



# THE RAILYARD DISPATCH

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DANBURY RAILWAY MUSEUM



**We're Back!**

Saturday & Sunday

July 3rd & 4th, 10 am to 4 pm

**FREE ADMISSION**

**FREE TRAIN RIDES**

[DanburyRail.org](http://DanburyRail.org) for more info

**Can't Wait to See You!**

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Look at that beautifully repainted coach shine! Huge thanks to Art Slothower for undertaking the project. Volunteers Phillip Beard, Justin Chapin, Alden Burns, Eoin Kavanaugh, and Max Dymerski all contributed to renewing 1547. We can't wait to see it on the Railyard Local!

## The Votes Are In!

### 2021 Board of Directors Election Results

The following Candidates were elected:

<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Votes</u>	<u>Position</u>
1. Stan Madyda	77	
2. Patty Osmer	74	Treasurer
3. Steve Gould	73	Secretary
4. Jose Alves	72	President
5. Justin Chapin	70	
6. Jim Teer	60	
7. John Barton	57*	
8. Alden Burns	52*	

There were 86 ballots returned vs. 232 mailed out which equals a rate of return of 37.1%. Rate of return for last year was 31% and for 2019 was 28.5%. The lowest was 17% in 2005.

While not up for re-election this time, Bill Wagner was elected by the board to serve as Vice-President. Thank you to George Psarofagis, and Orion Newall-Vuillemot for their service on the board.

Note: \*will serve one year terms. All others are for two year terms.

## Annual Report - President Stan Madyda

Little did we think that in March of 2020 we would be closed to the public for all but one month. The past year has been difficult for the Museum. Fortunately, our reserve funds have been able to see us through the pandemic. It will take several years to replenish what we had to spend the past 12 months to meet our financial obligations.

The board has met continually first by conference calls and then by Zoom. Other meetings have been conducted the same way.

We put together a Re-Opening Task Force to review procedures for dealing with the pandemic. We re-opened in July 2020 after protocols from the state outlined requirements needed to be met to allow access to the public. Plexi glass was put up around the front desk and gift shop (although the gift shop had to remain closed) and touchless payment was introduced. July was an encouraging month and many of our visitors were pleased we were open. When the Danbury positive test percentage spiked at the beginning of August, it was decided to close the Museum again and remain close until such a time when testing data was back to the July levels. Unfortunately, we are still not there. When we do re-open, we will have to see how many days we can have coverage. Members will have to be recruited to help handle some of the position that are required to be open as well as some behind the scene positions.

Although the Museum has remained closed, there has been some ongoing activity both in the building and in the yard. The O Gauge layout is being re-done with a smaller footprint. This will allow display cases to be constructed where models not on the layouts can be displayed. Other displays have been cleaned and updated. In the yard, restoration work was taking place with work begun by Boy Scouts on the Rutland flat car and the painting of one of the Reading coaches. Another coach needed repairs and an outside contractor was hire to assist with jacking up one end of the coach. The turntable continues to see restoration work done and our contractor and Museum members have worked on the Mill Plain Station. In the fall of 2020, a walk through of the yard was done in order to identify areas that needed attention and cleaning up. Metro North was contacted and they sent in a crew to repair sections of the fencing that had been damaged. (Continued on 3)



Boy Scouts working on the 1902 Rutland flatcar, X-578

(cont. from 3) Metro North donated an ex-Pennsylvania Railroad covered hopper that is now in the yard. By way of the Conrail Historical Society, we recently saw the delivery of a former New York Central Flexi-Flo covered hopper. The Maine Central caboose was donated back to the Museum by the individual who purchased it several years ago.



Our "New" Metro-North Sand Hopper

Also in 2020, a new website was designed and launched with help of an outside web designer. We have also maintained a presence with social media. The Archive has a new large bed scanner and with a grant from the Connecticut State Library training is about complete so our holdings can be included state archive sites. Sale of duplicate books has also been good with the donation of several good collections.

During the summer and into fall, we hosted the Danbury Farmer's Market on Fridays. Organizers were very pleased with being set up in



New York Central Flexi-Flo Hopper turned Scale Test Car

The locomotives in Glenmont will have to be moved before the end of 2021. The land that they sit on is being developed by the Port of Albany. Whether they make it to Danbury by the end of 2021 is still in question, but the Port understands the historical significance of the electrics and will work with us in saving them. We are also looking into saving the U25B. Over the past two months, members have traveled to Glenmont to work on the locomotives, preparing them for a move.



Recently secured NYC S-1 Electric Locomotive

our parking area.

For the past several years, we have presented Gandy Dancer Awards to deserving members. This year, I think we will wait until we can all gather to present any awards. I feel they have more meaning in person than remotely.

