

The Railyard Local

Volume 12, Issue 5

-The Newsletter of the Danbury Railway Museum-

October 2013

First Responders Day at the Danbury Railway Museum

Fire trucks on display among highlights

The weather on September 7th for our annual First Responders day was great as opposed to last year's rain-out, which made the event so much more enjoyable! We had a fire and police presence that made the day that much more enjoyable and poignant. Special thanks goes to Al Baker, DRM Board Member and Danbury police chief, for a wonderful police presence and to Danbury fire department's deputy chief T. Wiedl, for making it possible to provide five fire trucks for visitors to enjoy and view. We had many visitors to the event, including over 20 first responders and their family members, who came to see and experience our operating crew of dedicated volunteers in action. *Photo courtesy of: Wade Roese.*



Owney, the Railway Post Office Dog Day

A special visit to the DRM by the Railway Postal Service's favorite and famous dog

On September 21st, the Danbury Railway Museum was visited by Owney, the famous mascot of the Railway Post Office. Visitors came to the Museum to hear the story, history and interesting facts of this beloved dog told by Martha Bishop while riding the Railyard Local. When the train arrived at the end of

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In Memoriam - David Wilson



David Wilson, husband of Caroline Ranek Wilson, died after a long illness on September 3rd, 2013.

He was born March 27th, 1932 in Norwalk, CT, the son of the late Henrietta and David Wilson. He was a resident of Wilton, CT for 41 years. He graduated from Norwalk High

School and the University of Bridgeport and was employed by the Connecticut Labor department until his retirement 17 years ago.

Mr. Wilson was interested in any kind vehicle that moved — automobiles, trains, and planes. Enamored with trains since childhood, he watched the Montrealer rumble by behind his grandparents' home in Windsor, VT. As a young man, he participated in local rallies and gymkhanas and was a member of a local sports car club. Each Friday afternoon, Mr. Wilson served as tour guide at the Danbury Railway Museum from its opening 17 years ago until he became ill. Upon his retirement he began building a garden railway in his yard in Wilton.

He is also survived by a sister, Jane Dinielli of Southbury, CT, and nephews Wilson of Westport, CT and David of Los Angeles, CA. Also, Carol Wilson's sister, Marge Ranek Owen and her husband Robert; their children, Pamela, Cynthia, Sheila and Peter, and five grandchildren.

A memorial Celebration of Life for Mr. Wilson took place on September 14th, at his home for family and friends. Memorial contributions may be made to Stay At Home in Wilton, P.O. Box 46, Wilton, CT 06897.



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!

Joseph Perotti	Carmel, NY
Andrew Sellans	Ansonia, CT
A. Morton	White Plains, NY
Evelyn Bobb	Cold Spring, NY
Jeffrey Ngowc	Hopewell Junction, NY
Grace Shen	South Salem, NY
Vikram Makayee	Sandy Hook, CT
Kathryn Follett	Holmes, NY
Dawn Bell	Ridgefield, CT

Upcoming Events at DRM

October 12th & 13th, 19th & 20th, and 26th & 27th - Pumpkin Patch Weekends

That time of year for pumpkins is coming fast! Come to the Danbury Railway Museum for a historic train ride to our pumpkin patch where children ages 2 - 12 get a **free** pumpkin! The **\$10** admission for visitors ages 2 and up (under 2 years free) includes train ride, exhibits and displays, operating layouts, children's activities including free coloring station and temporary tattoos, and free cider and cookies! Children are encouraged to wear their costumes.

Hours are **10am - 4pm on Saturdays** (October 12th, 19th, and 26th) and **12pm - 4pm on Sundays** (October 13th, 20th, and 27th).

Trains will be running hourly 10:30am - 3:30pm on Saturdays and 12:30pm - 3:30pm on Sundays. The station and gift shop will be open until 4:30pm every day.

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.

November 10th - Active Service Members and Veterans Day

The DRM will be thanking our servicemen and women (past and present) on November 10th. Active service members and veterans will be granted a free train ride with paid admission.

Trackwork Saturdays

Volunteers are needed for doing trackwork beginning at 9:30am on the first Saturday of each month through October.

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Ten Years Ago

By Stan Madyda

Out in the yard, many restorations were still in full swing, trying to finish up before the cold weather arrives. Two of the projects that were seeing a lot of activity were the NYC Wooden Caboose and the New Haven Box Car. Also track work was being done on Track 42, always an on-going task. Decisions were also being made on getting the Alco FA #617 back on its trucks.

