

The Railyard Dispatch

Volume 14, Issue 8

The Newsletter of the Danbury Railway Museum

August 2015

Owney Day 2015

By Sue Teer; Photos by Wade Roesse, President

July 18th was Owney Day, the celebration of the little dog that rode the Railway Post Office cars in the late 1890's out of Albany, New York. Since we have a beautifully restored Railway Post Office car, this is a good way to talk about the Railway Post Office service and invite the public to hear the story of Owney. Martha Bishop, a wonderful storyteller, was on board the railyard local and told the many Owney stories before and during the trip. She also gave out specially wrapped dog biscuits to dog owners on board.

The public had a conducted tour of the RPO car and was also given a ticket for a free hot dog, which were delicious and served by Don and Wade under the pavilion on track 18. The Gift Shop was also busy selling Owney books, postcards, commemorative envelopes with five pictures of Owney on them (some with Owney postage stamps) and little Owney stuffed dogs. We had many visitors and a really good day at the Museum. Thanks to all who came and helped out!



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Library Books for Sale

By Stan Madyda, Vice President & Library Co-chair

We are again overrun with duplicate books. The donors have allowed duplicate material to be sold with proceeds going to the Archive Fund. This money is then used to purchase archival supplies for the library and any items or photographs we feel fit into our collection. Some recently purchased items include DVDs of the publications from Kalmbach, New Haven equipment photos and a metal New Haven station sign for Rye, NY.

Some of the duplicates are for sale in the Gift Shop and on the table opposite the Main Desk. Others are in the Library. If there are any titles you are looking for, please contact us at the Museum or by email at danburyrwymuseum@yahoo.com. If we have to ship, media mail postage is extra.

SPECIAL – From now to the end of September, any duplicate books by **Lucius Beebe** and **Don Ball** are **\$5.00** each.



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!

Allison Reklaitis	Danbury, CT
Shannon Short	Danbury, CT
Walter Primoff	Cos Cob, CT
Ana Trujillo	Ridgefield, CT
Shauna Yeager	Ridgefield, CT
Richard Sher	New Milford, CT
Michelle Martiv	Danbury, CT
Scott Bravi	Wilton, CT

Upcoming Events at the DRM

August 15th - First Responders Day & Members Picnic

Free train rides for first responders and their families.

After the day's event, the Museum will hold a members-only picnic where there'll be plenty of great food. A \$5 donation is requested at the picnic. Members can also take a ride on one of our engines or try their hand at the throttle!

If you are planning to attend, please let us know by calling the Station (203-778-8337) to let us know how many will be coming and if you are bringing a salad or dessert.

September 7th - Labor Day

The Museum will be open from 12 to 4pm with train rides. This is also when the Museum's summer hours end. After Labor Day, the Museum will be open Wednesday to Saturday from 10am - 4pm and Sunday from 12noon to 4pm.

October 10th & 11th, 17th & 18th, and 24th & 25th - Pumpkin Patch Weekends

Come to the DRM for a fun train ride in decorated cars to our pumpkin patch where children ages 2 - 12 get a free pumpkin! The \$10 admission for visitors ages 2 and up (under 2 years free) includes historic train ride, exhibits and displays, operating layouts, children's activities including free coloring station and temporary tattoos, and free cider and cookies! Children are encouraged to wear their costumes!

Hours are 10am - 4pm on Saturdays (October 10th, 17th, and 24th) and 12pm - 4pm on Sundays (October 11th, 18th, and 25th). Trains will be running hourly 10:30am - 3:30pm on Saturdays and 12:30pm - 3:30pm on Sundays.

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Ten Years Ago

By Stan Madyda, Vice President

At long last, Metro-North delivered the two former New York Central ACMUs on August 28, 2005. When the DRM learned that all of the units were to be retired and likely sold for scrap, a formal request was submitted to Metro-North and they donated numbers 1128 and 1171. The 1128 unit was built in 1962 and the 1171 was built in 1965. Both units saw extensive service on the electrified Harlem and Hudson Divisions.

