

# The Railyard Local

Volume 6, Issue 6

-The Monthly Newsletter of the Danbury Railway Museum-

June 2007

## Locomotive Back on Its Feet

### FA-1 New Haven 0428 has trucks again

The long awaited pick of the DRM's 1947 vintage locomotive finally took place on May 13<sup>th</sup>. We are grateful to James Modzelewski of Modzelewski Towing on Federal Road in Danbury for successful completion of this operation by supplying the equipment and the expertise of his employees Layne, Nicholas, and Edgar. It also came about through the efforts of DRM Vice-President Wade Roesse. Justin Chapin, J.R. Mitchell, Randy Natale, Bob Pitcher and DRM President Ira Pollack also assisted. After six years, the FA once again rests on a set of trucks!



Top, back on trucks in our rail-yard after the pick on May 13<sup>th</sup>. Below, a photo by Bob Westerfield of the FA-1 0428 just after its arrival at the DRM on Nov. 5, 1999. It was purchased from a scrapper in New Jersey.



When the DRM was acquiring the RS-11 from Martin Marietta Co. in June 2001, a different usable set of trucks was needed in order for it to be brought by rail from Georgia. The 0428's trucks were removed, sent down to Georgia, and arrived back in Danbury under the RS-11, where they still are today. The trucks rolled under the FA-1, with the assist of J.R. Mitchell's pickup pulling a cable attached to them, are ones we had available here. Our problem of how to get the trucks under the locomotive has finally been solved!

*Continued on Page 4*

## In This Issue

~Plans for Steam Locomotive - page 2

~Reminiscing about FA-1's - page 5

~On the Right Track (#34) - page 6

plus . . .

DRM Express Track and RPO News & Notes

## Meserve Memorial Fund Grant

### DRM once again a recipient

On April 26<sup>th</sup> a ceremony at the Museum marked the awarding of a grant for educational purposes to the Danbury Railway Museum from this generous foundation. The Meserve Memorial Fund once again has enabled the Museum to further its mission of educating the public about the history and role of railroading in our country. The grant is being used to replace and upgrade our computers, which are a very necessary for our functioning as a Museum. Gary Hawley presented the check on behalf of the fund. Many thanks to Steve Gould and Mike Salata of the DRM Grants Committee for pursuing this grant.



From l. to r., DRM Secretary Steve Gould, Mike Salata, Gary Hawley of the Meserve Memorial Fund, President Ira Pollack, and Treasurer Patty Osmer.

## Little Engine That Could Event

**Mark the dates!** Our feature event of the year will be on the weekends of **June 23 & 24, and June 30 & July 1**. We will need at least 52 volunteers for each day to help in various capacities. Please contact Sue Thomas at the Museum (203)778-8337 if you can help. Flyers are available at the Museum to advertise this important event. Complete ticket info on our website.

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## 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!

Jonathan Koza	Great Neck, NY
Jackson Carbone	West Hartford, CT
Bruce & Sandy Shewbrooks	Waterford, CT
Dan DeSimone	Wilton, CT
Ian Grauel	Norwalk, CT
Robert & Dorothy Manganiello	New Rochelle, NY
Candice Russell	New Fairfield, CT
Miriam Bakker	Westport, CT
The Gualy Family	Wilton, CT
Allen S. & Conner Matte	New Milford, CT
Tricia Gantert	New Fairfield, CT

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## Ten Years Ago

By Stan Madyda

The June 1997 issue of *Danbury Railway News* did not contain many articles relating to the Museum.

Over two pages out of four were dedicated to the organizational charts of the Museum. One chart showed how the management of the DRM was set up with the Board, Elected Officers and various key groups and functions within the Museum. Two other charts showed the positions of Yard Manager and Chief Mechanical Officer, with the people responsible for various projects and tasks in each group.

A new column written by Mickey Silberbauer, Station Volunteer Coordinator, was introduced with the scope to be issues and opportunities about the volunteer program. There would also be a feature on individual members actively involved in the DRM.

Member Tony White reported to the Board that he had many discussions with members and found that there was insufficient information about the Museum being relayed to the members. As a way to improve communication between the Board and the members, the Board decided that each Wednesday following a board meeting, the minutes of the meeting would be read at the Members Meeting followed by an open discussion.

It was also announced that the Library would have its opening on Wednesday September 24th. Regular hours were announced as Wednesdays 7-9 PM and by appointment whenever a committee member could be available.

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## Plans for Steam Locomotive

### #1455 Boston & Maine 2-6-0 Mogul

By Carolyn Taylor, Project Leader

There are BIG plans for the current season for the DRM's steam locomotive. Yes, it is an active project again. These plans involve improving and stabilizing its structural and mechanical condition, doing cosmetic restoration, and enhancements.



