

THE RAILYARD DISPATCH

Volume 18, Issue 6

The Newsletter of the Danbury Railway Museum

Aug/Sep 2018



Shortlines



CREWLESS TRAINS?

-Stan Madyda

Last issue, we mentioned an idea the New Haven Railroad had to run “crewless” trains. Thankfully, that never came to be.

But here is something that did work for them. In 1949, they went to Broadway producers with the idea of a Show Trains. While most producers did not feel it was a worthwhile idea, the New York Theatre Guild decided it give it a try. The first train brought patrons to see a performance of “Silver Whistle” and the railroad and show were pleased with the results.

The general passenger agent for the railroad would select a popular show, arrange to get a block of seats (usually in excess of 500) and would mail invitations to select people and groups about three months prior to the show. Any unsold tickets were returned to the theatre. The railroad did not make any money on ticket sales. A group of 50 or more people would get their own private car. In 1954, the railroad brought an additional 6,000 people into New York to see various shows.

So successful was the idea that other railroads began offering their own deals. Not all of them were local. Railroads brought in people from several hundred miles away, offering package deals that would include hotel accommodations, maybe several shows and other activities.

Looking to expand on the Show Trains idea, the New Haven decided to try a Zoo Train to the Bronx Zoo. The initial train ran in April 1955 and carried 2,700 passengers.

-Source: *Railway Progress*, September 1955

Editor's Note: Look Ma, No hands! Fast forward to 2005, where this “Junior Engineer” is using a power pack to switch a private rail car at Whitefish, Montana. Note there is no engineer in the cab of the locomotive.



BUDD CAR GOES TO NEW MILFORD

-Patty Osmer

No, train service hasn't been restored to New Milford from Danbury, people were quite surprised to see a Budd car parked outside the station during New Milford Days at the end of July! Through the efforts of the Rail Service Restoration Society and Mayor Pete Bass and the cooperation of the Housatonic Railroad, our Budd Car #32 was taken to New Milford where it was on display for the weekend. Although the car wasn't open for viewing, Bob Rush of the Society said that many people stopped and asked about the car and his organization's goals to again have passenger trains service to New Milford.



AMHERST HERITAGE GRANT

We received a \$750 grant from Amherst Railway Society; President Stan Madyda received the check for DRM at the Society's awards meeting held at their club house in Palmer, MA. The grant covers the cost of preparation and repainting the exterior of the PRR Railway Post Office car. The Museum thanks the Amherst folks for this grant.

FOX 61 VISITS THE DRM

-Stan Madyda

A popular weekly segment on the station is Daytrippers, where regional attractions are highlighted. On August 22, it was the DRM's turn.

Reporter Jim Altman contacted the museum two weeks before the airing to see if he and his cameraman could film a segment. A couple of days later, they were on site. They were here for about two hours filming inside the station, the Tonawanda Valley and around the yard. Joe LaPorta was on hand to operate the turntable. Another plus was Tom McCullough had an enhanced Hands on the Throttle session taking place and this was included in the segment. Thanks to Jeff Van Wagenen and Eion Kavanaugh for helping out.

This was not the first time Daytrippers visited the museum. When they first came up with the idea about 12 years ago, we were one of their first stops. A lot has changed since then.

The segment can be viewed at <https://fox61.com/2018/08/22/daytrippers-ride-the-rails-in-danbury/>

THE VIC WESTMAN ESTATE

-Stan Madyda

For any museum member that attended a Wednesday night meeting, no doubt they met Vic Westman. Vic was a retired engineer, artist and a living encyclopedia on the railroads of Connecticut and eastern New York. We were notified several months ago that Vic left his entire collection of railroad art, books, photos, ephemera and artifacts to the Museum. Vic also left a vast collection of non railroad books to the Danbury Public Library and the land and buildings to the City to be kept as open space. In May, Director Alan Gruber and President Stan Madyda toured the house and property to get an idea on how large the collection might be. It is large and we will need temporary off site storage to house it. Soon the process and removing and cataloguing items will begin.

Vic will live on as we will be able to display his art and use his research for many years to come.

HELP FOR PUMPKIN PATCH SET UP



October 13, 14, 20, 21, 27, 28. Pumpkin Patch Trains. We can use your help setting up for the event. Please email eventlady@att.net or call 203.778.8337 if you can help us the first week in October.

SPEAKER AT DANBURY LIONS CLUB

-Steve Gould

Secretary Steve Gould was the guest speaker at the Danbury Lions Club luncheon held at Anthony's Lake Club, Danbury on August 23, 2018. The topic was "The Trials and Tribulations of Amtrak", starting with the creation of the National Railroad Passenger Corporation in 1971 and progressing to the current status of Amtrak, including the current shaky status of the 17 long distance trains. There were 34 in attendance and Steve asked for a show of hands of those who have ridden an Amtrak train within the last 6 months. There were 6 or 7 hands raised. When asked if anyone had ridden a long distance train vs. one in the Northeast Corridor within the last 12 months, no hands went up. The talk was well received.

