

# Danbury Departures

Volume No. 18

July 2002

## President's Report to the Membership

**Welcome all members!** Each month I report to you on what is happening at the Museum and have tried to keep you updated on our many functions, needs, triumphs, failures, and diversities that make up our ever-growing Museum.

This month once again I ask you to **volunteer**, for volunteering is what keeps our Museum moving forward. I need your help, anywhere from the train crew operating on weekends, to the yard crew, to the people running the gift shop and the front desk during the week. We have reached a critical time now where there are not enough people to fill these openings and at times we have to scramble to stay open or to operate our railyard local on the weekends. We have actually had to **close** the Museum a few times due to not having a volunteer available. Please turnout and join these groups because these activities and the membership dues are the sole sources of income for the Museum at this point.

I am trying to modify our plans for a more comprehensive training program for our operating crews involving more people if possible and a more accessible program to get more volunteers involved in train service.

Originally, I had told you that our Wednesday night programs would resume in September, but I felt that a three-month rest would hurt our Wednesday night turnout. Therefore, starting July 3, we will resume our Wednesday nights with some new guests and information. Much to my surprise we are already booked through January of 2003 with speakers and many more are eager to get on the schedule for 2003. This has been a very successful program that brings many members, and non-members to the Museum and it is important that we continue this tradition.

Please support your Museum with your greatly valued time and spend it as a volunteer, because without your help, we will not be able to function. Come to the Museum on a Saturday morning and meet new people and help with new projects.

Send me your e-mail ([ira.Pollack@juno.com](mailto:ira.Pollack@juno.com)) and be included on the Saturday "**Call To Arms**" roster.

On Saturdays, lunch is usually provided for the working volunteers.

Thank you and see you there!

## **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.*

## **Officers**

**Ira Pollack - President**  
**Ron Freitag - V. President**  
**Steve Gould - Secretary**  
**Tony White - Treasurer**

## **Directors**

Dan Foley, Chairman  
Ed Blackman  
Suze Blackman  
John Greene  
Geoff Knees  
Dave Lowry  
Peter McLachlan  
Randy Natale  
Michael Salata  
Susan Thomas

## **Change of address**

Please send change of address to:

Danbury Railway Museum, Inc  
Attention: Frank Sullivan  
P.O. Box 90  
Danbury, CT 06813-0090

Or Via Email to:  
Drmmembers@aol.com

Danbury Departures is made possible by volunteers.

Comments and suggestions are always welcome.

Editor: Roberta Ballard  
roberta@iliketrains.com

Printing courtesy of:  
Infinity Printing

Circulation: Peter Hanen

Danbury Railway Museum, Inc is a not for profit 501(c)(3) all volunteer organization.

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

[www.danbury.org/drm](http://www.danbury.org/drm)

# **The Yard Inside** - July 2002

By Wade W. Roese

## **Yes, we have movement!**

After a couple of weeks of cleaning track, wheels and contacts; testing and repairing locomotives; wiring and connecting equipment the N gauge model of the Danbury yard saw its first train movement a couple of weeks ago. The most reliable equipment has been positioned to run via the automatic initiation and timer control. This allows visitors to the museum to start trains running on either of the N gauge mainline tracks by depressing a simple start button. Trains run for approximately 90 seconds and can be restarted immediately. Soon, the audio recordings of the various layout highlights will be operational.

## **N gauge:**

Contributions gratefully continued from Joseph E Sacca, Vincent De'Young from Carmel, and William Clifford. Many of these have already been incorporated into the operation and display.

## **HO gauge:**

Last month we listed the H.O. equipment Jeff Van Wagenen and Bill Britt recently started relocating from New York which has been donated by Mr. Herb Janek. The transfer has been completed and the museum is the recipient of an extensive and complete array of H.O. equipment. Dr. Frank P. Podrasky, D.D.S. has donated N, H.O., and O gauge equipment. This collection, which is also extensive, will be incorporated into the appropriate layouts in the near future.

Jeff Vanwagenen continues to look for more people that are interested in working on an HO layout, so please contact him:

(203)-263-3627 or [jjvanwagenen@yahoo.com](mailto:jjvanwagenen@yahoo.com).

Meetings of the club are set for Wednesdays at the DRM at 7:30p.m.

## **S gauge:**

S gauge operations have been resumed by Mr. Chet Janutolo with the assistance of all and any interested parties. Please join us. Thanks.

