



# The Railyard Dispatch

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DANBURY RAILWAY MUSEUM

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**Right: Conrail U25B 2510 in Danbury, 7/1/1979 . Photo by Eddie Blackman, Christopher Palmieri collection**

## NYCS Electrics Update



For many years now our museum has been attempting to relocate two New York Central (NYCS) electric locomotives located on Beacon Island in Albany, New York, to our museum in Danbury, Connecticut. There have been many pieces to this puzzle that are now lining up.

There are actually four locomotives in Albany, all owned by the museum. They include a General Electric U25B, American Locomotive Company RS-3, a General Electric S-1, and a General Electric T-3a - all of NYCS heritage. The Board of Directors (BOD) has published the following statement regarding the diesel-

electrics:

Our museum's primary focus was always and is currently to rescue the two, one of a kind electric locomotives from Beacon Island. After gaining much improved access to the site last year, thanks to The Port of Albany, we were able to assess the condition of the two diesel engines we also hold title to on the land. We have determined the RS-3 to be too far gone to save. We have also determined that given it's rarity, and the fact it operated in Danbury under Conrail, U25B #2510 was worthy of consideration to be saved and relocated to Danbury. We spent time securing the engine, and testing its air brakes while we waited for a move quote, and...(continued on 2)

## President's Report - Jose Alves

This year was the first that we tried a new event for the Christmas holiday – “The First Gift of Christmas”. With Covid rates poised to bubble up again, it was intended for this event to be as Covid friendly as possible. It was quite successful, netting the museum \$20,000! Visitors booked

tickets online or over the phone. They were given the option to bring their own pre-wrapped present for Santa to gift to their child (for free), or they could select to purchase one of three options from us, which we gift wrapped. In the weeks leading up to their departure time,

they had the option to drop their pre-wrapped present off ahead of time. Upon arrival at Union Station and upon check-in they could also hand off their own presents to our gift facilitator. Inside they were able to see the museum as normal and partake in some...(continued on 2)

## NYCS Electrics Update (continued)

upon receiving one we are disheartened to say that at this time we will not be pursuing saving this locomotive due to the logistics of this endeavor and that is cost prohibitive. To learn more about the electrics, and to donate to their saving please visit: <https://www.danburyrail.org/electrics>.

Right: NYC RS-3 on Beacon Island. Photo by Jose Alves



## President's Report (continued)

of the usual holiday activities we have had in the past.

Visitors then boarded RDC 32 which ran at 50% capacity (45 passengers per train) through the Railyard. While the visitors enjoyed their ride, the gift facilitator began staging gifts and the Claus' moved into place in front of the fireplace.

When the train arrived back at Union Station, visitors were escorted back to the building through the rear station doors where they lined up to see Santa. Each gift had the child's name, as well as a trinket from the DRM on it. And of course, visitors are greeted with Hot Chocolate as they left. The cost per ticket was \$20. A number of discount codes were instituted, which took \$2 off per ticket. The Event Committee is deciding whether to add another weekend next year.

The Board of Directors de-

clared the month of January as "absolute baloney" month to mark the firing of Patrick McGinnis as CEO of the New Haven Railroad. Those that declare "Absolute Baloney!" upon entry are granted free admission. Visitors will be informed about the tenure of McGinnis leading the railroad.

We have accepted a donation of roughly 476 yards of rail from the former Sperry Rail facility on Shelter Rock Road, just down the street from the museum. Sperry is a company that specializes in rail flaw detection. The company began in Danbury, but recently moved elsewhere in Connecticut. Some good, useable rail is left on the site and the new owners offered to donate it to us. It consists primarily of 105 lb rail, with some 127 lb as well. The 105 lb rail bolts up directly to existing rail in the

yard, and there are compromise joints fixed to the 127 lb rail, which allows us to use it in the yard as well. The donation includes tie plates, bolts, frogs, and switches. We only have to pay for transportation to Danbury Yard.

The situation surrounding the New York Central electrics continues to change, however, we are very close to bringing these historic locomotives home. The Port of Albany has been an excellent partner this whole time, and we are eternally grateful for their assistance.

# Peter McLachlan - The Jacobs Family



Above: Peter, Perry Gardner, and Dave Jacobs reviewing scans of Pete's slides. At the Falls Village - Canaan Historical Society.

Museum founding member, volunteer, and lifetime railroad employee Peter McLachlan held a special place in many of our hearts. Peter was especially close with the Jacobs family, owners of Jacobs Garage in Falls-Village, Connecticut. Below you will find two articles, one written by Judy, and one written by her son Dave, discussing their experiences with Peter. He will truly be missed, but their stories like this and the work they're doing to preserve his photo collection will help ensure his legacy endures. They have shared with us many of Peter's photos, and will be providing us a digital copy of his collection upon completion. This is a very generous offer, and we cannot thank them enough!

#### **JUDY:**

My husband Denny, son Dave and I own Jacobs Garage in Falls Village, CT. It has been a family business since 1930 and Denny's grandfather

who started the business, was a machinist on the New Haven Railroad. I think this is one of the reasons our family has always been fascinated by anything railroad related.