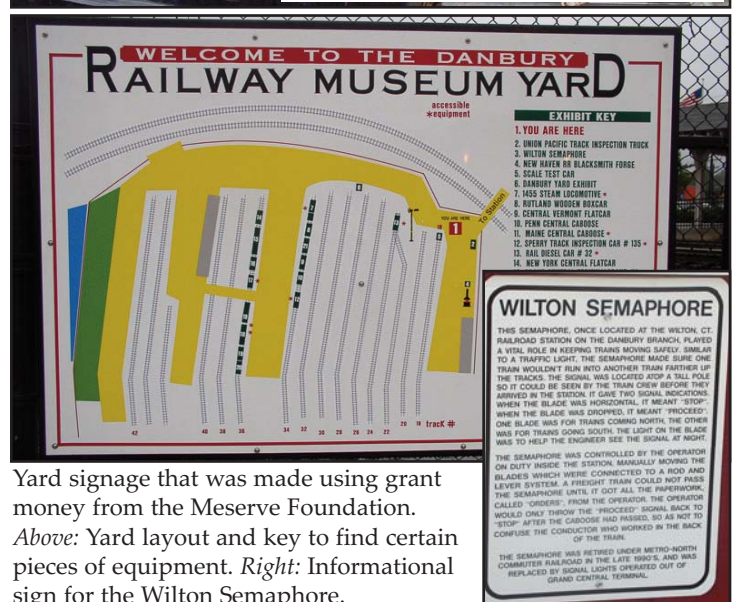
As always, the members' picnic in early August was well attended. Anyone interested was able to run the SW-8 to the turntable and back.

Prior to the picnic, the Museum had a successful volunteer information open house. Project leaders were on hand to discuss opportunities available in the Station and in the yard. These included restoration work on rolling stock, lettering of equipment, trackwork, general maintenance of the equipment and yard, and covering the front desk and gift shop.

Through a grant from the Meserve Foundation, the Museum proceeded to have new signage made for the yard. These signs included a layout of the yard and where to find certain pieces of equipment, a history of the yard, and informational signs for the Wilton Semaphore, the 1455, freight and passenger trucks and coil springs. *Photos courtesy of Carolyn Taylor.*



Ex-NYC ACMUs being delivered in the rain by Metro-North on August 28, 2005.



Yard signage that was made using grant money from the Meserve Foundation. *Above:* Yard layout and key to find certain pieces of equipment. *Right:* Informational sign for the Wilton Semaphore.

Member Profile - Philip Beard

Philip Beard is a recent graduate from Wooster School located in Danbury, CT. Although a resident of Hopewell Junction, NY, Danbury has evidently called to him from an early age! Nevertheless, one of Philip's most remarkable, and favorite, achievements was of spending 3 years on the crew that restored the Hopewell Junction Depot.

Philip first came to the Danbury Railway Museum as an infant trailing in his big sister's love of trains. His own passion of trains and of all things railroading-related grew steadily over the years and found them expressed in his art and photography.

After learning to shoot and develop 35mm film in 5th grade, Philip has gone on to study digital photography, digital 3D modeling, sketching and painting. He has been accepted to many of the most prestigious art colleges in the country and plans to begin studies of 3D Animation at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn in the fall of 2015.

In his work, Philip's passion for industrial history is evident; especially railroads, abandoned factories, industrial equipment and rusty gauges are common subjects. His passion for trains and railroading are evident in his drawings, photography and 3D computer imaging. By photographing such things, Philip hopes to bring awareness to the importance of our past and give a new visage to its towering remnants - remnants which all too often now are reduced to rubble and decay.

In addition to his art studies at Wooster School, Philip has also attended the Mill Street Loft Art Institute and is a member of the National Arts Honor Society. His works have been included in numerous "Teen Vision" galleries at Vassar College, and have also been selected to appear in the National "Exposure" gallery two years in a row. In 2015, he had a remarkable total of 4 photographs accepted into the National "Exposure" competition. Teenagers from around the country could submit up to 5 photographs for consideration. Only 70 were accepted, 4 of which were Philip's.

On the weekends, you are most likely to see Philip about the yard or Museum doing whatever work needs to be done. His cameras are a constant companion as he records the day-to-day activities of maintaining, working, educating, restoring and rebuilding at one of the iconic railway stations in the Northeast...and of his childhood.

