

The Railyard Local

Volume 9, Issue 6

-The Monthly Newsletter of the Danbury Railway Museum-

August 2010

Owney Was Top Dog at DRM Mascot of RPOs was honored

Our DRM guests enthusiastically celebrated what is becoming an annual event on the Museum calendar. In keeping with our focus of providing family



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Prestigious Award to DRM

By Steve Gould

The Danbury Railway Museum officially received an Award of Merit for the restoration of the PRR Railway Post Office car from the Connecticut League of History Organizations on June 7, 2010 at a ceremony in the Old State House in Hartford.



On behalf of the DRM, Art Slothower and Bill Britt receive the Award of Merit from Priscilla Brendler of the Connecticut League of History Organizations. Photo by Steve Gould.

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- Plus . . . New Members & Results of LEGO Contest

Double-header Sat., Aug 14th

4th Annual Danbury Railway Day plus our Annual Member Picnic

By Patty Osmer

The focus of the this year's Danbury Railway Day will be the birthday of our restored Pennsylvania Railroad Railway Post Office car. A special caboose train will be on hand to provide free rides on the Railyard Local and the turntable; the RPO will be open for inspection along with other pieces. There will be numerous added attractions including working hit-and-miss engines, blacksmithing at our New Haven forge, and multiple educational demonstrations, including railroad car coupling-uncoupling, explanation of whistling and hand signaling, the F.R.E.D., and the special role of the caboose. There will be a contest with the chance to win Pumpkin Patch tickets. Please contact Steve Gould at the Museum if you will be able to assist at this special event. The event will begin at 10:00am; the last train will be at 3:45pm.

The Annual Member Picnic will begin at 5:30pm following the Railway Day activities. The picnic-style dinner will feature Ed's Ribs, hamburgers, turkey burgers, hot dogs, salads and dessert. A \$5 donation is requested to help defray costs. If you can contribute a salad or a dessert item, we would appreciate it. **Admission to the picnic will be by reservation only – and must be made by August 11.** Reserve your ticket(s) by emailing us at info@danburyrail.org or call the Museum at (203) 778-8337, and let us know how many will be in your group. As in prior years, there will be free train rides, including the cab, for members. The picnic is a relaxing opportunity to enjoy good food while visiting informally with other members. We hope you will join us!

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.**

Janice Kovach	Newtown, CT
Alex Bessergenev	Trumbull, CT
Pedro H. Cantu	Danbury, CT
Wayne C. Pickhardt	Ossining, NY
David Haseid	Garrison, NY
Andre Perez	Staten Island, NY
Fred Palmer	Bethlehem, CT
Allan B. Deering	Riverside, CT
Hirsch Anderson	Chappaqua, NY
Erin Taylor	Patterson, NY
Jama Hansonbrook	North Salem, NY

Results of LEGO Contest

There were 256,378 LEGO blocks used in the layout featured at the DRM. How close were you? The five people guessing closest to that number are winners of prizes. There were 275 submissions to the contest, with 225 willing to give us feedback as to where they heard of the DRM. We wish to thank those who took the time to do that since it will help us in making decisions about advertising and promoting our Museum. Congratulations to the winners!

A Note from the Editor

When assuming the editorship of this newsletter in January 2005, the previous editor explained to me that all articles without a by-line are assumed to be written by the editor. Accordingly, that has been the case in every issue published by this editor, beginning with that one. Information used listing Wednesday night presentations comes from Dan Foley, and names of our New Members comes from our Membership Chairman. Also, every effort has been made to credit photos to the proper person. Along the same lines, any and all photos appearing without specific credit have been taken by this editor. Conscientious effort has

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been made to maintain accuracy of all information as of the press-time of each issue.

Ten Years Ago

By Stan Madyda

During 1999 and 2000 the United States Postal Service sponsored a special train called the *Celebrate the Century Express*. This train traveled the nation as part of the USPS's Education Program for school age children. The train consisted of a specially painted Amtrak Genesis locomotive, a baggage car, an exhibit car, an RPO car and a private business car. On board were historical exhibits, including much on a series of postage stamps issued to Celebrate the Century. The DRM learned that the train would arrive in Danbury and be on display September 8-10. Most of the set-up would be handled by the USPS but a call went out to members for help during the event.

A crew of four DRM members (Ron Freitag, Skip Kern, Randy Natale and Joey Sanfillipo) traveled to Georgia to do an assessment on the former New Haven RS-11 prior to the DRM committing to purchase the engine. Although work would need to be done on the engine before it could be moved, it was determined that it was in fairly decent shape. Fundraising efforts would continue in order to have sufficient funds to move the engine to Danbury.

