

The Year in Review

By Ira Pollack

This month I wanted to review and look over some of our accomplishments of the year 2002. I began by looking through the Wednesday reports that I read to you on a weekly basis, and I was very much surprised at some of the things we did. There were too many to list each and every one of the activities here.

It seems that almost every week there has been some sort of event, either major or minor, that has happened to us. We have worked as a team through these many projects, which very much encourages me as the President of the Museum. We have a certain trait of pulling together as a group to tackle whatever the project might be, although at the last minute, sometimes.

In 2002 we were very devoted to cleaning the yard with many dumpsters filled with refuse that had accumulated over the years. We have succeeded in making it a safer environment for our volunteers and, of course, for our visitors. The future brings more work though at the turntable area with the stacking of the many ties and the development of an exhibit area on the history of the roundhouse and facilities that existed there. This area should be considered the heart of the yard and be developed as such.

In accessions this year we were very fortunate to receive the generous donation of the **SW8 #1** locomotive from the Pfizer Corporation and the **#605 RS3m** from **MetroNorth**. In our lifetime as a Museum we were never able to have operating spare locomotives in our roster. This has considerably eased the maintenance strain on our **RS1** locomotive **0673**. Speaking of maintenance, our staff began a preventative maintenance program this year on our equipment and is closely scrutinizing the air systems, oil consumption, and quality of our engines and rolling stock. Our mechanical staff has been actively involved in the preservation and stabilization of our ever-expanding fleet of equipment and physical plant.

The **RDC32** continues to be a major success story for the Museum with its use in occasional yard local service. This is a story of great accomplishment and commitment over an approximate six-year period.

We have also received three boxcars this year and a wooden caboos. Aside from the donated **Reading** boxcar, these other projects were extremely difficult, expensive, and time consuming in their journey back to Danbury. There they are though! Sitting in the yard awaiting restoration. My compliments to the people who succeeded in these events. I'm looking forward to their eventual restoration and painting in the upcoming season. We also were given the Wilton semaphore for an eventual functioning display in the yard.

In the building we have constructed an exhibit area and have successfully had two photo exhibits there attracting new visitors to our Museum. This area has enhanced our station and has begun to educate the visitors on the rich history of the region. There are also further ideas for exhibits that are in the works for the upcoming year that should be exciting for us.

We have also incorporated computer service at the front desk and gift shop that has kept a better control of our admissions and inventories at the Museum gift shop. This is very important for us as an organization and will make operating the Museum for our volunteers easier in the long run.

The library has also moved forward this year in categorizing our ever-growing inventory of books and two-dimensional artifacts. They have reached the point of wanting and needing to expand into other reaches of the building. Sorry folks – No Room! The only space left is going up to the ceiling. They have been diligent in their non-ending tasks of sorting and inventorying the many photos, slides, and documents donated to us.

There are many events that I've left out and members who I haven't mentioned here in this report. The fact remains though that there are many different things happening at our Museum with many different people doing them. We all have that same love though and that need to keep the Museum vibrant and moving forward. I enjoyed working with you this year and respect you for what you have accomplished. I'm also very encouraged by walking through our facilities and hearing praise from our visitors. That makes it all worth it for me.

The future still brings much hard work before us. We still have grants to pursue, a maintenance building to raise, crews to train, and a thousand other tasks to do. I know we can do this though by once again pulling together and just doing it, by putting aside our personalities and differences and working as one team. It can be done!

Thanks for your help.

Mission....

The purpose of the Danbury Railway Museum is to organize and manage a railway museum in Danbury, Connecticut and to engage in any and all activities convenient to said purposes. The goal of said museum shall be to educate the public to the history of railroading and the role of the railroads, both as part of a natural heritage and as an institution in contemporary society. The corporation is organized exclusively for educational purposes.

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Danbury Railway Museum, Inc
Attn: Membership Chairman
P.O. Box 90
Danbury, CT 06813-0090

Or Via Email to:
drmmembers@aol.com

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Comments and suggestions are always welcome.

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roberta@lliketrails.com

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

www.danbury.org/drm

The Yard Inside - January 2003

By Wade W. Roese

It's December as this article gets written and will be the new year as you read. Hopefully the elves and others dropped off some new goodies to enhance your train world enjoyment for 2003. Last Departures addressed the issue of layout maintenance. This issue will be a short status report;

N Gauge:

N Gauge Rail received cleaning, gapping and re-gauging. Locos have had new couplers added, wheel-sets checked and cleaned, and adjusted as required.

HO gauge:

For months I have been overlooking the **HO** display layout which Hides out in the gift shop, but represents the DRM at many of our Train Shows. My apologies for this oversight. Soooooo we will be including info on this unit in future reports and also spending time and effort to upgrade and/or maintain this reclusive display.

S Gauge:

The **S Gauge** has received rail cleaning, but the non bearing American Flyer Locomotives are on their last legs(wheels that is). We have some plans to solve that problem; stay tuned!

O Gauge:

The **O Gauge** has now had the inner rail loop totally cleaned and the operating locomotive removed from service due to a reluctance to cooperate in the operating mode (the weakest link). Good By!

