

The Railyard Local

Volume 3, Issue 9

-The Monthly Newsletter of the Danbury Railway Museum-

September 2004

Wilton Semaphore Stands Tall

Part II

by Dave Roberts

In our last issue, the journey of Wilton Station's train order semaphore to its new home in DRM's historic freight yard was described in some detail - except for the process of actually erecting it on its new concrete block foundation. As promised, here is what took place . . .

In a perfect world, final assembly of the semaphore - attaching the two signal-blade assemblies to the mast - takes under five minutes. Each assembly,



The new look of the DRM railyard with the newly raised Wilton Semaphore.

weighing about sixty-five pounds, is mounted onto one of the two large pins projecting from the pillow block. Holes on the ends of the control rods are mounted to a pin on each of the assemblies. Washers and cotter pins lock everything into place.

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Revised By-Laws Up For Vote

The Board of Directors has completed their review of the Museum By-Laws. Soon you, as a member of the Museum, will receive a copy of the revised By-Laws and a ballot to vote on these proposed changes. Our current By-Laws require the members to approve the Board's suggested revisions to make them permanent. Be sure to take advantage of this important opportunity to shape your organization.

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plus . . .

Library, Gift Shop, and Membership Updates

New Locomotive Grants

The Danbury Railway Museum has been awarded two grants in the past months.

The Amherst Railway Society generously donated \$1,000 towards the replacement of brake shoes on our SW8 diesel locomotive. We have already begun this project (as highlighted in last month's issue). This gift will allow us to continue to keep safe our operation with this historically significant railroad equipment.

The National Railway Historical Society has chosen the DRM as a recipient of a \$1,500 grant towards the restoration of our New Haven RS-11 locomotive #1402. We look forward to working on this project.

We thank these generous organizations for their strong dedication to the preservation of railroad history and for helping us fulfill our mission.

New for 2004!

Pumpkin Patch Trains

This year our events committee has come up with a great new event to celebrate the October holidays. Visitors on October 16th, 17th, 23rd, 24th, 30th, and 31st will have a vintage train ride to our special pumpkin patch to pick up their pumpkins. Each paying visitor will receive one pumpkin.

This is a great way to have fun with your family. Discounted member prices are \$8 for adults, \$5 for children (5-12), children 4 and under free.

Please join us for this exciting new event!



New Members

We are delighted to welcome our new members this month. All members are welcome to attend the weekly meetings held Wednesdays at 7:30pm. Meetings are held at the Museum, 120 White Street, Danbury. Also, we invite all members to become involved in Museum activities as soon as possible!

Arthur Slothower	New Fairfield, CT
Peter Jensen	New Canaan, CT
Kevin Jordan	New York, NY
Paul Garasimowicz	Seymour, CT
Rosele & Dan Frishwasser	Scarsdale, NY
The Alexander Family	Danbury, CT

Gift Shop Update

Puzzles, Puzzles, Puzzles! This month the Gift Shop is highlighting their fantastic selection of railroad related puzzles. We have puzzles for kids and adults



alike. Some have a Thomas theme, others have paintings by famous railroad artists. Puzzles are a marvelous gift for any train-lover. Be sure to stop in and see our selection.

Also new to the Gift Shop this month is Geoffrey Doughty's new book *New Haven in Color Volume 2, The Struggle for Survival*. Read and see pictorially how the NHRR managed to limp forward with new power, new service, and other changes from tradition. This book is profusely illustrated in full color. The low, members-only price is just \$53.95. Get



2 your copy today!

