

The Railyard Dispatch

Volume 14, Issue 3

The Newsletter of the Danbury Railway Museum

March 2015

In Memoriam - Gerry Lawlor



It is with deep regret that we report the passing of one of our very active members of the Museum and a really terrific man, Gerald (Gerry) Lawlor, on February 9. Gerry watched the front desk and gift shop for many years and was always on hand during an event to give out info and/or an encouraging word to volun-

teers and answer lots of ringing phones. He also attended many event planning meetings, worked dozens of train shows with Sue, kept our record of volunteer hours and worked from home to secure grants. He has been at home the past few years unable to get to Danbury, but kept in touch to know what was going on.

Gerry was a U.S. Navy Veteran of WWII and graduated from UB where he met his late wife Mae. He was a passionate train and trolley enthusiast and model railroader since early childhood, and was also active in the NMRA. He was delighted that his retirement condo had a view of the New Haven main line so he could railfan from his living room. Gerry was also a founding member of the Branford Trolley Museum. When not railfanning, he was active at Blessed Sacrament Church as a lector and trustee. He is survived by three daughters: Kathleen Lawlor, Janet Nicholas and John, Barbara D'Agostino and Lou; several grandchildren and great grandchildren; and one great-great grandchild. His memorial mass was held on Saturday, February 14th, 2015 at Blessed Sacrament Church in Bridgeport. To share a message of con-



do-lence, visit www.wrmcdonald-funeralhome.com.

His warm heart and big smile were a big part of the DRM. Our condolences go out to his daughters and their families. We'll miss you Gerry!

Photos this page courtesy of Carolyn Taylor

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Safety, Crew Exams, Car Host and Tour Guide Training Scheduled

The following 2015 DRM qualifying exams and training sessions are offered to our volunteers, who must be DRM members paid in full, as follows:

Saturday, March 14th

Safety Exam: 10:30 AM. For ALL volunteers working in the yard.

Crew Exam: 1:30 PM. For ALL current and potential crew members.

Saturday, March 21st

Car Host/Tour Guide Training: 10:30 AM. For ALL current and potential car hosts and tour guides which must be completed before working on DRM trains or giving tours. Will cover duties of each position.

These exams and training sessions are given annually to qualify for each position. Safety of our guests is "Job One" and the exams or training sessions reinforce the things we need to keep in mind. Please plan to attend them. They will be conducted at the Museum.

Questions? For Safety Exam, contact John O'Hern, Safety Officer. For Crew Exam, contact Jeff Van Wagenen, Superintendent. For Car Host and Tour Guide Training, contact Steve Gould.



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!

Have you noticed? The address label on each newsletter indicates the expiration date of your membership (recent renewals may not have new date on label). Life Members do not have an expiration date.

Timothy R. Gartner	Bethel, CT
Rahul Anand	Danbury, CT
Jason Korosfc	Stamford, CT
Albert Hwang	Ridgefield, CT

Upcoming Events at the DRM

March 28th & 29th and April 3rd & 4th
2015 Easter Bunny Express Trains!



Come see the Easter Bunny! Ride a vintage train through our ten-acre railyard and visit the Easter Bunny in a specially decorated coach! Every child will receive a small gift from the Bunny!

Reservations are strongly recommended! You can reserve online at our website or you can call 1-203-778-8337. The \$10 admission for visitors ages 2 and up (under 2 years free) includes train ride, exhibits and displays in our beautifully decorated 1903 Station. There will also be a coloring station, play area, operating model layouts, temporary tattoos and more!

Trains will be running every **half-hour from 12:30pm - 3:30pm**. The Museum will be open Friday & Saturday 10am - 4:30pm and Sunday 12noon - 4:30pm.

If you are a member and would like to help out with this event, which would be very much appreciated, please contact Sue Teer at 203-778-8337.

May 9th - National Train Day

Free train rides with paid admission & other activities to be announced.