G gauge and "Live Steam":

The **G Gauge** project is not *headed for the scrap heap as previously reported, but has been temporarily put in limbo until spring 2003. If interested let us know or mark one of your many new calendars.

One additional area with which we need assistance is a timing circuit(push button initiated) to control the **S** and **O gauge** layouts hopefully to decrease the actual locomotive running hours. If you know of anything or have a solution, please contact Bill Brit or myself.

Thanks and Happy New Year,
Wade

NEWS FROM THE GIFT SHOP

Thanks to everyone for making our Member's Appreciation Weekend sale a big success! We had a good three days of sales, and are now busy restocking our shelves!

BOOKS! BOOKS! BOOKS! This is an area of which we are most proud, as we have added a number of new books to our shelves in 2002, with more to come in 2003. The book we are featuring this month, is **TWENTY-FIVE YEARS ON THE ND&C - A HISTORY OF THE NEWBURGH, DUTCHESS & CONNECTICUT RAILROAD** by Bernard L. Rudberg. We have this book in both hard and soft cover, but the hardcover editions are limited and when sold out, probably cannot be replaced. We also have signed, hard copy editions of **BRIDGING THE HUDSON**, by Carlton Mabee, which also will not be available again. You just have to watch the auctions to know what these books sell for once out of print!

We hope to be adding a book list to our web site soon, so keep checking it out! And, don't forget those Gift Certificates for the railfan on your shopping list!



JUST ARRIVED!

Our 2003 HO model box car is now in stock!

In 2003, we are commemorating the 100th anniversary of the station, and to celebrate, we've had a box car created featuring a picture of the station.

Stop on by and see it in person!

Santa Trains

By Sue Thomas

The last two weekends on December we had lots of happy visitors to the museum, riding on the beautifully decorated Budd Car #32 with Mr. Frosty to Santaland to see Santa in his special coach, along with Mrs. Claus and the elves. The children and parents all had a good time.

My thanks to the many people who helped make this a successful and fun time, to the crew and Nancy for keeping the train running smoothly, to car hosts, station and gift shop people, Santa and Mrs. Claus, the elves, Mr. Frosty, and the others who helped to make this event a success.

Look for our Santa Train photo in Railpace next month!

New Museum Hours

Wednesday - Saturday 10AM - 4 PM
Sunday noon - 4PM

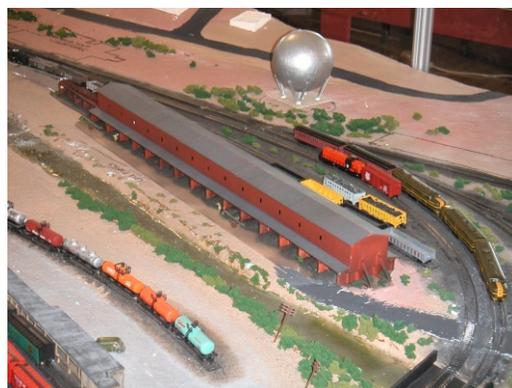


Photo Credit Charlie Albanetti

View of N scale layout under construction in the Museum.

THE VIEW FROM THE RDC

By Nancy Sniffen

I really have to admire all the railroad maintenance personnel that spend day after day working on trains to keep them up and running on a daily basis.

My crew got a taste of how grueling and frustrating the work can be. This summer two major jobs got done. Unfortunately these jobs kept the rdc out of service up on the pit track from June thru September. The job that was started first was changing the rubber suspension pads on the bolster anchor rods and the lateral stabilizer rods. The bolster anchor rods you have all seen, these are on passenger car trucks, they are the prominent horizontal bars on the outside of each truck with rubber pads. The lateral stabilizers rods you do not see unless you look to the interior of the truck, they run lateral to the bolster, one on each side. These eight rods are responsible for the alignment of each truck. Of course, major wear was found on the rods and on the trucks where the rods attach. Mike Miciukiewicz came to the rescue with his welder and grinder, and once again we had usable rods and all attachment areas were again sound.



While all the fuss was being made over the rods, John Andrews was quietly working on one of the Detroit 6-110 engines that had been on the RDC#47. Since all the work was being done without the benefit of a shop, or an area large enough to engage in a full rebuild of the engine, I made the decision to just rebuild the head. This decision was based on Bruce Van Wyk's preliminary observation and the old standby diagnostic tests of barring the engine. Observation showed that the number 6 cylinder had broken push rod springs and attempts to bar the engine over were not successful. After the head was removed, there was no problem barring the cylinders over, so work began on the head.

Yes, parts are still available so I ordered what was needed and John Andrews meticulously put them all in the correct places and Dan Carlton torqued all the parts to the correct specs. The head was then reinstalled on the block. Now came the fun part, as Bruce Van Wyk, Skip Kern, Randy Natale, John Geigle, Dave Roberts and Ira Pollock proceeded to pull out from under the RDC the 4200lb power unit(engine and transmission) that was to be replaced. This was done with an engine dolly that the Budd Co. devised just for this purpose. Thanks to Jimmy Gagliardi for the loan of his, the entire unit came out with only a few groans from the crew.



