

# The Railyard Local

Volume 4, Issue 5

-The Monthly Newsletter of the Danbury Railway Museum-

May 2005

## Museum Forging Ahead with Blacksmithing Event

### Hammer-In on May 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>

Come join us at our vintage forge, the site of our first annual blacksmithing event! This is an exciting chance to observe reknowned blacksmiths showing the techniques involved in creating works in iron. They will be selling some of their wares. G-scale model trains will be running on a special layout. Refreshments will be available. The DRM Library will be conducting a sale, as described in the Library News on page 2. Our gift shop already has books on blacksmithing (see page 2). All this will be in addition to our regular weekend train operations. These attractions will make for a fun-filled weekend!



*Continued on page 7*

## Semaphore Almost Ready to Send Signals Again



During the past few weeks the Wilton semaphore has been transformed. It now has an operator's shed attached, with the controls to the signal arms positioned within it. Holes were dug for the form cores, which then were filled with concrete as footings. The shed was lifted into place by the trusty backhoe, holes

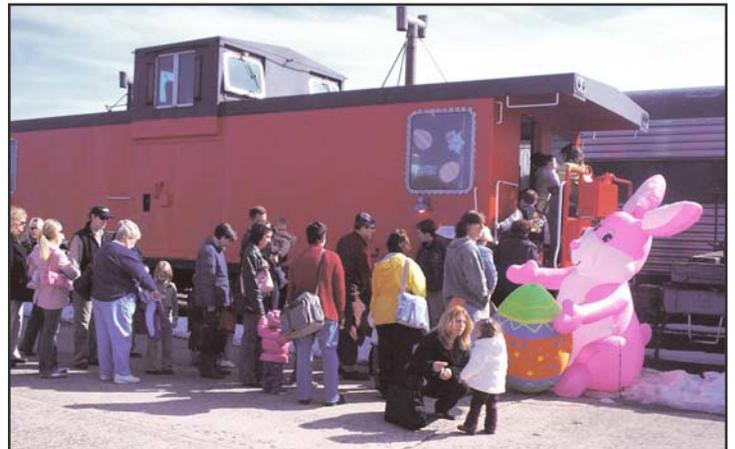
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## DRM Dressed Up for Easter

The Danbury Railway Museum was in its Easter best for the weekend of March 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> and on the 25<sup>th</sup>&-26<sup>th</sup> to greet the parade of visitors. Special decorations abounded inside the Museum building, railyard and cars. Our Budd car took a rail trip to the center platform for a visit to the Easter Bunny in the bright red CN caboose, which featured colorful trim-



A carload of Budd car passengers enters the CN caboose to greet the Easter Bunny within. Festive inflatable figures stood at each end of the caboose.

*Continued on page 7*

## Upcoming Railyard Projects

We will start working on the #1402 RS11 locomotive by doing sanding, cleaning the car body, steam cleaning it, and otherwise preparing it for painting. The sheathing on the forge needs staining. A passenger truck and the semaphore operator's shed need a coat of paint. These are just a few of the projects. If you can help us out, come to the yard parking lot Saturday mornings by 9:30 with you safety vest (we'll issue you one if you don't have one), work clothes and work boots.

## New Members

We are delighted to welcome our new members this month. All members are welcome to attend the weekly meetings held Wednesdays, 7:45pm, at the Museum, 120 White Street, Danbury. We invite all members to become involved in Museum activities as soon as possible!

John Liffiton	Somers, NY
Victoria Falis	Southbury, CT
Ms Maiorano	New Fairfield, CT
John & Kathleen Bartolatti	Thomaston, CT
George T. Boucher, Jr.	East Haven, CT
Jennifer Cerqueira	Danbury, CT
Ross Chapin	Whitehouse Station, NJ
Lisa Ciampi	Prospect, CT
Arthur Graham	Brewster, NY
Robert Holz hacker	Rowayton, CT
Glesce S. Mallery	Chappaqua, NY
Sean Malloy	Fairfield, CT
Gregory McKenna	Brookfield, CT
M. Richard Shubar	North Salem, NY
Mark Capossela	Brewster, NY



Our new pocket tees for sale at the DRM Gift Shop

## Gift Shop News

By Patty Osmer

Stop in to check out our new pocket tees! The tan one is the CNE t-shirt with the laurel-leaf wreath on the pocket, and the Poughkeepsie Bridge Route logo on the back. This is a must-have! After seeing our tee in ash-grey, with a circular Danbury Railway Museum on the pocket and a brightly colored front view of a NH FL-9 on the back, you'll want to have one of each! Member price is only \$13.50 per shirt. While you are shopping for your tees, pick up your



NYNH&H wind-breaker for only \$18.90 to members. This light-weight, lined windbreaker comes in either black or hunter green, with snap closures and the NYNH&H script logo printed on the front.