May 10th - Mother's Day

2 Mothers ride free with child's paid admission.

Photos this page courtesy of Carolyn Taylor

Ten Years Ago

By Stan Madyda, Vice President

The DRM was busy right from the beginning of the year. In 2005, Danbury's First Night celebration continued right up to midnight. The Museum opened its doors for the evening and guests were entertained by Liz McNicholl, a singer and acoustic guitarist.

The Museum got some airtime on cable TV when Steve Gould appeared on a local educational access program in Norwalk. The show highlighted three different attractions from Fairfield County.

Jay Merrick of Danbury donated the small shed by the Wilton semaphore and it arrived in January. While not a railroad structure, it would serve to make the semaphore an interactive display. There wasn't much going on in the yard during the winter, but Gerry Herrmann reviewed the progress that was being made on the New York Central wooden caboose with siding completed and roof repairs made. Ira Pollack outlined plans for work on equipment, events and exhibits once the weather warmed up.

Inside the station, good progress was being made on the HO-gauge diorama. Space became available when the existing S-gauge layout was dismantled. A small mock-up was built of the layout to be used as a guide. Next, with a donation of lumber from Ring's End in Bethel, the benchwork was constructed.

DRM and the StEPs-CT Program

By Stan Madyda, Vice President

The American Association of State and Local History offers a national program they call StEPs, which stands for Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations. It allows history organizations and museums to measure their work using a series of standards developed by the AASLH. In 2014, the Connecticut League of History Organizations and Connecticut Humanities sent word out that they would again be offering this program to eligible organizations within the state. The DRM applied and became one of 26 organizations accepted into the program.

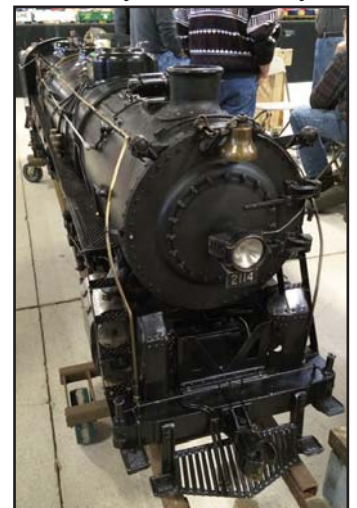
StEPs-CT is designed to be a self-study program lasting 26 months. It covers mission, vision and governance, audience, interpretation, stewardship of collections, stewardship of historic structures and landscapes and management. Some of the benefits of the program include education of staff, gaining credibility with potential funders, improved policies and practices and long-term planning. As *Continued on Page 4*

Danbury Railway Museum at the Annual Amherst Railway Society's Railroad Hobby Show, By Sue Teer

Over the weekend of January 24th & 25th, 2015, the Danbury Railway Museum took part in the annual railroad hobby show put on by the Amherst Railway Society held at the Eastern States Exposition Fairgrounds in West Springfield Massachusetts. This is the biggest railroad hobby show held in the northeast, which includes vendors and dealers from all over the country selling all sorts of railroad hobby equipment, photos, memorabilia and more. In addition, the show features several large model railroad layouts of all scales and numerous railway historical societies and museums.

The DRM had a good show, but not the best money-wise due to Saturday's ice and snowstorm. As a result, the attendance for the show was a little above 14,000 – a far cry from the usual 21,000+ people who usually attend. However, we saw lots of people and gave out lots of Museum brochures as well as Easter Bunny event flyers. Visitors to our booth were pleased with our display and bought several items that were for sale, including models, literature, and other things. People also were able to take home another special four-page color issue of *The Railyard Dispatch* newsletter. It contained articles on who we are, our annual events, current restoration projects and our 2015 schedule of events.

A special thanks goes out to some of our members who helped make the DRM's presence possible: Sue and Jim Teer, Patty Osmer, Don Konen, Suze Blackman, Joe and Mike LaPorta, Chuck Sager, Wade Roese and Chuck Sager. You guys did a terrific job transporting, setting up and manning our booth at the show, and helping us make lots of new friends and Museum visitors for next year! If you would like to be a "booth attendant" next year please let Sue know. All are welcome for a day, or two, or the three days we are usually there, Friday through Sunday.