Restoration work continued in the yard with body work performed on the PRR N5 caboose, and with the final wall panel temporarily secured in place. Once the sides were finished, work could begin on the interior of the caboose. The Budd car was on the inspection pit track where the brake system was being worked on. Interior work saw ceiling panels removed so they could be restored. The PRR bobber caboose was in sad shape with much of the wood needing to be replaced along with parts of the frame. Everything was saved so patterns could be made.

Inside the station, work had begun on the N-scale layout of Danbury Yard with work sessions



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DRM Express Track

By Ira Pollack, President

In this month's report I will update you on some of the things going on. There is a lot happening so maybe I will just list them for you.



1) Turntable – Welding and painting on the operator's house has been completed. A new diamond-plate floor has also been fabricated and installed. I have recently been in contact and invited representatives of the State Historical and Preservation Office to assess the progress of our stabilization of the turntable. Their visit to the Museum was apparently a very pleasant surprise. I do not think they expected to see the extent of our operation and facility, and were very excited by it. We will expand our relationship by updating them periodically on the progress of the turntable. I am hoping to tap into a higher level of expertise and knowledge to guide and help us in this grand project.



2) Yard – As you may know I am trying to expand the time limit on the lease of the yard and possibly extend our operations just beyond our east gate. This has been an arduous task, but we are slowly making progress in our negotiations with CDOT. This has entailed looking ahead to our future, trying to plan out an upgrade of our trackage, and make the whole yard operable at a minimal Class I FRA standard. I have presented both CDOT and the DRM Board of Directors with a ten-year plan for this restoration. Some of this work can be done by our volunteers, but unfortunately the majority is out of our mechanical and budgetary means. We will be having an inspection shortly by CDOT and Metro-North officials to assess the conditions of our trackage and to recommend a more detailed plan for this goal.

3) Albany Electrics – I have not spoken much about this project over this past year, but I can tell you it is still moving forward. There has been a lot of behind the scene negotiating between PS&G, CSX, RJ Korman, and our benefactors to make this a success. As it stands now, CSX will be moving the electrics by way of heavy duty center-depressed flatcars. What actually remains is finding a suitable area to load them. I have remained somewhat quiet about this project because the circumstances and logistics have changed numerous times, and I do not want rumors starting. When it happens, it will happen, and if not, I know that the people involved in the preservation have done everything in their power to make it work. I also have a lot of respect for these people for their knowledge and expertise, plus their drive to succeed with this project.

In closing my report this month, I will go back to the turntable. We have worked together as a team to get to where we are now with this project. We have had a very wide range of volunteers working on this as one goal. I am very proud of what we have done to date and hope we



can continue the momentum of this project. I would love to be able to work this way through all of our many projects at the Museum – working together toward one goal.

NMRA Meeting at DRM

Danbury Railway Museum once again hosted a meeting of the Metro-North Division of the National Model Railroad Association. On June 12th a large gathering of modelers was enthusiastic about the slide presentation by expert modeler Rick Abramson, and John Grosner's presentation on rubber molds and resin casting. Many DRM members enjoy the hobby of modeling, and also are members of the NMRA.



Gift Shop News

By Patty Osmer



Rapido HO Scale Osgood Bradley Lightweights "American Flyer" for sale!

The Gift Shop has acquired **one of each** New Haven road number produced of Rapido's HO Scale Osgood Bradley Lightweights "American Flyer" models, and will sell them for \$74.95 (less 10% member discount). People who know modeling know how detailed these cars are!

Rapido only made enough of these cars to meet pre-production reservations; when ours are gone, we will not be able to get more – and they will go fast. Cars in stock as of July 15th were:

New Haven - Pullman Green with Partial Skirts (*1950 - 1954)

Car numbers 8205, 8207, 8213, 8238, 8245, and No #

New Haven - Hunter Green as Built with Full Skirts (*1935 - ~1947)

Car numbers 8200, 8211, 8212, 8221, 8227, 8230, 8239, 8247, and No #

New Haven - Hunter Green Modified with Partial Skirts (*~1947 - 1950)

Car numbers 8252, 8255, 8258, 8260, 109014, 109015, 109016, 109017 and No #

New Haven - #401 Green No Skirts & Green Window Frames (*1954 - 1955)

Car numbers 8201, 8208, 8210, 8214, 8236, and No #

New Haven - McGinnis "Black Knight" No Skirts (*1955 - 1968)

Car numbers 8209, 8216, 8224, 8232, 8240, 8248, 8251, 8253, 8266, 8268, and No #

If you wish to order one, please email us at info@danburyrail.org to see what is available. If the car needs to be shipped, a shipping charge will be added. Tax will be charged for cars shipped to a CT address.



Owney Was Top Dog at DRM, Continued from Page 1

as well as railfan entertainment, we included special attractions on June 12th. A packaged doggie bone was given at the Front Desk to dog lovers or owners in honor of Owney. Since we also provided free hot dogs that day, which as photos show were greatly enjoyed by visitors, it appears Owney may have had competition for “Top Dog” of the day! Master storyteller Marty Bishop dramatically related the true story of Owney to those riding on the *Railyard Local* which traversed the railyard to Track 42, then remained for passengers to disembark for a tour of the historic RPO car and refreshments. Guests received a special Owney stamped envelope. The day also included a ride on the turntable and pumphouse tour.



