

The Railyard Local

Volume 7, Issue 9

-The Monthly Newsletter of the Danbury Railway Museum-

September 2008

Rare Mileage Rail Excursion!

Danbury to Kent, Saturday, November 1st

Our members and guests have been clamoring the past several years for the DRM to run another rail excursion. **HERE IT IS! The last scheduled passenger train along this route from Danbury to Kent was 37 years ago on April 30, 1971.** Take advantage of this exceptional opportunity to travel through scenic and historic Western Connecticut by rail and explore the quaint New England town of Kent. During our journey our guests will be enthralled by the colorful commentary supplied by popular speaker Pete McLachlan. He is a retired engineer New Haven RR engineer who traveled this route for many years, including the last scheduled passenger train to Pittsfield. He will point out sights and relate stories during the trip. Guests will receive informative handouts to add to everyone's knowledge and enjoyment of this special occasion. The excursion will be 30 miles each way, with a stop in Kent, CT, a location abounding with charm. There will



Photo of the former Kent railroad station, which is over 130 years old, and is open to the public as a commercial establishment. Photo is from the web site: [train stations/depots at www.waymarking.com](http://trainstations/depots at www.waymarking.com)

be time enough there for lunch, sightseeing, and browsing at the boutiques and unique shops, including a New Haven baggage car gallery, before heading back south to Danbury. We expect that this experience will stimulate your interest in visiting Western Connecticut again, and in learning more of its history.

**Reservations must be made by
SEPTEMBER 29TH.**

Refer to Page 4 for more details.

In This Issue

- ~ Ten Years Ago - Page 2
- ~ DRM Express Track - Page 3
- ~ Qualification as a Steam Locomotive Fireman - Page 6
- ~ Grant for Turntable - Page 7
- plus . . .
- City Island Monorail, and New Members

2nd Danbury Railway Day

Celebration of RPO car's restoration gets our stamp of approval. On second thought, cancel that! OK!

The centerpiece of our August 9th Danbury Railway Day event was our restored United States Railway Post Office car #6563. The dedication of this showpiece and many of the attractions that day focused on RPO's, their employees, and the U.S. Postal Service. One of the most popular features with rail-



road buffs and philatelists was the availability of a special stamp cancellation.

Ceremonies began with DRM President Ira Pollack relating the chronology of our acquisition and



Continued on Page 5

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!

David and Susan Reitz	Danbury, CT
Leslie Tewes	Ridgefield, CT
Maryann Allen	Weston, CT
Frank Anders	Martinez, CA

City Island Monorail

Tom Casey's program on Wed., Oct 22nd

Biographical information sent by Mr. Casey indicates that he is the co-author of a postcard book called "Bronx Views", and that he has extensively researched the monorail line running from Bartow Station to the City Island Bridge. Come learn the history of "The Flying Lady" and this forgotten rail line, including what remains along this route, which he has walked many times! Our Wednesday night programs are open to the general public free of charge. Join us at 7:30pm for an evening of railroading entertainment! A listing of upcoming programs is on the back of each newsletter and on the Museum's web site.

Pumpkin Patch Trains

Weekends of Oct 11-12, 18-19, and 25-26

The frost is not on the pumpkins yet but we already are preparing for our annual Pumpkin Patch event. Our track repairs will enable the patch to be on the far side of the railyard again. Saturday hours will be from 10-5; Sundays from 12-5. All children coming in costume will receive a free souvenir. The \$8 admission for ages 2 and over (under 2 are free) entitles each child to a free pumpkin, and all ticket holders to a train ride to the pumpkin patch, turntable ride, participation in special children's activities, refreshments, and access to the attractions in the railyard and Museum building. Trains will run hourly beginning at 10:30am on Saturdays and 12:30pm on the Sundays.

Hosting our joyous children's events brings extra big smiles to our volunteers' faces. As with all special events of this magnitude, we will need extra volunteers. If you can assist at any time during the weekends of this event, please contact Sue and Jim

Teer at the Museum (203) 778-8337 or call them at (203) 792-1981.