Editor's note: Check out these photos that Phil took on June 13th at the Steel and Wheels car show. Phil also has an interest in miniature engines. He's pictured tending to them on page 16 during Owney Day.



Words from Our President

How are you? How have you been? How are you doing? All questions utilized as a greeting or part of a simple "Hello" or "Hi". Our newsletter is replete with progress reports on projects, stories of what has been going on in the yard and in the building, numerous photos highlighting events and activities, even financial information, but how are WE doing? After each event and each week we evaluate various statistics we collect: Sales, attendance, volunteer participation, weather, what worked and what didn't work.

More importantly, how are we doing with the public, our guests? A couple of months ago, the Danbury Railway Museum was awarded a certificate of excellence from TripAdvisor, a highly recognized, independent travel site which includes the collection and publication of millions of reviews and comments from visitors and world travelers to restaurants, hotels, resorts and places of interest. Having previously received this award of excellence, we decided we had better see what our visitors were saying with regard to our Museum. Wow! Quite a few were providing great, very good, good and informative information about our Museum including some questions and suggestions to help us improve what we do.

Following are some exciting quoted headlines to be shared with our members:

"A Hidden Gem"
"A real nice museum"
"Awesome, safe, clean and many cool artifacts"
"Wonderful"
"Charming and informative"
"Great for all ages"
"Worth repeated trips"

Our first review is dated August 28, 2008 and we're currently at 81 reviews, all of which give us insight, encouragement, and reflection.

Lastly, we wish to acknowledge the time, detail and sincerity expressed in this recently submitted review:

If you have a reason to be in the area, then this is a great place to stop if you have kids interested in trains, or if you are a train aficionado.

The museum is located about five minutes off I-84 in Danbury, about 10 minutes from the NY state line, and is located in an old station house. It was easy to find.

Essentially, the museum has two main parts. Outside, it has its own rail yard with a bunch of vintage train engines and cars, ranging from a 1907 steam engine to a diesel engine from the 1970s that you would still see on the rails today. The day we were there, five of the trains were open for boarding. My 5-year old loved all of them, but he especially loved the steam engine and the ability to ring the bell.

There is a short train ride, but we got there too late to take it, so I can't really say anything about it. It looked fun.

Words from Our President, Continued from Page 4

Inside, the museum has a video screen showing train-related informational films and some artifacts and photos that are interesting. But most of the inside is taken up by five or so model train setups. They are really elaborate and beautiful, on a scale of what you would see at a train show during the holiday season. You can activate the trains by pressing a button, which thrilled my 5-year old.

I should note they also have train-related toys around for kids to play with (and seats for the parents to sit and watch), as well as a Thomas the Tank Engine statue (not sure what to call it...it's a big, plastic version of Thomas) inside. My son loved posing for a photo next to it.

The volunteers who worked there were knowledgeable and really nice.

The museum is really inexpensive (\$6 for adults, \$4 for kids), and the gift shop had some nice train-related toys and gifts for reasonable prices (we picked up a railroad crossing sign for my son's room and a train-shaped cookie cutter for about \$13 total).

Again, the museum is not a destination for a long trip. But if you are going to be anywhere near Danbury, especially if you are driving across Connecticut on I-84 and need a good stopping off point to break up the trip for the kids (we spent about 1 hour and 15 minutes there), I highly recommend this place. My son had a great time.

Visited July 2015

With most of the submitted reviews being of this tone, maybe we can say we are doing pretty well. How we are doing, however, is a reflection of ALL our volunteers, their talents, their commitment and their dedication. Thanks to all our volunteers and members. You've all received recognition from

our welcomed guests.