Our business sits very close to the former New Haven Berkshire line, and Denny first got to know Peter McLachlan starting in the 1960's when Pete would pass by with a cheerful wave. It seems like everyone with any connection with the Berkshire Line knew Pete McLachlan and loved and admired him.

I am also the president of the Falls Village-Canaan Historical Society and got to personally know Pete when I asked him to do some talks for us several years ago. Pete was legendary when it came to storytelling. He could tell a railroad story that would truly entertain and sometimes shock the audience. You never knew what he would say! But you always learned something. His

memory of places, people and anything to do with the railroad was amazing. With every one of his slides, he knew every detail about it. He was fascinating and always a popular speaker.

Last year I asked him if he would do another talk for us and if we could scan his slides to have them on digital format so they could be viewed easily. I was honored that he agreed. It was well known that Pete was hesitant about anyone having access to his slides. It was understandable as he had loaned some out in the past and they were never returned. This upset him terribly. There were literally thousands of slides and he cherished every one. He told me that they were like family to him. They were legendary and very historically significant.

We had only intended to scan the slides of the line around Falls Village and North Canaan, but when we

## Peter McLachlan (continued)

saw what Pete had, we felt it would be beneficial to all railroad historians if...(continued on 4) we did his entire collection. There are literally thousands of slides! Over 15,000 to be exact! The Falls Village-Canaan Historical Society is fortunate to have a volunteer, Perry Gardner, who has the equipment and ability to scan a large amount of slides in a short amount of time. Additionally, my son, Dave, who is not only a great railroad enthusiast but also very good with photo work, could edit and organize the scans.

So when we explained to Pete that we would like to scan the entire collection so that they would be available to all historical entities and fans and that we would do it with great care, he agreed as long as his name was on each picture. At first he would bring up a few cases of slides, we would scan those, and then he would swap those with a new batch. He would call me every few days to see how they were coming. After a while, he relaxed and trusted us to not lose or injure them. We were only about a third of the way through the project when Pete passed away.

Pete's passing was devastating. Not only were we upset about losing



© Pete McLachlan

him, we are also so saddened that we didn't get chance to do the talk with him and his slides this summer. And we were worried that our hopes of preserving his visual railroading history was not going to happen. We were tremendously relieved and honored that those in charge of Pete's slides let us know that Pete wanted us to have them and to continue with the project. So we have the slides in safe keeping with the Historical Society and still plan to have a presentation of them over the summer. It really won't be the same without Pete narrating them, but fortunately he has told us and other railroad buffs the stories behind them and we will

attempt to relay the stories in a way that will make Pete proud. When the slides are completely scanned, we will be delighted to make copies available to the many railroad museums and historical societies along the Berkshire Line and beyond. We want to honor Pete and keep his memory alive for generations to come.

### DAVE:

Peter was known for his stories, mostly his tales of his trips up and down the Berkshire line, or across the Maybrook line. From his times as a youngster standing trackside at his favorite Maybrook line vantage point at Schoolhouse Hill Rd, to all those RDC trips to Pittsfield, his personality was contagious. Wherever Pete went, he had a camera (or two) with him, and what he saw was amazing. He saw everything from New Haven fan trips with Alco PA's to the dark days of Penn Central, back to the better days of Conrail and the Housatonic. Pete had photos of all of it. In addition, Pete traveled across the world and documented some amazing moments in railroad history. He trav-



© Pete McLachlan

# Peter McLachlan (continued)

eled multiple times to Canada to see the last steam power on the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National. He took trips to California, catching the Zephyr across the Rockies, and hanging out around San Francisco riding the cable cars, watching Santa Fe PA's, even checking out the General Electric U-boats they used for hauling fill while building the Orville Dam. His travels took him to South America, Scotland, Mexico, Africa, Hawaii, and the Yukon, not one single corner of the globe was left untouched by Pete. It seemed the only place that was home to him was when he was telling stories and showing off his photos. We are so glad he was able to document all of it with that Peter smile, his camera, and that he wanted to share it with as many people as possible.



## In Memoriam - Carl Liba



**Stan Madyda** - Anyone who was a regular at our Wednesday night meetings and presentations was familiar with Carl Liba. Sadly, word came from his wife Bernice that he passed away on January 10, 2022. He was 84 years old.

The first Wednesday of the month (except during the summer) was reserved for Carl's presentation. Carl was an avid photographer and

slide collector. Each presentation that he gave was well researched with a wide range of slides covering that month's subject. Many times, maps and statistics were included. In addition, to his DRM presentations, he was active with other organizations including the New York Central System Historical Society where he authored several articles for the "Central Headlight."

Part of Carl's working career was spent with the New York Central. There, one of his projects was the development of the Flexi-Flo cover hopper to be used shipping cement and other dry goods. The Flexi-Flo car we have in our collection is a result of Carl's work.

The Danbury Railway Museum sends our condolences to Bernice, children and grandchildren.



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