Library News

by Stan Madyda

Recent acquisitions include:

- ~A bridge mileage marker and copy of a Certificate of Examination - Telegraph Operator were received from Lisa A. Dibble
 - ~Bob Pitcher donated a collection of photos and various railroad papers
 - ~Debbie Vail donated a collection of calendars, three framed photos and a coin changer
 - ~S. M. Larsen donated two date-stamps
 - ~A large collection was received from Wesley Oliver. It contained 57 books, marker lamps, electrified switch-lamps, replacement lenses, blueprints, photos and a reflector switchstand marker
 - ~A New Haven dinner napkin was donated by Valerie Beeble
 - ~John Holbrock donated two wheels and two support brackets that came off an REA cart that was used at the Danbury Freight House
 - ~Another large collection was received from John Arents which included 54 books, magazines, and photo albums
 - ~A book written in 1910, *Problems with U.S. Railroads* was donated by Jonathan Koza
 - ~Bob Ellis donated an old grab iron
 - ~Our collections of Lionel trains and HO trains continue to grow with more cars, track, transformers, and locomotives donated by Stephen Fishman
 - ~Jeff Van Wagenen donated a Craftsman Planer/Joiner.
- Thanks to all of our donors on behalf of the DRM

Ten Years Ago

A summary of the September, 1994 Danbury Railway Museum newsletter contributed by Stan Madyda:

The September, 1994 edition of the DRM Newsletter was only four pages. One page was devoted to the upcoming Holiday Express.

The next page and a half announced five coordinator positions within the museum and what each job would entail. Appointed to positions were: Ed Blackman - Museum Trips, Geoff Knees - Museum Accessions, Sue Thomas - Gift Shop, Bob Chuvala - Museum Communications, and Tom Morris - Galleria Project (the Galleria Project was a G Scale train layout sponsored by Union Savings Bank to be set up in their

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DRM Express Track

by Ira Pollack, President

As I've reported to you, our strategic planning meetings have been going well over the past several months. We came to the important realization that DRM must have an action-plan to follow for a logical growth pattern in the years to come. Although many of our decisions in the past were very positive for our organization and did allow us to grow at a steady pace, sometimes almost too fast, we needed to focus on our direction.

In this last year our Board of Directors and some dedicated members had begun a series of brainstorming sessions to figure out where we should be heading and how to get there, yet we remained without a proper strategic plan. Then came Jim Whitney.

We met Jim through Kay Schreiber, a good friend of the Museum who was, at the time, working for the state tourism bureau. More about Kay later. Jim is the Executive Director of the Northwest Connecticut Convention and Visitors Bureau. He is a professional financial and strategic planner, and he presented us with a logical process to prioritize our goals into a 1-5-10 year plan. Every member of the group was able to express his or her ideas, and, when the brainstorming was complete, we voted on which goals we'd tackle first. Surprisingly, we were all in agreement as to the general direction the Museum should take. Jim stressed throughout the process that it would be up to us to make this happen and that we would have to follow through in making our goals realities.

In the very near future we will present you with the DRM strategic business plan. It will show what we believe is the key to the Museum's future and



how we, together, can proceed to realize it. The plan specifies what our priorities are and who is making them happen. As a member of the DRM, you will be welcome to join this process and help us succeed. Throughout this process, Jim Whitney has clarified, simplified, and encouraged us, and we are most appreciative for all of his efforts and optimism.

Earlier I mentioned Kay Schreiber. She has recently been appointed CityCenter Danbury's manager. Kay is a strong supporter of the DRM and certainly sees our importance within the city community. We congratulate Kay on her new position and look forward to working with her. We firmly believe that we must begin reaching out to the community and involving them in our goals, events, and future.

In other news, our train crew training program has been moving forward at a steady pace. I'm very proud of our dedicated crew's efforts and their successes accomplished over the past few months. I also congratulate our staff for their work in keeping the Museum open and operating on Sundays. It has been a hard commitment by all, but the difference is starting to show. There is a lot going on at the Museum. We seem to be moving up to the next level of success. Please join us. I know you will enjoy becoming part of this great group of volunteers.

Finally, our By-Laws 2004 revision is finished. The revised document will be submitted to you for approval in a few weeks. As we grow as an organization we must, periodically, amend our governing By-Laws to meet the needs of the Museum. Although arriving at the appropriate revisions was a lengthy and painstaking task, it was a necessity. We ask that you support these carefully thought out revisions.

We hope to see you soon!