## **The Gremlins are back!**

A couple of months ago we were able to locate and identify a gremlin (hope he is feeling better). It appears there are many other Gremlins in our museum and in the yard. These Gremlins quietly continue to work their magic, contribute their time, and help the facilities grow. Thanks to the many unsung and, usually unrecognized, "Gremlins" whom we are fortunate to have wandering around our facilities. Anyone wishing to join our "Gremlin" contingency, please stop by.

There's a place for everyone in the "Yard Inside", even "Gremlins", Stop in!

Thanks,  
Wade

---

A word of apology to Richard Carlo, an outstanding and talented modeler, whose last name was inadvertently left off the caption in last months newsletter.

Richard did an excellent job of creating the replica of Danbury Union Station for the N scale layout and his efforts are greatly appreciated.

---

## GIFT SHOP NEWS



The Gift Shop is bustling, with new merchandise arriving weekly! Stop by and see our new collection of railroading books and videos.

New Haven fans won't want to miss New Haven Color Pictorial V. 1 West End NY NY & H. by David Sweetland Hardcover, 128 pages, only \$54.95. Also featured are Vol. 1 (\$49.95) & Vol. 2 (\$59.95) of Sweetland's NYC Color Pictorial, and the updated Two Feet to Tidewater, (\$60) by Robert Jones and David Register, and autographed by Robert Jones. The original version of Two Feet to Tidewater is now out of print, and is going for up to \$120! Remember, members receive 10% off all books and most other merchandise.

### ***Summer is T-shirt weather!***

Members, bring membership card into the Gift Shop and receive an extra 10% off any T-shirt.

Check out the Gift Shop on our web site!

We will be glad to accept your email order; please see the web site for details.

---

### **CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS - DRM CLOTHING AVAILABLE**

We have a large supply of the red DRM golf shirts that many volunteers wear, in sizes L and XL. If you wish to buy one, please see Patty or Kathie in the Gift Shop. The cost is \$12 each (member discount does not apply).

Several volunteers have asked us if we will be getting any more of the red nylon 'stadium' jackets that many of the volunteers wear. The Gift Shop Managers are willing to acquire the jackets and sell them to members at cost, but we will be able to order only the ones that will definitely be spoken for. The cost to members will be somewhere around \$25 for an unlined jacket, somewhat more for a lined jacket or for an XXL size; final prices will depend upon the number of jackets ordered (discount will not apply). If you have a definite interest in obtaining one or both of the jackets, please complete the form below and either drop off at the Gift Shop, or mail it to us. Once we have determined the interest level and the number of jackets we need to order, we'll be in touch with you.

Mail to:  
Gift Shop Jacket Project  
Danbury Railway Museum  
Box 90  
Danbury, Ct. 06810

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ LINED \_\_\_\_\_ UNLINED \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ SIZE: S \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ L \_\_\_\_\_  
XL \_\_\_\_\_ XXL \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

---

## Welcome New Members

Andrew Clark III	New Milford, CT
Robert W. Emerson	Boston, MA
S. Gibaldi	South Salem, NY
Jean Martin	Wappingers Falls, NY
Donald Seifert	Staatsburg, NY
David Siegel	Ridgefield, CT
Monica Wilson	Ridgefield, CT

---



## **The Life of a Guide at the Museum**

By John O'Hern

While conducting tours at the museum, I'm frequently asked about my background in railroading. Inevitably, people are surprised to learn that my graduate training was in microbiology and my work was as a professional microbiologist. I then explain that the museum does not have need for this type of work, so I currently work the front desk, with tours, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and work as a conductor/brakeman on Saturdays.

To go back a few (?) years, my father worked in Freight Traffic on the **DL&W RR** in the terminal in Buffalo, NY. He was brought up in Dansville, NY, which was about 60 miles east of Buffalo. We lived in Lancaster, NY, just east of Buffalo on the **DL&W**. When I was about 5 years old, I, or with my sister, would frequently go to visit my grandmother in Dansville on a pass. When alone, my folks would take me to the **Lancaster Station** to catch the early Saturday local. I was turned over to the conductor, who kept an eye on me until we got to Dansville. There he would turn me over to a local taxi driver who would drive me to my grandmother's house. On the following Sunday afternoon, the taxi would pick me up, and the procedure was reversed.