Our blacksmithing members, Skip Kern and Mike Miciukiewicz, who will be participating in the Hammer-In at the Museum May 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, have highly recommended several books on the art of blacksmithing. These books are now available in our Gift Shop, just in time for this big event.

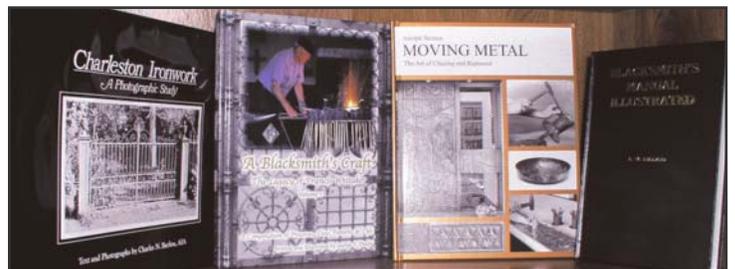
**Charleston Ironwork**, by Charles Bayless, is a photographic record of the rich legacy of the artform as seen in Charleston's surviving examples. Mem pr: \$33.25

**A Blacksmith's Craft: The Legacy of Francis Witaker**, by George Dixon, is a compendium for blacksmiths of all levels to preserve the techniques and processes necessary for the mastery of traditional blacksmithing. Member price: \$38.25

**Moving Metal**, by Adolph Steines, covers the art of chasing and repousse, and is a must-have for anyone's blacksmithing library. Member price: \$29.66

**The Blacksmith's Craft**, from The Rural Development Commission, is a how-to on the art of blacksmithing. Member price: \$30.60

**Blacksmith's Manual Illustrated**, by J.W. Lillico, is a practical treatise on modern methods of production. Member price: \$31.50.



## Library News

### Book Sale

On May 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, during the Hammer-In Event, the Reference and Research Library will hold a duplicate book sale. In addition to books, we have magazines, timetables, Official Guides, blueprints, post-cards, and other items for sale. DRM members will receive a 50% off the prices marked.

We also will be selling a print of the Boston & Maine 1455 by Andrew Neilly. Minimum donation for the print is \$50, and all proceeds go towards the restoration of the engine.

# DRM Express Track

By Ira Pollack, President

For this month's column I was interviewed by the editor, and the following is the result:

***What was the reason you first became involved with the Danbury Railway Museum?***

Ever since I can remember I've had a love of trains and heavy equipment. When I heard the Museum was starting up, I had to be a part of it. I thought that this was the greatest thing to happen in Danbury. In my memory the station and yard had always been rundown, and someone was taking the initiative to rebuild it.



***Why do you continue being involved?***

I feel that a lot of time and effort has been expended, and I have a vision that I have to see through. Someday I'd like to see this organization handed down to the next generation. I get a good feeling of accomplishment by being able to work together with our other volunteers to reach our goals. Look at what we just did!

***What has been most exciting or satisfying for you ?***

It's hard to answer this. Of course, when we acquire more equipment to enhance our collection, it's exciting, uplifting, and refreshing to see a new piece. There's a feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction in knowing that you've found this piece of equipment and managed to bring it in. I think the most satisfying is seeing the building and yard filled with people, and seeing the families enjoying themselves, learning about what we do here. There's definitely a higher level of energy and excitement on event days when we have a great number of visitors to the Museum. Part of the satisfaction is being able to make a difference and help this organization grow as a Museum.

***What do you find frustrating?***

With all of the satisfaction involved, there is also a very high level of frustration for me. There is a constant challenge of keeping members interested in the growth of the Museum, to keep projects moving to completion, and to make sure that things are still fresh. My frustration is there constantly. One of the big frustrations is that I want our goals to happen immediately, and with most of these there is a very long time element, and continual follow-up needed to move

them forward. What makes me feel better is when I see or hear compliments about what we've done in the short time we've been here.

