

The Railyard Local

Volume 8, Issue 8

-The Monthly Newsletter of the Danbury Railway Museum-

October/November 2009

Antique Wheels of All Kinds

Vintage cars, trucks, military vehicles and a helicopter greeted guests on September 19th for the DRM's event featuring old-time motorized vehicles.



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Eagerly Awaiting Santa

It's almost time for Santa to suit up for the Museum's annual Santa Express event on **Sunday, December 6th, and the weekends of December 12 & 13, and 19 & 20.** A vintage locomotive journey will end in a visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus, who once again will have accommodations in our specially decorated coach. Children will receive a small gift there. Elves will be busily at work in Santa's Workshop. Temporary tattoos, other children's activities, the Gift Shop, play tables, refreshments, and operating layouts await visitors in the Museum building. As always, festive decorations will grace the Museum and railyard. Tickets will be \$8 for ages 2 and up, with under 2 years old free. The train ride, which will depart every 1/2 hour, is included, and will run 12:00-3:30pm on the Saturdays, and 12:30-3:30pm on the Sundays. Reservations are suggested, and can be arranged on-line at www.danburyrail.org or by calling (203) 778-8337. We hope you will join us! If you will be able to help, even for part of one of these days, please contact Sue Teer at the Museum or by calling (203) 792-1981. The holiday excitement is contagious.

Holiday Excursion Canceled

Unfortunately, as a result of lackluster ticket sales prior to the deadline by which the DRM had to make a significant irrevocable monetary commitment, the DRM had to cancel plans for the Holiday Express to New York City. We apologize for the disappointment to those who also were anticipating this trip.

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Pumpkin Patch Delights All

The frost might have been on the pumpkin, but our guests were given a warm welcome during our popular annual event. On the days when the weather was seasonable, many of the trainloads were filled. Each year Sue Teer finds new decorations so that even guests returning for this event are delighted by the enhancements they find. We extended the event one extra day since a couple of the days had been rainy, and we still had supplies. Thanks to all the volunteers who participated, and especially to Sue Teer and the members of the Events Committee.



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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!

Sheila & Sy Mendel	Wayne, NJ
M Cubria	Bronx, NY
Max Handler	New Rochelle, NY
Dan Griffin	Bethel, CT

Gift Shop News

By Patty Osmer

DRM Member Appreciation Weekend

In appreciation of the support of our members, the Gift Shop will hold its Annual Member Appreciation Weekend on

Friday-Sunday November 27, 28 & 29.

Members will receive **20% off most items.**

(The books *The Old Put*, *More of the Old Put* and *Bridging the Hudson* are excluded, but these will remain at 10% off.) Sorry, no discount on special orders and items cannot be held. Those joining as members during the sale days will be eligible for the discount.

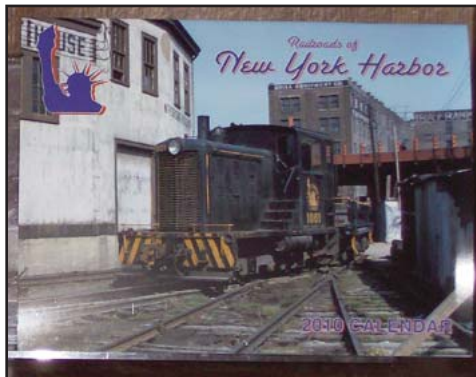
It is time to compose your wish list! Shop early while your choices are in stock!

2010 New Haven Calendars



The popular 2010 New Haven calendars that you have been waiting for are in, and they will be discounted 20% during the sale.

The newly arrived calendar *Railroads of New York Harbor* features fantastic shots from that venue, and also will be discounted at 20% only during these dates.



Ten Years Ago

By Stan Madyda

Preparations for the Holiday Express were well underway. A new stop was scheduled for Wilton for anyone wishing to board there. A newly arrived Genesis engine would be used for the trip, replacing the FL-9s which pulled the trips in previous years. New York Central 3 was also expected to be part of the consist.

A special program jointly presented by the Bethel Historical Society and the DRM Reference & Research Library was announced for November. The topic of the presentation was a history on the Shepaug Railroad with guest speakers William Bader, the town historian from Washington, CT and Peter McLachlan.

Restoration work was ongoing the GCT double ended crane, the EL Hopper and RDC 32. The Board



voted to approve a \$5,000 expenditure for the following year so that RDC 32's progress could continue.

An Oral History project was announced. The idea was to collect memories from past and present railroad employees and others.

Membership was on the rise. Membership chairman, Bill Guider, reported one of the largest monthly increases.

Work was still underway to move the water tower from Botsford to the yard and a new tool shed was proposed to store our smaller equipment used in the yard.

Members profiled were Bob Broderick, his son Bob, Jr., and Nancy Sniffen. The Brodericks joined the DRM after riding one of our Santa trains in 1996 and soon became project managers for the GCT Crane. Nancy learned of the DRM when she saw a sign in the window of the station announcing its formation.

