

The Railyard Dispatch

Volume 14, Issue 9

The Newsletter of the Danbury Railway Museum September - October 2015

Former Erie Lackawanna Caboose Arrives at the Museum

By Stan Madyda, Vice President; Photos courtesy of Sue Teer

On August 10th, the DRM received delivery of a former Erie Lackawanna bay window caboose, currently lettered as Delaware & Hudson #35815. Built in 1970 by International Car for the Erie Lackawanna and numbered #C378. There were nine others in this class and these were the last cabooses built for EL. Several others still survive. Prior to becoming property of the DRM, the caboose was used on a local Canadian Pacific local job based in Plattsburgh, NY.

How did we come to acquire this caboose? CMO Justin Chapin saw on CP's website an upcoming auction of surplus rail equipment. A discussion between several board members led me to contact CP's Asset Disposal Department and get further information on the caboose. I learned that it was not in Cambridge, NY as the website said, but in Plattsburgh. I was assured it was in good shape and "roadworthy" (note to self - for next time, define roadworthy) and that equipment like this usually attracts a number of bidders. Getting back to the board, we voted either by phone or email to enter a bid of \$5,006 plus up to \$5,000 for the movement. This auction was on only for a few days, thus not giving us the opportunity to visit it in person, so we relied on the photos, description and assurances of the Asset Disposal Department. Onto the website I went to enter the bid. There were no instructions on how to enter the dollar figure and the site kept asking me to confirm a \$5.00 bid. I used trial and error to finally get the site to accept \$5,006, but not before I had the bid up to \$500,000. That would have been an error. \$5,006 is a low bid compared to sale prices of cabooses on railroad equipment websites.

A few days passed after the auction closed and we learned that we won the bid. Asset Disposal wanted to make sure that we understood their terms before they would award the caboose to us. Their terms included going to the site and trucking the caboose out. Wait a minute; I thought it was "roadworthy." Perhaps over the



highway, but not on rail. Renting a crane in Plattsburgh and Danbury plus moving the caboose by truck over the highway would add considerable cost. Asset Disposal told us that the caboose was not registered in Umler, a database which in part contains specifications on railcars in interchange service. Justin did some research and located the information needed to register the caboose and that was passed on to Asset Disposal. The car was then registered and able to interchange with other railroads which was needed since the car routing would be CP to CSX to the Housatonic.

Next came a curve ball from CP. The role of the Asset Disposal department is to get as much as they can for equipment no longer needed by the railroad. As it turns out, the DRM was not the highest bidder. Two other bids were received for \$8,000 and \$10,000. Those bidders declined initially because the *Continued on Page 4*

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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!

Philip Dominguez	Brooklyn, NY
A. Donato	New Fairfield, CT
Christopher Castro	Portchester, NY
Luca Bechelli	Ridgefield, CT
Slarom MacCaskie	Danbury, CT
Rachel Kopta Song	New York, NY
Kristin Miles	Chappaqua, NY
Dick Schell	Southbury, CT
John Breuning	Stamford, CT
John Bandler	New York, NY
Gary Kriss	South Salem, NY
John J. Thomas	The Villages, FL
Deirdre Lehr	North Salem, NY
Christine Jamin	Beacon, NY
Edel Boland	Bronx, NY
Richard Sol	New Fairfield, CT
Louise Loya Mayne	Danbury, CT
Bo Francois	Stamford, CT
John Rich	Sherman, CT
Sara Borniger	Norwalk, CT
Jennifer French	Danbury, CT
Joseph Rivas	Oxford, CT
Tara Inigo	Danbury, CT
Kate Schell	New Milford, CT
Gussie Tipper	Danbury, CT

Upcoming Events at the DRM

October 10th & 11th, 17th & 18th, and 24th & 25th - Pumpkin Patch Weekends

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 10th, 17th, and 24th) and **12pm - 4pm on Sundays** (October 11th, 18th, and 25th). Trains will be running hourly 10:30am - 3:30pm on Saturdays and 12:30pm - 3:30pm on Sundays.

November 7th - Military Appreciation Day

2 Free train ride for past & present military personnel and their families.

Ten Years Ago

By Stan Madyda, Vice President

The Museum learned that as of September 15, 2005, the turntable had been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. This was a nine month process headed up by then President Ira Pollack and member Bruce Clouette.

Fall plans were well underway during September 2005. It was decided to again run the Pumpkin Patch Trains in October following a very successful event in 2004. The Museum had been doing the Haunted Rail Yard prior to 2004 but they were a little too intense for younger children.

During the summer, the DRM saw a number of non-members come in and volunteer for a day or two. While the help was welcome, they were not clearly covered by our rules and insurance. The Board established guidelines that would allow for further volunteering by non-members.

The Board as a whole was also involved in work sessions with a museum consultant. The premise for these sessions was to establish a strategic plan for the Museum as well as address other needs and issues the Museum was encountering.