With the engine out from under the RDC we were able to swap parts, rebuild others, and change fluids to give the, soon to be, installed engine the best chance of running. I say this because the replacement engine had not been previously started at the DRM and it had been sitting idle for over 10 years. From start to finish the engine job took four weekends, both Saturday and Sunday in the hot sun and occasional rain. But we had success in the end, the ex New Haven RR RDC-1 #32 is now running on both engines just in time for her 50th birthday in March 2003.



To see more pictures of our work, please go on-line to: www.mikes-stuff.com.

ARE THERE ANY RAILFANS IN HOLLYWOOD

By Steve Gould

As DRM members know, Hollywood paid a visit to Danbury in the 1950's when Alfred Hitchcock brought camera, crew, and the two leads, Farley Granger and Robert Walker, to the New Haven railroad station to shoot location scenes for "Strangers on a Train". Even "Hitch" himself got into the act, trying to board a commuter coach with a bass violin while people were getting off. There were plenty of vintage New Haven shots of pre-"washboard" MU's and box cab motors as the movie was made prior to the wires being removed from the Danbury branch. As was common in those days, the station name was changed to "Metcalf".

"Strangers on a Train" is but one of my favorite movies that featured trains. Another of Alfred Hitchcock's films, "North by Northwest" had many scenes aboard a train in the early part of the film. Cary Grant's character, Roger Thornhill, was seen at Grand Central Terminal in New York, while, in the background, the station announcer was calling a boarding announcement for Train Number 25, the "20th Century Limited". He walked to Window #15 and tried to purchase a bedroom on the train, but ended up running past the gate guard onto the train just prior to departure. As he did, he passed sleeper #10006 "Imperial State". No sooner aboard, the train lurched and was underway, the platform red carpet clearly visible through the window. And, later, in the dining car, Eva Marie Saint invited him to her compartment, Drawing Room E in Car #3901. Upon arrival in Chicago, both characters are seen walking up the platform past NYC E8 #4044. Who could forget the last scene of a SP train darting into a tunnel just after the newly-married couple jumped into bed in a sleeping compartment? In those days, Hollywood used symbolism to make a sexual point!

The movie version of the musical "Hello Dolly" had PRR D16b #1223 and a number of Strasburg Rail Road coaches running Northbound along the Hudson River during the opening credits. Numerous locations were selected as the train passed by, heading from "New York City" to "Yonkers". Poughkeepsie was the stand-in for New York while Garrison, NY became Yonkers. In fact, many exterior shots were done in Garrison including Vandegelder's Hardware Store, the proprietor of which was played by the late Walter Matthau. I remember visiting Garrison while the set was still in place for the film. Of course, today, you can ride the "Hello Dolly" car at the Strasburg Rail Road, and #1223 is on display at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania. Hmmm, how many think that Metro North would allow such a scene to be filmed today?

"Bad Day at Black Rock"! Remember that one, with Robert Ryan, Spencer Tracy, and Walter Brennan? Tracy, playing a one-armed detective, got off at Black Rock, the first time the "streamliner" had stopped at this after thought of a town in the middle of a desert. The opening credits of the film featured SP F's, an A and B unit, at the head end of the unmistakable "daylight" passenger cars. The train was again featured at the end of the film when Tracy left town, his job done. Much of the photography was done from a helicopter and is excellent. It is best seen in the wide-screen version of the film.

People seeing "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" were so in awe of the arrival of the mother ship at Devil's Tower that most don't remember a train. Yet, there was a glimpse of one. It occurred when Richard Dreyfus arrived at the Gillette, WY station looking for Melinda Dillon, who also experienced a CE3. Look it up – Gillette is a town on the then Burlington Northern and, a train was seen in the film approaching the station. Where are the green units? Even at the camera angle used by Steven Spielberg, any railfan in the theatre could spot that a Family Lines unit was on the head end. Background information on the film revealed some location shots were done in Alabama, not in BN territory.

Another favorite of mine is "Union Station" which starred William Holden, Nancy Olson, and Barry Fitzgerald. Holden played a railroad detective stationed at...Union Station in Chicago. But, again Hollywood figured who would know the difference? The station interior shots included those unique waiting room benches found only in Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal. In fact, there is a scene with Holden threatening a stool pigeon with being thrown off a platform in front of a fast moving train if he didn't talk. The train rushes by in a cloud of smoke and steam, sporting "Southern Pacific" on the tender! SP in Chicago? The climax of the movie was shot in Chicago in the underground freight tunnels and gave moviegoers a rare glimpse of this very interesting example of railroading.

There are hundreds of other films I could mention, like "The Natural" with the ex-GTW engine; Walt Disney's "Great Locomotive Chase"; "The Train" which starred Burt Lancaster; or "Van Ryan's Express". And Gerry Herrmann would remember the great shots of German steam in "The Great Escape". What were your favorite films that featured trains? Be sure to check the recent issue of Trains Magazine for their picks of the best and worst train movies.