During these many trips, I frequently rode in the baggage car, shared lunch with Frank(?), the Baggage man, and helped toss off mail and small packages en- route. One time they had a few merry-go-round horses in crates and Frank opened one so I could have a ride on a horse. It was a great time for a youngster.

At the **Lancaster Station**, they did some local switching. I remember riding in the caboose, and once I rode in the cab of one of the **DL&W** camelback or mother hubard locomotives. So I guess my early experiences eventually led me back to the great world of railroading!

P.S.: Yes, I had a large 0 gauge Lionel set-up in the early 30s, kept in their original boxes, and later built a 10' x 12' HO gauge set-up, including building my own switches.

## Members Picnic

Join us on **Sunday, August 18, 2002** at **5:30pm** in the Rail Yard for the annual Danbury Railway Museum member's picnic. Featuring: "Ed's famous ribs"

See how the Museum has grown!

Enjoy sharing with other Museum members!

Bring a chair and your family!

Only \$6.00 for adults  
and \$3.00 for children under 12.

Tickets available in the Museum at the Front Desk.

---



## CT Heritage Railway Websites

**Connecticut Eastern Railroad Museum**  
[www.cteastrrmuseum.org](http://www.cteastrrmuseum.org)

**Connecticut Trolley Museum**  
[www.ceraonline.org](http://www.ceraonline.org)

**Danbury Railway Museum**  
[www.Danbury.org/drm](http://www.Danbury.org/drm)

**Essex Steam Train**  
[www.essexsteamtrain.com](http://www.essexsteamtrain.com)

**Naugatuck Railroad/R.M.N.E.**  
[www.rmnr.org](http://www.rmnr.org)

**Shore Line Trolley Museum**  
[www.bera.org](http://www.bera.org)

**Western Conn. Chapter NRHS**  
[Www.westctnrhs.org](http://Www.westctnrhs.org)

---

## LIBRARY REPORT

by Stan Madyda

In May, we received on loan a collection of railroad china and silverware. Pieces are from the Pennsylvania Railroad, New York Central and the Pullman Company. The donor also loaned us several books on the subject which we are using to research information on the various pieces. Once that is complete, the china and silverware will be on display.

We are continuing to work on the database, which we call the Accession Register, making sure what we have on the shelves is in the computer. New shelving and file cabinets are making the job easier, but it is a long process. The overall goal is to have a database of information that researchers and members can access by appointment. Speaking of researchers, we have had a number of members and people from the community use the material in the Library. Whether they are looking to help their child do a report or writing an article or book, we do our best to help them. Members have used the Library to look up information on equipment in the yard or to research their favorite railroad subject.

Here are some more donations that you can find in Reference and Research Library:  
More donations from 2000 include:

- John Christy- NYC car equipment books
- J. Paul and Joanne Letendre - video camera
- Richard A. Young - books
- Lucye Boland - DRM newsletters
- Estate of Edwin Owen c/o Robert Owen - books, newsletter and paper material
- Ira Pollack - books
- James Lockard - Lionel trains and HO trains
- Robert Paltauf - two manual and a newspaper article
- Frank Quintano - stock certificates
- Irma Lambert - 300+ RPO stamp cancellations
- George Reitze - magazines, books and maps
- Charlie Bardo - Union Pacific cuspidor
- Dan Foley - 108 slides
- Irene Holcroft - magazines
- Ann Joseph - magazine and a book
- Thomas M. Collins - photos of the DRM yard
- Howard Price - New Haven wrench and a NYC wrench
- Andrew Schnitzler - magazines
- Terri Stramiello - two videos and photos
- Estate of M. A. Ehlers - notebook from the General Freight Traffic Committee
- Robert young - Danbury & Norwalk bond
- Anonymous - employee timetables, magazines
- Joanne Spring - sheet metal tools
- Harold Tepper - eight railings from New Haven main line, switch stand lamp, New Haven lock, New Haven lanterns, builder plates, New Haven Ticket Collector hat, Conrail Trainman hat, sign from Bridgeport.
- Ed and Harriet Rosenberg - four headrest covers from the Denver Zephyr
- Randy Natale - painting diagrams and GCT #1 crane information.

If you'd like more detailed information, please see Stan Madyda or Gerry Herrmann.