A number of small jobs still needed to be done in the rail yard. One day was set aside for a general yard cleanup where a group of members filled a dumpster with debris that had accumulated over the years. One of the trailers used for storage near the turntable needed new doors installed, lettering for the New Haven box car and the steam engine needed to be completed, as well as many small repairs to equipment. As always, track maintenance was on the project list. One small restoration project was finished on our Schramm air compressor which needed painting and mechanical work.

With the former Pennsylvania Railroad Railway Post Office car sitting in the yard, a plan was developed for restoration with Bill Britt as project manager. Immediate attention needed to be paid to replacing window glass in order to protect the car from the weather. The Museum established a dedicated fund for the restoration.

Good news came in the form of being able to host year-round birthday parties. Up until the fall of 2005, this popular and profitable venue could only be held outside in nice weather. But the refitting of the Telegraph Office allowed for parties to continue when cooler weather arrived.

In early October, the Museum was visited by a number of G-scale enthusiasts who set up their trains for all to see. The day was rainy so the layouts were confined to areas under the canopies.

StEPS-CT Visits the DRM

By Stan Madyda, Vice President; Photos courtesy of President Wade Roese

On July 27th, the Museum played host to the local historical societies we regularly meet with at the monthly StEPS-CT program. The second segment pertained to Audience. Members of the Newtown Historical Society, the Weston Historical Society, the Westport Historical Society and Wilton Historical Society along with our StEPS mentor got to see a typical day at the DRM. They were treated to a train ride out to the turntable and a tour of the Pump House. Terrie Roese and Art Slothower were on hand to open the *Tonawanda Valley* for a tour. Although it was very hot that day, some attendees opted for a tour of some of the other equipment in the yard. After a brief meeting inside the Station, the attendees expressed their gratitude to the DRM for allowing them to come in and see how we operate and maintain inside and outside exhibits, restorations and a train ride. We received many favorable comments on how well the DRM experience is for visitors.



Left: StEPS members walking out to the yard to ride the RYL (right). Center left: StEPS members making their way to the turntable to take a spin (center right). Bottom left: StEPS members checking out the rooms and hallway in the *Tonawanda Valley*. Bottom center: Art Slothower showing the group work that was done in the lounge area.



Bottom right: Group photo on the rear of the *Tonawanda Valley*.



Words from Our President

In our August newsletter we asked: How are you?, a form of simple greeting. In this issue: What's up?, also a commonly used greeting. So, what's up at the DRM? At the September BoD meeting, each officer and director present reported on their current project's status. Some of them are as follows (*full list online*):

- The StEP's program moves forward into the third module concerning Museums.
- Tuesday work crew has been painting, building, repairing and enhancing interior displays & exhibits.
- A rigger has been located to assist with erecting the Solari Board.
- Lexan has been purchased and cut for the *Tonawanda Valley* observation car.
- Window frames and rebuilt windows are being constructed for the NH caboose.
- The RS-1 #0673 is being prepared for our upcoming Pumpkin Patch event.
- Former D&H caboose has arrived in the yard and has been cleaned up.
- The Library is seeking grants to digitize and store photographic records.
- Several new grants have been submitted to assist with existing and proposed projects.
- New LED high-efficiency lighting and occupancy sensors have been installed in the Station in order to reduce operating expenses.
- The 1455 has had windows, frames and sills replaced along with a cab wall panel.

Many projects are in work at the Museum and many people are volunteering a lot of their time. Thanks to all! So what's up? Fortunately, for the DRM, a lot! On behalf of the DRM, Wade W. Roese

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caboose was not in Umler. My contact at CP was extremely helpful during this whole process and wanted to see the caboose go to a museum, but the fact of the matter was the caboose was now able to interchange, something the \$10,000 bidder required. My contact suggested we raise our bid to \$6,000 and he would do what he could to get the caboose awarded to the DRM. A few days later, I was contacted and told the Asset Disposal Department agreed to award us the caboose. There was some uneasiness about having won the auction and then having to raise our bid. The language that Asset Disposal was using was they would award us the caboose. In the event the caboose could not be registered in Umler and if the trucking option was too expensive, this language gave us the option of walking away.

CP would ready the caboose for movement to their CSX interchange at Kenwood Yard in the Port of Albany, at no charge to the DRM. Meanwhile, Justin was in touch with CSX and received a quote of \$2,000 to move the car from Selkirk to Pittsfield and then onto Danbury. This was below the amount the board appropriated for the move. CSX picked the caboose up in Albany and upon arriving in Selkirk, was sent to the car repair shop. When it was released, it was sent back to CP in Albany instead of being put on a train for Pittsfield. Justin then had to put a trace on the caboose. After several more days, CSX Customer Service alerted Justin that the caboose was located, the paperwork was in order and it would be sent back to Selkirk from Kenwood Yard. From there, it would go to Pittsfield to finally interchange with the Housatonic. The caboose arrived in Danbury and our inspection concluded that we got a caboose that was in very good shape. The plan is to restore it back to its Erie Lackawanna heritage that will require, in addition to painting, some structural work.

I'm not sure how many emails went back and forth since the start, but it was a lot. These included contact with the railroad and amongst DRM board members. The three railroads involved all worked with us, doing their parts to get the caboose from Plattsburgh to Danbury. Overland Models produced the caboose in brass several years ago. No doubt, getting one on Ebay will be much easier.