The photos accompanying the “Museum Calendar” were shot by DRM Secretary Steve Gould. The photo just above is courtesy of Tom Brown.

Night Life at the Danbury Engine House - December 1957

Article and photo by Peter McLachlan, former New Haven RR engineer



There were probably 13 employees on duty at Danbury yard at night, and it was busy. Coming on duty at 11pm, my first chores were to go over to Motor Storage and service the electric locomotives that had come in that evening. Servicing included putting sand into the locomotives by pail, then fueling them (fuel was for the steam boilers). After the electrics were serviced, I would go over to the engine house. By then all the diesels had been serviced outside then placed inside. All the units were broken up before placing them in the house, and all this outside work was done by the 3-11pm people. At this time in the night my job was to clean the cabs and windows, and check that they were supplied with all the supplies needed. This generally would take me to about 2:30-3am. In this break time I would eat lunch, take a break, or snap photos. Now Danbury engine house at approximately this time in the am was very quiet and dark. We would leave the lights off since each pit had its own set, and we turn them off after we serviced the engines. Even the pigeons slept. (This explains the lighting for the photo above.)



Before 4am I would open all nine doors on the engine house; each required 54 long pulls on the chain to open. The doors were heavy bamboo roll-up doors. If I hadn't opened the doors first, the entire

*Night Life at the Danbury Engine House -
December 1957, Continued from Page 6*

engine house bunk room and office would have been smoked out. Just before 4am the Machinist on duty, the Electrician on duty, and I would fire up the engines. When the Hostler came on duty at 4am with a list from the Engine Dispatcher, we would take the locomotives one-by-one out of the house and make up the engines for the morning locals. It made no difference which way the engines had gone into the house, since I would turn them on the turntable to the way they should face, after we were given the list from the dispatcher. All engines came out unless one was in there for inspection.

What you see in the photo are the #1 and #2 pits, with #1 in foreground. Engine 529 is the engine that currently runs at the Railroad Museum of New England, and the other is an Alco RS-3. Behind the 529 is another RS-3.

Everybody referred to the roundhouse part of the facility as the "engine house", as well as the office part of the building. The office part of the building contained the Engine Dispatcher's office, Electricians office, General Foreman's office, crew register room, bunk room, showers, crew room upstairs, and Store's Room(that is where we picked up the supplies for all work.)

Ten Years Ago, Continued from Page 2



The N-scale layout today still needs work to enhance it. Are you available to help with it?

scheduled for two nights a week.

The DRM Library was putting together a month long exhibit that would be on display at the Danbury Public Library.

Bill Guider resigned as Membership Chairman due to outside commitments and Frank Sullivan volunteered to fill the position. Tom Blackman was the Featured Member.

Prestigious Award to DRM, Continued from Page 1

Accepting the award for the Museum were Bill Britt, RPO Project Manager; Art Slothower, Assistant Project Manager; and Steve Gould, Secretary. The Award of Merit, which was also given to seven other individuals or museums in the State, was presented as part of the League's Annual Conference. Chris Dobbs, Awards Committee chair, presented the award along with CLHO Executive Director Priscilla Brendler

In first announcing the award in March 2010, the League's Awards Committee "was highly impressed" with the RPO restoration. "Accolades from the committee included:

- . Impressive volunteer effort
- . Nice outreach and exposure with programs
- . Great work for a relatively recently funded organization"



The group presents awards every year "in recognition of outstanding institutional and individual contributions, in keeping with current professional standards, that enhance and further the knowledge and understanding of Connecticut history." The application, which was prepared by Secretary Steve Gould, was reviewed by a committee of museum professionals; and, according to the CLHO, "these applications represented some of the most professional and dedicated work that is happening at our historic sites across the state." This Award of Merit was recognition that the Danbury Railway Museum has come a long way since its founding in 1994.



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MUSEUM CALENDAR

Aug	18(7:30pm)	T.B.A. - Bob Gambling
Aug	19(7:00pm)	Board Meeting - Open to Members
Aug	25(7:30pm)	Video; Last Run of So. Pacific Cab Forward - DRM Library
Sept	1(7:30pm)	Milw Electrification - Carl Liba
Sept	8(7:30pm)	Berkshire Scenic - Jim McGeorge
Sept	15(7:30pm)	B.C., Ry, W. Canada- Pete McLachlan
Sept	16(7:00pm)	Board Meeting - Open to Members

Museum hours: Mon-Sat 10-5pm; Sun 12-5pm
See the newsletter in color at www.danburyrail.org!



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