We are in the process of having a new metal staircase fabricated for this historic artifact. It will allow easier access to the locomotive, and be more congruous with it in appearance.

Another member is going to fabricate an apron plate to cover the junction between the cab and tender.

We plan to powerwash the locomotive at a location further down the yard. Cosmetic restoration will be done after the powerwashing has been completed to avoid duplicating those restoration efforts.

Since the tender has sagged somewhat, it probably will need to be jacked up to have its front end aligned better with the cab.

There are plans to do necessary lubrication.

The main brake reservoirs need replacing.

We plan to reinstall the main rods.

In order to move the #1455 down to the maintenance area of the railyard, the #34 track on which it now rests first needs to be refurbished. Therefore the major effort to work on Track 34 which will benefit the Museum as a whole, also will help with the steam locomotive project. The emphasis has been on getting the track work completed. Our mechanical staff has needed to focus on readying our motive power for *The Little Engine That Could* event. The rest will follow.

**This project is in need of funds.** There is some money available, but little has been added in recent times. Now that the project is active again, these funds will be used up, and I am very concerned about the future for this irreplaceable jewel in our collection. It will be 100 years old this year; on August 11<sup>th</sup> we will have a ceremony marking the occasion. Please send a donation in any amount you can spare, indicating it is specifically for the #1455 Boston & Maine locomotive. Funds may be addressed to the Danbury Railway Museum, 120 White Street, Danbury, CT 06810.

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# DRM Express Track

By Ira Pollack, President

This month I would like to report on some of our progress with various projects in the yard.

## Trackwork -

We have made tremendous progress on Track 34 restoration over the last six Saturdays. Work crews have replaced approximately 15 ties through the curve, including replacement of single flanged tie plates with doubles where needed, as well as regauging and widening that area. The regrading and recontouring of the surrounding roadbed continues to help with drainage of the areas adjacent to Track 34. About



40 yards of stone and cinders have been removed from this area for eventual future reuse. Approximately 500

hours have been expended by our volunteer crews to date. I must also comment on the level of cooperation and attitude of our volunteers on this project. They have worked together as a team and are to be highly commended for their grand efforts. What remain now are stone backfilling, possibly replacing one or two more ties, then final tamping and compaction of about 200 ft. of the refurbished track. I will also add that member Dan Carleton has purchased two pneumatic

spikers which have added to the project's ease and completion. Dan has also recommended purchasing the tamping machine in Hatfield, MA that I had talked of in the



past. We have offered scrap value for this machine to its owner, and I too am very supportive of acquiring it for the Museum's needs. We will be making the accommodations to move it to Danbury in the near future. We are in dire need of this kind of machine to

aid us in track work.

## FA-1 0428 -

As you may well know now, the locomotive was seated on the trucks this last Sunday, May 13. I would like to thank Wade Roese for heading up this long overdue project, and seeing it through. After many false starts on this project over the years by the Museum, Modzelewski Towing made short work of lowering the precariously perched engine on to its wheel sets with his crane service. Mr. Modzewleski, who has a strong sense of community spirit and willingness to share his expertise, has helped us achieve a significant financial savings on this expensive project. I am very grateful and relieved at closing this chapter on the project. The Mechanical Department has no immediate plans for restoration of the locomotive at this time since their schedule is already full with many needed projects.

We have been using our wheeled equipment vigorously this season for all of the construction going on in the yard. Many thanks to Bob Andrews and J.R. Mitchell for keeping the backhoe and low-boy dump truck running through it all. These are vital pieces of equipment for the Museum, for without them we would not be able to proceed on any of the lifting or digging jobs that we have.



Bob Andrews made several trips over to the Museum to get our backhoe running again. This trusty machine is a necessity around our railyard, and we were severely handicapped the week it was out of commission.

As always there is much ahead of us, but we are making progress. Hopefully in the next several weeks the work on Track 34 will be completed and we will begin reconstruction of the turntable lead switch. This, too, will be a large project but I am very confident in the efforts of our volunteers. As I have said before, we have pulled together and are working as a team.

Looking ahead to the near future, the Museum will be sponsoring "The Little Engine That Could" event. Please come forward and sign up to volunteer for this event. The Little Engine is our big event for the year, and we need your help. I look forward to seeing you at the Museum, of course to volunteer, but you are always welcome to come over to talk or just visit and see what's going on.

# Locomotive Back on Its Feet

*Continued from Page 1*



Layne, Jim, Nicholas, and Edgar of Modzelewski Towing did the FA pick.



