponsor special children's activities to honor the famous rail-riding mascot that sported a collection of medals on his harness from places he had visited. Passengers on our train rides will be entertained by a delightful telling of the true story of Owney. The RPO car will be available for tours and the history of rail post office cars and the service will be related. The Gift Shop stocks two children's books about Owney. These are some of the activities added to our usual popular attractions.

## DRM Seasonal Hours Change

After the arrival of Labor Day, the Museum's hours will change for the season. The Museum will be open Wednesday through Saturday 10-4pm, and Sunday 12-4pm. It will be closed on Mondays and Tuesdays as well as most holidays. Hours may vary somewhat for special events, so check beforehand.

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## Party Room Redecorated

Recently Joseph Alves undertook the project of redecorating the DRM's Party Room. Colorful framed pictures, banners, photos and graphics, tablecloths, curtains, plus a 3-dimensional cardboard front of a steam locomotive will delight all party attendees. The room has a very festive appearance. Thanks, Joseph!



The Museum has been a popular site for holding birthday parties. We provide the reserved party room and the guests have access to all the interior and exterior attractions the DRM has to offer. It is a wonderful place to entertain a group of lively children and accompanying parents for the celebration. From April-November the \$175 party fee provides for Museum admission for up to 12 children plus up to 12 adults. The birthday child and one adult may ride in the locomotive cab, while party guests enjoy the train ride and all take a spin on the historic turntable. January-March, the birthday child and one adult receive a locomotive cab ride pass to use during our operating season. The fee for those months is \$125. All are entitled to 10% off party purchases in our Gift Shop. Museum members receive a \$10 discount on the party fee. A \$50 non-refundable deposit is required at the time of the reservation. Details at the Museum.

## 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!

Our Membership Chairman requests that all those renewing their membership **PLEASE return the paperwork with your check.**

Phyllis Florian	Danbury, CT
William C. Waggoner	Bethel, CT
George Baehr	Coronado, CA
Ryan Saghir	Bethel, CT
Andrew H. Neilly, Jr.	Weston, CT
Emily Moser	Southbury, CT
Lance Loewengart	Brookfield, CT
Freeman Gregory	West Hartford, CT
Victoria Meehan	Brookfield, CT
Sheri Tinguirlis	Stratford, CT

## Restoration Work on #1455

By Carolyn Taylor, Project Leader

Beginning last fall welding work was done on the windows of the DRM's Boston & Maine steam locomotive. The metal in and around the windows had deteriorated to the point that this work was necessary before the wooden windows could be replaced. Bernie Singer and his associate Joe of Singer's Welding Works of Danbury performed the work.



Welding work in progress. Photo by Noreen Foley.

The window on the fireman's side has been broken for some time and there had not been enough metal intact to keep a repaired or new one in place. The wooden sections of the window on the engineer's side are brittle, broke and came apart when it had to be removed for welding the frame. In the meantime it has been put back together in a makeshift manner, then taped and wedged into place in the window frame.

DRM member Bill Nicholson, who did amazing restoration work on the former PRR Rail Post Office car and the baggage wagon featured in last month's issue, has agreed to tackle the carpentry required for the window restorations. It was our good fortune that Bill had just completed the baggage wagon at the time the steam locomotive was ready for the carpentry work! It is a very significant project both in importance and timewise. Thank you Bill for all your efforts! We look forward to the end of some years of frustration involved with getting this part of the locomotive restored.

There is much more metal work and carpentry work needed on this historic locomotive. Some of the painting needed is not too detailed. Please contact me at the Museum where I can be found almost every Saturday, call the Museum at 203-778-8337, email me at [drmnewslettereditor@gmail.com](mailto:drmnewslettereditor@gmail.com), or leave a message in either my Board Member or Newsletter mailbox in the DRM Office if you would like to assist.

## Does Your Company Have a Matching Donation Plan?

By Steve Gould

Many companies have matching donation programs where the company will match all or part of a donation given to a non-profit organization or educational institution. Does your company have one? If so, it is an excellent way to increase the value of your donation to the Museum and it allows your company both to be an excellent corporate citizen of your community and receive a tax deduction. Check with your Human Resources group to see.