---

## Celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the '20<sup>th</sup> Century Limited'

By Tony White

June 15, 2002 marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the **20<sup>th</sup> Century Limited**, the most prestigious train on the **New York Central System** which ran from Grand Central Terminal in New York City to Chicago along the water route. This train was the showpiece of the NYC and many famous people rode it for the luxury that it afforded its passengers. The major competition to this train was the **Pennsylvania Railroads' 'Broadway Limited'**, which took a different route from New York to Chicago.

For the celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the **NYC-3** car belonging to a DRM member Lovett Smith and his wife Barbara was at the rear of the Lake Shore Limited Amtrak train #49. In front of the **NYC-3** was the **Ohio River**, another rear deck car. Both cars were met with reporters at **Penn Station**. The car was decked out in bunting and flags. Barbara Smith and Ann Miller were wearing clothing appropriate for 1902. The lucky passengers were treated to wonderful meals. Ken and Ann Miller and Peter and Diane Hine cooked meals. In addition to the meals, there were great conversations, exciting views of the water route and of course all the luxury that was found on the original '**20<sup>th</sup> Century Limited**' trains. Almost everyone that saw the car took a second look. When riding the rear platform we always felt like stars because of all the waves that we got.

The press met the train upon arrival in Chicago and did interviews. John Kuehl, the Editor of 'Private Varnish' magazine took us to lunch at a fantastic and inexpensive Chinese restaurant in Chicago's Chinatown. He gave us a history lesson and showed us the trackage of the lost railroads that ran through Chicago.

The following day the group split up and did various things. Lovett, Roberta, Charlie and I went on the chase of the Union Pacific #3985 steam engine and matched set of cars from western Chicago to 25 miles into Iowa. The steam engine was magnificent and it put on quite a show for us to photograph. We even managed to see the **Burlington Zephyr**, which is housed in the Museum of Science and Technology in Chicago.



Union Pacific 3985 headed back to California.

An added feature of this trip was traveling to Toronto, Ontario. On this route, we saw varied styles of architecture among the old stations that we passed traveling through Michigan to Port Huron where we crossed the border into Canada and eventually to Toronto.

In Toronto we parked in the **CN / GO** Train Yard and witnessed lots of train action with **Amtrak**, **Via**, **Go** and **CN** freights. We saw the saved CN roundhouse that now houses a microbrewery aptly named Whistle-Stop and soon to house a museum complete with a turntable and a steam engine. It was hard to imagine the magnitude of tracks that once stood around this area but photos in the overpass to Union Station in Toronto helped us.

On the return trip we were lucky enough to reach customs stopped over the spectacular Niagara Gorge. After passing the old Buffalo station we rejoined the water route for the ride home.

For the members of the DRM, Charlie Albanetti, Roberta Ballard, Barbara and Lovett Smith and myself, everything was perfect and this trip was a respectful salute to the greatest train to ever run in the United States, the '**20<sup>th</sup> Century Limited**.'



---

-First Look -  
New Equipment on VIA's Montreal-Toronto Overnight Trains

By Tony White

VIA Rail Canada has purchased a total of 139 new Renaissance cars and began operating them on the overnight train between Montreal and Toronto on June 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The cars are specially designed to enhance overnight and business-class service consisting of coaches, sleepers with bedrooms and toilets and sleepers with showers, and snack cars with lounge areas. One coach on every train will have a wheelchair tie-down facility to safely accommodate those who must remain in their wheelchairs.

The Canadian Federal Government has invested \$402 million dollars into its 5-year program to modernize the rail service and bring more trains, faster trains and more frequent services to Canadian travelers.



New Euro-style coupler



Doors leading to next car



Coach Class interior



Stainless steel snack car



Conductors desk



Sleeper - upper & lower berth -  
phone for service

---

## YOU'RE A RAILFAN?

By Steve Gould

"It's a beautiful noise, going on everywhere. Like the clickity-clack of a train on a track, it's got rhythm to spare." Neil Diamond's lyrics, from "A Beautiful Noise", says it all! The cadence of steel wheels crossing rail joints; the beat of a steam locomotive's exhaust; the wail of a steam whistle; the major chord of a diesel air horn; and even the wheel squeal of an **IRT** subway train are all beautiful noises to a railfan's ear.

