

The Railyard Local

Volume 5, Issue 5

-The Monthly Newsletter of the Danbury Railway Museum-

May 2006

Bunny Trains 2006

Event delights DRM guests

Our Easter Bunny had such a great time greeting DRM guests in the specially decorated CN caboose last year, that he made an encore appearance. The pre-planning for signs, publicity, parking, reservations,



additional entertainment, train crew, volunteer staffing, etc. enabled the Museum to smoothly accommodate large numbers of train and bunny lovers on the two weekends of the event.



Reservations have enabled visitors to plan their visit without waiting in line, and have eased the pressure on the Front Desk volunteers during such a popular event. Sue Thomas came many evenings to process the reservations requests. She, Dave

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The Yard Inside and Library News

The Little Engine That Could Will Make It to the DRM

Watch for the form inserted in this issue

As previously mentioned, a **major** highlight of this season will be the two weekends, **June 17-18 & 24-25**, when this full-size replica of the engine made famous in Watty Piper's book of the same title will come to our Museum. We realize that this event will take a major commitment from our membership and other volunteers, but the rewards of doing it should be even greater. **The Museum needs your assistance!** Please look at the insert and indicate on the back side of it a way that you are willing to help. If you have a way to assist that is not mentioned, just give the Museum a call, or write it on the form, and return it. Our Museum will benefit greatly from your efforts.

Gift Shop News

By Patty Osmer

Our featured items are the new 1455 t-shirts, plus, as pictured, a full range of Little Engine That Could books and items in anticipation of the big event in June.



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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!

Patricia Giurgescu	Danbury, CT
Richard O. Cossetto	Lake Peekskill, NY
Kenneth & Nathan Lee	New Milford, CT
Dana A. Gisondi	Danbury, CT
Michael Powell	New Fairfield, CT
Suzanne Waters	Lagrangeville, NY
Michelle Brown	Bridgewater, CT
Carolyn Courtney	Buchanan, NY
Annrose Fluskey-Lattin	Danbury, CT
Perry M. Peretz	Ridgefield, CT
Darlene & Gordon Wicks	South Salem, NY
Bridget Henry	Danbury, CT
Karen Shehadeh	Katonah, NY
Herbert M. Iselin	Pound Ridge, NY
Tony Lamberti	East Haven, CT
Joanne F. Spring	Danbury, CT

New Haven Fencing for Semaphore Operator's Shed



James Powell is shown digging a post hole for the New Haven fence's end post. Jeremy Rice also helped so that the fencing could be installed as pictured below. Bob Pitcher did all the metal work. It just needs some cosmetic touch-up to be the perfect frame for the Wilton semaphore and operator's shed.



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Ten Years Ago

By Stan Madyda

The Spring of 1996 was a very busy time at the Danbury Railway Museum. The May 1996 newsletter reviewed what was happening in the yard and station.

The cleaning out of the turntable pit occurred in May. For years after it was taken out of service, the pit was used as a dumping grounds by the railroads that occupied the yard. A backhoe was used to remove the debris (including trees) which City of Danbury trucked away. This was the first step in preparing the turntable to operate again.

The City also supplied crews to truck away additional debris that DRM members cleared from the yard. Plans were being made to do track work on tracks 18, 20, 22 and 24 during the summer. Other spots in the yard would see weed control and new ballast.

The Mechanical Department was formed with Geoff Knees appointed Mechanical Manager. The Department was to be in charge of maintenance and restoration of the equipment.

A members' picnic was announced for June.

The yard saw a visitor when member Ken White stopped by with his Wooding track car, also known as a "speeder". He gave rides to several members. It was decided that it would be a good idea to have a speeder of our own, and sponsor meets for other owners.



Giving speeder rides about ten years ago. Photo from Ira Pollack's collection.

The station's parking lot also had visitors when the Mixed Morris Ale dancers performed traditional dances from England for the arrival of Spring.

Inside the station, it was determined that the Gift Shop would be located in the former Baggage Room, the Library would occupy the Adams Express Room, and the Museum Office would be in the former Ticket Office. The former Telegraph Room and Waiting Room would be used for displays.

A call for volunteers was again made to staff the station and to give yard tours. At the time, yard tours were lasting about 15 minutes.

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DRM Express Track

By Ira Pollack, President

This month I will update you on some of the projects that we have been working on.