The Confortini family, DRM members, spent time in August enjoying the play tables and layouts in the Museum. Pictured are Andrew, Juliana, and Andrew, Jr.. Isabella was too busy playing to pose for a photo!

# Words from Our President

Welcome to our DRM version of the fireside chat, one-sided as it is, but maybe you will give us some feedback. Hot, wet, cloudy, muggy, and just plain ugly weather has, as local volunteers know, made project progress and attendance tentative. Throw in a marginal economy and well, we have hope. So much for the gloom! Hopefully, by the time you read this we will have had a well-attended Danbury Railway Day and picnic.

As you saw in the July *The Railyard Local* the first pavilion is in place and is only in need of roofing material for which we are trying to find a donor. Anyone who may have a contact, please let us know. We can utilize either 90# roll roofing or asphalt/fiber-glass shingles. On a similar subject, Gil, Bill, David, Bob, and yours truly have started on a pavilion #2 to be a destination point on the south side of the yard near our yearly Pumpkin Patch site, also known as "Roberts' Park".

We have received a substantial donation of O-gauge and G-gauge model train equipment from Nancy and Charles Cuniff of Danbury. In addition, the



Left, Nancy and Charles Cuniff; lower left and above, Wade, Gil and Chuck loading the donations; these photos by Joseph Alves, who also assisted. Below, unloading.



donation includes many structures, memorabilia, magazines, books, reference manuals, and videos. We cannot over-emphasize how much this donation will assist our Museum. Our thanks to the Cuniffs can only be a small sign of our sincerest gratitude for this very generous gift.

A recent letter to the Museum from a person that considered himself a long-term "member" (a search of 16 years of records of his name and address revealed nothing) critiqued what, when and how we published the newsletter, and what we did at the Museum. We always appreciate and welcome suggestions and input from our members and look forward to their receipt and the ideas they may bring forth. This letter contained suggestions that had, however, already been implemented months and years previously. Also, in commenting about timeliness of issue of *The Railyard Local* it should be noted that one "volunteer" does ALL of the work getting our newsletter out to our members. Thanks, Carolyn!

On behalf of the Danbury Railway Museum, Wade W. Roese



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# The Yard Inside

By Joseph Alves

The main focus of the last “The Yard Inside” was the huge G-Gauge donation from Paul Busse and the New York Botanical Gardens. Since then, other than layouts, railroading exhibits have been moved to be more chronological. The most recent addition to the Great Hall is a baggage wagon, painted red and Pullman green, beautifully restored by Bill Nicholson.

## N-Gauge

J.R. Mitchell was busy on top of the layout replacing the operating loops on the layout. This meant pulling up and scraping off old track, painting the new road bed, laying new track, soldering, and finally replacing the old equipment with new equipment be used on the new track. Meanwhile Marty Grossman has been busy under the layout replacing the electronics, including timers, transformers, and automatic station stops.



## G-Gauge

Alongside the G-gauge layout in our railyard, a shed has been built by Wade W. Roesse, Dave McKee and Joseph Alves, and painted by Dave McKee. The shed now houses most of the Museum’s G-Gauge equipment and buildings. We are planning final steps of construction of the layout. Often the components of the consists are specially chosen to emphasize the special event of the day. **Look for Owney on this layout on**

**4**

**September 10<sup>th</sup>!**

*Continued on Page 5*

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## The Yard Inside, *Continued from Page 4*

### HO-Gauge

The HO layout also has been undergoing changes. Marty Grossman has been doing more work on the electronics under the layout, and adding lights to the underground tunnel on the east side of the layout. J.R. Mitchell has been working on a cover for the layout, a dome made out of plexiglass. This “crystal palace” will not only keep out hands but also help disperse the light, giving the layout an even more realistic look.



### O-Gauge

The O-gauge layout has had some scenery done by Gary Bentley. It also features some beautifully crafted buildings by Harry Burke, including a coal tower, yard shanty, signal tower, newsstand and farmhouse. Along



with these additions Harry also weathered some non-functioning locomotives by adding rust, warning signs, and even shrubbery growing around the wheels. Another modeler has been busy inside the layout rotating equipment, cleaning track and mating new and creative trains, the latest being a colorful unit train comprised of recently donated hopper cars.