When did you know you were a railfan? For me it was as a youngster growing up in East Hampton, NY, out on the Eastern end of Long Island. **The Long Island Rail Road** ran right through my family's dairy farm, between a cow pasture and a potato field, so I could see trains from my back yard. My dad took me to the East Hampton station to get "up close and personal" with the **LIRR**, not once but many times.

My railroad world was the **LIRR** and I began to accumulate railroad knowledge. For instance I could tell a passenger steam engine, with its red keystone number plate and melodious multi-chamber whistle, from a freight engine, which had a yellow round number plate and single chamber, high pitched "banshee" whistle. I later learned that these were leased **PRR K4's** and **LIRR H 10's** respectively.

In high school, my brother and I would meet the evening "**Cannonball**" from New York and Jamaica to collect the evening newspapers (Journal-American, World Telegram and Sun, New York Post, and Brooklyn Eagle) and deliver them, with our dad driving, to the three newspaper stores in town. We saw a K4 six nights a week. And, did I take my camera? If I had, I would certainly be a rich man today since **LIRR** steam photos on the East End of Long Island are so rare.

I can remember seeing a pair of diesels, painted in what looked like Santa Fe colors, on the "**Cannonball**" one evening (Fairbanks-Morse Trainmaster demonstrators). And a boxy black diesel with yellow "**Long Island**" lettering on a New York bound train on the passing siding at the East Hampton station was my first ever glimpse of a **LIRR**-owned diesel, an **RS 1**. One summer, mixed in with **LIRR** and **PRR P70** coaches, were coaches lettered for the "**Reading Company**", leased, so I learned, during an equipment shortage.

We visited my maternal grand parents in the Bronx quite often and "Grandma Thinnies" would take my brother and I all over New York City. We rode the **Third Avenue El** many times. We rode end to end on many streetcar lines. Once, we took a Public Service bus to New Jersey and I saw a steam locomotive with a headlight mounted in the center of the smoke box door!! Now that was new - all of the engines I had seen up to then had the headlight mounted right in front of the smoke stack!! It must have been a **New York Central** engine on the **West Shore Line**. The vision I remember is of an engine simmering near a grade crossing as the bus crossed the tracks.

In 1957, when I went away to college in Washington, DC at American University, my railroad world and knowledge expanded. I met Bob Kessler on the first day of classes in Economics 1. The professor had talked about trains in his lecture and Bob went to ask him if he was interested in trains. I was in earshot when the professor said no. I piped up immediately and said that I liked trains. Soon Bob and I were making plans to ride a Washington, DC NRHS Chapter fan trip to Northumberland, PA, which, we learned on the trip, was to be steam-powered north of Harrisburg. And, here we are in 2002, forty-five years later, still planning rail excursions. Thanks to Bob, my interest in trains mushroomed and I started taking 8 mm movies and black-and-white stills with a Brownie box camera.

That brings us up to date. Instead of movies and the old reliable box camera (it is now on display in my basement railroad room), I take video and 35 MM color stills. And, I have joined and become active in the **Danbury Railway Museum**, which I look on as another chapter in my railfan story - a new way to pursue the hobby. What satisfaction it brings to share railroad knowledge I have gained with those youngsters on a school tour; or share experiences with other member fans. Those of you out there who have not become active in the **Museum** - do so!! It is well worth it and you will feel better for it. "**Come on down**", as Bob Kaufman is fond of saying in his furniture store advertisements, and share with us why you became a railfan!

# Danbury Railway Museum Equipment Roster

## LOCOMOTIVES

ALCO Manchester Works 2-6-0 Mogul (1907)	Boston & Maine 1455
ALCO RS-1 (1948)	New Haven 0673
ALCO RSC-2 (1949)	DRMX 1513
ALCO RS-3m (1952)	CONNDOT 605 (repowered C R 1979)
ALCO RS-11 (1956)	New Haven 1402
ALCO FA-1 (1947)	New Haven 0428 (LIRR 617)
EMD E-9A (1947)	New York Central 4095 (repowered 2x fr orig E-7)
EMD FL-9 (1953)	New Haven 2006
EMD FL-9 (1960)	New York Central 2013
EMD SW-8 (1953)	Pfizer #1(Rock Island #838)
MLW FPA-4 (1959)	NYC 1390 (Windsor & Hantspot 6786)
MLW FPB-4 (1959)	NYC 3390 (Windsor & Hantsport 6867)