2

Ten Years Ago

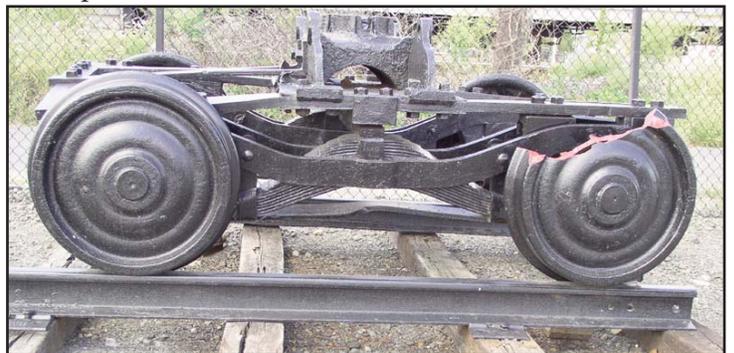
By Stan Madyda

September 1998 was a busy time at the DRM. Members were busy preparing for the 3rd Annual Fall Train Show to be held in October. The show once again included dealers selling everything from model trains to railroadiana. A special excursion from Poughkeepsie to Danbury and smaller excursions were being planned and promoted. Through the work of Museum members more rolling stock would be available to the public for viewing.

Along with the Show, preparations were in the works for the Santa Trains and the Annual Holiday Express excursion to New York City. It was decided that for the Santa Trains, instead of running them to Brewster using Metro-North equipment, they would be run within the DRM Yard using Museum equipment and personnel. The idea was to make the trains more appealing to families and would cost far less to operate than leasing a trainset from Metro-North.

Since the Museum's founding there have been quite a few news stories done on the Museum. Carol Wilson volunteered to organize and preserve them.

As Metro-North was preparing to install a new bridge on their Hudson Line track in Peekskill, NY, they found a pilot truck off a New York Central steam engine buried in the mud. It arrived at the Museum on September 18th.



Mayor Gene Eriquez and his family visited the DRM during the "Day Out with Thomas" event and was very pleased. In a letter to Bill Guider, then Chairman of the Board, he expressed his gratitude to the members for their hard work in making the event one that was a good reflection on the DRM and the City of Danbury.

A reminder was included in the newsletter that Dan Foley was still in need of slides for the Slide Auction scheduled for November 11th.

There were four photos included from a collection recently donated to the Library by Frank Thomson whose father was employed in Danbury as

Continued on Page 7

DRM Express Track

By Ira Pollack, President

Hope all is well with you this month. We are nearing the end of summer, but I will tell you we have had a fairly good season this year.

As usual a lot of different things and events have gone on both in the yard and in the station. We have realized several good happenings at the DRM over this last month, and I am hoping you were able to attend. If not, I will tell you that the Museum celebrated the restoration of the RPO car at our annual Danbury Railway Day and Member's Picnic. There were many dignitaries, including representatives of the U.S. Postal Service and historians, who attended this gala event. Of special note was a gentleman who actually worked in our car! David Wagner of Queens, NY spoke highly of our restoration and relived many of his experiences while employed by the Postal Service.



A commemorative cancellation was issued by the Postal Service that day, and was highly sought after by our guests. The picnic afterward lived up to its usual standards with much food and festivities including our annual "Run the Locomotive" portion of the day. This year we used the RS1 for our motive power.

In other good news, work is continuing rapidly on the CN 0660 party car. Art Slothower has been painting the sides of the car in the original paint scheme, meticulously including the tedious pin striping which separates the different colors. We have also decided to reletter the car in its proper CN lettering. I am very excited by seeing this project move along, and somewhat look forward to doing the lettering to finish this unique piece for the Museum. Art has done extensive research for the paint scheme, and has even provided the lettering fonts and stencils for the project. Once finished, the DRM will have yet one more showpiece to exhibit and actually use for our varied events.



The Museum still has many projects that must be finished before the seasons really change for the worse. We are in process of rebuilding the fan assembly for the SW8. Welding new brackets for the pedestal base for the fan is in the works now, and is almost done. What remains then is reassembly of the other components and thorough testing of the unit. I was hoping also to build a shed to shelter some of our yard equipment, such as our inflatable, the barbeque grills, lawn mower, snowblower, and such. To date we basically have the materials, but need volunteers and time to do this. I was also looking at rebuilding one of the flat cars into an open-air riding tour car for our Railyard Local during the summer months, but once again, have the material, but no volunteers or time to do it. There is never a shortage of projects to do at the DRM!

I will mention in closing that we have two important events coming up. First our annual Pumpkin Patch event will be here before you know it. This has proven to be successful for the Museum, with many guests attending. This year we will be going back to the original spot for the pumpkins at the end of Track 42 on the lawn area. This is more of a destination point for the Railyard Local since guests will actually be going somewhere to access the pumpkin patch. This was made possible by all the trackwork that was done this past spring.