Continued on Page 6

Words from Our President

It is now March 2015. It is snowing again and still feels as if we are in Alaska, although Alaska is warmer than here in the Northeast. Throughout the year many activities, events and projects roll along as they have in previous years. Our newsletter publishes pictures of the happenings and periodically we highlight a new project, acquisition, or relevant item of interest. All too often, however, we/I tend to take some of the day to day operations and activities in stride, forgetting that they might be of interest to our readership. Some years ago I wrote a column entitled "The Yard Inside" which related activities and changes to the layouts, models, displays and enhancements to the interior of the Museum building.

Please accept my apologies for not keeping you (our readership) informed. The following is a "Yard Inside" update:

A grant from the Meserve Foundation in early 2014 allowed the DRM to purchase a new 72+ inch flat screen TV, Blue-ray player and display furniture for the main lobby. Used every day and for Wednesday evening programs, this equipment replaced the projection TV we utilized for 15 years.

We have relocated a lot of our display cases (*pictured right*) and even some of the model layouts. In addition, all the model layouts have had storage enclosures built under them and additional displays built on their tops (*pictured below right*). We have added new displays of china dishware, uniforms, Grand Central Terminal memorabilia and railroad tools.

A new art display by railroader Vic Westman (*pictured below left*) and photography display by WestConn students have also been added in the main hall.

Work is currently underway to erect the support for the newly acquired Solari board (from Union Station in New Haven) and limited operational circuits have been designed and tested for future operation.

More enhancements are in the works for the "Yard Inside"



and we will attempt to be more diligent in relating the progress. Stay tuned.

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



DRM and the StEPs-CT Program, Continued from Page 2

participants, members of the DRM will meet monthly, mostly at the Connecticut Historical Society in Hartford, to go over the various sections of the program. Currently we are working on the mission, vision and governance part of the program.

The 26 organizations are been broken down in smaller groups based on geography. In our group are the Historical Societies of Newtown, Weston, Westport and Wilton. We have been assigned a mentor, Dr. Jackie Haley of Ridgefield, who will be with us for the duration of the program. At times, some of the topics covered are done so in a "general assembly" type session and also open to other organizations not in the StEPs program. The February meeting focused on hiring and funding paid staff, including an Executive Director, and working with consultants. Although the DRM will not be hiring a paid staff anytime soon, a lot that was covered did apply to an all-volunteer staff.

As we complete each section of the program, there are benchmarks to measure our progress. They are basic, good and better. We are then able to apply for certificates for each benchmark we reach. StEPs is still fairly new, but of all the certificates given out nationally, almost half have gone to history organizations in Connecticut.

Amherst Railway Society Heritage Grant Awarded to the Danbury Railway Museum for Model 30 Burro Crane Project

The Amherst Railway Society, Inc. sponsors two annual grant programs intended to further the preservation, renovation, rebuilding and restoration of historical railroad items. The Founders' Award is a single \$10,000 grant to a project, selected by the Board of Directors. The Heritage Grant Program is for lesser amounts, usually below \$4,000, that are distributed to several organizations. The Heritage Grants are awards for smaller projects, or for the partial funding of larger projects that are receiving matching funds from other sources. The funds for these programs are generated by their annual railroad hobby show in January.

On Sunday, January 25th, 2015, the awards and grants were publicly announced at the Amherst Railway Society's Railroad Hobby Show in West Springfield, MA. Once again, the Danbury Railway Museum was the recipient of a heritage grant in the amount of \$2,000. This was awarded to the DRM specifically for the Model 30 Burro rail crane restoration project. President Wade Roese and Treasurer Patty Osmer were on hand to receive the check and certificate of this most generous award (*pictured below*). Burro crane project manager (and editor of this newsletter) Michael Madyda (*pictured below on bottom left with Patty and Wade*) was also on hand to witness the awarding of this grant, as were Vice President Stan Madyda and Chairman Don Konen. On behalf of the Danbury Railway Museum, I would like to thank Amherst's board of directors and their president, Bruce MacCullagh (*pictured below on top left with Patty and Wade*), for the generous amount that they awarded us.