## SELF-PROPELLED PASSENGER VEHICLES

Budd RDC-1 (1953)	New Haven 32
Budd RDC-1 (1953)	New Haven 47
Mack Railbus (1954)	Remington Arms 2 (FCDII)

## CABOOSES

PRR Bobber Caboose (1905)	
Class N-5 PRR Lines East Shops (1916)	Pennsylvania 477099
Class NE-5 Pullman Standard (1944)	New Haven C-627
Class N-8A (orig NE-6) Intl Car (1948)	Penn Central 23662
Class NE (1940)	Maine Central 661
Class NE (1937)	Maine Central 664

## PASSENGER EQUIPMENT

Class PBm Coach Harlan & Hollingsworth (1922)	DRMX 2001
Class PBm Coach Harlan & Hollingsworth (1922)	DRMX 2012
Class PBm Coach Harlan & Hollingsworth (1922)	Reading 2014
Class PBm Coach Harlan & Hollingsworth (1922)	DRMX 2015 - <i>John E. Flower</i>
Class PBr Coach Bethlehem Steel (1925)	Reading 1547
Pullman Car Pullman Std (1949)	NY NH & H 525 - <i>Stratford Point</i>
Observation/Exec Car (c1928)	DRMX 2022 (NYC 100) - <i>Tonawanda Valley</i>
Observation/Business Car PRR (1926)	(was P-70 coach PRR 1670) - <i>SASQUA</i>
PRR Class B-60 Baggage Car (c1920)	MNCX 057
M.U. Wire Car Pullman Std (1954)	MNCX 017 (NYNH&H 4671)
M.U. Wire Car Pullman Std (1954)	MNCX 018 (NYNH&H 4673)

## FREIGHT CARS

Wood Boxcar Youngstown (1924)	Rutland 8085 (w/ steel frame)
X-38L Boxcar (1941,r1963)	PRR 45924
X-58A Boxcar PRR (1964)	PRR 1124325.
PS-1 Boxcar Pullman Std (1947)	New Haven 33732
PS-1 Boxcar Pullman Std (1948)	New Haven 34537
70-ton H-39 Hoppercar PRR (1960)	PRR 666573
70-ton Hoppercar Greenville (1974)	Erie-Lackawanna 33491
37ft Flatcar (1902)	Rutland X-578
40ft Flat Car ACF (1910)	Rutland 2764 (Green Mtn 2762?)
35ft Flat Car (1906, r1930)	NH 41178 (Bullard Co 2) [stored backyard]
35ft Flat Car (1906, r1930)	NH 41XXX(Bullard Co 5) [stored backyard]
Flat Car (fish belly) (1922)	New Haven T-27 [stored backyard]
Flat Car (c1925)	Central Vermont 7625
Flat Car	MNCX 003 (w/GCT-1)
Flat Car	MNCX 011 (w/ GCT-1)
Transporter Flat Car JTTX 902572	
Flat Car (CV 5146)	These two to be shipped out.
Flat Car (CV 5151)	
Gondola (drop-bottom) New Haven Shops (1937)	NH 60521
C1-RPL Mechanical Reefer (1966)	Conrail 359020
Class TRI Tankcar (1966)	N.A.T.X. 12516
Class TLI Tankcar (1967)	N.A.T.X. 12811

## MAINTENANCE & REPAIR EQUIPMENT

Wrecker/Double-Ended Crane Ind Crane Wks (1914)	GCT-1 <i>Wellington</i>
15-ton Test Weight Car PRR (1909)	PRR 999951
Burro Crane Burro (bld date unk)	DRMX CB 3001 (stored)
Burro Crane Burro (1947)	DRMX CB 3004
Woodings Track Speeder	DRMX 270302
IRRIS Track Speeder	M1148
Track/Tool Trailer	DRMX 0401

## Rail Excursion Across Canada (Part 1)

by Larry Vodra

Before I begin, let me state that I have never been employed by nor associated with a railroad. Most of my railroad knowledge is second hand. The last time I rode a "real" train (other than commuter or excursion trains) was in 1962. Also, in the U. S., we have "railroads", while in Canada, they have "railways". Maybe we should re-name our museum the "Danbury Railroad Museum" in the interest of accuracy.