Erie Lackawanna Dining Cars

Preservation Society Visits DRM

by Charlie Albanetti

Visitors and members of the DRM got a special treat on the afternoon of Saturday, July 24th, when representatives from the Erie Lackawanna Dining Car Preservation Society (ELDCPS) gave an interesting and



Tim Stuy gives an informative slide show presentation on the history of EL.

comprehensive presentation about the history of EL dining cars and the work of the Society.

Tim Stuy, the Secretary of

ELDCPS, brought an interesting display of artifacts and photographs to the DRM to exhibit to our visitors. He also presented a detailed slide show on the history of EL dining cars and the services they provided.

The ELDCPS is in the process of restoring Erie Lackawanna Dining Car #741. The car, built as a Pullman diner in 1925, originally worked on the Erie as car #941. In 1930, the Erie purchased the car from Pullman. Then, when the EL merger took place in 1960, the car was renumbered to EL's 741.

Also, the ELDCPS owns three other passenger cars, which, when restored, will be operated out of Scranton, PA.

If you would like more information on the great work this group is doing, please visit their website at www.eldcps.org.

Changing Tracks

McLachlan Exhibit Soon to Open

Changing Tracks, a new photographic exhibit, will open at the DRM on Friday, September 10th, at 7:00pm. The photos in the exhibit are by renowned photographer and historian, and one of our members, Peter McLachlan.

In 1956, after walking around the Danbury



yard taking photos, Pete was offered a job on the New Haven RR. He gleefully accepted. His first assignment was to the Cedar Hill facilities near New Haven. Thus began a long and distinguished railroad career of some forty-three years.

Over those years, Peter worked for the New Haven Railroad, Penn Central, Conrail, and the Housatonic Railroad. When it comes to railroading, he has seen it all. His employment has provided him with virtually endless opportunities to fulfill his passion for photographing trains.

The Penn Central years will be the subject of this new exhibit. This was a tumultuous, uncertain, and influential time in the history of railroads. Peter's first-hand encounter with the new way of doing business will be illustrated through this provocative exhibit. Many artifacts of the Penn Central Railroad will also be on display.

All are invited to attend the opening ceremony on September 10th, at 7:00pm. For more information, call 203.778.8337.



What's Happening at the DRM

by Charlie Albanetti

A lot of exciting things have been happening at the DRM in the past few weeks. Here is a sampling of just a few of them. Come on down and get in on the action!



Suze Blackman windexes a new display cabinet that will fill the empty space left after the removal of 1455's drive rods from the front entranceway. This display cabinet will be filled with our newest donations. You will have to visit the DRM often as the artifacts displayed here will be changing monthly.



Dan Foley and Gerry Herrmann work on the NYC wooden caboose. Gerry and his crew have fully replaced one side of the caboose and are now beginning to tackle an end.

Photo by Bob Boothe.



This is a hydraulic pump from the steering system of our backhoe. This pump had been malfunctioning until Glenn Miller removed it and replaced the broken seal. Now our most versatile piece of equipment is back in business!



A group of visitors rides the turntable while volunteer Sue Thomas narrates. The turntable, built in 1914, is 95 feet long. It is a favorite attraction, and the DRM is the only place in Connecticut where you can ride an operating turntable.

Until now, DRM lacked a reliable air compressor for use with our larger pneumatic tools. This one was donated by our member Bob Pitcher. Thanks Bob!



Visitors and volunteers alike have been entertained for the past few weeks by Metro-North track crews replacing the loop tracks beside the Museum. MN felt the tracks were not sufficiently robust for use by their Genesis locomotives and needed work. Their crews have fully replaced the inner loop track with welded rail and are working now on the outer one. Photo by Bob Boothe.