***What do you see as the biggest challenges facing the DRM?***

Right now I think our biggest challenge is to have the Board of Directors and the membership fully pursue the strategic business plan, to become involved in it, and to see our goals through to completion. We can accomplish these goals, but there must be a higher level of commitment from everyone involved. I believe that the success of this plan is crucial to the Museum's future and growth. Another big challenge for the Museum is incorporating more new members into our volunteer force. With more people active in the Museum, it would make it easier to pursue our goals. We need to reach out to the membership, to fit volunteers' interests and skills to the needs of the Museum's. No matter how successful our events are, we are always looking to improve them.

***How is the Museum working to meet these?***

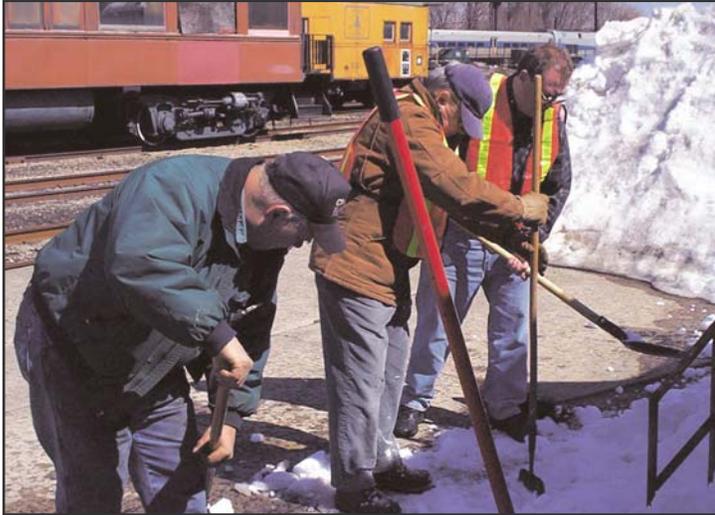
We are reaching out to our membership to support our new goals. As we grow we hope our membership involvement will grow, and that we can integrate our new members into our work force. I have repeatedly said that our members determine the level of success of our Museum. Over the past several years, we have tried to standardize a training program for operators. We now have a safety program, and shortly will have a procedural manual to help train our staff. It is very important to let our volunteers know what to expect from the Museum and vice versa. Also, after each event we review it, discussing how to make it even better next time.



***What's exciting that will happen in the near future?***

We've been expanding our marketing program, and begun looking at new and different events. This season at least two new events will attract visitors with more diversified interests. We have to continually expand our horizons and look at new ways to attract guests. I'm very excited by the Meserve grant, which allows us to pursue interactive exhibits with a real budget. It's always exciting to pursue getting new equipment. We hope to have a new piece of equipment to display in the yard soon. We are growing and reaching a point where we can pursue our really big goals and aspirations.

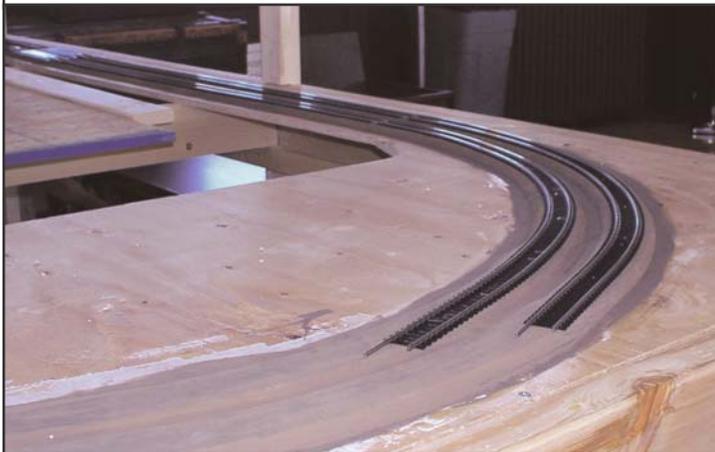
# What's Happening at the DRM



Late in March, Bob Pitcher, Bill Britt, and Bob Broderick clear the snow and ice off the 24 platform.



On Danbury Clean-up Day, Ed Holowinko spends some time removing the sand accumulated in our parking lot.



Work on the HO scale diorama is progressing. Joint compound has been spread over the trackbed, and rails are being added for two tracks.

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Don Konan makes some introductory remarks to a large group of tour planners brought to the DRM by American Heritage Tours guide Peter Heyel. Members Steve Gould and Don then led a tour of the building and railyard.



After the winter, checking on the RS1 diesel locomotive to see what work needs to be done before running it again.



Steve Mayerson, Randy Natale, Bob Pitcher, and Ira Pollack(above), and Ira Pollack with Geoff Knees (below), are shown preparing the semaphore and footings for the addition of the semaphore operator's shed.