# Ten Years Ago

By Stan Madyda

Ask any rail enthusiast familiar with Danbury when the last steam engine operated in Danbury yard and they might answer 1968. That was when #97 (now at Essex) ran excursions for the New Haven Railroad. The correct answer, however, is 2001 when Thomas the Tank Engine visited for three days in July. Almost 15,000 people attended the event and ride behind the 0-6-0 Thomas in one of our five coaches. Thomas was built and operated by the Strasburg Railroad and shipped to Danbury on a flatbed truck.

Many members turned out to help with the numerous jobs. Marty Steinberg was on hand to entertain guests with his magic. With the support of the Board of Directors and many members, Tom McCullough stepped forward as event director. In order to successfully operate Thomas, Track 34 needed rehabilitation and a dedicated crew worked to make this happen. Another pre-event task was ticketing and a number of members, headed by Kathy Fay handled the thousands of transactions. Joe Ward and Randy Natale were responsible for food service and Sue Teer the gifts shops, all assisted by many members. Ira Pollack arranged for and coordinated the popular speeder rides. Wayne Karns acted as volunteer coordinator and Darryl Harrington organized the car hosts and train boarding. New member Wade Roese was our on site EMT. Our Kiddie Train was manned by Mike Petreycik. In addition to Thomas, we also ran our Railyard Local, and movements within the yard were the responsibility of Geoff Knees and Joe Mato.

Lines were long and the weather was hot but our visitors all enjoyed themselves. The profits the DRM earned gave us a strong financial footing for years to come.

New President Ira Pollack wrote his first of many letters to the members thanking them for their efforts leading up to and during the Thomas Event. Tony White provided a detailed report.



Above, photos by Bob Westerfield. Below left, Magician Marty Steinberg; right, Sparkles. Photos by Sue Teer



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Thomas the Tank Engine event in 2001. At right, the Gift Shop. Photos by Sue Teer.



Thomas the Tank Engine 1998; Above, speeder rides, and right, Ira Pollack and volunteer managing the rides. Below: l., Shirley Peatfield supervising the coloring table; ctr., face painting; r., John Silbert and Dave Simington. Photos by Sue Teer.



Not to be overlooked was the arrival of former New Haven RS-11 #1402 on June 20th. The engine left its previous owner in February for the trip to Danbury. But once it arrived at Selkirk Yard, it was discovered the engine had developed some problems with the air that would prevent it from completing its trip. CSX shop forces worked on the engine when they could, and as they did more problems popped up. Eventually, with the help of our DRM crew (Ron Freitag, Skip Kern, Randy Natale and Mike Miciukiewicz) parts were replaced and work completed on the air brake system. CSX then approved the engine for movement to Pittsfield where it would be picked up by the Housatonic Railroad for delivery to Danbury.

A change in how yearly dues would be handled occurred due to our increasing membership. For the first several years of the DRM's existence all memberships expired in June. The new system would have memberships expire one year after a person joined, spreading the renewal process over 12 months.



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## MUSEUM CALENDAR

Aug	18(7:00pm)	Board Meeting - Open to Members
Aug	24(7:30pm)	T.B.A.- Ed Blackman
Aug	31(7:30pm)	Future of Railroads - Jim McGeorge
Sept	7(7:30pm)	G.N. Steam/Electrics - Carl Liba
Sept	14(7:30pm)	Vid;Guilford on D&H - DRM Library
Sept	15(7:00pm)	Board Meeting - Open to Members
Sept	21(7:30pm)	T.B.A. - Pete McLachlan

**DRM hrs: Mon-Sat 10-5; Sun 12-5; TO CHANGE 9/5!**  
See the newsletter in color at [www.danburyrail.org](http://www.danburyrail.org)!



### Contact Information

Please contact us with submissions:  
Mail: The Danbury Railway Museum  
Attention: Newsletter  
PO Box 90, Danbury, CT 06813  
Phone: 203.778.8337  
Fax: 203.778.1836  
Email: [drmnewslettereditor@gmail.com](mailto:drmnewslettereditor@gmail.com)  
Editor: Carolyn Taylor  
Printing by: Infinity Printing of Danbury

### **Change of Address**

If you move, please send your change of address to:  
Danbury Railway Museum,  
Attention: Membership Chairman  
PO Box 90, Danbury, CT 06813  
Via Email to [drmmembers@aol.com](mailto:drmmembers@aol.com)