DRM Express Track

By Ira Pollack, President

This month I will offer you pre-holiday greetings. It is hard to believe that I am starting to see Christmas decorations going up already. I feel that we should be in the middle of June or July because time has flown by much too quickly this year. By the time you read this the Museum will have held our annual Pumpkin Patch event. This year's event was very successful in spite of the, yes, poor weather that seems to plague us every time we try to do something



using the backhoe, jackhammers, and compressor to help with this work – a definite godsend. I also am trying to sustain these pieces and keep them running for our maintenance work. This in itself has been quite a challenge for me, with the older equipment that I have to work with. I just wish someone would come forward to help me maintain what we have. There is nothing worse than having a crew of people ready to work, and then have that machine that we desperately need suddenly die on us. More frustration!

This past season had many frustrations for me as President. There were many success stories, but there were many disappointments for me. The Museum still moves forward, even at a snail's pace.



These trackwork photos were taken by member Tom Brown, who also was working on the project.

outside. My thanks go out to the many people who dedicated themselves to running this event over the three weekends that we do it, and especially to Sue Teer who is the Coordinator of this important Museum function. Many of you do not realize the enormous number of hours that are spent setting up for this type of event, with its decorations and all of the little details that must be done to make it successful. My compliments to all of you.

In the yard we are starting to wind down some of the work that has been going on there this year. The trackwork, which is an ongoing project, helped extend our operations for the Railyard Local on Track 42. Again, I would like to thank the people that came out to help me regauge the 200 feet that needed to be done. This was backbreaking work, but it is one of the necessities of running our railroad. I am hoping that we can continue this program, and, if possible, I would like to try to spend one day a month just replacing and upgrading our trackwork. I know this sounds crazy, but we need to do this on a regular basis. I think I would be content with replacing 5 ties at a time during one of these sessions, weather permitting. We have made this a little easier on ourselves by

Sometimes I just wish that we could work together as a team and work toward the same goal, putting our egos and personalities aside and work toward that goal. I saw this happen with the trackwork when we pulled together and accomplished our goal. I know it can be done. Years ago we had a member who would help us paint, but would only do yellow paint when and where needed; I still see that mentality existing with some of our people. It is a funny analogy, but think it is very accurate and appropriate. What I have tried to do in the yard is for the good of the Museum, for the safety of our guests and volunteers, and the growth of our organization. Some of the things that I am doing I really do not want to be doing, but I see them as needed for our progress. Cleaning up the yard is a good example. It has been long overdue, and now, after many dumpsters have been filled, has made a difference in the appearance of the yard. I also feel that we must remain diligent in keeping it that way, although sometimes I feel like it is a losing battle.

In closing my report, I wish you all well, with a good, prosperous and healthy holiday season that is before us. Talk to you next month.

History of the Fairgrounds Pumphouse

By John Ivansco, Project Leader

The pumphouse was built around 1917. The purpose was to supply water to the water tower located at the Segar Street crossing, which was four tracked at the time. The reason why it was put there by the Still River was because the water was pure and had no impurities to mess up the boilers of the steam engines. It would service between 45-50 trains in the 24 hour period. Steam locomotives needed to stop to replenish water supplies more frequently than coal. The building was unmanned. There was no heat in the building. People think because there was no heat why didn't the water freeze? The reason there was no freezing was because the water was always on the move because of the demand of the steam locomotives. It was an all automatic operation. It pumped water from the river up into the water tower. There was a float in the water tower. As water was used, the float would come down and automatically turn on the pump. When the float reached the top of the water tower it would shut the pump off. The water was dispensed from stand pipes to the locomotives. There were two stand pipes, one on the east side and one on the west side. The pipes went under Segar Street, and then about a quarter of a mile down the tracks, to about opposite O&G, where there was the stand pipe for the west bound trains. The trains had to be on the outside tracks to access the stand pipes. This operation was ongoing until 1946-47.

With the advent of the diesel there was no need for either the pump or the water tower so they were abandoned. In 1950 it was bought by the John Leahey Corp. who owned the Danbury Fair for the purpose of advertising the Danbury Fair. In 1967 on a Saturday night after the auto races, the tower burned down. After that the pumphouse fell into disrepair, and became a home for the homeless. In 1995 a member of the Museum, Paul Gassner, who was an employee of the Leahey Corp. , was instrumental in getting Leahey to donate the land and building to the Museum. In 1996 Paul Gassner, Dave McKee, Bernie Balon, and I started restoration on the pumphouse. The back wall and new roof were done. At that time money was very scarce for any projects at the Museum. One night while we were working at the pumphouse, a gentleman who was the owner of Chuck's Steak House, Hank Zaccara, gave us substantial financial help with the pumphouse.