The Limitations of Fast Running

by Matthias Nace Forney*

(Excerpted from the Speed In Locomotives series
Scribner's Magazine, Vol. 11 No. 3 March, 1892)

The following article came from Bob Boothe, our resident Mogul expert (see his photos on page 9 of storing 1455's drive rods). Bob says that while working on 1455, M. N. Forney came to mind for a number of reasons related to our own 2-6-0 Mogul, and also because Forney-type locomotives ran on the Putnam line up to Brewster, NY in the early days



The network of rail lines surrounding Danbury circa 1926.

when Danbury was on its way to becoming a rail hub in the Northeast. Bob points out that the railroads then were much like the internet of today in that they brought the industrial revolution wherever they went (with electrification and communication - for example, between 1869 and 1873 trackage in Wisconsin more than doubled and in one year in Illinois more track was laid than the entire length of the Union and Central Pacific lines. You can see on the map at the Museum, pictured above, just how dense the network of lines was around Danbury, which had continuous rail service from 1852 onward). Speed in locomotives then was clearly an issue. A number of improvements came along by the time our Mogul was built in 1907, one of which was the valve gear. We've illustrated one type of this device (the Walschaert, ours is the Stephenson) at right.

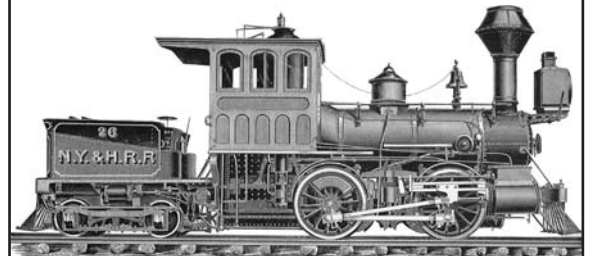
RACING seems to be a natural instinct in human beings as well as in other animals. In our natures this instinct seems to be stimulated, and not satisfied, by the means which science has supplied for achieving rapid movement . . . Whole nations are now interested in the "records" of transatlantic steamers, and in the time made by the Flying Dutchman or the Columbian Express. Each gain in speed, in both land and water, seems to add to the eagerness with which people inquire about future possibilities.

When Stephenson's Rocket, on its trial trip, made a speed of nearly thirty miles an hour, doubtless those who saw and heard of it were as anxious then to

run as we are to-day when we travel more than twice as fast.

In speculating on this subject . . . [m]echanical

dialecticians assume as a premise that [since] the improvements which have been made in locomotives in sixty years have resulted in doubling the speed, therefore in sixty years more we will be able to travel twice as fast as we do now. Or, in other words . . . now we travel 60, therefore as $30 : 60 :: 60 : 120$ = the speed at which we will travel sixty years hence. There are, however, greater difficulties in the way of doing this



M. N. Forney's 0-4-4T (T for tank) engine. Previous designs wrapped the water tank over the boiler, and thus, as the water was depleted, and weight over the drivers lessened, tractive force dropped considerably. Forney's design placed the water tank between the frame over the four trailing wheels (behind the cab) and underneath the coal or other fuel supply. Illustration courtesy of FPG International.

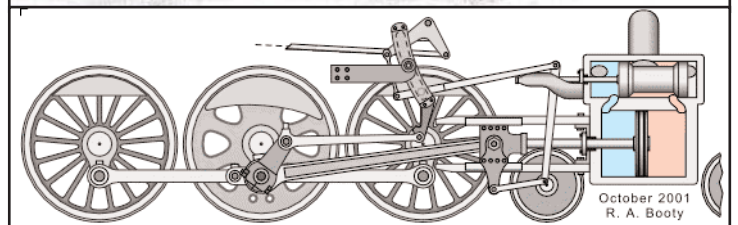


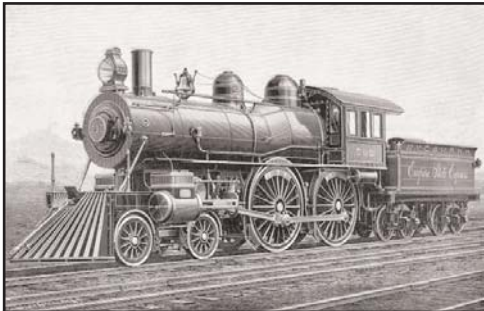
Diagram showing piston valve gear system [illustration here is a Walschaert type on a 4-6-X]. A similar system can be seen above on DRM's 1455 Mogul [the Stephenson type]. After the piston in the lower section of the steam chest has done its propulsive work (movement), steam must be released to begin the next cycle. The valve gearing, with a system of levers and eccentrics attached to the crosshead and the main driver, moves the valve in the upper section of the chest to do this. Photo of 1455 from Bob Boothe. Illustration courtesy of R.A. Booty from his website: <http://home.new.rr.com/trumpetb/loco/> which has sound and animation.



know how much faster a locomotive could

than appear from this arithmetical syllogism . . .