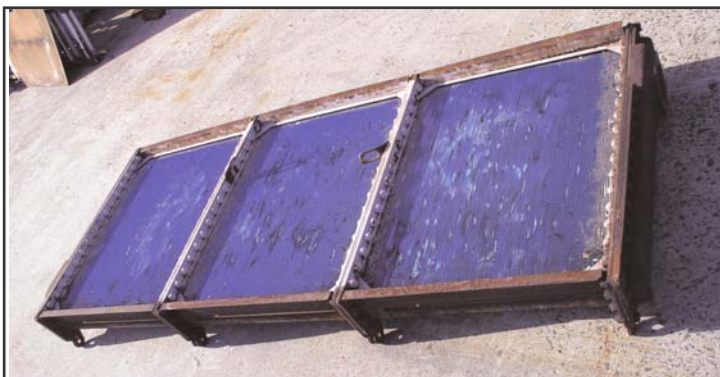
We are moving closer to “The Little Engine That Could” event. Our Events Committee has been diligently meeting on a weekly basis to formulate a plan for this large event. They have been renting tents, tables, booking entertainers, seeing to the hundred other details necessary to run an event of this magnitude. Our yard crew has also been busy making our four coaches ready for this event. There has been much sanding and scraping in the cars to prepare



Ed Holowinko is one of the volunteers who has been restoring the interior of the coaches.

them for interior cleanup, painting and makeover. As always, we need your help for this event. Our committee has estimated the need of about 100 volunteers per day (for part of each day) to run this event smoothly. Please come forward to sign up.

The mechanical crew is also busy working on our operating equipment. The Pfizer SW8 is in the process of receiving a new radiator bank. We have



The leaking radiator bank removed from the Pfizer SW8 locomotive.

been fortunate over the years with this engine because there have been only relatively minor maintenance issues. However, now the leak in the radiator has reached the point of no return. Our crews will also be replacing the batteries for the RDC 32 Budd car. This



Dan Carleton and Justin Chapin have been working hard and late to remove corrosion from inside the SW8. With the radiator bank temporarily removed, they have access to that area, and will protect it with paint it before installing the new radiator bank.



faithful servant to the Museum is in dire need of new batteries. Both of these projects are fairly expensive, but one of the necessary costs of running this operation. It is part of doing the business we do of running

trains. We must continue working on and solving our maintenance problems because the Museum’s main attraction to the public is our train rides.

I would also like to announce that Geoff Knees will be helping us schedule our weekend train crews this season. Please contact him if you have any experience in train operations, or if you have an interest in learning to become part of our operations staff. Good luck to you Geoff in this endeavor.

Our busy season is upon us now folks. We have many projects to complete this season with many deadlines to meet. I am hoping to get your help in the yard on Saturdays, or at any time that you may be available. Always feel free to contact me if you have questions, advice, or just want to talk.

Library News

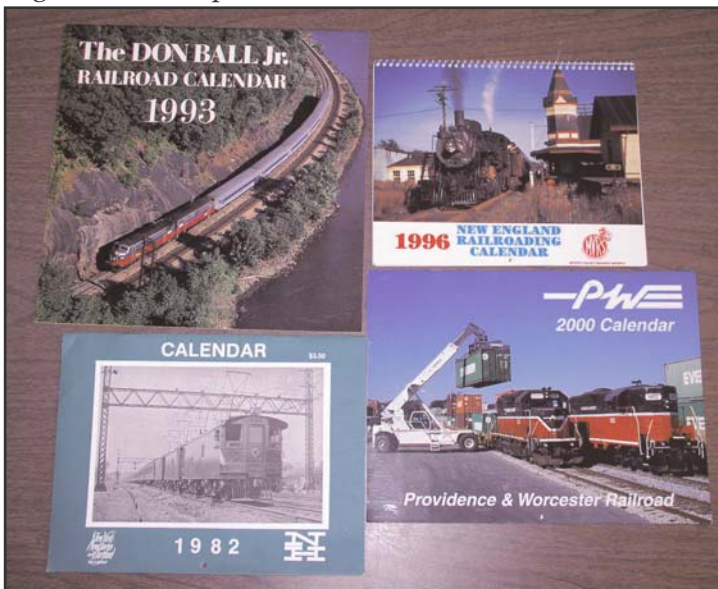
By Stan Madyda

During the past month, members of the Library Committee have been meeting on Tuesdays and Saturdays in order to keep up with the amount of material that needs to be sorted, accessioned and cataloged.

The Harry Vallas Collection has given us a number of new books for our collection. We also sorted through videos and calendars that were included. Magazines, newsletters and timetables will also be worked on in coming months. We feel the purchase of the collection has far exceeded our expectations. More on this collection next month.