Behind the scenes, the Board of Directors was actively involved in by-law revisions. As the Museum evolved in its first ten years, it became apparent that changes were needed to be made to best serve the Museum and membership.

In order to continually promote the Museum, efforts were being made to reach out to the local schools and senior groups. In addition, discussions were taking place with Metro-North to include the Museum in the One Day Getaway brochures.

On the layouts inside, Dave Rist was busy scratch-building structures for the N-scale layout. At the same time, motive power was needed to keep the Lionel layout running, a situation that has happily changed. We still had the S-scale layout running and attracting attention. Meanwhile, the HO crew was in the process of determining where to build the layout.

Logo Denim Shirts Available

If anyone is interested in purchasing a denim shirt in either long- or short-sleeve with the DRM Logo over the left pocket and their name embroidered on the right side (optional), please email the Museum at info@danburyrail.org. The shirts need to be custom-ordered and will cost \$20 with no name, and \$25 with name. Payment is required before the shirts can be ordered.

Help Wanted for Front Desk

The Danbury Railway Museum is run entirely by dedicated volunteers, but right now we really need front desk volunteers. In the past few months we have lost three dedicated people, Carol Wilson, Don Collier and Dave Lowery. All of these folks gave many hours to the desk in the past.

However, if you are a people-person and like meeting and greeting people, can accurately handle money and sell tickets, we need you! Please contact Sue Teer at 203-792-1981. Thank you!

That AU Connection - The AU Railfan Crew

By Steve Gould (Kogod '61)

What is it that connects people to their alma mater? Is it the education received? The memories made? Friends made or, in some cases, future spouses met? All of them apply. But, in one instance, there was something else. A hobby shared, one might say an unusual hobby shared. What was it? It is the love of trains and all things railroad. Yes, being a "railfan" or "railroad enthusiast". This is the story of three of them, all members of the Class of 1961.

Bob Kessler grew up in New Jersey, born in Mountainside Hospital in Montclair, NJ in December 1939. He was bitten by the train bug early and spent all of his free time watching trains of the Erie Railroad or Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad in his home town of Montclair. A teacher in Montclair High School was also a rail enthusiast and, thanks to him, Bob was able to move beyond the boundaries of Montclair to see railroad wonders elsewhere. Bob came to American University (AU) in 1957 because of its Transportation Program and majored in Transportation and Traffic Management in the School of Business Administration. Bob spent 20 years in the United States Air Force, mainly in the field of air traffic control, retiring as a Major. He continued in the field after retirement with various FAA contractors and he currently lives in Reston, VA.

Steve Gould got his start at Southampton Hospital in Southampton, NY in August of 1939. He grew up on a dairy farm in East Hampton, NY, on the East End of Long Island. His roots were deep there with ancestors showing up in the mid 1700's. His great-great grandfather was appointed by President Andrew Jackson to be the Keeper of the Montauk Point Lighthouse in 1832. As the farm pastures were split by the Long Island Rail Road, Steve got to see trains every day. His dad would take him to the station to see the LIRR's name train "Cannonball" up close and personal. This early interest in trains was well known to the East Hampton High School guidance counselor. It was he who advised Steve to look into transportation management and suggested AU and Syracuse. Thus, in 1957, another Transportation and Traffic Management major showed up on campus. After three years in the US Army Transportation Corps, Steve continued his career in transportation and distribution with two major food companies. He now resides in Shelton, CT and is an active volunteer at the Danbury Railway Museum.

Paul Waugaman entered the world in December 1939 at Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh, PA. While his interest in trains was not as deep as Messrs. Kessler and Gould, nevertheless it was there. Paul's grandfather (also named Paul) was a railroad engineer who took young Paul aboard locomotives in his early years. Furthermore, he grew up in the Pittsburgh suburb of Edgewood, where the Pennsylvania Railroad's many passenger and freight trains raced through town. How can such a scene go unnoticed? It didn't. However, Paul's choice of AU differed from the other two. He showed up at AU in 1957 as a Political Science Major in the College of Arts and Sciences, and returned later to get his Masters in Public Administration. After living and working in the Washington, DC area and North Carolina, Paul now lives in Tucson, AZ.