In late April, my wife and I drove from Brookfield to Montreal to participate in an Elderhostel rail excursion across Canada. Our group consisted of 38 people, some singles and some couples, all in their 60's or early 70's. Our trip guide was a college history professor in his mid-40's, whose rail knowledge (other than the history of Canada's trans-continental rail-lines there were 3) was very limited. The program was 14 days and 13 nights, but only 2 nights were actually spent on the train. The remaining nights were in mid-price hotels, which gave us a chance to unpack, and there were 1 or 2 day "field trips" in Montreal, Toronto, Edmonton, Jasper, and Vancouver between train rides. All meals, tips, and incidental admission fees were included in the tour price. One final note: It is about 3,000 miles from New York to L. A. Our trip was 3,273 rail miles, and we traveled only about 2/3 of the way across Canada!

The first "rail event" we enjoyed was a full afternoon at the Canadian Railway Museum in Delson, Quebec, which is about 20 miles south of Montreal. They have a lot of "stuff," including 140 pieces of rolling stock, but much of it is jammed coupler to coupler in two large metal sheds with poor lighting and very narrow aisles between tracks, so that we couldn't really get a decent view of any single locomotive, passenger coach, or interurban car. The rest of their collection is slowly rusting outside with little apparent preservation being attempted. They are presently constructing an \$11 million "Exporail" pavilion (\$7 million contributed by the Federal and Provincial governments) which will have 12 indoor tracks, an overhead mezzanine and under track observation pit, and which will house about 30 pieces of their best equipment. This will certainly improve their ability to show what they have. But there seems to be little coordination in their collection - do they really need three F-7 "covered wagons" in different paint schemes?



Some of the outdoor displays at the Canadian Railway Museum at Delson, Quebec.

The next day, we rode **VIA Rail's "Corridor"** service between Montreal and Toronto. This 333 mile double-track main line is the heaviest traveled rail segment in Canada. The last of the **LRC** (Light, Rapid, Comfortable) high speed trainsets were retired in 2001, and service is currently provided with conventional engines and cars. (We saw two of the **LRC** trainsets in a scrap yard as we left Montreal.) The train left exactly on time and arrived in Toronto 2 minutes early, averaging about 63 mph which included 9 very brief intermediate stops. One car had "VIA I Class" service, which included a hot meal served from a cart; the remaining 6 cars, where we sat, were "Economy Class," and featured an attendant who passed through the cars about once an hour selling coffee, tea, and non-alcoholic beverages. My thought was that **VIA Rail** should raise the fare by about \$1 and have the attendant give the beverages away as they do on airplanes. (This fall, **VIA Rail** will begin putting 139 new "European-style Renaissance cars" in service pulled by 21 new Genesis high-speed locomotives, and next summer, the current 5 hr + 29 min. service will be cut to 3 hr + 50 min, with 2 intermediate stops. Some trains will continue to make all 9 stops, but will still offer higher speeds than at present.)

After 2 nights and 1 day in Toronto, we arrived at the station to board VIA Rail's "flagship" train, the "**Canadian**." The original "**Canadian**" was operated by the **Canadian Pacific Railway**. In 1978, **VIA Rail** was created, similar to **Amtrak** in the U. S., and took over all **CP** and **CN** passenger rail service. Initially, most passenger service was retained, but in 1988, "the Great Shrinkage" occurred when the Canadian government reduced passenger train subsidies. At that point, **VIA Rail** transferred the "**Canadian**" from **CP's** tracks to **CN's**, and reduced the frequency from every day to 3 days per week. In 1992, **VIA Rail** took 190 of their 1955-vintage Budd-built stainless steel cars, and spent over \$200 million refurbishing them from the trucks to the domes. The result is the "**Canadian**" you ride now.



The "Canadian" during its 75 minute service stop and crew change in Jasper, Alberta.