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



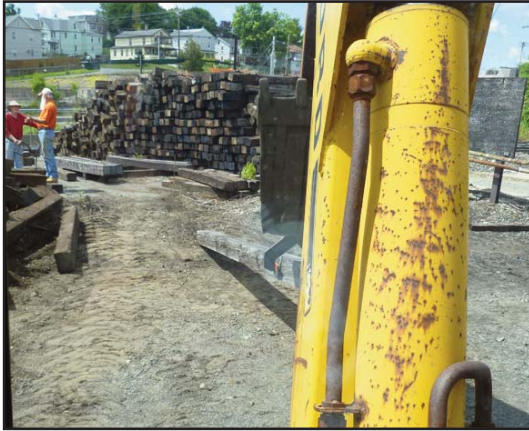
Photos courtesy of Carolyn Taylor

Track Work Week

By Jeff Van Wageningen, Superintendent of Operations

The DRM has completed the 2015 "Track Work Week" that lasted from June 24th to the 27th. We had participation from Mike Madyda, Jim Teer, Don Konen, Justin Chapin, Bill Wagner, Philip Beard, Dave Kopycinski and myself. Five switch timbers near switch #30 were replaced, and five ties were removed from track 42 that were later replaced in July. The work involved a good deal of hard manual labor. Justin and Jim were able to get new front tires for the backhoe prior to our start on Wednesday, June 24th. The backhoe, dump truck and air compressor were all employed and helped enormously. Sue Teer provided the lunches during the week and I provided a pizza lunch on Saturday. Light rain on Saturday afternoon provided a good excuse to knock off early and rest our weary muscles.

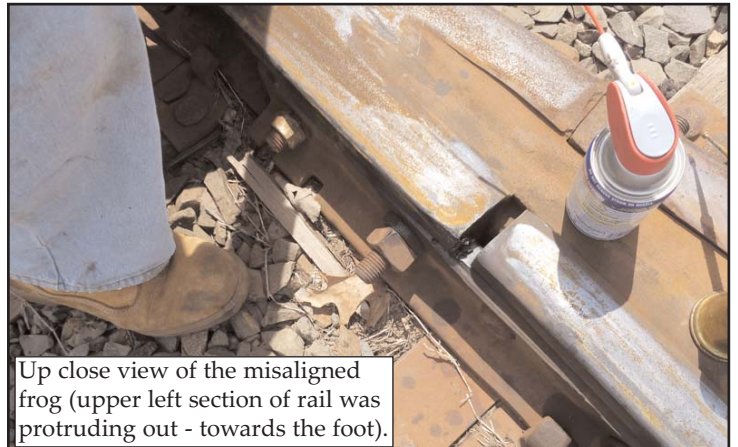
There is more work to do to return track 42 to full service, and we will be doing this a day at a time over the next couple of months. Please contact Jim Teer or myself if you can pitch in. Thanks to all who participated!
Unless otherwise noted, all photos were taken by the editor.



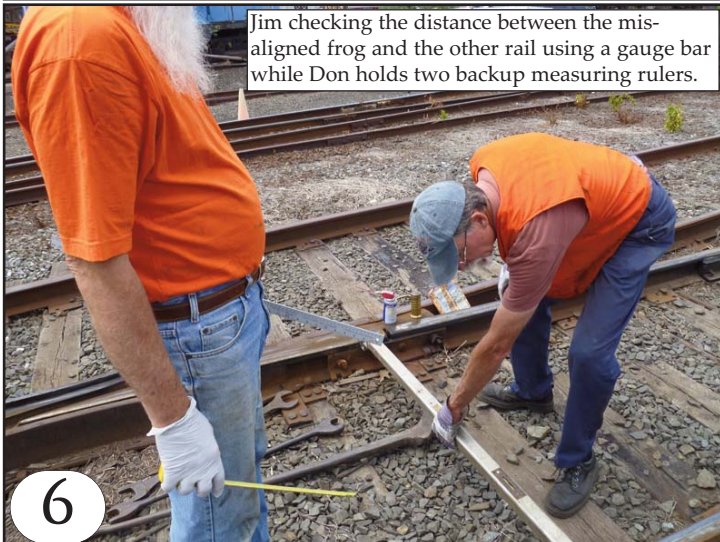
Left: Work began on Wednesday by utilizing the backhoe (operated by Mike Madyda) to drag out from storage the 14ft+ switch timbers and hoisting them onto the back of the dump truck (pictured right).



Don Konen, Jim Teer and Jeff Van Wageningen inspecting the misaligned frog, which was the first thing addressed on Wednesday.



Up close view of the misaligned frog (upper left section of rail was protruding out - towards the foot).



Jim checking the distance between the misaligned frog and the other rail using a gauge bar while Don holds two backup measuring rulers.