[T]he problem the designer, then, has to solve is to proportion the parts of his locomotive so as to produce the most efficient machine of that weight. During each revolution of the wheels the pistons must be moved backward and forward through their whole stroke. At 70 miles an hour a six-foot wheel [for comparison, the drive wheels of DRM's 1455 are 5' 3"] of a locomotive would revolve more than five times in a second. During every revolution each piston and its connection must start and stop twice. They come to a state of rest at the end of each stroke [1455 stroke is 26"], and must be started and their motion accelerated to a speed of nearly 35 feet per second, in less than



New York Central's Engine No. 999. On May 10, 1893, just west of Batavia, NY, No. 999 reached a speed of 112.5 mph. This American type locomotive was a special 4-4-0 with 86.5" drivers and often pulled the NYC&Hudson's Empire Express. Photo: Scientific American, September 3, 1898 on <http://www.catskillarchive.com/rrextra/stamen.html>

one-tenth of a second, and then come to a state of rest again in the same time. When it is remembered that each of the pistons, with their moving connections, weighs considerably over 500 pounds, the amount of power required to move them, and the disturb-

ing effect which they exert on being started and stopped twice during each revolution at these high speeds may be imagined. To neutralize these disturbing effects balance-weights are placed in the wheels opposite the cranks. These accomplish their purpose, however, only partially, for the reason that they move in a circle, while the piston and other reciprocating parts have only a horizontal motion. Consequently, while the balance-weights may be made to neutralize the horizontal motion and momentum of the pistons, etc., the weights themselves thus produce a vertical disturbing force which at high speeds has been said to be so great as to bend the rails on which the locomotives are running. For these reasons a compromise is usually made by balancing the reciprocating parts only partially, which lessens the vertical disturbance

but does not entirely compensate for the horizontal momentum of the reciprocating parts. Therefore, a locomotive at best is an unstable machine at high speeds.

It will be safe to say that to be able to travel continuously at 100 miles per hour we must have either boilers or fuel which will generate more steam in a given time than those we are using now do, or our engines must use less steam to do the same work, or, what is more probable still, we must have all three of these features combined. In the locomotive of the future the action of the reciprocating parts will probably be more perfectly balanced than it now is; coupling-rods will either be dispensed with altogether or their risk of breakage will be lessened by placing the driving-wheels near together, and both this danger



The ultimate record for a steam locomotive is held by the London&Eastern's No. 4468, Mallard, an A4 class 4-6-2 designed by Sir Nigel Gresley. It attained a speed of 125 mph pulling 240 tons over a course of five miles on July 3, 1938. Illustration courtesy of The Science Museum, London.

and the disturbing effect of the reciprocating parts will be lessened by increasing the size of the wheels. To enable the engine, or, rather, its journals, to "run cool," the journals and their bearings will be increased in size so as to have ample surface to resist wear.

Just how these improvements will be made, it is perhaps too early to predict . . . [and] if the march of improvement continues . . . the anticipation that we shall travel at the rate of 100 miles per hour may be fulfilled while some of us are left here to see it.

[Ed. Note: Forney did live to see 100 mph attained - on May 10, 1893 near Batavia, NY, the NYCentral's No. 999, a 4-4-0 with 86" drivers, was timed at 112.5 mph. See illustration at left above. The record is held by the London & North Eastern's No. 4468, Mallard, a 4-6-2, which on July 3, 1938 reached 125 mph pulling 240 tons. See illustration above.]

*Editor, Railroad and Engineering Journal and designer of the Forney 0-4-4T (T for tank) engine adopted by the NYC elevated system and the NYNH&H and NYCentral RRs. See illustration page 6.