The above projects and accomplishments could not have been undertaken with the dedication of our active members. We owe them a great deal of thanks.



CMO Justin Chapin working hard to free up the brakes of Conrail U25B 2510

### Vice President—Jim Teer

The President's report pretty much says it all concerning events that have transpired over the past year.

The basement flooding that occurred at the end of 2019 as a result of a failure in a water line resulted in the installation of new boilers among other equipment that was destroyed by the flood. At the end of it all, we seemed to get by through the winter of 2019-20. However, for some reason the boilers, which were newly installed have proven to be problematic over this past winter. I have been in touch with the city repeatedly over sporadic failures of these units. Otto plumbing as well as our people from the Department of Public Buildings have checked out the units and have gotten them to operate with some success. When I say with some success, it is more like temporarily. With the coming of warmer weather, I am hoping that the City will take the time to do a more thorough job and get these up and running properly before the next winter is upon us.

I would like to add to our President's mention of Glenmont by mentioning Justin's success in getting the brakes operational on the "U-boat" G.E. locomotive that has been dormant up there for decades.

Some tweaking will make it perfect.

In the upcoming warmer weather, I am hoping to see more track work get done as well as progress on the turntable.

### Secretary—Steve Gould

1. A grant was filed with the National Railway Historical Society in February for \$5,000 to cover canopy replacement for the Mill Plain Station. We received the grant in June.
2. I did a talk in January at the Trumbull Library on the "Trials and Tribulations of Amtrak" as a part of the Museum's outreach program.
3. We filed a claim with our insurance carrier for equipment lost in the basement flood in the station building. We received payment of \$2,167 after the deductible of \$1,000.
4. A grant of \$250 was received in March from the Women's Club of Danbury and New Fairfield for the Mill Plain Station.
5. We have received \$80,000 in grants since 2002.
6. I was a member of the Reopening Committee which began meeting in May as we were working for a soft reopening on July 4, 2020.
7. Using the Health and Safety Plan created by American University, I used that format to create the DRM Health and Safety Plan, which was required by the State as a part of reopening protocol.
8. Our total premium for liability, property and umbrella insurance for September 2020 to September 2021 period is \$11,753, no change over the previous period.
9. We updated agreements for privately owned equipment stored in our yard.

### **Superintendent of Operations—Jeff Van Wagenen**

- Regular operations were suspended for 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Several "Hands on the Throttle" sessions were also postponed. One session was held with crew and participant masked.
- Current certifications for Conductors and Engineers will be extended to September 30, 2021 to allow us to schedule crew exams later this year.
- Work continues on the Mill Plain station, which will become a destination stop for our railyard local.
- I am hopeful that regular weekend operations will resume late spring/early summer, but no decisions have been made at this point.
- I am looking for additional volunteers to train as conductors and engineers. Interested persons should contact me at [jjvanwagenen@yahoo.com](mailto:jjvanwagenen@yahoo.com).

## **Message From the Presidents:**

### **Outgoing President—Stan Madyda:**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Museum and people from outside of the Museum for their support and encouragement over the last four and a half years I served as President of the Museum. The accomplishments we have seen during this time can not be attributed to just one person. It was a team effort with members buying into the idea of moving the Museum forward. I will still be involved with the Archive/Library, the New York Central wooden cabooses, the locomotives in Glenmont and assisting wherever I can.

As we look to reopen soon, I encourage members to become involved with the Museum. Over the last several years, we have had some key members who could always be relied on move away, retire and sadly, pass away. We have to make up for a lost year that will be challenging but not impossible. Any and all help will be greatly appreciated by the Board and Officers.

Best wishes to incoming President Jose Alves, Vice President Bill Wagner and returning officers Secretary Steve Gould, Treasurer Patty Osmer and Board Chair Don Konen.

### **Incoming President—Jose Alves:**

Fellow Members,

I am deeply humbled to have been given this opportunity to lead our museum, and I hope you'll all join me in thanking Stan Madyda for his many years of faithful service in this role. Stan continues to be a valuable asset to our museum as a director on our board, head of our Research and Reference Library, and Project Manager on some very important pieces of New York Central equipment just to name a few projects he's still involved in. As we continue to go through this once-in-a-lifetime event, I am hopeful for a reopening soon. As many of you know, we were dealt a nasty card at the end of 2019, the great basement flood severely hindered our Santa Trains, and little did we know this was only the beginning of the set-backs we and the world would face.