Possibly more important though, is our Fan Trip up to Kent, CT on November 1st. I have been asked over the years as to when the Museum will do this kind of excursion again, and guess what, here it is! Ticket sales have been slow at best with only 52 tickets sold to date. We need to fill a train with 300 people if this event is to happen at all. Please make your reservations now to let us know if we can sell this event, cancel it, or if we will need to attach more cars on to the consist. The tickets are \$50 a person, but please make your reservations before Sept 29th so I will know what to do with the event, and inform Metro-North.

Finally I will tell you again, as I always do, there is a lot going on at the Museum, and your help is always appreciated in whatever form you can give to it. I also always look forward to meeting you and talking about your interests and the Museum's future. See you next month.

Fall Foliage Rail Excursion

Join us on Saturday, **November 1, 2008**

Rare Mileage;

37 years since last scheduled passenger service

Don't miss this opportunity!

Departing from Danbury Railway Museum
at 10am for Kent, CT, 30 miles away
Return at approximately 4:30pm

Informative handouts for participants

Our scenic journey will be accompanied by a **running commentary** by the immensely knowledgeable and entertaining speaker, retired New Haven RR engineer **Peter McLachlan**. Pete will point out sights along the route, such as Boardman's Bridge, the Merwinsville Hotel, and Hatch Pond, site of a horrific camp train wreck in August 1941, and relate colorful tales and history

Stop in the charming town of Kent for lunch

12 restaurants and cafes with food to suit everyone's taste

Time to browse - 36 shops and boutiques
art galleries and antiques shops

\$ 50 per person - Limited seating

Reserve by September 29th

On-line at www.danburyrail.org,

call the Museum at (203) 778-8337 Tue - Sun noon - 4:30pm,

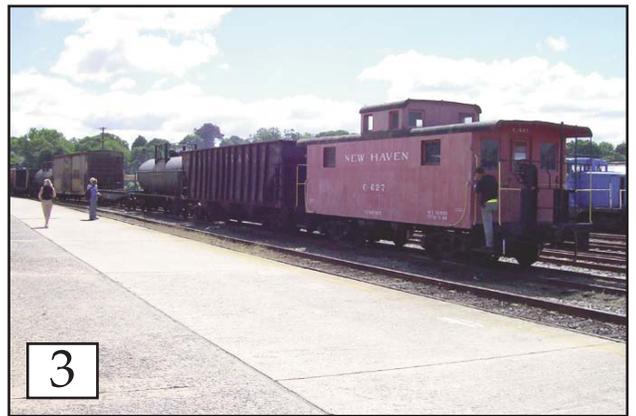
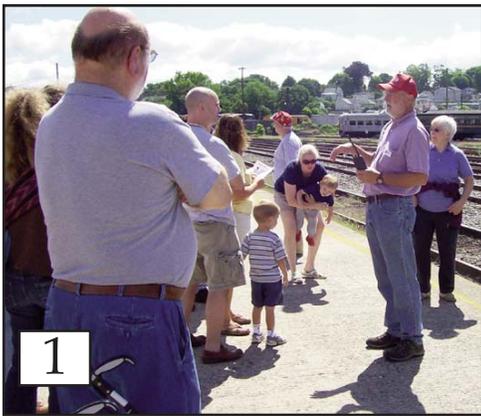
or in person at Danbury Railway Museum, 120 White St, Danbury, CT

2nd Danbury Railway Day, *Continued from Page 1*

restoration of this RPO car. Bill Britt, Project Leader, and Art Slothower, his primary assistant, were recognized for their work and dedication to the restoration. Bill Nicholson, Alan Kellogg, the Maloney family, Patrick McKnight of Steamtown, Jay Hanlon of the Housatonic RR, and others also were acknowledged. Dr. Frank Scheer, curator of the Railway Mail Service Library in Boyce, VA, traveled here for this occasion to give our assembled guests a history of Railway Mail Clerks and to interview retired RPO Mail Clerks. David Wagner, who was a Railway Mail Clerk from 1947-1979, including service on the #6563, came with his wife Selma, and another retired RPO Mail Clerk, Joe Gomez, who traveled the Danbury to Pittsfield line, made the effort to attend and reminisce about their days working on these railroad cars. Mike McLachlan, Administrative Assistant to the Mayor of Danbury, spoke, as did DRM Secretary, Steve Gould, who reminded everyone about the many other attractions on this special day. Danbury postal personnel, Joe Viola and Mike Buzzio, participated with the special stamp cancellations. The real star of the day, PRR Railway Post Office car #6563, was open for tours.