# Reminiscing about FA-1's

As related by Peter McLachlan

There were 30 diesels of FA-1 . The numbers went from 0400 to 0429, and people would ask how come the highest number was 0429 when we had 30. That was because the numbering scheme was unusual to start with 00, which is how the New Haven numbered locomotives.



Pete McLachlan(r)dressed the engineer's part at the Easter Bunny Trains event as he chatted with conductor John O'Hern. Pete educates and entertains with colorful stories of his railroading experiences.

In the cabs they had three seats across facing the front. The seat on the left was the head brakeman's seat, one in the middle was the fireman's seat, and the seat on the right was the engineer's. I was often offered to sit on the left window seat because the brakeman would like to put his foot up on the dash.

When I was a fireman and went to check the engines, I would wear earplugs because the noise was so loud, and we had to do this about every half hour.

When I was promoted to engineer on April 4, 1965, I already had many hours under me running the FA's as a fireman courtesy of engineers.

To run them Maybrook to Cedar Hill was intriguing because they had no dynamic brakes and no 26L brake. Any brake system with 25L did not have a brake pressure maintaining setup, which means if I made a brake application on a FA-1, the brakes could leak on more because of train line leak. The brakes didn't keep a steady pressure, so braking was tricky. Dynamic brake would use the electrical traction of the locomotive in reverse to help hold back your train. How I got over this is that I would make my brake reduction, reach down and turn the main feed valve for the train line pressure back a turn or two, and that would cut back train line pressure to stay at what I reduced it to even when I released the brake handle.

They were a very rugged hard-working locomotive. We could get down to 10mph on an uphill

grade for over an hour and they would just pull.

We were on them from 1959 up until 1970, and ran with the 0428 in the consist about thirty times, always on the Maybrook, even though the FA-1's ran over the whole New Haven system.

Penn Central sold the 0428 to Long Island RR as a cab car, and it was renumbered 617.



"A rare sight with FA's on Danbury, CT service track-0409"; photo by Peter McLachlan on May 16, 1959.

The "F" in FA stands for "freight unit". The A unit has a cab. The B unit does not have a cab, is a booster unit, with diesels and the traction motor, but no control cab. It would be called an FB.

## Slides on the New Haven RR

Rick Abramson on Saturday night June 16

Train fans, and those interested in the New Haven Railroad in particular, will want to attend this special program at the Museum beginning at 7:45pm. This program will feature choice slides from his extensive personal collection. It will be open to the public and free of charge.

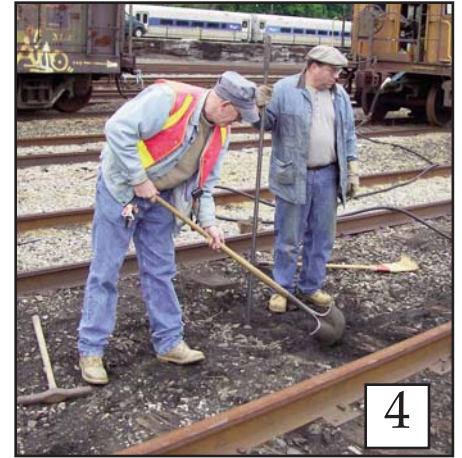


Currently Rick is a regular engineer working on the Southern Division of the Housatonic Railroad, between the New Milford and Danbury areas. The Housatonic Railroad has trackage adjacent to our Museum. Formerly he worked for the New Haven, Penn Central, Amtrak, Connecticut Central and New York Cross Harbor Railroads.

An active member of the New Haven Railroad Historical and Technical Association, he chairs the Technical Committee, which answers questions from New Haven Railroad fans, and helps model train companies with their models' accuracy.

# On the Right Track (#34)

The crew has varied in personnel, but we have had quite a few people working on restoration of Track 34. At this point we have replaced all of the ties in this location that we are going to do. Some still need to be spiked with double-flanged tie plates, additional ballast will be added, and all restored areas must be tamped. The area around the track has been significantly regraded, and that is almost finished. The excess material has been used as the underlayer of fill for our enhanced outdoor G-gauge layout.