Up to now we have filed our books by author rather than by subject or using one of the standard library numbering systems. We'll continue to do this for the most part but we have separated some books by subject. Two that we are segmenting are passenger cars and trolley and interurbans. We are keeping this material on their own sections of shelving. This should help any member or researcher find what they may be looking for. We are still interested in purchasing Past Perfect, a resource program designed for museums and historical collections. This program will also enhance our functions and make locating material much easier.

Over the years, calendars have been donated the Library. We are now in the process of getting them together in one place. We were not sure what to do



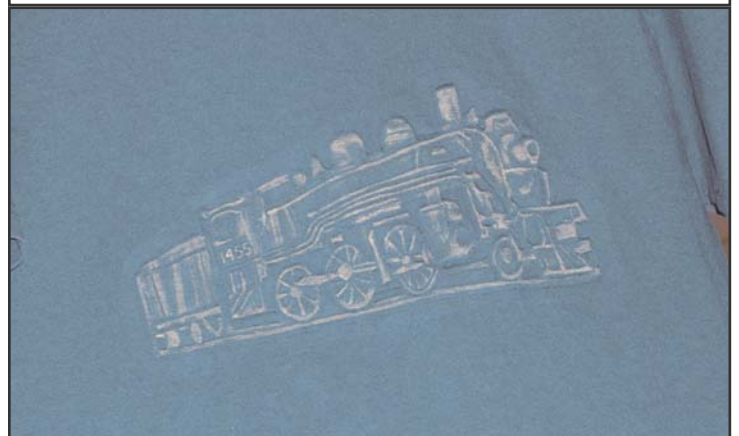
with calendars. Railroads did and still do produce yearly calendars to use as promotional material. So it was easy to decide to save these. But we had a number of calendars produced commercially and by historical societies and museums. I placed a call to **4** Ellen Halteman at the California State

Railroad Museum Library to see how they treat calendars other than the ones directly from the railroad. She said that they save all calendars and explained the reasoning behind their policy. In short, the commercially produced calendars and ones from museums and historical societies contain photographs that can be helpful to researchers studying specific topics. Case in point - a commercially produced 2006 New York Central calendar has an excellent photo of a brand new ACMU, just like the two we have in the yard, on its way to being delivered to the New York Central. If someone is interested in Don Ball's work, we have several of the calendars W.W. Norton produced. Other notable topics are a number of calendars from the New Haven Railroad Historical & Technical Association, Kinsey Calendars of Northwest Logging Railroads, Golden Press' black and white calendars of steam, diesel and electric engines, Howard Fogg calendars, Mystic Valley calendars on New England railroading, Ann Arbor Railroad Historical Society calendars and Those Magnificent Trains. Anyone wishing to see our collection should contact the Library.

Gift Shop News, Continued from Page 7



Shown above are some of the new 1455 t-shirts, with an enlargement of the embossed image shown below



Roberts, and Wade Roesse placed decorations throughout the Museum, railyard and Bunny Caboose to give a festive appearance. (Sue shops for decoration bargains year-round.) She and Suze Blackman donned the bunny costume for greeting children at the caboose, which was probably the highlight of the visit for many of the children.



This young visitor throws up his arms in delight at seeing the balloon animal that Caitlin McElroy has created for him. Her cousin Doug also assisted at this popular entertainment site within the Museum.

In addition to the train ride via a RDC Budd car to the Bunny Caboose where each young visitor received a small gift, the Museum entertained with a face painter, people who fashioned balloon animals, a coloring station, train toys, and ongoing model railroad layouts and photographic exhibits.



We appreciate the efforts of the many volunteers who contributed to the success of this event, and especially to Sue, who had primary respon-



sibility for organizing it. One entire family of new members came to volunteer: Jean Powell amazed and delighted with her talents at face painting, Mike snapped the photos of the event included in this issue,

as well as ones for "The Yard Inside" and back cover, one son, James, used the Museum camera to photo-



graph children with the Easter Bunny, while another son, Steve, printed those photos. They joined many volunteers who regularly donate their talents here, as well as those who come when we need extra help for special events such as this one. The event was a financial success, which is def-



initely needed for keeping our equipment functioning, and the Museum open. We volunteers love this Museum of railroading; therefore being able to share it and see the delight and appreciation of our guests makes our efforts worthwhile.