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# Strap Rail

by Stan Madyda

Probably the oldest artifact in our collection is a piece of strap rail donated in 1996 by Charles Aldrich from Brookfield. Our piece dates from the 1830's and was used on the Housatonic Railroad.

Strap rail is a piece of iron strap typically 2 ½ inches wide and ¾ inches thick spiked to wooden beams. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad had experimented with fastening the rail onto granite sills but later reverted to the wooden beams. The beams were then placed on cross ties. The Hartford and New Haven Railroad, for instance, used pine timbers on white Chestnut ties. During the period from 1829 to 1850, strap rail was in common use on mainline track. Some branch lines still had strap rail until after the Civil War. When the railroad stopped using strap rail and began converting to "T" rail, farmers would use the beams for barn construction. This is how the piece donated to the DRM was saved.

At the time of early railroad construction in the United States, there were a few mills that could produce the flat iron pieces of rail. Much of the strap rail was imported from England. According to records of the Hartford and New Haven Railroad, a yard of strap rail weighed 16 ½ lbs. Later the railroad began using "T" rail that weighed 57 lbs to the yard. This rail was also imported from England. About this time, mills in the United States began rolling out iron "T" rail making it much more affordable for railroads to convert over to this safer and heavier rail.



The artifact of strap iron rail on display in the Museum building.

Rides on strap rail were uncomfortable and dangerous. The weight of the engine would cause the rail to sink into the wood and the beams and ties would settle into the ground. The vibration and weight of the train would sometimes loosen the strap rail resulting in derailments. If the end of the rail became loose, it could get caught on the underside of the rail car sending it up through the floor and injur-

ing passengers. This was called a "snakehead."

Strap rail gave way to iron "T" rail that was an improvement although the brittleness of iron also caused problems. Later railroads changed to steel rail, which continue in use today.

Sources (all available in the Library):

The Railway and Locomotive Historical Society

Bulletin #61, May 1943.

The National Railway Bulletin (NRHS), Volume 67, #5, 2002

The National Railway Bulletin (NRHS), Volume 68, #6, 2002

"Train Wrecks," by Robert C. Reed, published 1968 by Bonanza Books



## Donations

The Fund Raising Campaign we began in 2003 to raise \$30,000 toward track repair has brought in \$18,493 through the end of March 2005. Although we have not reached our goal, thanks to the generosity of you, our members, we have raised nearly enough to pay off the loan we had to take out in order to finance the track work. Throughout 2004, and starting this April, we have been able to run our Railyard Local every weekend April-November.

Recent donations have been received from: Hector Torres, George Reitweisner, Andrew Neilly, Christopher Simone, James Stevenson, IBM, as a Matching Grant.

Additional donations have been received for some of our various projects from: Warren & Linda Hagenkotter, John Stottle, and Dan Carleton.

We thank the Estate of Marion Fowler for the generous gift of \$5,000 to be used for the restoration of the NYC wooden caboose. There will be two plaques, one each in the station and in the caboose, to acknowledge this gift in her memory. She had a deep love for Union Station, which was the DRM building's name when it was an operating train station for the railroad.

Our Board of Directors sincerely appreciates each and every donation. We could not continue to pursue the Museum's goals, or operate the Museum at its current level without this generous support.

# Lionel LLC Donates Model Locomotive To DRM

By Steve Gould

In 2003, employees of Lionel LLC visited the DRM to photograph and take measurements of B&M Mogul #1455 on display in the rail yard. The DRM also furnished specifications and other information because the company planned to offer an O-gauge model of the engine in a future catalog.



The real 12" to 1' scale Boston&Maine Mogul #1455 steam engine is one of the most popular attractions in the railyard. Visitors love to climb into the cab and ring its bell. Train fans of all ages have their picture taken in front of this unique piece of railroad history.

Steve Gould, Secretary, wrote to Lionel president, William L. Bracy, in October of that year about the visit and the production design drawing of #1455 in the 2003 Lionel catalog. He invited Mr. Bracy to visit the Museum and see the locomotive in person. Also, he suggested that a donation of a model, once it was in production, would make a nice display addition inside the Museum. Mr. Bracy responded and said, "I'm glad you like our version of the Boston and Maine #1455. This engine is not due out until February 2004, but I would be more than happy to send you one then."

