

The Railyard Local

Celebrating 20 Years!

Volume 13, Issue 5

The Newsletter of the Danbury Railway Museum 1994 - 2014

August - September 2014

Danbury Railway Museum 20th Anniversary Dinner

By Sue Teer; Photos by Jose' Alves

On the evening of July 18th, 60 of our members and guests celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Museum with an enjoyable evening at Armando's restaurant in Danbury. After a delicious Italian buffet dinner (and doorprizes!), Wade Roese welcomed the group and Stan Madyda gave a short talk about the formation of the Museum and our first two years operating out of a storefront on Ives Street. The Museum managed to run Holiday Express excursions to New York City in 1994, which were well attended and got us off to a great beginning. Some of the long-time members attending the dinner were Dan and Faith Erickson who came from Florida, Nancy Sniffin (restorer of the #32 Budd car) and Vic Westman, whose wonderful paintings are currently on exhibit in the station. (*Editor's note: A special thanks goes out to Sue Teer and Patty Osmer for organizing this celebration dinner.*)



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Founding of the Danbury Railway Museum

By Stan Madyda

This is a series of articles written back in 2009 for our 15th anniversary on how the Danbury Railway Museum came into being.

In the 1980s, the Railroad Museum of New England was searching for a larger and permanent home for its growing collection. Danbury became a prime location with its station, freight house and yard. In 1987 the RMNE approached the City of Danbury with the idea of moving its collection. After receiving a less than enthusiastic response from the city, state and Conrail, they decided to look elsewhere. Common Council members Michael Fazio and Gene Eriquez were appointed to a committee to study the museum idea. Mr. Fazio kept a dialogue going with the RMNE.

Fast-forward to 1991. Gene Eriquez was now the mayor and Michael Fazio was still on the Common Council. The RMNE again approached the city with a plan to create the Danbury Railroad Heritage Park. It would be a multi-million dollar venture that would include moving the RMNE collection, the Guilford signal tower and a flag stop station from Quinnipiac to Danbury. The existing Union Station and freight house would be utilized and new construction would consist of a roundhouse and shops, storage and display buildings and a separate building for the library. The RMNE would also explore operating a tourist train along the Maybrook Line to Brewster. It was hoped that funding would come from corporate sponsorship and the city. The 1991 proposal estimated attendance would be 100,000 visitors a year.

Over the next two years, negotiations took place with the RMNE, Connecticut Department of Transportation and the city to make the Danbury Railroad Heritage Park a reality. In 1992 the state transferred ownership of Union Station to the city and plans were made to restore it. The

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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!

Greg Lindsey	Manchester, CT
Charles Hillery	Carmel, NY
Gustavo Ribeiro	Danbury, CT
Michael Caplan	South Salem, NY
Barry Sanel	Carmel, NY
Bradley Kaplan	New Canaan, CT
Emily S. Gray	Yorktown Heights, NY
Dwyer Q. Wedvick	New Milford, CT
Anne Lohan	Brookfield, CT
Jack Gustaitis	Sandy Hook, CT
Guild Fetridge	Patterson, NY
William Arm	Carmel, NY
Alex E. Lopez	Sandy Hook, CT
Rebecca Antista	Ridgefield, CT
Martin Ellis	Brooklyn, NY
Sae Hahm	Ridgefield, CT
Edgar Courtemanch	Columbia, MD

Founding of the Danbury Railway

Museum, Continued from Page 1

RMNE ran an excursion in May and held a two-day railroad event in October to publicize their intentions. However, during a meeting held in March 1993, it was learned that the RMNE was considering an alternate site but still had hopes things would work out in Danbury. The RMNE stated that it would need \$5,688,650 to fund their plans if they were to move to Danbury. Other considerations were also presented. Later in the year, alternative ideas were being considered to bring a museum to Danbury with the possibility of RMNE equipment on display.

On February 20, 1994, the Danbury News Times reported that Mayor Eriquez felt the chance of the RMNE moving to Danbury was "highly unlikely." Within days, a new proposal put forward by L. Peter Cornwall, John Flower and other members of the WestConn Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society was on the mayor's desk.

Next Installment: The DRM takes shape.