Jim gets to work by pulling up spikes using a spike puller.

Track Work Week, Continued from Page 6



Above: Jim observes as Don and Jeff loosen the bolts holding the rails to the frog.
 Top right: Jeff using a bottle jack to spread the rail away from the frog so a shim can be inserted between the frog and rail to bring the track back into alignment (pictured with arrow at left).
 Right: Spikes pulled on opposite side so the proper distance (4ft 8 1/2in) can be attained.



Rail on opposite side of frog is out of gauge indicated by the rail gauge propped up on the railhead (should be inside the railhead).

Spreading the rails apart using some wooden blocking and (at first) a small bottle jack.



After the small bottle jack couldn't cut it, a larger jack was put to use.



Jim hitting a tie plate into place while Don and Jeff prop up the rail.

Continued on Page 8

Track Work Week, Continued from Page 7



Left: Jim stands on the wooden blocking to prevent it from buckling while Jeff cranks the larger jack to bring the rails into gauge as Don and Justin Chapin observe. Right: Jeff drilling holes into the ties where new spikes will go, although the auger drill bit that he brought kept getting caught in the hole. Ugh!



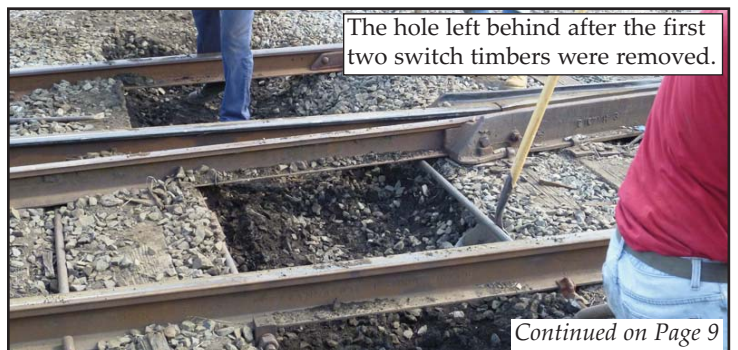
Below, below center and below right: Don "the spiker" Konen driving a rail spike using a spike maul.



Above: The first switch timber being removed after rail spikes and tie plates were removed.



Justin clearing away some dirt with the backhoe to make removing the old switch timbers easier.



The hole left behind after the first two switch timbers were removed.

8 The first two switch timbers that were removed off to the side.

Track Work Week, Continued from Page 8



Above: The sunny morning of Thursday, June 25th showed the newly aligned and spiked rail opposite the frog (looking east).
Right: The frog now properly aligned.



Top right: Bill Wagner and Jim pulling spikes while Jeff drills holes for the new spikes using a (better and non-catching) spade drill bit.

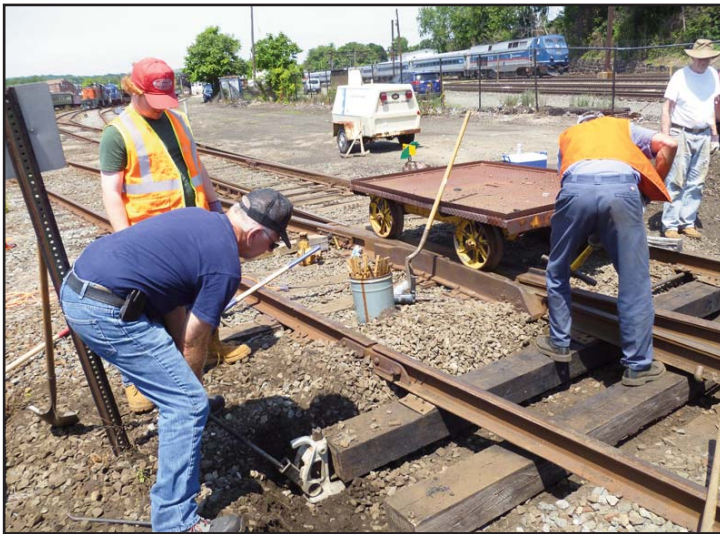


Left: Two new switch timbers located under the rails with rail jacks at the ready on both ends of one to lift the timbers into place for spiking.