During those early days at AU, the three got acquainted. Steve met Paul his first day there as they were both residents of Hamilton House dormitory. Steve met Bob the first week of classes when they both were taking Economics I from Frank Gathof, where they discovered their common major and interest in trains. The connection was made! They had no classes that first semester on Wednesday mornings so Bob and Steve would take the N2 or N4 bus to Dupont Circle where they grabbed a #42 streetcar to Union Station. To Steve, this was Mecca. His limited railroad exposure did not prepare him for the array of railroads serving this great station. All four years at AU with cameras in hand, the two would pursue "the steel wheel on steel rail" from riding all of the DC Transit streetcar routes; riding the disappearing streetcar routes in Baltimore; and taking numerous rail excursions from Union Station or Alexandria, to places in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. The two appeared on the front page of the New York Times in 1958 as they were passengers on the last northbound run of the "Royal Blue". One vivid memory was riding behind a Norfolk & Western Railway steam engine between Petersburg and Suffolk, VA at 110 mph in 1959.

Paul met Bob later at AU but the "click" of railroading was never made. Paul and Steve joined Phi Sigma Kappa and, although both were good friends in the fraternity, the subject of trains was mentioned only in passing. So, this railroad interest, as far as Paul was concerned involved trips to Pittsburgh and back on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. One common thing that both Paul and Steve had while at AU was that they both met their spouses there. Dot Murray Waugaman celebrated her 50th reunion in 2012, and they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 2011. Steve met the former Leen Sellendi his

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Words from Our President

Too often, and sadly, I must again relay that we had the passing of one of our long-time members. After an extended illness, Life Member Dave Wilson of Wilton, CT passed away September 3rd, 2013. Dave is survived by his wife Carol, who together were very supportive of the Museum. Both Carol and Dave worked the front desk and greeted visitors, helped with tours and participated in events. Many pieces of Dave's G-gauge collection were shared with us out on the garden layout. As Carol does not drive, both the Wilsons will be missed.

Carol Wilson's support of the Museum causes further reflection on volunteerism at the DRM. Dave and Carol Wilson, Ed and Suzy Blackman, Bob and Mary Ann Boothe and Jim and Sue Teer are examples of the many couples that volunteer and support the DRM, or have done so. Switching tracks to the many guys/boys/gents that come out to "play" with their toys (of all sizes) at our Museum. Without our spouses/girlfriends that relinquish shared time for us to "play" and be away, what would our volunteerism be like? Our unsung "heroes" may complain and joke about where we are, but do we realize that without their patience, acceptance and support, we, and the Danbury Railway Museum would not exist or have the success and achievement that which we have? We all joke about our "honey-do-lists" and escaping to our toys, but how many times have we thanked our spouse/girlfriend and recognized THEIR sacrifice?

Recently, Terrie became involved as a guide on the Tonawanda Valley during Danbury Railway Day and collected some things to share with our Museum. The many hours where she, along with the rest of the wives, or significant others, are left fending for themselves is recognized, significant and appreciated.

On behalf of all the related volunteers, we express our sincerest gratitude. And thanks Terrie!

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

Editor's note:

Wade's wife Terrie had been in need of a new kidney and was on a waiting list for 5 years. However, on September 16th 2013, Wade received a call at 5am from the folks at Yale-New Haven Hospital to bring her there. The kidney that she had long been waiting for arrived from a donor. The surgery was performed that morning and it went well. The kidney is functioning flawlessly. Please keep Terrie and all Members and relatives who have medical issues in your thoughts and prayers. Get well soon and get back here to the DRM Terrie – we need you to give tours of the Tonawanda Valley when it's complete!

The Yard Inside

By Wade Roesse

"The Yard Inside" may have seemed to be quiet lately, but hasn't. We have been doing things but, unfortunately, not reporting our progress. Our operational layouts (N, HO, O, & interior G-scale) are operational and get periodic (weekly) maintenance. We are, however, re-doing the display structure on the N-gauge with new supports, toy display cases, and improved storage area and access. The exterior G-gauge (garden railroad) is in the process of being rebuilt including new railroad tie enclosures, a revised track plan, and new landscaping including stone, elevations and tunnels. Stay tuned for photos.

Our visit to Grand Central Terminal and The Parade of Trains celebration has prompted a new display and case near the front desk to feature various memorabilia of Grand Central Terminal. In addition, Terrie Roesse has acquired and is loaning the Museum for display, a significant collection of railroad china from various US railroads.

New donations continue to enhance and upgrade our existing displays which we are in the process of rearranging. WestConn student photographs from new classes continue to be updated and present different perspectives of our equipment. Progress in "The Yard Inside" moves forward thanks to our faithful volunteers which is much appreciated.

