

# VALLEY EXPRESS

## Transfer Caboosees

In the first issue of the Valley Express (*Volume 1, Number 1*) I discussed the family history of caboose C356, which included the earliest steel cupola and bay window caboosees of the pre-merger Erie Railroad and the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad. Then we continued to discuss the purchase of the last of the steel bodied bay window caboosees bought new by the Erie Lackawanna Railroad in the late 1960's. Not covered in that history were the T-Series Transfer Caboosees built by the railroad in 1969.

During the years that the Erie Lackawanna Railroad and its predecessors operated, trains on the mainline required caboosees for reasons of safety, so deemed in those days. The cars were manned by the conductor of the train as well as the rear brakeman assigned to that manifest. Besides the jobs performed by their respective titles, they were to ride in the seats of the cupola or bay window and watch for any problems that might occur in the train's consist, such as a hot wheel bearing capable of derailing the train. In reality trains still derailed, sometimes immediately before the caboose, often injuring crews during the abrupt stops. So, soon after the creation of Conrail, which succeeded the Erie Lackawanna, the railroads of this nation began putting the caboose to pasture and

electronic end-of-train devices did the job of monitoring conditions at the rear of the train for the engineer up front in the engine.

But, getting back to earlier times, transfer runs (trains that transfer cars between yards or to an industry) usually used, if anything at all, older wooden caboosees from the days of steam. In such cases, the Magor 04900 series became the common caboose for this use. Locally, the transfer crew that moved cars from the lower yards to the American Viscose plant in the Fifth Ward used caboose 04967 for this purpose. The use of the caboose in transfer runs allowed back-up moves through railroad crossings in an industrial area. The crew of the caboose alerted traffic of such movement.

The Erie Lackawanna must have realized that many of their wooden units were coming to the end of their useful life, and so began to replace them with new cars. But, unlike road caboose purchases made through outside builders, the EL chose to build these replacements in their own shops. So in March and April of 1969 the railroad built 25 new transfer caboosees here in Meadville. Numbered T-10 thru T-34, the cars were fabricated using plans similar to the Norfolk and Western Railroad units. Unlike the caboosees these cars replaced, they were short (28' 4" long) and quite modest.

They featured large corner-mounted windows and were fitted inside with benches from former Erie Railroad Stillwell commuter cars.

The construction design varied from the N&W's in such things as the low profile steel frame with wooden deck planking, and the handrails on the car ends. Mounted on the frame of the car was a cabin measuring only 10'6" long and 7'3" high in the middle. The cabin was fitted with a reflector on each end above the door. Included were a toolbox mounted on the platform at one end, as well as an outside mounted flare box on the end wall of the cabin. The caboose cabin was painted caboose-red, with a black roof and white lettering, and a large EL diamond on the cabin sides. The frame and undercarriage, along with the wheels, were also black, and the handrails were painted yellow. These cars never saw any repainting during their lifetimes.

The T-Series transfer caboosees were assigned to several major yard operations on the railroad, such as Youngstown and Croxton, but they were never assigned to Meadville. When the railroad was absorbed into Conrail, they quickly disappeared. It has been suggested that they did not conform to Conrail (ex Penn-Central) work rules. For sometime after the April 1976 takeover, stories were told about these cars sitting in fields sans wheels in the Hornell, New York area. So, last November I took a daylong trip to Hornell in search of the remains of one of these products of the Meadville Shops. It had been reported that T-14 sat parked in back of a home in Hornell, but I was unsuccessful in locating the car. The day ended on a sad note, though, as I found the remains of the very first car, T-10, sitting in the backyard of a home outside Canisteo, NY. All that remained was the cabin, which was being used as a shed. Gone were the frame and wheel sets.

*(continued on page 5)*



Remains of Transfer Caboose T-10 (Photo by D. L. Mead)



## From the Stationmaster's Office



As we approach the thirty-fifth year since the take-over of the Erie Lackawanna Railway by Conrail, it seems harder to find sections of the former railroad that are still in operation. We are lucky that the railroad remains in service here in Meadville, and that trains continue to run east to Hornell, New York and beyond. In fact, you could board a train and actually ride the former EL all the way to Hoboken, New Jersey if you really wished to do so. But to travel westward from Meadville, it becomes a different story. Today, the former-EL trackage stops at Hubbard, Ohio.