Right: Jim positioning a tie plate under the rails.

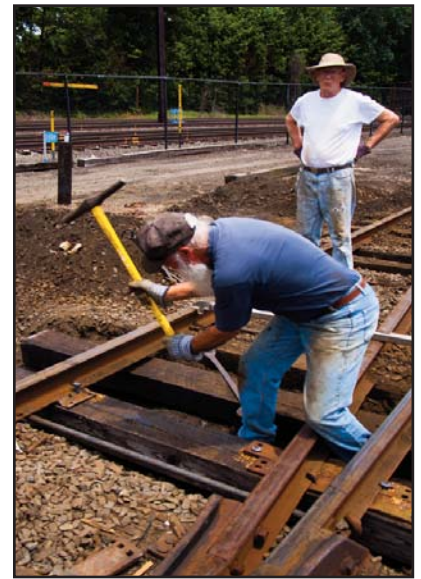
Bottom: Close-up view of new timbers ready to be jacked up under the rails.



Above: Bill jacking up one end of the new switch timber while Jim adjusts one of the tie plates so it will fit exactly under the rail and centered on top of the timber.
Right: Hook twin tie plates positioned on top of new switch timber for rail locations such as this to make sure rails are properly aligned and secured.



Track Work Week, Continued from Page 9



Above left: Don drilling into the switch timber through holes in the hook twin tie plate while Jim observes.

Above: Jim driving a spike. Above right: Don "the spiker" driving a spike while Jeff takes a breather (it was a hot day!). Photo courtesy of Philip Beard.

Left: Bill driving a spike the easy way using a pneumatic jackhammer hooked up to an air compressor.



Above: Up-close view of pneumatic jackhammer. Photo courtesy of Philip Beard.

Left and far-left: First two switch timbers spiked and installed.



Left: Don, Bill and Jim removing the third switch timber using timber tongs.

Right: Justin dumps new ballast onto the site where the first two new switch timbers were installed. Philip and Don look on and get ready to shovel it into the voids around and inbetween the new timbers.



Continued on Page 11



Above: Jeff, Jim, Philip and Don shovel out new ballast from the backhoe's bucket.
Top right: Jim, Jeff, Philip and Don shovel the ballast around into the crevices surrounding the new switch timbers.



Left: Don spreading around new ballast. Photo courtesy of Philip Beard.
Above: Jim tamping down the new ballast using a pneumatic jackhammer with a chisel.
Right: Don, Jim, Philip and Jeff bringing a new switch timber into position under the rails.



Left: The third new switch timber positioned under the rails with tie plates being located under each rail.
Above: Don lifts one end of the new timber while Jim positions a rail jack under it (pictured right). Continued on Page 12



Jeff and Philip lifting one end of the timber so Jim can get the rail jack under it.



Jim and Jeff working together to jack up the timber.



Almost there!



Bill tamping down the ballast.



Left: After digging out a majority of the last two remaining switch timbers on the east end, Mike Madyda uses the spike maul to knock out the tie plates to prepare them for removal. Right and bottom right: Justin scrapes away dirt and ballast using the backhoe at the north end of the timbers to make removal easier.



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Track Work Week, Continued from Page 12



Left: Philip starts the spikes into the pre-drilled holes while Jim (behind) drives them home using the maul. Above: The last two timbers on the east end ready for removal.



Photo courtesy of Philip Beard

Mike Madyda guides one of the old switch timbers as it is hoisted out by the backhoe and moved next to the fence.



Left: Mike gives the backhoe operator (Justin) directions where to place the new switch timber as Jim steadies it. Photo courtesy of Philip Beard. Right: New switch timbers placed under the rails ready to be lifted and secured to the rails.



Jeff brings tie plates in to be placed under the rails.



After the switch timber has been jacked up, Jeff drills holes to receive the rail spikes while Don holds the tie plate down with his foot. Behind Jeff, Jim starts the spikes into the holes.