PEDDLE POWER

-Patty Osmer



Ever on the lookout for new railroad related activities, Don & I learned of an activity run by the Newport and Narragansett Bay Railroad Company, (formerly the Old Colony and Newport Scenic Railway) called Rail Biking. Rail Biking is a relatively new activity and has sprung up around the country, with a location in the Catskills and also the one in Rhode Island. Rail biking is riding pedal-powered machines that make use of defunct rail lines. Either two or four people ride on a bike, at a distance enough away from other riders so that you felt you had the trail to yourselves. Our ride took us along Aquidneck Island and Narragansett Bay for a distance of about 6 miles and a time of just a little over an hour. Because the roadbed was largely flat, with two people peddling the job was fairly easy.

DANBURY RAILWAY DAYS - ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL EVENT

-Steve Gould

The Danbury Railway Museum held its 12th annual Danbury Railway Days August 4 and 5, 2018. Several hundred guests visited the Museum over the two day event.

A major component of this year's event was the reprise of last years "Hands on the Throttle" program. Attendees who signed up received thorough training about running a locomotive, from a walk around of the locomotive to an "in the cab" demonstration of what makes it tick. The training was conducted by Tom McCullough, a highly qualified operating crew member. Once the instruction was completed, the attendee was then allowed to "take the throttle" under complete supervision of Tom and take the engine for a short spin in the rail yard. At the conclusion, the attendee was given a certificate of locomotive training completion.

Guests also got a chance to ride the Museum's Rail Yard Local train, itself a rolling Museum exhibit with a 1948 RS1 locomotive, a passenger coach from 1925 and slightly "younger" caboose. The passengers got off, walked around the turntable (which is undergoing restoration) and walked the "red carpet" to tour the restored 1928 observation/lounge/sleeping car "Tonawanda Valley". This car once served on the famed 20th Century Limited, operated by the New York Central Railroad; passengers for this train walked on a red carpet to board it at Grand Central Terminal and originated the phrase "roll out the red carpet". Visitors got a chance to see the car recently lettered "PULLMAN" and the car's name below the windows. We also ran a "caboose hop" special run during the event, giving guests an extra train ride for no extra charge.

Once off the Rail Yard Local, guests saw a demonstration of coupling and uncoupling the locomotive and new this year, a demonstration of "hooping up train orders". See photos of this reenactment below.

Guests got a chance to visit other open exhibits such as a 1907 steam locomotive, a former New Haven Railroad FL9 diesel locomotive with former engineer Pete McLachlan holding forth in the cab, a former New Haven Railroad Rail Diesel Car, a 1909 New York Central and Hudson River wooden caboose where Gerry Herrmann and Stan Madyda gave tours, and the 1910 Pennsylvania Railroad Railway Post Office.

The overall comments were very favorable for this once-a-year chance to learn more about the "steel wheel on steel rail".



Left: Jose Alves hooping up orders to Fireman Jim Teer; Right, Don Konen hoops up orders to Fireman Eoin Kavanaugh.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

BOARD OF DIRECTOR MEETINGS

Meetings take place the **third Thursday of each month at 7:00pm**. Museum members may attend these meetings.

ARTICLE SUBMISSION

Please contact us with submissions or ideas for articles you would like to see:

Mail:

The Danbury Railway Museum
Attention: Newsletter
P.O. Box 90, Danbury, CT 06813

Phone: 203-778-8337; **Fax:** 203-778-1836

Email: NEWS4DRM@GMAIL.COM

**PLEASE LET US KNOW IF
YOUR MAILING OR EMAIL
ADDRESS CHANGES**

If moving, please send your new address to:

Danbury Railway Museum,
Attention: Membership Chairman
P.O. Box 90, Danbury, CT 06813

Via Email to: drmmembers@aol.com

KNOW A MEMBER WHO IS NOT GETTING OUR NEWSLETTER?

Send us their email (or snail mail) address and we will add them to our mailing list.

**ALL NEWSLETTERS FROM 2001
TO PRESENT CAN BE FOUND ON
OUR WEBSITE,
WWW.DANBURYRAILWAYMUSEUM.ORG**

**IF YOU CAN HELP US IN ANY OF THE
AREAS BELOW, PLEASE EMAIL
info@danburyrail.org
OR CALL US (203.778.8337)**

GIFT SHOP/FRONT DESK

We need Gift Shop & Front Desk staff. If you can volunteer even ½ day a week, we need you.

OFFICERS/DIRECTORS

Officer terms (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer) and some Director terms, will expire in March, 2019. Although this seems like a long time away, if you are interested in helping to shape the future of the Museum, now is the time to think about running for one of the positions.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

We need a Newsletter Editor so that we can keep the **Railyard Dispatch** going.



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