Another popular highlight of the event was a coupling/uncoupling demonstration as a freight train consist was created, then disassembled. We are encouraged by our guests' response to do this again. Children had a great time bouncing within the inflatable locomotive, coloring and receiving temporary tattoos. Volunteers at our forge mended tools and created parts. G-scale trains running on our outdoor layout, and hit-and-miss engines entertained visitors.

At the end of a successful event, members gathered on the 18 Platform for our Annual Members Picnic to relax while enjoying delicious food, great company, and a chance to operate a locomotive under supervision. We appreciate the interest, participation, and assistance of everyone who contributed to this special day.



- 1) Don Konen describes the action during the coupling/uncoupling demos
- 2) Connecting the air brake hoses
- 3) The completed consist
- 4) Dr. Frank Scheer relating the history of Railway Mail Clerks
- 5) Photo by Steve Gould of the Railway Mail Service Museum in Boyce, VA, which once was the Norfolk & Western station
- 6) Dr. Scheer interviewing David Wagner, retired Railway Mail Clerk

Qualification as a Steam Locomotive Fireman

By Chris Locke

(A continuation of his article from the August issue)

The training process continued. The first things I learned about the locomotive were inspection, oiling (later greasing for the older Alco's) and the names of the parts. Dave Conrad was a wonderful boss. He gave me literature to read that was not only effective at teaching me the rubrics of my job, but they were old as well. The Locomotive Catechism, Student Firing Guide, Number 6ET brake system, so many books!

The first official job was to be trained as a Brakeman. This required a rudimentary knowledge of the operation of the brakes, how to inspect them, and how to repair and test them. My first chance to use these huge tools was to replace a brake hose on a passenger car with a 36" pipe wrench. And the abbreviations. COTS, VRR, 6ET, why were tanks were drilled, how to measure brake action travel, and then the exam. There was going to be a test? Nobody mentioned a test! Yep, the brake exam. Required before you could be come qualified as a brakeman. Once qualified as a brakeman, the real work started...

Student Fireman, the name sounded magnificent. What it meant was more studying, learning. Bill Wolfe was my teacher. I had to learn the parts of the locomotive, how it worked, what every noise was. I had to learn the ICC Defect Chart, what to inspect, how often. What to oil, what oil to use when oiling, how to hammer test, the list went on and on. The week of one-on-one teaching flew by, with not much memorable happening. What I do remember is the 2nd run of one day, Bill handed me the coal scoop and said "Here you go." I said "Where am I going?" He climbed down out of the cab and said "Nowhere, I have work to do. You know what you're doing." Oh man, panic set in. I had studied, I had practiced, but now this thing was under my watch... What to do?

The very last thing Bill taught me before he left was what to do in the event of a boiler leak. Boilers are amazing things. They take the heat from a source of fuel, and turn water into steam, lots and lots of steam. But, funny things happen to boiling water inside a closed vessel. As the temperature goes up, the water boils, but, since the boiler is closed, the pressure goes up. As the pressure goes up, the boiling point also goes up. We would keep the boiler at about 200 pounds per square inch. Well, at 200 psi, the boiling point of water is about 380 degrees F. This is where the danger comes in. One of the fireman's most important

jobs is to make sure there is always enough water in the boiler. If it gets too low, parts of the steel around the firebox can melt,

particularly the top piece, the crown sheet. It's just like boiling water in a paper cup. Hold a lighter under a paper cup with water in it, and the water will boil, the cup will not burn, the water takes the heat away from the paper so fast, the paper doesn't heat up. Well, if the water in the boiler exposes the crown sheet, it can melt. There are little lead plugs in that sheet, so when the water gets too low, one plug will melt, right in front of the door, and steam will hiss out, to let you know you're in trouble. If the boiler suddenly leaks, be it a crack, hole in the crown sheet, whatever, the pressure drops. If the pressure drops, the boiling point does also. So, if the pressure drops really fast, the water in the boiler doesn't just boil, it instantly turns to steam, it flashes. 1 gallon of water is over 1000 gallons of steam at atmospheric pressure. The boiler held over 1000 gallons of water, that if instantly turned to steam, would be 1,000,000 gallons of steam. Ever see a picture of a boiler explosion? Ever wonder why the boiler was flat and no longer round? It's a bomb, plain and simple. The boiler would explode with such force as to send things flying over a mile away. What to do? Make the fire and boiler as cold as possible as quickly as possible. I was ready!