Semaphore, continued from page 1

In a perfect world the completed semaphore is then lifted and dropped straight down onto the



Ira Pollack operating the crane, which will raise the semaphore into position. Dave Roberts at left and Bruce Van Wyk center.

mounting studs, level is checked, and bolts are tightened. The job is done in perhaps twenty minutes.

In a perfect world we would have a sufficiently tall crane to attach to the top of the semaphore mast.

In our real world the available crane was not sufficiently tall.

As a result of this, the cable had to be attached about six feet from the top of the mast. The considerable weight of the signal-blade assemblies, mounted that far above that connection, would result in a top-heavy condition, which would result in dangerous swinging of the base. Therefore, the mast had to be raised before mounting the signal-blade assemblies, which would then have to be installed some twenty-three feet above the ground.



Volunteers Bob Pitcher and Justin Chapin are delightfully surprised that the semaphore was plumb.

Even without the blade assemblies, the

mast would not hang vertically, but was canted about 20 degrees once it cleared the ground. Adjusting the plumb of the mast would now be a major obstacle as it would involve raising it back off of the mounting bolts and turning one or more adjusting nuts at the base, relying on best guess as to correct amount, and then remounting the mast. Complicating this process would be the fact that the length of the mounting bolts left little room for manipulation. Here however providence stepped in. On initial examination, to the surprise of all involved, try as we might we could find no direction from which the mast appeared to be out of plumb. The decision was therefore made to tighten down the nuts, and go on to the next step.

It had been already determined in planning this operation that the next step, mounting the two blade assemblies, while hanging onto an eight-inch wide ladder, twenty-three feet above the ground,

could not be accomplished with the equipment at hand. However, it had also already been decided by our yardmaster, Bruce Van Wyk, that he would go ahead and do it anyway.

As Bruce climbed the remarkably narrow ladder to the pillow block (the casting which supports the blade assemblies) at the top of the mast, two other volunteers, Bill Britt and Bob Pitcher climbed into the bucket of our pay loader carrying the blade assemblies and assorted hardware necessary for the installation. With Ira Pollack at the controls they were raised to the machine's maximum extension - unfortunately still three or four feet below the pillow block.

A rope was attached to each assembly as it was prepared to be raised and passed over the top of the mast to allow for assistance by the ground crew. Each unit was handed up to Bruce who still had perhaps



The volunteers admire their work, as the Semaphore's raising was complete.

two or three feet to hoist each piece up to the level of the mounting pin on the pillow block. Because of the extreme friction of the aforementioned rope against the mast, the ground crew could not assist at all in lifting the assemblies but could only serve to prevent slippage as they were raised. Once raised to the necessary height, each piece had to be maneuvered into place by Bruce, while hanging on with one hand to the mast twenty-three feet up.

Once this was accomplished, attaching the control rods, washers, and cotter pins was at least a little less white-knuckled a project as these processes could be accomplished without having to support the sixty-five pound assemblies by hand.

There was to be sure a great sigh of relief at this point as everyone could now climb or be lowered back to the ground safe and sound. The operation was a complete success and should have shown anyone paying attention what can be accomplished when the will is there. Perhaps the only mistake we made - we should have sold tickets. Barnum and Bailey had nothing on us that day.

Ten Years Ago, continued from page 2

offices on Main Street for the Holiday season.)

Membership cards designed by Don Silberbauer were mailed out with this newsletter.

There was also a reminder that the railyard was still off limits to members, pending the lease being signed and fencing erected.

At this point the DRM did not have an official logo and the newsletter mentioned that two suggestions were received from members and opened up an informal contest running until December 15th for logo ideas (with all the different logos we've had, it seems like everyone was a winner).

There was an interesting story submitted by Ed Blackman about the time NX-10 went to pick up an empty car at Newtown Hospital only to find the switch had been removed by the track supervisor who thought the siding was no longer in use.

To wrap up the newsletter, there was a report on the Cape Cod Railroad operations. It was also the first time Boston & Maine Steam Locomotive #1455 was mentioned in the newsletter.

There was a great deal of interesting and historically important news in those four short pages.

1455 Drive Rods Moved

On Saturday, July 24th, a team of volunteers moved the drive rods of our steam locomotive B&M 1455 from the main entranceway of the Museum into our Delaware & Hudson boxcar on track 36 in the railyard.

