

PENNDRAGON

The Newsletter of the Unadilla Valley Railway Society & Museum PO Box 751, New Berlin, NY 13411 -- Fall 2010

UNADILLA VALLEY RAILWAY SOCIETY AND MUSEUM'S MONTHLY MEETINGS

Time: 7 PM the first Monday
Of each month at the following-
May thru September Meetings
Railroad Museum-3 Railroad St.
New Berlin, NY

October thru April meetings held at the
New Berlin Library, Main Street
New Berlin, NY

Our Next meeting October 4th

New Berlin Library will be in the community room, basement level. Time is 7 PM with Peter Iorio, discussing fund raising and George Wolfangle sharing his new purchases for donation to the UV Museum. Halloween Games and Prizes along with refreshments will follow. This will be at the New Berlin Library on Main Street in New Berlin, starting our October thru April schedule.

THE D&H CABOOSE IN NEAHWA PARK ONEONTA, NY



picture taken by Hezekiah Welch on September 23, 2010

Have you ever wondered about this caboose enshrined at Neahwa Park?

The answer along with pictures and an interesting story written by Mark Simonson

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Officers	
President	Ralph Scopo
Vice President	Ernie Clemens
Secretary	Phoebe Hendrick
Acting Secretary	Laurie Hotaling
Treasurer	Bonnie Jean Bauer
Corresponding Secretary	Liz Ryan
Member At Large	Bill Fliedner
Member At Large	Alan Fairbrother
Member At Large	Sam Senn
Executive Advisor	Geo. Wolfangle
Director	Pat Gifford

If you have a change of address, either mailing or e-mail PLEASE inform us of the change. If we don't have the proper address, we are unable to send your newsletter.

The UVRS&M is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization chartered by the New York State Board of Regents. Checks payable to Unadilla Valley Railway Society and Museum may be sent to PO Box 751, New Berlin, NY 13411

Our Guest Speakers:

**October 4th Peter Iorio,
and George Wolfangle**

See page one

November 1st Jim Loudon,
Author of **"The Oneonta
Roundhouse"** as well as the
"Leatherstocking Rails"

His books will be available with a personal signature on this date, so mark your calendar now. He will present a talk on the history of the D&H and show a DVD "All the Live Long Day".

December 6th Mark Simonson,
City historian Mark grew up in Oneonta, like many at his age left to explore opportunities elsewhere. He returned in 1997. Prior to returning to Oneonta, Simonson had a career in public relations, marketing and broadcast journalism. He is a graduate of both Onondaga Community College in Syracuse, and the State University College at Oswego.

Mr. Simonson was appointed Oneonta City Historian in 1998. Since then he has been doing freelance research and writing for a column seen twice weekly in The Daily Star of Oneonta. Mark has published books about Oneonta and other general topics of local history in a 5-county region. They will be available for sale and signing.

Mark's presentation will be as an anchorman in a "mock newscast". Imagine yourself in an era of black and white TV, and prepare for a pictorial visit back to many news, sports and weather events that have occurred in our area from the 1970s back to the 1870s! There will be some interesting "words from our sponsors" during the newscast as well. It's "Old News Coverage You Can COUNT On!

Recent Guest Speakers

In April John Taibi, Author and well known Railway Historian spoke on "THE NEW BERLIN BRANCH OF THE O&W THAT BECAME THE UNADILLA VALLEY RAILWAY" or "UP THE RIVER". As always everyone enjoyed John Taibi's knowledge of our Unadilla Valley and the people who lived here and worked for our "rails".

Our May Speaker; George Wolfangle, our Executive Advisor, gave an interesting tour of the main display room in our growing museum. George was also training us to be able to answer questions if we are called on to give tours. We sure learned a lot and are grateful for his vast knowledge and willingness to share it with the members. **On May 8th William Young** had his new book signing. "**UV THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A SMALL RAILROAD**"

His book is a Definitive Account of the Unadilla Valley Railway, with a lot of local history, many pictures and a personal name index with around 700 names listed with references to the pages they are on. His book contains 120 pages and sells through our Museum for only \$20.00. This is a must for any train (railroad) buff. To order a copy before they are gone send \$20.00 plus \$4. Postage fee to UVR Society and Museum, PO Box 751, New Berlin, NY 13411.

On June 7th Fred Lanfear, **President of the Oxford Historical Society and Author of "Railroad**

Days" was our speaker. He brought with him many railway books and photographs of near by railroad trestles and other interesting prints.