- 1) Teamwork: one lifts up the tie while the other spikes
- 2) Digging out a rotten tie
- 3) Predrilling holes for the spikes
- 4) Clearing soil away from the ties
- 5) Moving in the new tie
- 6) Using the backhoe to bring the track into gauge so that it can be spiked to hold it in gauge
- 7) Most ties needing replacement were dug around, then pulled out with the backhoe using a chain attached to the tie and backhoe bucket
- 8) Two people lift up the rail while the third person uses a spike maul to position the tie plate under the rail
- 9) Spiking the tie plate and rail into position
- 10) Two ways of spiking: on the left using a pneumatic spiker, in the middle using a spike maul

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## RPO News & Notes

By Bill Britt, Project Manager

As of this writing we have been moving right along with the project. Art Slothower has completed painting the insides of the paper boxes and has about half of the ceiling completed. The 880 small mail sorting slots have also been painted; several fixture globes have been installed, and they look pretty good. Bob Pitcher has been working on the "Hook" (mail retrieval arm) and that looks great. We estimate that from a labor point of view, we are about 80% complete.

THE ABOVE IS THE GOOD NEWS; NOW COMES THE BAD. As of May 3<sup>rd</sup> we were out of money; as a matter of fact we were a few dollars in the red. The small difference has been made up, so if we are forced to put the project on hold or shut it down completely it will not cost the Museum any money. When we have used the remaining one gallon of white primer, two gallons of white ceiling paint, as well as some wood stain, we will have to make the decision to put the project on hold or cut it off completely. Needless to say this is not a decision we want to make since we can see some "light at the end of the tunnel".

To date all funds have been from individual donations of Museum members and friends, plus two small grants from The Amherst Railway Society and the Meserve Fund. The Museum's available funds are needed for other worthy purposes.

We want to thank again all who have helped us in the past; your support has been great! If there is anyone who wants to help now, please send your contribution to Railway Post Office, % Danbury Railway Museum, 120 White Street, Danbury, CT 06810. All donations are tax deductible. Thanks again.

**Editors Note:** Since the writing of this article on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, some donations came in which allowed work to progress, however the project now is once again almost out of funds as described above.



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## Membership Open Forum

The DRM will hold its second Membership Open Forum on June 20<sup>th</sup>, giving our membership an opportunity to ask the Board of Directors questions and express their opinions and suggestions concerning the operation and direction of the Museum. Light refreshments will be provided.

The members of the Board attended the first Open Forum on April 18<sup>th</sup>, and appreciated the interest and comments of the members who also made the effort to attend. The Board considered the meeting's interaction worthwhile, and hopes that some members who were unable to attend the previous one will be able to join us for this one.

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## DRM Joins Danbury Cleanup

The areas along White Street near the Museum and Museum parking lot looked markedly improved in appearance as a result of several DRM members' efforts on April 21<sup>st</sup>. They generated an amazingly big pile of filled trash bags for the City to pick up. In addition, sand and dirt were shoveled and swept off the sidewalks and parking lot. After spending the morning being part of the Museum's participation in Danbury's Cleanup Day, these members continued their day by helping the Museum in other ways.

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## Gary Gurske Wed. July 18<sup>th</sup>

The DRM once again will welcome Gary as he draws from his video library and experiences to present a special Wednesday night program. This one will feature a video of Nevada Northern.

Gary hired out on the Penn Central in July 1970, and set up as a conductor in 1972.. He hired on the Providence & Worcester RR in 1973, and worked as a trainman and engineer on that railroad. Thereafter he went back to Conrail on the Boston & Albany, resigning in 1992. For a lot of his career he shot videos, which are now being produced by A & R Productions in Connecticut. He filmed from work locations and trips, including caboose trips. His own private caboose, the *Cold Harbor*, is based in Tilton, NH along with 22 private cabooses. This caboose train is operated by The Hobo & Winnepesaukee Scenic Railroad.

We welcome you to join us Wednesday evenings at 7:30pm for DRM President Ira Pollack's weekly update on DRM activities, followed immediately by very interesting programs. Afterward there usually is some time to talk personally with the presenter. Please consult the Museum Calendar on the back page of each newsletter for upcoming programs.



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## MUSEUM CALENDAR

- June 16(7:45pm) **Special Saturday Night Event:** Slides  
New Haven RR - Rick Abramson
- June 20(7:30pm) Membership Open Forum w/Ira  
Pollack and DRM Board Members
- June 21(7:00pm) Board Meeting (Open to Members)
- June 27(7:30pm) NYC Hudsons & Trains - Carl Liba
- July 11(7:30pm) Clinchfield '76, Freedom Train - Pete  
McLachlan
- July 18(7:30pm) Video;Nevada Northern-Gary Gurske

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

Editor: Carolyn Taylor

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### **Change of Address**

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Danbury Railway Museum,  
Attention: Membership Chairman  
PO Box 90, Danbury, CT 06813  
Via Email to [drmmembers@aol.com](mailto:drmmembers@aol.com)