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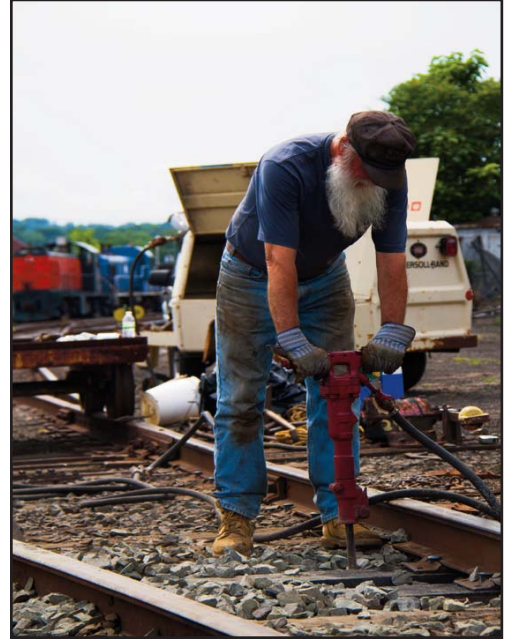
Track Work Week, Continued from Page 13



Bill drives down the rail spikes using the pneumatic jackhammer.



New switch timbers spiked into place.



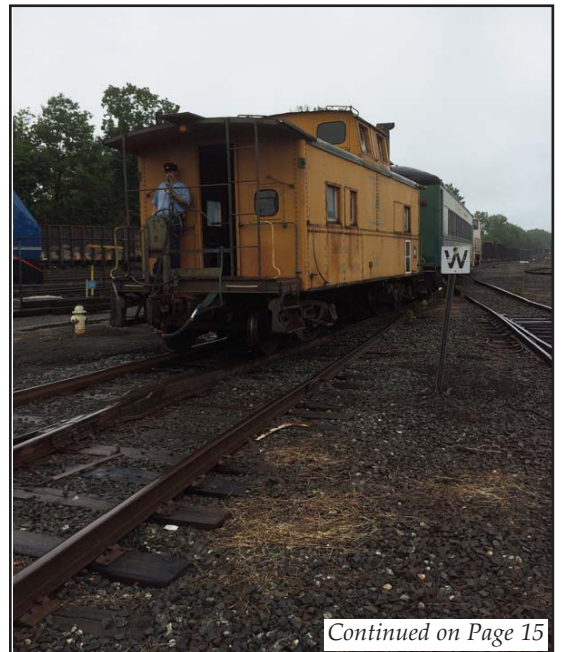
Don tamping down the new ballast on the west end. Photo courtesy of Philip Beard.



Above left: New switch timbers in place on the east end. Photo courtesy of Philip Beard.

Above right: New switch timbers and ballast tamped down on the east end.

Right: On Sunday, June 28th, the Railyard Local rides over the completed section of track.



Track Work Week, Continued from Page 14



Left: Jim using a pickax to loosen ballast on track 42 on Friday, June 26th. Photo courtesy of Philip Beard. Right: On Friday, the track crew moved on to track 42 to remove five rail ties. Justin uses the backhoe to remove ballast. Photo courtesy of Wade Roese.



Left and above: The crew at work on track 42 digging out the five rail ties. Photos courtesy of Wade Roese.

Bottom left: How track 42 looked on Sunday, June 28th. Below: Track 42 on Wednesday, August 5th, with five new rail ties installed and tamped ballast.





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Address Correction Requested

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MUSEUM CALENDAR

- August 5(7:30pm) 2008, Part 2 - Al Baker
- August 12(7:30pm) MD, PA, NY Summer 2006 -
Pete McLachlan
- August 19(7:30pm) New England Shortlines - Peter
Cornwall - **Repeated by Request!**
- August 20(7:00pm) Board Meeting - Open to Members
- August 26(7:30pm) Last Train to Pittsfield - Jim
McGeorge
- September 2(7:30pm) New Haven Freights - Carl Liba
- September 7(Labor Day) **Open 12-4pm with train rides**
- September 9(7:30pm) Across Canada - John Barton
- September 16(7:30pm) To Be Announced
- September 17(7:00pm) Board Meeting - Open to Members
- September 23(7:30pm) To Be Announced - Steve Gould

**Summer Museum hours: Mon-Sat 10-5; Sun 12-5
Beginning Sept. 7, Wed-Sat 10-4; Sun 12-4**

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



Photos courtesy of Wade Roese

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