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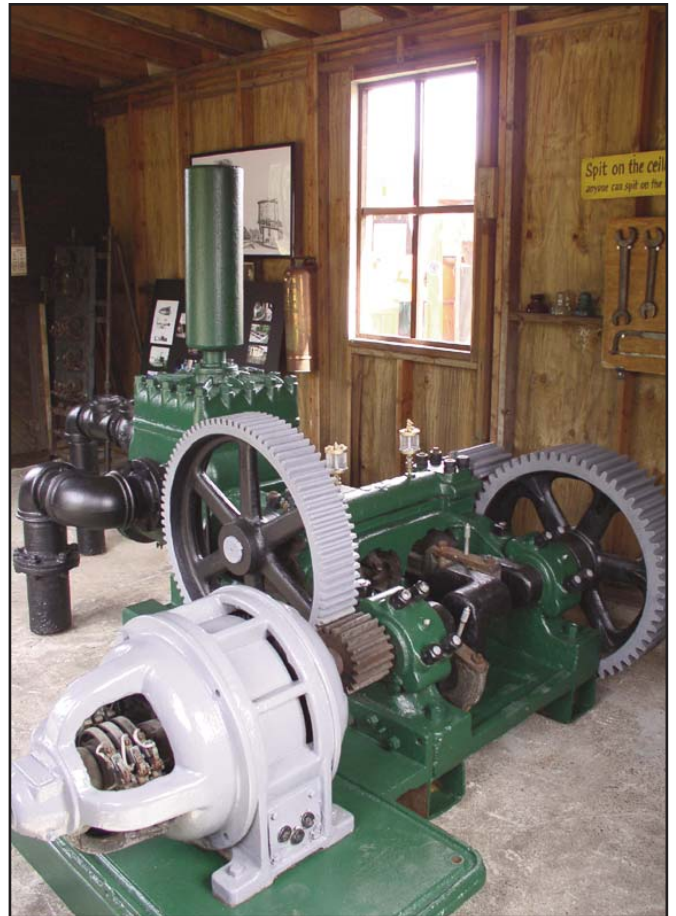
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History of the Fairgrounds Pumphouse, Continued from Page 4

After the restoration of the pumphouse, it sat there for another eight or nine years with much graffiti added and vandalism done to the building. Then in 2008 I approached Venning Movers about moving the building to the Museum railyard. He offered to do it at no cost, which I thought was a dream. Our volunteers removed the pump. Then Mr. Venning braced and shored up the building in preparation for the move. In October that same year the building was finally moved to the yard at 5:30 in the morning. The Museum had located the foundation slab formerly used for the sand tower in the yard. It then was readied for use as the foundation for the pumphouse.

After it came to the yard, a tremendous amount of restoration was done to the building. The doors had to be redone. The pump and motor were reinstalled. Windows were installed, wiring was restored, the roof replaced, and the building repainted. In August 2009 it was finally opened to the public. It is the only pumphouse and pump intact that I know of in New England. This is a preservation of an historic era in railroading. The pumphouse is now a part of our Museum's Railyard Local train tour by the turntable. In addition to the pump, the pumphouse features displays of photos and tools used in maintenance of the pump. In years to come I think this artifact will be continue to be a great asset to the Museum. I would like to thank all the volunteers involved: Dave McKee, Bill Britt, Bob Pitcher, Glen Miller, Dave Roberts and all the countless others. Thank you also to those who contributed funds for this project. Without the financial contributions we received we could not have done the work we did.

In the near future we hope to re-erect the Botsford water tower near the pumphouse.



The pumphouse from Danbury Fair officially opened to the public for tours on August 8th, Danbury Railway Day. In addition to the pump and motor in the restored structure, there are numerous displays of items pertinent to the pumphouse. They include the control board, a display of tools used to operate the pumphouse, and photographs of the restoration progress. John Ivansco found the perfect historic photograph showing a steam locomotive at the site of the Fairgrounds pumphouse with the water tower!

Pumpkin Patch Delights All, Continued from Page 1



Pumpkin Patch Delights All, Continued from Page 6



Antique Wheels of All Kinds, Continued from Page 1



Left top, a HUEY military helicopter brought by Andy Knapp, and bottom left, a gamagoat, a general transport vehicle, both of Vietnam era. Right top, a jeep and volunteer from the Military Museum, with a vintage jeep fire engine for fighting brush fires and jeep tow truck brought by Doug Eddy. Bottom right, a Model A.





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MUSEUM CALENDAR

Nov	11(7:30pm)	T.B.A. - Gary Gurske
Nov	18(7:30pm)	Video; Chicago, Pt II - Steve Gould
Nov	19(7:30pm)	Board Meeting - Open to Members
Nov	25	HAPPY THANKSGIVING!
Dec	2(7:30pm)	British Tourist Trains - Bill Brett
Dec	9(7:30pm)	Slides; NYC Freight Ops - Carl Liba
Dec	16(7:30pm)	Australia/N. Zeal. - Pete McLachlan
Dec	17(7:00pm)	Board Meeting - Open to Members
Dec	23 & 30	HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Museum hours: Wed-Sat 10-4pm; Sun 12-4pm
See the newsletter in color at www.danburyrail.org!



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Printing by: Infinity Printing of Danbury

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