From there, trains moving west to Youngstown use the former New York Central/Penn Central tracks. And so, to find any remains of the EL, one has to search - often in the weeds - for any right-of-way. But, with the exception of small segments of track left in Indiana, the Erie Lackawanna Railway west of Mansfield, Ohio has mostly disappeared into the earth.

So, when I had the chance to visit Marion, Ohio on a day off this past June, my spirits were lifted to see the ghost of the EL surviving there. And, I must say, it survives very well. When I visited Marion Station, which today hosts the Marion Historical Society, I could almost feel the railroad activity that existed back in the 1970's. Yes, the Dayton Branch is gone, as is the EL mainline west of the station, but many remnants of the railroad are still there. AC interlocking tower remains, although it has been moved to the other side of the tracks from its former position. And the diesel shops, built by the Erie in the early 1950's, are still in use, although these days by a tank-car repair business. But AC crossing on the old EL remains a busy place for watching trains. The former-EL east-west tracks are today operated by CSX, as is the former-C&O north-south line on the west side of the station. And, on the east side of the station, the north-south tracks of the Norfolk Southern crosses on its way to Sandusky. And, busy? You bet! In the three hours that we visited the station, eight trains of all three railroad routes passed by our vantage point at the station. All together, forty-five trains bear down on AC Crossing in a single 24 hour period.

Although many of us wish the Erie Lackawanna were still in existence, visiting and seeing the activity in Marion, Ohio makes you think not all has been lost to time.

*Dennis Mead*

### CONTRIBUTIONS & GIFTS

- Weber Electric Supply
- Staples Copy & Print
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- Tom's Train Terminal
- Western New York & PA RR
- Susi Building Supplies
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- AC & J RR, Jefferson, OH
- LakeShore Railway Historical Society
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- Anne W. Stewart
- Tom Collard Family
- Ed Cronin Family
- Pipp Graphics & Design
- Jack Sheets Family
- Joe Mazzone
- Moss Family

### Gifts in Memory of Bob Bingham

Wilda Parks of Milwaukie, OR  
Gary & Nancy Decker of Round Rock, TX  
Andrzejczak Landscaping of Girard, PA

## French Creek Valley Express

A Publication of the  
French Creek Valley Railroad  
Historical Society

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**French Creek Valley Express** is published Spring and Fall. Those wishing to submit material must do so no later than 30 days prior to publication, i.e. by April 1st or October 1st. All submissions are subject to editing for length and clarity. Queries must include full name, address, and daytime phone number or e-mail address. Individual membership dues are \$20.00/year, family membership dues are \$35.00/year (\$1.00 for juniors to 18 years) for the period July 1- Jun 30. New member dues received after January 1 are good through the following full year period. Support from local businesses is welcomed: Gold, Silver and Bronze levels at \$500.00, \$250.00, and \$100.00, respectively, are available.

### Budget and Finance

Our fiscal year ended on June 30. Thanks to all of our members who have renewed their memberships for the 2010-2011 year. Your continued support is greatly appreciated. As of this writing 13 members have not renewed their memberships. I will send a third and final notice to them on September 30.

I have filed our federal returns with the IRS, filed our annual report with Harrisburg, and renewed our registration with the Pennsylvania Bureau of Charitable Organizations.

-Ed Cronin

### Membership

We welcome five new members: Ed Shaw of Titusville, Stanley Niwa, David and Christopher Manning, and Darius Dempsey of Meadville. *Welcome aboard!*

-Carl Timko

### Museum

The planning project for the Northwestern Pennsylvania Railroad & Tooling Heritage Center is almost complete. Last month the business plan and feasibility study were approved by Harrisburg. Both Bob Good of Pashek Associates, who wrote the feasibility study, and Ann Brown of the Ann Barton Brown Company, who wrote the business plan, believe we are headed in the right direction. All that remains of the planning project is site engineering and conceptual drawings. Porter Consulting Engineers (PCE) has the contract for that. They should complete their work by December 1st.