It is worth noting that prior to the move the rods had been on display up front at DRM from the



Volunteers Bill Britt and Glenn Miller support one of the rods while the forklift lifts it.

time 1455 first arrived. They proved to be a great attraction, and in that location, provided a setting for our tour guides to

introduce our visitors to the history of steam locomotives.

The two drive rods, each weighing about 700 pounds, were moved out of the Museum with the help

of a forklift from our downtown Danbury neighbor Omaha Beef. The forklift raised the rods onto the bed of Bob Pitcher's



Volunteers Bill Britt, Bob Pitcher, and Glenn Miller assist in the careful placement of the second rod on the back of Bob's truck.

pickup truck. Then the rods were driven out into the yard to the D&H boxcar.

Once inside the boxcar, our mechanical and restoration volunteers can begin the process of restoring and stabilizing these crucial pieces of our locomotive. When that is done, the rods will be restored to their rightful place on 1455, and the other elements of the drive train can be affixed.

DRM thanks the volunteers who worked on this arduous task.

Railyard Operations Report

by Nancy Sniffen

The Railyard Local train ride is a vital aspect of our visitors' experience. This year's initiation of Railyard Locals on Sunday has led to a necessary expansion of our qualified operator program. Although not as many people have turned out as we hoped, we are pleased to have a number of new



Engineer-trainee Jeremy Rice gives the RS1's throttle a tug, bringing the train back up track 18.

trainees learning the ins and outs of railroad operation.

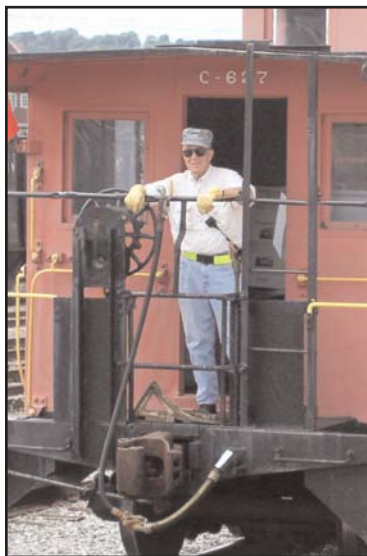
Justin Chapin has successfully completed the full training program and is now a qualified locomotive engineer. His hours of hard work and study have proved him to be an excellent engineer, skilled in train handling, which ensures safe, smooth rides for our visitors. Congratulations Justin!

Jeremy Rice and Jeff Van Wagenen have completed their conductor training programs and are now training to be engineers. Learning to be engineer, although fun and interesting, requires a great deal of study and hands-on training.

Understanding

10

how the braking



Conductor John O'Hern riding the 1944 New Haven caboose - a favorite of our visitors.

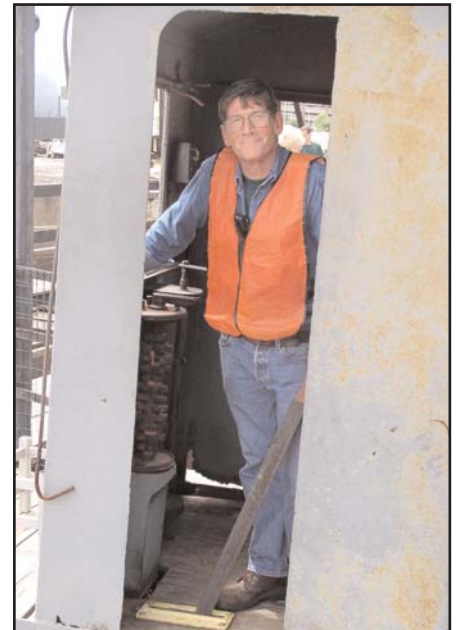
and acceleration works, and how they affect the whole train takes a lot of experience. These volunteers should be commended for their dedication.

Don Konen and Joe Calabrese have completed their full conductor training. Don is now training to operate the RDC #32. This will greatly assist DRM's aspiration to run the RDC weekdays for school and tour groups.