Danbury Railway Days 2015

By Secretary Steve Gould and Sue Teer; Photos courtesy of Carolyn Taylor

Danbury Railway Days, August 1st and 2nd, was a two-day event for the first time this year. It was well attended both days. There were two trains operating in the rail yard, the Rail Yard Local with SW8 #1 and two ex-Reading Company coaches, and ex-UP 44-tonner pulling ex-Maine Central caboose #661. The latter train, called a “caboose hop”, recalled the days when railroads would regularly deadhead a caboose, without any other cars, from yard to yard. Admission price included rides on both trains.

Rail Yard Local riders were treated to a ride on the turntable which allowed them to reach the “red carpet” walkway to the 1928 *Tonawanda Valley* observation/lounge car being meticulously restored by project manager Art Slothower. Guests had a walk-through tour by Art and President Wade Roese’s wife Terrie, who was dressed in 1920’s attire. This year, guests got to see the newly-restored drawing room sleeping compartment. They then re-boarded the train to continue the ride through the yard. At the conclusion of the ride, guests were de-trained in front of the forge where Bob Pitcher gladly showed his skills.

Some new items were added this year. Pete McLachlan did a demonstration of 21 different hand signals that were used regularly in the Danbury freight yard. He also was the docent for the newly-opened cab tour of ex-Metro-North (nee-New Haven) FL9 #2006. Guests were enthralled to hear about the operation of the locomotive by Pete, who is a former New Haven Railroad engineer. There was also a new visual scavenger hunt for kids 12 and under, which asked them to find various things inside the Station or in the rail yard. Prizes were awarded for winning entries in the Gift Shop.

The New York Central & Hudson River Railroad wooden caboose was also open for tours so that guests could get an update on the restoration progress of this 1909 artifact. A Metro-North (ex-New York Central) ACMU commuter car was opened for inspection. Regular exhibits, such as the #1455 steam engine, the Railway Post Office, the RDC and various cabooses were all open to the guests.

John O’Hern, who provided safety protection inside our gate for guests when Metro-North trains passed by, also engaged guests and found out that they had a wonderful time at the event, which should make all those who volunteered feel that it was well worth it. From Marty at the Front Desk, Sue in the Gift Shop, the car hosts and operating crew members – everyone made our guests feel welcome.



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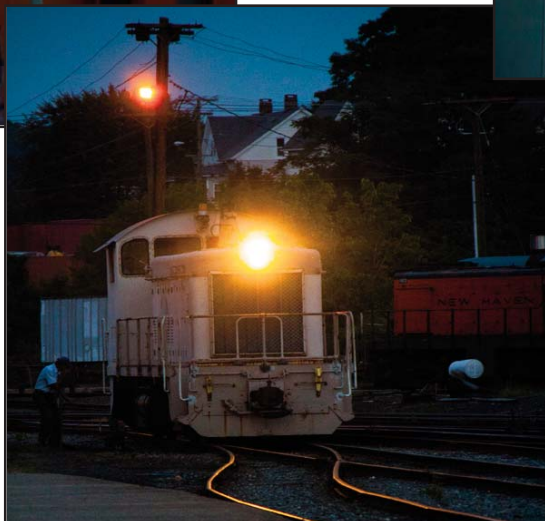
DRM Member Picnic

By Patty Osmer; Photos courtesy of Philip Beard

The Museum's Annual Member Picnic was held on August 15th, with over 40 members attending. Attendees enjoyed burgers, hot dogs, ribs, corn and a large selection of many salads, sides and desserts supplied by various members. Due to the heat, the picnic was held inside which most people appreciated. Following dinner, attendees had fun trying their hand at operating the SW-8 locomotive that evening with a very patient crew. Again this year, thanks to the planning and grilling skills of Don Konen and Patty Osmer.



Top left: Rachel (Philip Beard's sister) tries her hand at the throttle under the supervision of engineer Tom McCullough.
Top center: Al Baker up in the SW-8 #1.
Left: Chuck Sager acting as conductor.
Right: Philip Beard tries his hand at the throttle as well as his mom, Marty (below right).





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MUSEUM CALENDAR

- September 30(7:30pm) Port Jervis Line: RDC Ride (Part 1) - Jim McGeorge
- October 7(7:30pm) UP Challengers - Carl Liba
- October 14(7:30pm) Danbury to Beacon (From the Engineer's Seat) - Pete McLachlan
- October 15(7:00pm) Board Meeting - Open to Members
- October 21(7:30pm) To Be Announced - Dan Foley
- October 28(7:30pm) To Be Announced
- November 4(7:00pm) NYC's Other Chicago Station - Carl Liba
- November 11(7:30pm) To Be Announced
- November 18(7:30pm) To Be Announced
- November 19(7:00pm) Board Meeting - Open to Members

Museum hours: Wed-Sat 10-4; Sun 12-4

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



Photo courtesy of Carolyn Taylor

Contact Information

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Printing by: Infinity Printing of Danbury

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