There has been considerable debate about the location of the new museum. The Museum Site Committee, made up of Ashley Porter (PCE), Lance Johnson (Associated Contractors), Maryann Martin (Economic Progress Alliance-retired), Greg Rademacher (Ground Water Resources) and I favor the 84 Lumber property or the Bessemer Building. We are in agreement with our two consultants, Bob Good and Ann Brown. The Museum Board

favors the 84 Lumber site above all. The reasons the site committee favors the two sites are size and location. Currently the Johnson-Shaw Museum has 2200 square feet of exhibit area. We believe the tooling exhibits will need at least that amount of space. The railroad space requirement is estimated at 3000 square feet. The exhibit space would total 7400 square feet. But the exhibit space is only 30% of the total space requirement according to the Pennsylvania Federation of Museums and Historical Organizations. Another 30% should be reserved for storage, and the remaining 40% is for everything else (classrooms, offices, auditorium, lobby, gift shop, bathrooms, libraries, mechanical units, and special exhibit area). The total space requirement for our project is about 24,700 square feet. Only the 84 Lumber site has that much space under roof (in two buildings). With 19,300 square feet, the Bessemer Building would require an additional storage building.

By the next issue of this newsletter we will have selected the site, begun negotiations with the owner, and be in the early phase of our Capital Campaign - starting with the financial feasibility study.

-Ed Cronin

### Model Railroad

Two events were scheduled in the conference room @ the Bank at 940 Park Avenue in Meadville. On June 11th Al Notarione held a seminar on weathering model railcars and locomotives. Al is an expert and has

been teaching and writing articles about weathering techniques for almost 30 years. Demonstrations included the use of chalk with a Dullcote overspray and an airbrush using thinned paint. The seminar was well attended. As proof of success, member Brandon Symonette brought both a newly weathered boxcar and an open top hopper to the Model Railroad Bull Session that meets @ the Bank on the second Friday of each month. Both cars were very well done.



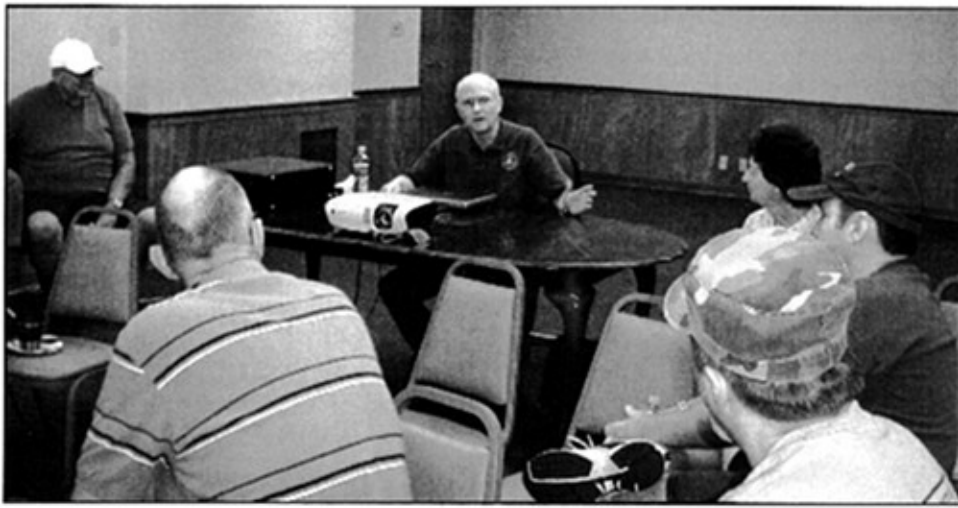
Al Notarione demonstrates his Weathering Techniques

The second event was held on August 6th and featured guest speaker Karl Shaffer visiting Meadville from Chattanooga, TN. Karl gave a power point presentation about the HO Scale-model railroad that was recently reconstructed under his guidance at the Chattanooga Choo-Choo Museum. Karl's presentation was interesting and well received. After concluding his talk, he spoke briefly about wiring techniques.