Jim Daly has completed his training period as a brakeman and can now move on to conductor training. Jim's hard work and dedication has made him a valuable addition to our operating crew.

Thanks also to our qualified train crew members for their patience and skill in implementing our training program. John O'Hern and Joe Ward have been working as conductors almost every weekend this season.

Finally, special thanks go to Andrew McClellan for his dedication to the Museum over the past few months. Andrew has been the engineer on the majority of Railyard Locals this season. We congratulate him on his new position as an Assistant Conductor for Metro-North Railroad and wish him the best of luck.



Brakeman Jim Daly having a great time operating the turntable for our visitors.



Engineer Justin Chapin at the controls of the RS1.

The Lost Art of Lettering

by Ira Pollack

It all began a few years back. We had just purchased our slightly used New Haven RR caboose, the C-627. After much sanding, priming, and discussion as



Ira Pollack begins tracing the NYCS logo on the Wooden Caboose in preparation for hand-lettering the logo.

to the final color of the car, there it sat, one fairly finished caboose, all in one color. I might add that when delivered to Danbury, it was in three colors: green, white, and Conrail blue. After many hours of hard work and learning about red orange or orange red, or maybe after all, vermilion for the correct livery - there it was in our yard, our first cosmetic restoration.

What to do next?

But of course, it must

be lettered, and I was to do it. Here began for me a new experience, a lost art, a study in patience, and a religion in itself. Under the watchful eye of an early

member, AJ Scioto, an experienced artist, letterer, and sign painter, I began my journey into the art of hand lettering. AJ, who was of the mind that the beginner should jump right in, sink or swim, handed me a special lettering brush, and told me to go for it. To this day I still have and use this brush. After deciding to use a stencil as a guide



Ira traces the NYCS logo onto the caboose using a white wax pencil.

or, as AJ said, a crutch, I was on my way.

There are very specific guidelines to follow in

this art. First off is the brush. I would imagine AJ would have called this his magic wand, for this is where the control of the paint is. AJ was able to do free hand lettering at will. The brush itself is unique in that the bristles are very long, almost 1 ½ inches for a quarter inch diameter brush. One of the methods for good paint application is actually to lay down the bristles on the surface and try to use a sweeping motion to form your letters. Just remember: practice makes perfect and do a lot of it. The paint that is used is very specific also. It is designed with a very fine pigment, lead based, and very thick in consistency. It is made just for



Ira begins the tedious process of hand-lettering each character by filling in the tracings he just made from a stencil.

lettering and is available in many colors, too.

As I have learned, this paint must be thinned as you go, and as I work I dilute it on a wide putty knife with paint thinner. Hand lettering is a quickly disappearing art form. Many museums and graphic designers have reverted to vinyl lettering, which, of course, is faster but not as durable. Hand lettering doesn't peel, fade, or wear off. Once it is cured, you must sand it off to remove it.

Over the years I must admit that I still rely on using a stencil to trace my pattern onto the railcar body. All of my artwork at the Museum has been done by generating a drawing and then a tracing to create that pattern. In essence, I've been cutting out paper dolls to create my stencils, but it works nicely although it is time consuming.

In the end, I thank AJ Scioto for sharing his art with me and teaching me this lost profession. It has helped immensely in recreating the many and varied lettering styles for our equipment. Now if I only had two more hands . . .

DANBURY RAILWAY MUSEUM

PO Box 90
Danbury, CT 06813

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MUSEUM CALENDAR

DRM Railyard Local Train Rides Are Now Running Every
Saturday and Sunday!

Sept. 1 (7:45pm)	Railroads (1965-85) - Steve Gould
Sept. 8 (7:45pm)	CSX Riverline - Dan Gallo, Jr.
Sept. 15 (7:45pm)	DRM Library Slides & Videos
Sept. 16 (7:00pm)	Board Meeting (Open to Members)
Sept. 22 (7:45pm)	Historic Slides - Dan Foley
Oct. 16,17,23,24,30,31	Pumpkin Patch Trains
Dec. 4,5,11,12,18,19	Santa Trains



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