In late January, a package arrived from Lionel; it was the O-gauge version of #1455! You can see it on display in one of the glass cases near the front desk. Incidentally, you can also see #1455 in Volume I of Lionel's 2005 catalog. The engine, which costs \$599.99, features Trainmaster Command Control, synchronized exhaust, and directional lighting, just to name a few. Come on down and take a look at this excellent replica of the #1455, and then visit the 12" to 1' model on display in the rail yard!

**Editor's Note:** Prints of the B&M Mogul #1455 in our railyard are for sale at the Museum, as detailed in the Library News on Page 2.

## Paint Schemes on the B & M #1455

By Bob Boothe

Lionel first contacted Gerry Herrmann, as head of our Reference and Research library, back in the fall of 2002 with a request to verify over 18 different critical measurements for them (driving wheelbases, length of smokebox, etc). Gerry passed their request on to me. Taking these measurements was the incentive to crawl all over the 1455, taking photographs, and starting the research process on the engine and its individual component parts.

For example, when the 1455 arrived at our museum, only the front of the smokebox was painted the light colored "graphite gray". Usually the entire smokebox and smokestack are painted the same color (both models and original locomotives). That question started the research project re: the early history of the 1455 and led to my call for "help" in the March 2003 article in the newsletter. Eventually we turned up authoritative black and white photos showing the 1455 in service with the entire firebox and smokestack painted in a lighter shade than the rest of the boiler.

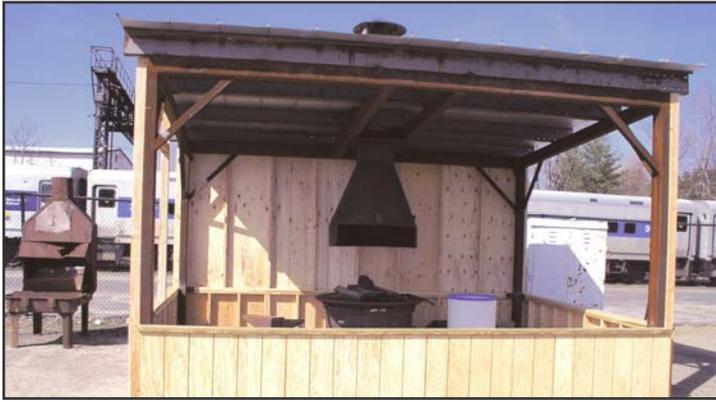
Why the different paint schemes? Since the smokebox was not insulated (as would be the adjacent boiler section), it would get so hot that the usual black paint used on the rest of the engine would "burn off" exposing bare metal. However, a mixture of graphite and linseed oil faired much better, hence the "gray color" and a "two toned" locomotive.

That led us to similarly to paint the rest of the smokebox the same color "gray" as was just the firebox door (as you see 1455 now). I passed our research results and a photo of our "update" on to Lionel, but didn't know what the final paint scheme on the model would be. Happily their model has a similar "two tone" scheme as our 1455. Thus, Lionel's model of the 1455 is indeed an excellent replica.



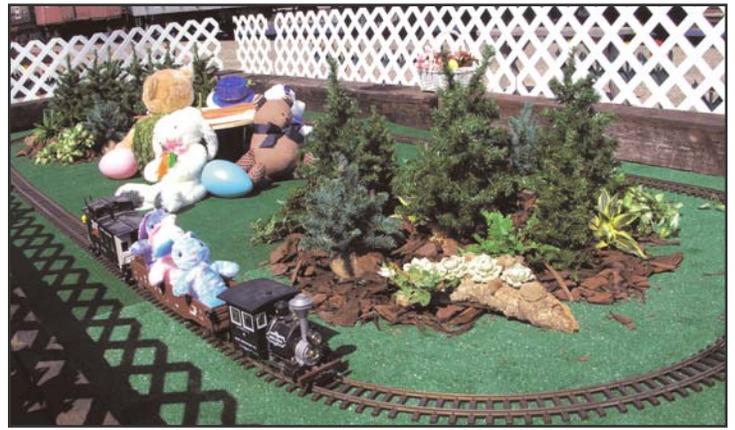
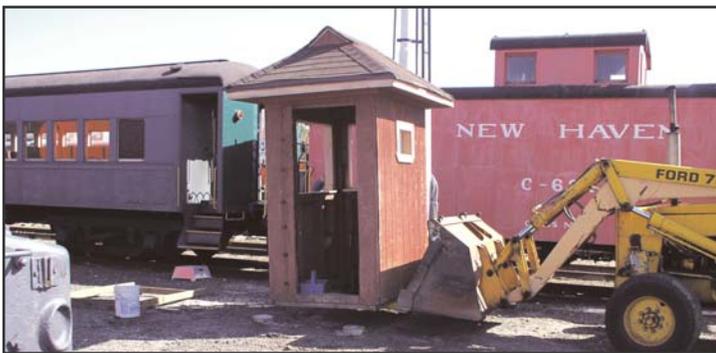
A production-run Lionel model of the Boston&Maine 2-6-0 #1455 steam engine donated by Lionel LLC is in a display case at the Museum.