The Weathering Seminar on June 11th was well attended.





Karl Shaffer Shares Scenes From Chattanooga Choo-Choo Museum

The Committee thanks both Al and Karl for meeting with us and sharing their experiences.

Attendance at the **2nd Friday Bull Sessions** dropped off during the summer months, but was near normal in September. Al Reibel brought in a unique TT-Scale gondola body manufactured in the Netherlands by *Shapeways*. The car body was cut or, if you prefer, carved from plastic using a new 3-dimensional technique that is certain to impact model railroading in a big way. The process works from consumer - provided CAD drawings and/or specifications. It permits very small production runs - even one-offs if desired - regardless of scale. The technique is still in its infancy but is fast growing and could easily be adapted to cover other types of models including buildings.

Discussions at the **2nd Friday Bull Sessions** are not limited to model railroading but include anything railroad. Please join us the second Friday of each month from 6 to 8PM. Everyone is welcome.

To make our committee more responsive to the needs of individual modelers I have proposed that each scale modeled have a team leader specializing in that scale. The representatives suggested for the various scales are as follows: (1) Al Reibel - TT/S; (2) Dennis Mead - G; (3) Ed Cronin - HO; (4) Scott Wilson - N; and (5) Bill McComas - O-scale.

-Tom Collard

### Special Events / Programs

President Dennis Mead has recently been involved with construction of a garden railroad at the Eric Zoo. The sizeable G-Scale multi-level layout was funded largely through the generosity of GE Transportation, and should attract rail fans of all ages. Denny and crew are to be commended on seeing the project through to completion. Our Pres also serves as engineer on the Zoo's "people mover" train.

Another project - that of completing the Edinboro University 6-ton 'Fighting Scot' mascot - was finished and installed after some 13 years of art work, casting and assembling.

-Dan Higham



### Public Relations

Although the open days of the caboose this summer were scaled back, it was a mostly good summer for attendance. Ken Springirth attended book signings on June 20th and August 5th, with good sales of his books. Then Thomas and Ken Kraemer were present on August 1st and signed copies of their books for visitors. Sales of these books were brisk each day and resulted in partial proceeds from sales given to the Society. Thanks to all who gave their time to man the caboose during the

open days, and to all who visited and bought copies of the books. The Crawford County Fair represented an opportunity for selling FCVRRHS Tee's and for briefing the public on Society activities and goals.

-Dennis Mead

### History & Archives

The 100th anniversary of the opening of the Trolley Depot in Cambridge Springs is to be celebrated sometime in November, after a lengthy restoration period. The site may eventually house the Society's model train layout until the future Heritage Center is up and running.



The donation of an Erie RR retirement / certificate of appreciation, awarded to Mr. Herman Dinkeldein, came to us from Martha Dinkeldein Baker, courtesy of the Crawford County H.S.

-Pete Gifford

### Property & Equipment

Power to the caboose at Pomona Park on the Meadville Bypass is nearing completion, as grounding rods have been driven into the ground at both the caboose and power pole ends, and a watertight box to permit wiring the caboose and outlets has also been installed with Penelec approval.

Connection of the two track panels, and re-ballasting and leveling to support the caboose was accomplished by Society members under the guidance of Wayne and Lee, prior to receiving the #518. Jack has recently repainted the closet, 'Head' and floors of the caboose, but re-staining of the outside steps awaits the temporary shift of the caboose - deemed necessary to accomplish the above track work.

The Alco #518 S2 Switcher hood, louvers, fan screen, side panels, and railings - all removed last fall by Society members - have been sand blasted and painted black and yellow per the planned Erie scheme.



Newly Painted #518 S2 Parts

Repainted #518 Hood

*(continued from page 1)*

Well over thirty years has passed since these Transfer Caboose were retired. I was (and still am) hoping to find one of these cars still intact, with the idea of bringing it back home to its birthplace here in Meadville, where it could be placed on display - a salute to the fine craftsmanship of the Meadville Car Shop employees. Sadly, I realize this dream may no longer be possible.