In July our guests were Harla and Mark Lazur, members and active participants of many Railroad related organizations including ours. They brought a console television, VCR tape and talked about their experiences at the National Railroad Historical Society Annual meeting held the previous week in Scranton, PA. Harla and Mark are often helping with the various train rides for the Cooperstown and Charlotte Valley Train Ride between Milford and Cooperstown, that is owned and operated by the Leatherstocking Chapter, of the National Railway Historical Society.

Our August Meeting found Alan and Dorothy putting on the finishing touches to the float. Alan talked on how he decided to use wood material, unlike the paper materials from the last years float. The meeting was enjoyed by the few people who could attend and refreshments were wonderful. Thanks to all the good cooks.

Our September Meeting was held on the 13th as the first Monday was on Labor Day. At this meeting Alan Fairbrother, a well known Award winning International Long Distance Runner and railway aficionado who hales from England, was our speaker.

Alan is also responsible for our group's First Prize award winning float for the second year in a row. Alan has been in the "White Peaks Marathon", England several times, finishing in the top 6 and first in his age

group with 300 runners. He enjoyed running on the old railroad tracks created by George Stevenson who was the originator of the railroad system. All attending were interested and learned a lot from Alan's descriptive talk.

Refreshments were extra nice with a hand made and decorated cake in the shape of a train, by Phoebe Hendrick, fresh apple pie by Ruth Gregory, Brownies by Bonnie Jean Bauer and half-moon cookies made by Gladys Slentz. This was the last meeting of the year scheduled at the UV Railroad Station.

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Did you know that the caboose was not on the passenger trains, only on the freight trains and always the last car?
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Starting in October we will meet at the New Berlin Public Library on Main Street in New Berlin on the first Monday of the month at 7 pm. Everyone is invited and encouraged to bring a friend.

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Anger is when two people are trying to get the last word first.
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FIRST ANNUAL PICNIC

On September 11th we held our first ever picnic. The attendance was great. From 1 until 9 PM members and their families and friends came and enjoyed the gourmet foods prepared by Alan Fairbrother and the many dishes brought in by the members as well as touring Alan's very unusual and fascinating home, revealing his many talents. If you missed this picnic please keep in

mind to attend the next one. It was really fun having time to meet all the children and friends of our members.

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A SPECIAL THANKS

To Mark Pylinski for his many hours of volunteer labor on the UV Railroad engine house area at our Sophie Street property. His efforts have greatly improved the looks and interest to this long forgotten massive repair building that hardly showed from the street. Mark's continued work cutting down bushes, trees, grass, weeds and moving many years of forgotten materials left at this site have earned a lot of compliments from members as well as the neighbors in the Willow Lane Trailer Park adjacent to this site. Thank you Mark from the members of the Society & Museum.

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Exciting News from George, our Tour Guide, "Attendance is up on Saturdays with many coming from 1 to 5 for the Free Tours. We have also had several Special Guests that include CLIFFORD CROUCH our NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLYMAN and DENNIS McCABE, our ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL." Thanks go to George for always being there for the tours as well as the others who assist him.

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ALL ABOARD?? Last call boarding on UV Track now!!!!