So, with this weighing heavy on my mind, Dave looked at me and said "Ready?" I didn't have a choice. HOOT HOOOOOOT!!!!!! He yanked twice on the whistle cord, and we were off.



I remember every scoop I shoveled in that trip, I was scared to death. I remember filling that darn boiler to the brim with water. I remember the safety valve lifting constantly, I remember making smoke (smoke is the sign of a bad fireman, and don't let anybody tell you differently) I remember the trip being absolutely horrible. But, I did it by myself. I made

Continued on Page 7



Qualification as a Steam Locomotive Fireman,

Continued from Page 6

many mistakes, I learned a lot from Dave. Good judgement comes from experience. Experience comes from bad judgement...

Shortly thereafter, I took my fireman's exam. I passed. I got a 98, and still have the exam. I also remember joining the only "union" I ever joined: The ABLEF, the American Brotherhood of Locomotive Enginemen and Firemen.

Watch for the conclusion of Chris' article in the October issue of *The Railyard Local*.

Grant for Turntable

Amherst Railway Society aids DRM

Once again this organization has made a generous grant to our Museum. This one is for \$3000, to be used exclusively for the repair and restoration of our historic turntable, and we are very grateful to Amherst for this financial assistance.

Amherst Railway Society hosts the very extensive and tremendously popular Railroad Hobby Show each year at Eastern States Exposition ("Big E") in West Springfield, MA. The 2009 show will be on January 24th from 9-5 and on the 26th from 10-5pm. Some of the proceeds from the show are used to fund grants such as the one awarded to the DRM.

We also appreciate the effort made by members of the DRM Grants Committee to put together and



submit applications for grants such as this. Without that, we certainly would not receive these funds.

Ten Years Ago, Continued from Page 2

yardmaster, chief clerk and ticket agent from 1909 to 1960. The subjects of the photos were of Mr. Thompson receiving his 40-year pin from the New Haven, the 1935 visit by the Comet in Danbury as it toured the New Haven System, the steam locomotive Daniel Nason on a flat car enroute to the Danbury Fair and an original electric motor of the Ansonia, Derby and Birmingham, also on its way to the Fair.

2nd Danbury Railway Day, Continued from Page 5



Top left, Art Slothower discusses the RPO restoration with Danbury's Deputy Mayor Mike McLachlan; Top right, an original mail bag from an RPO; Above, visiting retired Railway Mail Clerks, wearing caps, share experiences from their railway days as other listen to their tales; David Wagner is to the left of Joe Gomez; Bottom, DRM Secretary Steve Gould points out special attractions of the event.



PO Box 90, DANBURY, CT 06813

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
DANBURY, CT
PERMIT NO. 569

MUSEUM CALENDAR

- Sept 24(7:30pm) Slides; Executive Trains - Ron Smith
- Sept 29 **RESERVATIONS DUE FOR**
 FALL FOLIAGE RAIL EXCURSION
- Oct 1(7:30pm) Slides; D&RGW 3-ft gauge - Carl Liba
- Oct 8(7:30pm) Videos; Steve Gould
- Oct 15(7:30pm) Slides; His Collection - Bob Gambling
- Oct 16(7:00pm) Board Meeting - Open to Members
- Oct 22(7:30pm) City Island Monorail - Tom Casey

Museum hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10-5pm; Sunday 12-5pm
See the newsletter in color at www.danbury.org/drm!



Contact Information

Please contact us with submissions:
 Mail: The Danbury Railway Museum
 Attention: Newsletter
 PO Box 90, Danbury, CT 06813
 Phone: 203.778.8337
 Fax: 203.778.1836
 Email: newsletter@danburyrail.org
 Editor: Carolyn Taylor
 Printing by: Infinity Printing of Danbury

Change of Address

If you move, please send your change of address to:
 Danbury Railway Museum,
 Attention: Membership Chairman
 PO Box 90, Danbury, CT 06813
 Via Email to drmmembers@aol.com