That AU Connection - The AU Railfan Crew, Continued from Page 3

last year at AU and they have been married 50 years in 2013. Leen got her BA degree, after spending three years at AU, from Fairleigh Dickinson University in 1966 after she and Steve were married.

To celebrate the completion of finals in 1961 and to fill part of the free week until graduation day, Bob and Steve headed to West Virginia to seek out the last remnants of steam locomotive operations, which were mainly confined to short-line lumber and coal operations. They covered 911 of non-Interstate miles in two days and found what they were looking for. Their friends back on campus tried to thwart their 2am departure by fooling around with the engines of both of their cars. When Bob started the ignition of his "green bomb" 1951 Buick, it purred to life and off they went with no cares in the world. The friends back at AU, however, were worried sick that something would happen during the trip, which it did not.

Over the years since AU, Bob and Steve have gotten together at various locales to ride and/or photograph all kinds and types of trains. Both served in the military and there were times of foreign assignments for both that they could not get together. However, they were successful more often than not in pursuing the hobby at some location.

Paul, meanwhile, concentrated on his career with research management and technology transfer positions in government and academia, and as an entrepreneur of his own consulting business. But, in 1987, something happened. Bob and Steve were going to the annual convention of the National Railway Historical Society in Roanoke, VA. Steve noted that Paul was living in Winston-Salem, NC at the time, relatively close to Roanoke and so he contacted Paul to see if there was interest in meeting them in Roanoke. Yes there was and the spark ignited; that latent desire emerged. Paul and his son Don started following special train excursions thereafter, reinforcing this interest.

In 1996, Paul was living in Raleigh, NC. A church member of his, the late Murphy Evans, was President of the Laurenburg & Southern Railroad in the southern part of the state and invited Paul and a friend to come on down and visit. Paul contacted Steve and they spent a day on the railroad and even got a ride in the cab of one of the local trains. That spark was very strong now. Bob and Steve were planning to buy tickets for a charter train on the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad out of Cumberland, MD in 2000 and they invited both Paul and a boyhood friend of Bob's, Ev Sahrbeck, to join them. The spark was now a burning fire as they all planned their next venture, a grand trip to England to attend the "Gala" at the preserved West Somerset Railway.

The foursome (the Frantic Fatuous Four as they referred to themselves) met about once a year. When they all turned 70 in 2009, they decided to celebrate in style: they bought round trip sleeping car tickets to Chicago and spent five days visiting railroad sites there. It was a fine trip but turned it out to be the "swan song" for Ev. His interest in trains was just not the same as Bob, Paul and Steve's.

Now it was back to just three of them. They made plans for their May 2010 "Spring Fling" which they called "Penn-Jersey Junket". It was decided that the group badly needed a name change. What was the common link? It was an "Aha" moment when they agreed on "The AU Railfan Crew"! No, this is not a University-sanctioned operation but an informal group that decided to make the common denominator of their AU education the focal point of their group name. Bob, Paul and Steve, aka The AU Railfan Crew, have been busy since then, visiting many parts of the country and pursuing their common interest in all things trains. The highlight of an outing in June 2012 was an opportunity to run a steam locomotive at the Williams Grove Historic Steam Association in Williams Grove, PA. Obviously they were supervised but they all three accomplished something on their "bucket list".

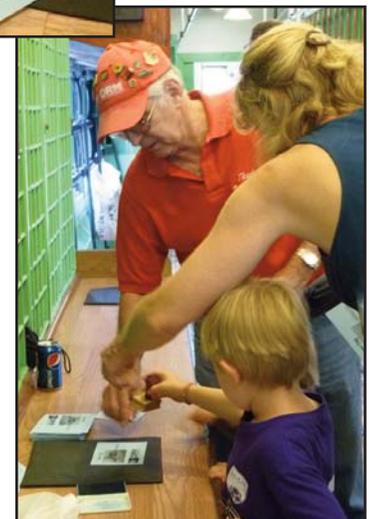
Each trip is recorded for posterity both in hard copy report form, complete with inserted photos, and a multi-media DVD of stills and digital video, thanks to Paul's computer skills. And, each year, a calendar is prepared with twelve months of their favorite photos from past trips. The subject for the 2013 calendar was that each of them picked their four favorite passenger train photos.