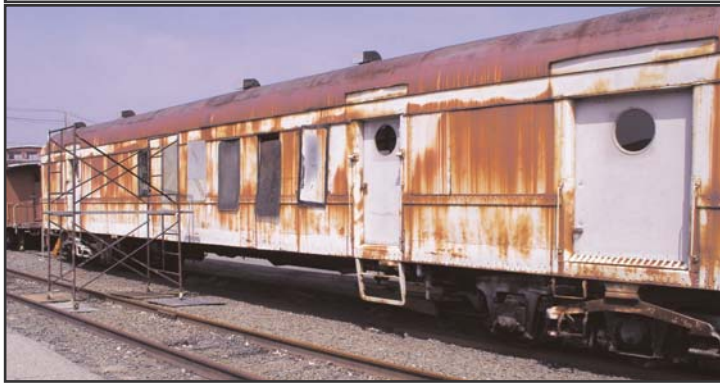
RPO News and Notes

By Bill Britt, Project Manager

The window replacement is going well. The door's circular windows have been reinstalled. The sashes for the larger windows have been reglazed and are in storage in the car. Reinstallation will be done by the yard crew as the weather warms up. We thank all who contributed in this effort.



What a wonderful sight it is to see reflection in the newly installed windows on the RPO car! Warmer weather has made additional progress possible. Quite a few more windows remain to be installed on the south side of the car. It now is easily possible to envision what a beauty this piece will be with a bit of cosmetic restoration.



The mail bag drive has been status quo this month. We can always use a few more.

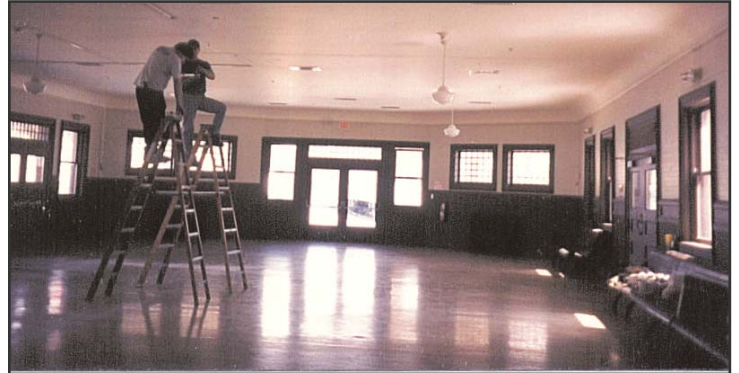
Our next task will be to repair some minor holes in the roof, remove and neutralize roof rust, prime it, and paint it.

Did you know?: That train speed was critical for mail sack retrieval. A train speed of at least 30mph was preferred by the clerks; at slower speeds it took a very experienced person to retrieve the sack. The train did not stop for dropped sacks and I'm told that when a sack was missed or dropped there was a little bit of "you know what" to pay.

As mentioned in prior reports, thanks for your support. We look forward to hearing from you.



Ten Years Ago, Continued from Page 2



Finishing the interior of the Waiting Room before exhibits and displays. Photo by Ira Pollack.

A meeting was scheduled to discuss new exhibit ideas. One exhibit was to feature a history of railroad signaling, while another was going to be about hobos and gandy dancers. The exhibits did not come to fruition but remain excellent ideas.

All of the Library material stored at 16 Ives Street was moved to its new location in the station. Sorting would continue during the summer with an anticipated opening in September. There was mention of a four year goal to have a very comprehensive collection of books and papers relating to railroading in the Northeast (we have learned this is a never ending job). At the time, the Library Committee was meeting only two evenings a month.

The Hudson Highland Excursion held on May 18 was discussed. The trip included a boat ride on the Hudson on the M/V Rip Van Winkle. Because it took place right after the Open House and the move into the station, it was felt that some of our marketing efforts were not entirely successful, and the trip resulted in a small loss.



Bob Westerfield sets up a Lionel layout as one of the Museum's first displays in the former Waiting Room. Photo by Ira Pollack, about nine years ago.

Lastly, a memorial service was held for John Flower with over 100 members, friends and family in attendance. One of Danbury Railway Museum coaches which had earlier been named the "John E. Flower" was used to give rides in the yard. The Flower family also planted a tree outside the station in his memory.



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MUSEUM CALENDAR

- May 17(7:30pm) Slides of People Movers in Action - Roger Coleman
- May 18(7:00pm) Board Meeting (Open to Members)
- May 24(7:30pm) 1960's Railfanning (Slides) - Gerry Herrmann
- May 31(7:30pm) Slides from His Collection - Bob Gambling
- June 7(7:30pm) Cross country 1966 - Pete McLachlan
- June 14(7:30pm) Durango 1984 (Slides) - Paul Gassner

Be sure to look for the full color version of this newsletter on our website: www.danbury.org/drm/



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