The "**Canadian**" was a long train! There were three Class "**GPA-30c**" locomotives, one full-size baggage car, and 24 assorted passenger cars, including coaches, 2 dining cars, 3 dome-lounge cars, sleepers, and a 4-bedroom/lounge/dome/round-end observation car bringing up the rear (try to find one of those on Amtrak!). Add all of that together, and you have about a half-mile of passenger train. (I was told that, during the peak summer season, they add a third dining car, and the train expands to 32 cars in length, while mid-winter trains may have as few as 12 cars.) The "Economy Class" coaches have very comfortable seats with both thigh and foot rests, with lots of leg and fanny room. No food is included in the fare, but one of the dome-lounge cars has a short-order kitchen which sells things like hamburgers, pizza, pre-packaged sandwiches, and non-alcoholic beverages. Or you can bring your own food. At night, you are provided with a pillow and blanket, and the lights are turned down. "Blue & Silver" class (First Class) passenger occupy the sleepers, where you can sleep in an old-fashioned pullman-type accommodation where you have opposite-facing seats by day and an upper & lower berth by night with a curtain for privacy (and go down the passageway to the bathroom), or sleep in a "single bedroom" with a chair during the day which converts to a bed at night (in these, the toilet is under the bed; if you have to use it at night, you have to fold up the bed to get to it), or sleep in a "double bedroom", with an upper & lower berth which face sideways instead of lengthwise, and the toilet located in a small private room. Each car has 6 double bedrooms, 4 single bedrooms, and 3 upper/lower berths, and can house a maximum of 22 passengers. Each passenger is provided a small bag of toiletries, a big fluffy bath towel, small face towel, and a wash cloth, and may use the rather large shower & dressing area that is located in each car if he desires. "Blue & Silver" class passengers also have all meals included in the fare. The food is excellent and is entirely cooked to order. Breakfast is on a first/come first/served basis (anything from toast & jelly to a full "lumberjack" breakfast). Lunch and dinner are served at one of three "seatings" (dinner was usually about 4:30, 6:30, and 8:30) with 5 different options and a completely different menu at each meal.



Just like 1955 on the "California Zephyr", except this was taken in 2002 on the "Canadian".

Well, when we arrived at the Toronto station, there was no train! We were informed that the 9 am scheduled departure would be delayed due to the late arrival of the train from Vancouver due to a freight train derailment in Ontario. **VIA Rail** personnel were very nice, and sent the entire 300 or so passengers across the street to the Royal York Hotel (built by the C. P. in 1928; at one time the 32-story hotel was the tallest building in the British Empire) to a banquet room where a big continental breakfast buffet was set up for us. Well, the 9 am departure finally occurred at 12:15 p.m! I think that if we had left on time, we would have remained on time. Unfortunately for us, the Canadian National's freight service is set up so that all westbound trains run at track speed for about 4 hours, then they all take sidings and all eastbound trains do the same. The **CN** is basically a single track line, with 1-mile long sidings every 10 - 15 miles, all the way from Toronto to Vancouver. We were running head-on into eastbound traffic, and stopped at nearly every siding to wait for another mile-long freight train to pass. Before we passed the 100-mile marker from Toronto, we were 4 hours late, and by the time we reached Sudbury, 260 miles from Toronto, the train was 5 hours late. Our entire first dinner was spent sitting motionless on a siding next to a pretty lake; I almost felt like we were on a "dinner train" and would return to Toronto later in the evening!

After awakening the next morning, we were informed that we were now 6 hours late. At mid-day, a stop was made at Sioux Lookout, Ontario, a small city of 1,200 people, where we were allowed to get off the train during a 20-minute servicing stop and operating crew change. I walked the length of the train in each direction, and it really was about a half-mile long! Our 20-minute scheduled stop expanded to nearly 45 minutes (more opposing traffic), and then we maintained the 6 1/2 hour late operation for the next 24 hours as we proceeded to Edmonton.

From Sioux Lookout to Edmonton, the only city of note we passed was Winnipeg. This is the city where all of the service crew employees are based, and we had an entirely new group of young men and women board our train. There is a small railway museum in the Winnipeg station; unfortunately, due to the late operation of the train, it had closed by the time we arrived.

The second night, we slept soundly. The main problem I discovered with welded rail is that when the train is under way and you are in the windowless upper berth, you can't tell how fast the train is traveling. When we awoke the next morning, we were crossing the flat wheat fields of Alberta on straight track at 75 mph. We were supposed to arrive in Edmonton at 8 am, but finally accomplished the 1-mile back-up maneuver into the train station at 2:30 p.m. The tiny station and the mile-long blacktop platform are new, located between the **CN** rail yard and the Edmonton Int'l Airport. Only 1 train a day stops there (the "**Canadian**" operating in one direction or the other), and the big station in downtown Edmonton is now abandoned.

Next issue: Part 2:

Jasper, the "Skeena," and the "Cariboo Prospector."