Sources: Material from the John Flower Collection, the Charlie Bardo Collection and the Danbury News Times 9/29/91 and 2/20/94.

Upcoming Events at the DRM

September 1st - Labor Day

The Museum will be open from 12 to 4pm with train rides. This is also when the Museum's summer hours end. After Labor Day, the Museum will be open Wednesday to Saturday from 10am - 4pm and Sunday from 12noon to 4pm.

October 11th & 12th, 18th & 19th, and 25th & 26th - Pumpkin Patch Weekends

That time of year for pumpkins is coming fast! Come to the DRM for a fun train ride in decorated cars to our pumpkin patch where children ages 2 - 12 get a **free** pumpkin! The **\$10** admission for visitors ages 2 and up (under 2 years free) includes historic train ride, exhibits and displays, operating layouts, children's activities including free coloring station and temporary tattoos, and free cider and cookies! Children are encouraged to wear their costumes!

Hours are **10am - 4pm on Saturdays** (October 11th, 18th, and 25th) and **12pm - 4pm on Sundays** (October 12th, 19th, and 26th).

Trains will be running hourly 10:30am - 3:30pm on Saturdays and 12:30pm - 3:30pm on Sundays. The station and gift shop will be open until 5pm every day.

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Owney Day

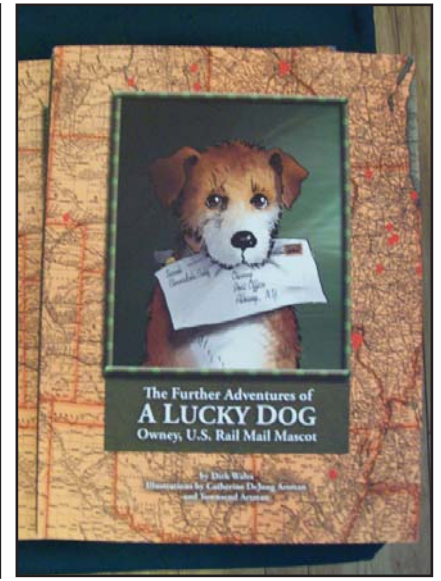
On July 19th, the Danbury Railway Museum celebrated Owney, the dog that rode the Post Office Cars in the late 1800's and became the mascot of the U.S. Postal Service. We had many visitors who received an escorted tour of our beautifully restored Post Office Car and heard the adventures of Owney from storyteller Martha Bishop on the train ride. There were also free hot dogs for visitors to aid in the celebration of Owney. Many thanks to all who helped make this day fun for visitors and volunteers alike.

Photo this page and top four left photos on page 3 courtesy of Wade Reese; other photos on page 3 courtesy of Carolyn Taylor.



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Owney Day, Continued from Page 2



Words from Our President

Armando's restaurant in Bethel was deluged by 60 DRM members and guests on July 18th to happily celebrate our 20th anniversary. New and long-time members started the evening with hors d'oeuvres and then sat down to a great buffet dinner, which was interrupted by only a couple of short speeches. The first was a quick welcome and then a history of the Museum's founding by Vice President Stan Madyda was given. This was concluded with a summary of accomplishments in the last ten years by yours truly. A special thank you to Sue Teer and Patty Osmer for all the arrangements and logistics to facilitate a super night.

After the nice celebration dinner, the next day on July 19th was our Owney day celebration. Jose's own 'Owney' (aka, Max), was a big hit in the RPO car. The free hot dogs were another hit with the guests. Special stamps, postcards and envelopes were available. Story reading on the train by Martha Bishop and forge demonstrations by Bob Pitcher were some of the other activities of the day. Note: No dogs were lost during the day.