Through 2020, one thing remained constant, you! The dedication the membership has shown to our cause helped see us through the dark, and we are now almost out of the tunnel. I would be remiss not to mention that being a member is the first step toward becoming a volunteer. I'd like to take the opportunity to tell you all about what we've been up to the past few months. (Continued on 7)

The inside of Union Station is receiving a long overdue cleaning, the O Gauge has been consolidated and a new shelf display case just for model railroading has been constructed by Bill Wagner and Jeff Van Wagenen. We have also been sorting through our model rolling stock, there are some real gems that will be on display in the new case. After taking a hard look at the limited space we have in the building, we are turning the former Telegraph Office into the Research and Reference Library's new office and research room. The heart of our organization is the collection, and equipping our librarians and historians with a working space commensurate with the size of the task they undertake is necessary. This new space will also free up much needed room in the current library, the new "wobble room" will also allow for a coordinated effort to install new shelving we received from the Taunton Press building in Newtown. Stan Madyda, Bruce Beard, Bill Wagner, and Eoin Kavanagh are all helping in this coordinated effort.



New display case, courtesy of Bill Wagner and Jeff Van Wagenen

Our ten acre railyard is receiving some much needed attention as well. As the weather thaws the yard has sprung to life again. Unfortunately we had to deconstruct the track 18 pavilion that had been standing since 2011. It had begun to show its age, and repairing it was not cost effective, our building committee is working on plans for a suitable replacement. Thanks to Bob Pitcher, Justin Chapin, Philip Beard, Max Dymerski, Eoin Kavanagh, Bruce Beard, Al Gruber, Franz Gerencir, Jim Teer, Alden Burns, and Stan Madyda the structure was deconstructed and packed neatly in a 10 yard dumpster. MJ Refuse of Danbury donated full use of one of their dumpsters for this project. We will be setting up the picnic tables under the shade of the station platform for the 2021 season.



Volunteers Stan Madyda, Jose Alves, Jim Teer, and Al Gruber clean up the remains of the Track 18 Pavilion. Not pictured are Phillip Beard, Justin Chapin, and Alden Burns



2015 flying high to facilitate a brake line repair

Yard cleanup is also underway, and we will be looking for hands in the future to help with this effort. With 2015's brake line repair completed, Art Slothower has begun prepping the car for repainting, volunteers will be needed in the very near future for scraping and applying new tar to the roof. Alden Burns, Eoin Kavanagh, Philip Beard, Franz Gerencir, and Justin Chapin have all been working on the turntable, we hope to have this operational again by the end of summer so we can access landlocked equipment like the Tonawanda Valley, and soon to be completed Eagle Scout project organized by Sami El-Abid. Sami and the scouts have resumed work on the oldest railcar in the yard, Rutland Flatcar X-578 built 1902. At the time of writing this, they are staining and beginning to affix wood to the freshly painted car body.

We'll be open again Saturday July 3rd and Sunday July 4th, from 10 Am, to 4 Pm, with free admission and train rides for all. We'll see you all soon, at the museum.



In Memoriam: Joe Ward

It is unfortunate that we must say goodbye to a very good friend, Joe Ward, who passed away on March 14 at the age of 95. Joe always had a big smile and was a huge asset to the museum since he first joined soon after moving to Danbury in 1995 from Mt. Kisco when he retired from many years with IBM. Some of his many accomplishments follow:

During the early years of the museum he was instrumental in getting breakfast and snacks, coffee and drinks on board our excursion trains, no mean feat as our early trains to New York had hundreds of hungry people on board, and "in the yard" events required cooking and feeding lots of visitors. With a small staff (primarily our Board Chair Lucye Boland), they managed a huge task with smiles and calm amidst the chaos surrounding them.

Joe trained as a conductor and worked hundreds of railyard locals and car hosted all our excursions and events, as well as tour guide when needed.

In his other jobs you could see his orange VW Vanagon everywhere in the yard working on one or another project. For many years he partnered with Nancy Sniffen in transforming the Budd Car 32 into a showpiece. Part of this involved removing all the windows (most had to be cut out) and replacing with new windows. I believe Joe said it was well over 20 hours per window.

Inside the building Joe worked at the front desk weekly, usually Fridays so he could enjoy a visit to a local watering hole with Dave and Carol Wilson and Gerry Herrmann at the end of the day. Many times he would put on another hat and man the gift shop or a gate during an event, or keep the Easter Bunny company. With his co-volunteer Richard, they covered Wednesday and Friday and his many hours of speaking with the public on the phone and in person were a huge asset.

Joe's lovely wife Ginny was at all the DRM dinners and picnics until her passing in 2002. Joe was predeceased by his daughter Margaret, and survived by his children Janet, Phyllis, Sheila (Ken), Bernard (Judit), and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Joe Ward will be very much missed by the Danbury Railway Museum. He was a dedicated volunteer, and a great person it was a pleasure to know, who spread joy and railroad knowledge for many years.

~Sue Teer

Our New Hours:

Saturdays & Sundays

10am - 4pm

Our New Editor:

Alden Burns

[editor@danburyrail.org](mailto:editor@danburyrail.org)