Don't think that the AU Railfan Crew is the only AU connection. Steve has been an Admissions Volunteer since 1999, visiting schools in the Shelton and Trumbull area of CT; while Paul and his wife Dot are Admissions Volunteers in the Tucson area.

And there you have it. The three have vowed to continue chasing and photographing trains even if all of them have to do it with walkers. Long live the AU Railfan Crew!

Owney, the Railway Post Office Dog Day, *Continued from Page 1*

track #42, visitors disembarked and went up to check out our Railway Post Office car, like the one Owney used to ride in. Visitors were surprised to be greeted by a real-life Owney look-alike, a.k.a. "Max," owned by Joseph Alves. Children were able to get a close up and, in some instances, get licked by Max. They were even able to have a special postcard stamped (with the help of Steve Gould) with a likeness of Owney that included the story of him on the back. When the train came back to the station, visitors were treated to free hot dogs cooked up by Don Konen. A big thanks goes to all the people who made the day special. *See Page 7 for the story of Owney.*



Member Profile - Joe LaPorta



This newsletter issue will begin a regular series of DRM Member profiles. As space permits, each issue will have a small profile of a Member and explain their position at the Museum and how they began their interest in trains. This issue's first profile is of Joe LaPorta, a newly-minted conductor for the Railyard Local.

Joe's love of trains started back when he was very young. His father had owned an auto parts store on White St. and Conrail used to run right behind it.

His parents used to take him to Strasburg, PA a lot when he was young. In addition, his grandfather had a train layout in his basement. Joe didn't get involved with the Museum until three years ago when he made a visit here and he's been there ever since. Since joining, he worked as a car host on the RYL and just this year became qualified as a conductor. You can also see Joe in action at the annual 'Big E' in Springfield, MA, manning the Museum's booth.

The Story of Owney



Owney was a stray mutt found in 1888 in the Albany, NY post office cuddled up on a pile of old mailbags. When the postal clerks spotted him, instead of chasing him away, they took pity on him, and he was soon "adopted." Feeling at home wherever the mailbags went, Owney made his first trip from Albany in a railway mail car bound for New York City. Gradually, his trips took him farther and farther away.

It was not long before Owney was away from Albany for months at a time.

One night, Owney jumped aboard a loaded mail wagon for his usual ride to the local post office. But when the wagon arrived, Owney was no longer on board. He had never before left his post on top of the mailbags. When the wagon was unloaded, the mail clerks discovered that a mail sack was missing. The wagon driver hurried back over his route to find it; near the train depot the clerk saw Owney sitting in the gutter, wagging his tail and sneezing. Sure enough, the mailbag was there, too. Owney was sitting on it – he had stayed behind to guard the mail.

Known at first as the mascot of the Albany post office, the tramp mail dog soon became the faithful companion of the nation's railway mail clerks. He traveled with the mail pouches wherever they went, jumping from one train to the next.

Knowing that his trips were taking him across the country, mail clerks at the Albany post office fastened a note to Owney's collar asking employees of the Railway Mail Service to record his journeys by attaching leather and metal baggage tags to his collar. Soon his tiny collar was so heavy Owney could hardly hold up his head. To lighten his load and make room for more tags, Postmaster General John Wanamaker presented Owney with a special harness-like jacket on which the dog's souvenirs could be more evenly spread around. During his time with the Railway Postal Service, Owney traveled more than 140,000 miles and even circled the globe as an ambassador of the US Post Office. Interestingly, Owney was considered lucky because not one train that he rode on had an accident. Owney was even entered into dog shows and won "the most traveled dog" award.

Owney died in Toledo, Ohio, on July 11th, 1897; American postal clerks collected money for his preservation, and today, Owney, sporting his vest with over 1,000 mail tags, can be seen at the National Postal Museum in Washington, D.C.





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MUSEUM CALENDAR

- October 2(7:30pm) Marshall Pass D&RGW - Carl Liba
- October 9(7:30pm) To Be Announced - Al Baker
- October 16(7:30pm) New England Short Lines - Dan Foley
- October 17(7:00pm) Board Meeting - Open to Members
- October 23(7:30pm) Steam in Australia and New Zealand - Bill Brett
- October 30(7:30pm) Road to Chicago and Back - Joe LaPorta
- November 6(7:30pm) Rio Grande Southern - Carl Liba
- November 13(7:30pm) To Be Announced - Bill Brett

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

See the newsletter in color at www.danburyrail.org!



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