A couple of weeks later, we again impressed our volunteers into service for our annual Danbury Railway Day. Two coaches behind our 44-tonner (the Railyard Local) provided visitors the ride experience with a mid-way stop to tour the *Tonawanda Valley* with Art Slothower and Terrie Ruese as guides. When visitors arrived back on track 18, a coupling/uncoupling demonstration took place with Don Konen as interpreter, Dave Fuller as Engineer and Joe LaPorta as Conductor. Afterwards, visitors were led to a designated area towards the end of the track 18 platform where they were able to see and photograph a freight train pulled by our RS1 with Mike Lague as Engineer, Mike LaPorta as Brakeman and Jeff Van Wagenen as Conductor. A visit to Gerry Herrmann's NYC caboose and a demonstration at the forge by Bob Pitcher were some of the other experiences guests were able to enjoy this day. In addition, various railroad models, duplicate books from the library and gift shop specials were for sale. The model railroads inside the Station even featured special train consists.

The end of Danbury Railway Day was followed by our annual member picnic. Approximately 60 members enjoyed an evening of hot dogs, hamburgers, ribs, salads and desserts. A special thank you to Don Konen and Patty Osmer for preparing and cooking the food. Afterwards, anyone wishing to run a locomotive climbed aboard our RS1 with Jim Teer as Engineer/teacher. Thanks to all who volunteered and have helped with these and all other events.

On behalf of the Danbury Railway Museum, Wade W. Ruese (*Photos by Wade Ruese*)



Danbury Railway Day and Member Picnic

By Sue Teer

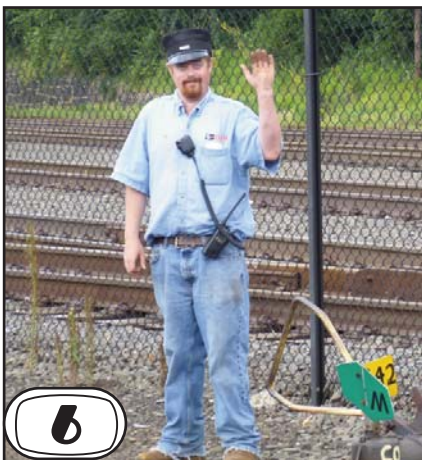
The Danbury Railway Museum had a very busy day August 2nd as our annual Danbury Railway Day was in full swing. Guests who came that day could enjoy seeing a freight train running (with caboose riders on it), operating forge and an uncoupling/coupling demonstration. Halfway through the Railyard Local train ride, guests were escorted onto and through the beautiful *Tonawanda Valley*, which was open for public viewing with Terrie Roese in costume giving a talk about riding on the *20th Century Limited*. Our train crew and docents answered lots of questions about railroads and rail operations that day. The library also held a half-off used book sale and had a display in the telegraph office on how railroads communicated in the past. Thanks to all who worked very hard that day to provide a fun experience for the 200+ visitors, especially to Steve Gould who coordinated all the activities.

At the end of the day was the annual picnic with the very enjoyable selection of many salads and sides, dogs, burgers and yummy ribs. Over 60 members came to enjoy good food and good company in this annual summer get-together. Many people had fun trying their hand at operating the RS1 locomotive that evening with a very patient crew. This great picnic would not have been possible without the excellent planning (and grilling!) by Don Konen and Patty Osmer. *Top six photos this page courtesy of Carolyn Taylor; others taken by the editor.*



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Danbury Railway Day and Member Picnic, *Continued from Page 6*



All-Wh (Don't Use Brandy!) This was placed for the old wooden stone cement platform. The device could be raised and lowered by hand. The key was the device used to send the signal message to the other end of the line. (Photo courtesy of Danbury Railway Museum, 2012)





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MUSEUM CALENDAR

- August 27(7:30pm) Ontario & Western - Vic Westman
- September 1(Labor Day) Open 12-4pm with train rides
- September 3(7:30pm) Cab Aheads - Carl Liba
- September 10(7:30pm) Charlie Palmer Slides - Bob Welk
- September 17(7:30pm) Pennsylvania RR - Pete McLachlan
- September 18(7:00pm) Board Meeting - Open to Members
- September 24(7:30pm) Danbury East - Vic Westman
- October 1(7:30pm) NYC & Other E Units - Carl Liba
- October 8(7:30pm) Memories of New Haven - Jose Alves

Museum hours: Mon-Sat 10-5; Sun 12-5

Beginning Sept. 1, Wed-Sat 10-4; Sun 12-4

See the newsletter in color at www.danburyrail.org!



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Printing by: Infinity Printing of Danbury

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