*(Note: After submitting this story to the editor, our Society secretary found a website for a campground located north of Utica, New York. There, shown in the accompanying brochure, sits Caboose T23, complete with wheel sets and now being used as an ice cream stand. See photos on the back page.)*

*-Dennis Mead*

The transfer of the Ashtabula Carson & Jefferson S2 #518 chassis, cab, and replacement trucks located in Jefferson, Ohio still awaits the coordination of crane services - necessary to tear down a Detroit Edison U30C and hopefully to salvage the #518 engine/air tanks for AC & J, as well as loading the stripped #518 unit and replacement trucks for transfer by truck to Butler. Al has a friend who could make a stencil for the #518.



Alco #518 Hood Removed

On the recommendation of Ken Springirth, local rail author and activist, who recently hosted a book signing at the caboose, PENNDOT will be asked to install a sign alerting traffic of the Pomona Park entrance.

*-Al Reibel / Jack Sheets*

## Book Review



### ALCO Locomotives

By Brian Solomon

Published by Voyageur Press

This book should pique the interest of any ALCO fan. The introduction is a summary of ALCO's history from steam to diesel to ALCO's demise in 1969.

The first chapter summarizes all of the companies that made up the American Locomotive Company, such as Brooks, Cooke, and Schenectady. Of interest to Erie Railroad fans is its importance to ALCO through the Brooks Locomotive Works.

The steam photos are excellent and are mostly black and white. The color photography is also extremely eye-catching. The Erie Railroad is represented in the steam section with pix of a 2-8-0 (page 25), and a 0-8-8-0 camelback (page 39). This locomotive is interesting in that it was officially named the Angus type.

Not every type of steamer is mentioned - switchers were largely omitted. Mr Solomon lists detailed info on the various types of locomotives as well as important advances in locomotive technology.

ALCO diesels start on page 80 and include rare pix, some early demonstrators, and railroads that no longer exist - most of which the younger generation never heard of. The photography, both color and black and white, is top notch. Most diesel-electric models are mentioned, though some experimental models are not. Mr. Solomon goes into great detail with the evolution of each series. Of particular interest are the color photos of Erie passenger cars (page 122), Erie S1 in Meadville, PA in 1948, LA&L S2 (parent of the WNYP), a string of EL RS3's hauling freight, an Erie FA1 at Meadville, LA&L C425 #425, an EL C425, and WNYP M636 at Meadville.

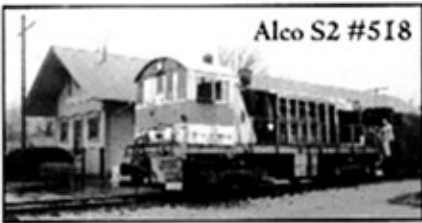
This book is well researched as noted from the extensive bibliography, and is a must read for all ALCO fans including Erie Railroaders. Congratulations should be extended to Brian Solomon and Voyageur Press for a job well done.

The book is available in the FCVRRHS library for loan to members.

*-Carl Timko*



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Alco S2 #518

French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society  
Tentative Program & Events Schedule

**Spring - Fall 2010**

**Oct. 16 ~ Membership Reception at  
Johnson-Shaw Museum**

**Nov. 7 ~ Erie Train Show at Rainbow Gardens**

**Nov. 24 ~ Hundredth Year Anniversary of  
Trolley Station/Museum Opening**

**Nov. 24-Dec. 27 ~ Model Train Display at  
Trolley Station / Museum**

**Nov. 19-21 and Nov. 26-28 ~ Noon - 8 pm  
O-gauge Coal Train Layout  
as part of the Trees of Christmas Program at the  
Baldwin-Reynolds House**



**The Lil' Red Caboose & Camp-store -  
former T23 Transfer Caboose**  
(Note: The extensive open deck, fore/aft  
and small cabin)

Photo courtesy West Canada Creek Camp  
Sites ([www.westcanadacreekcampsites](http://www.westcanadacreekcampsites))



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