As far as the Burro crane project goes, you may be wondering what has been going on with it since there have been no articles recently. Well, rest assured, we have been making slow progress on it. Like my friend and assistant Louis Pisacano has said, this is not going to be an overnight restoration, but will take years to complete due to the condition of it when we (re)started work on it. From the last article on the crane that I wrote, we have removed some more parts, including the engine, and started erecting a structure to house and protect the crane while we work on it. This will be the first such structure in the Museum's history to be erected for the purpose of restoring a piece of rail equipment. This is almost complete and should be completed by this spring.

Last spring, Louis & I took a research field trip to the Wanamaker, Kempton & Southern Railroad in Kempton, PA to examine their Model 30 Burro crane. Theirs runs, but is a little simpler than what we received from Metro-North, since MN had it equipped with a magnet and air reservoir so the crane could be used to move rail cars for MofW work. We were very happy with our trip and were able to get some good info and pictures thanks to WK&S's CMO Tom Hartman. By the way, if you're ever in the northeast region of Pennsylvania, stop by the WK&S to check it out and go for a ride on their train. Go to their website at www.kemptontrain.com for more info. Articles on this field trip and what we've been doing will be forthcoming in upcoming issues of the RYD.

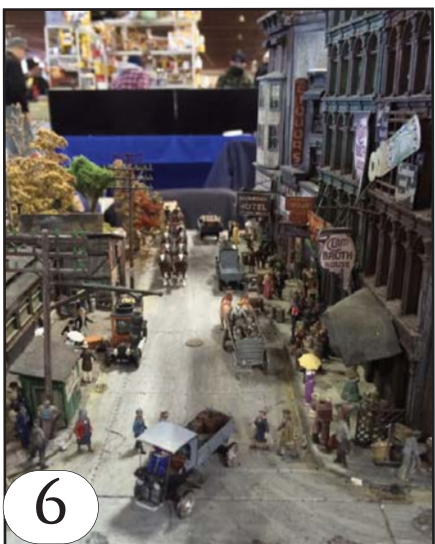
Even though we received \$2,000, which will go towards rebuilding the engine, we still need funds to

make this project come to fruition. If you believe in this project like the Amherst Railway Society, we would gladly appreciate any amount of money that you can donate. **Please send checks to: Danbury Railway**



Museum, Attention: Burro crane restoration, P.O. Box 90, Danbury, CT 06813, and make checks out to: Danbury Railway Museum with 'Burro crane restoration' in the memo. Thank you!







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MUSEUM CALENDAR

- | | | |
|-------|------------|---|
| March | 4(7:30pm) | Chicago - L.A. Corridor - Carl Liba |
| March | 11(7:30pm) | To Be Announced - Chuck Sager |
| March | 18(7:30pm) | ANNUAL MEETING - Deadline for Ballots! |
| | | Videos - History of the DRM |
| March | 19(7:00pm) | Board Meeting - Open to Members |
| March | 25(7:30pm) | Foreign Power on the NH & Others - Pete McLachlan |
| April | 1(7:30pm) | Chicago - S.F. Corridor - Carl Liba |
| April | 8(7:30pm) | To Be Announced |

Museum hours: Wed-Sat 10-4; Sun 12-4

See the newsletter in color at: 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@yahoo.com
Editor: Michael Madyda
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Change of Address:

If moving, please send your new address to:
Danbury Railway Museum,
Attention: Membership Chairman
PO Box 90, Danbury, CT 06813
Via Email to: drmmembers@aol.com