**Support the New Haven forge.** The forge, originally used at the Cedar Hill New Haven facility to make and repair items for the railroad, was erected in our railyard last fall with a new roof to partially protect it. Work is progressing on enclosing it to protect it from the weather and render it usable year-round. The design will allow blacksmiths to work, yet still give plenty of visibility for demonstrating their skills to the attending visitors. Members Skip Kern, Mike Miciukiewicz, and Glenn Miller have been putting the sheathing-the-forge project on the "fast track" to complete as much as possible before the Hammer-In event. More funds are needed to purchase sheathing and other materials for finishing the job. A donation of \$25 will help us shelter the forge, and put you in possession of a DRM 7-function stainless steel pocket knife for your pocket or keychain. We will have this thank-you gift ready to be picked up at our gift shop. Please make your donation today.



Semaphore Almost Ready, Continued from page 1

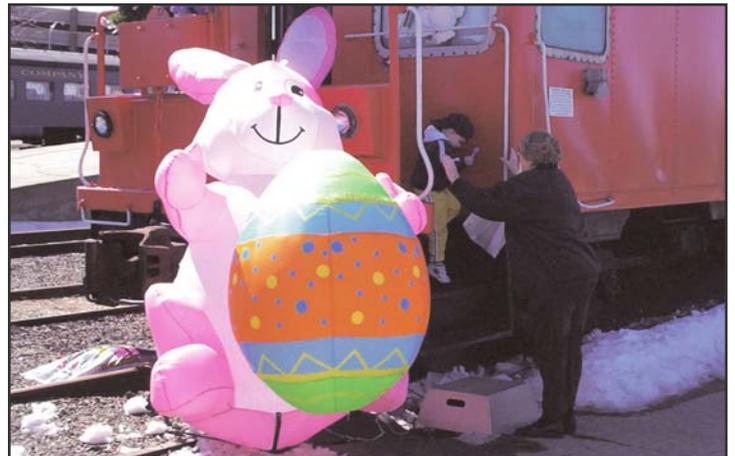
drilled into the footings, and then the shed attached to them. The controls were painstakingly set up inside the shed and attached to the semaphore for operation. This is a great oversimplification. The whole project required precise measurements and planning, as well as strenuous effort. There is carpentry work and painting to be done on the shed, and a bit more to anchor the controls. Electric work for the light to illuminate the signal lights still lies ahead. We can hardly wait! For more pictures, see What's Happening on page 4



mings inside and out. Each young guest received a small gift from the Easter Bunny. The G-gauge model train running within a specially created "bunny garden", was perhaps the most popular attraction of all.



An event like this takes the collaborative effort of numerous volunteers, many of whom have said that seeing such a large group of guests so obviously enjoying their outing at our Museum is what makes their volunteering efforts worthwhile. Thank you all



who participated in making this event such a success! Special thanks to Sue Thomas who coordinated it, and two groups of young volunteers: Boy Scouts from Ed O'Lena's troop, and students from Immaculate High School.

# DANBURY RAILWAY MUSEUM

PO Box 90  
Danbury, CT 06813

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## MUSEUM CALENDAR

May 11 (7:45pm)	Shepaug Railroad - Bill Bader
May 18( 7:45pm)	A Mixed Album - Woody Cohen
May 19 (7:00pm)	Board Meeting (Open to Members)
May 25 (7:45pm)	Steam in the Northeast - Dan Gallo, Jr
June 1 (7:45pm)	Historic Slides - Roger Coleman
June 8 (7:45pm)	Cass: Oh Shay Can You See- Steve Gould
June 15 (7:45pm)	Model Railroad Scenery - Steve Mayerson

Be sure to look for the full color version of this  
newsletter on our website: [www.danbury.org/drm!](http://www.danbury.org/drm!)



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### **Change of Address**

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Via Email to [drmmembers@aol.com](mailto:drmmembers@aol.com)