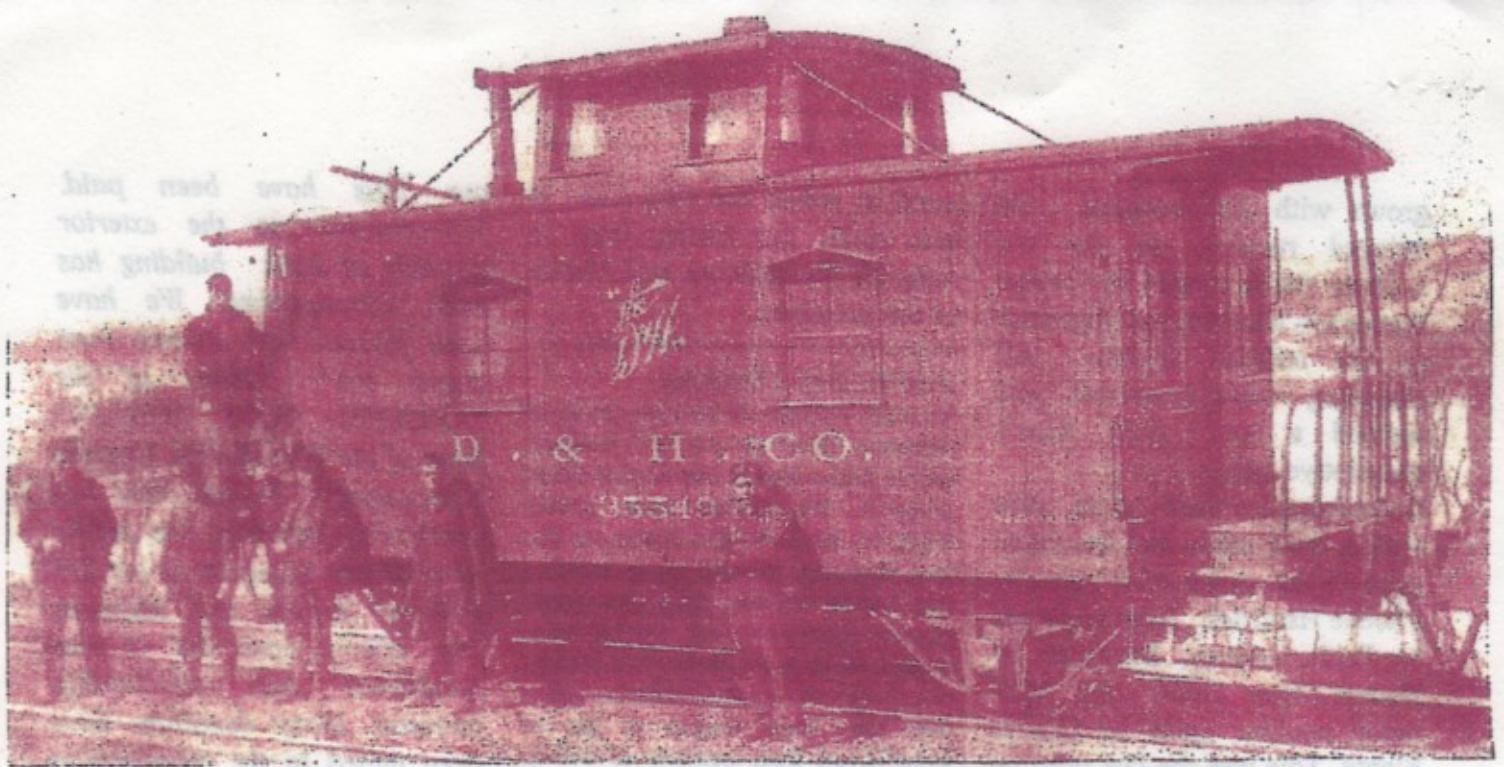
A note from your director.... As Fall is upon us I am giving thanks for all the great things we have accomplished this year. Our membership has grown, we had business meetings as scheduled and regular monthly meetings with many guest speakers and

our bills have been paid. Improvements to the exterior grounds of each building has been accomplished. We have been blessed with Bonnie Jean Bauer the Writer of the "AROUND NEW BERLIN" page of the New Berlin Gazette Newspaper. Bonnie Jean has continually informed the public of what was going on at our UV Railway Society and Museum. Her efforts have led to our attendance and membership increase. Many donations have been added to the memorabilia and the hours of cleaning and organizing show when one enters our main show room or looks around our Engine House or The Depot.

It seems like our guest speakers have been extra informative this year, Thank you all sincerely.

Our First Annual Picnic was sure a success as was our entry into the Otsego County Fair for the first time. It was nice receiving the first place prize for our float, with a trophy, ribbon and money. As usual we were involved in the New Berlin Youth Days and placed first with our float in their parade as well.

As we prepare for the last months of this year I count my blessings for all who have helped in any way. Remember on January 3rd we have our election of officers for the coming year. Please prepare to be part of this growing history for our children and grandchildren's future by stepping aboard the UV Tracks .



Workers pose with a caboose from the D&H Railroad in a photo from the early 1900s. The Caboose had a history of being the last car on a train from the 1840s until about 1980s

Photo courtesy of Huntington Memorial Library



Mark Simonson,

Author of this story taken from
THE DAILY STAR March 7, 2005.

For decades, motorists and horse and buggy drivers sat at railroad crossings in Oneonta, waiting for trains to pass. Probably their favorite sight was seeing the last car go by, the caboose.

From our family station wagon as kids, my brother and I would always wave to the man on lookout duty in the caboose's cupola. It always seemed like we were first in line when the trains passed along the Gas Avenue crossing, at the entrance of Neahwa Park. To pass the time, we'd count the number of cars on the train.

Until the middle of the 1980's, motorists continued to wait at crossings, but saw fewer cabooses. The end for what were called "crumb boxes" by some was near. Railroaders called them by numerous names: cabin car, crummy, shack, waycar, bobber, brainbox, shanty and hack, just to name a few.

What used to be an office for a conductor, or a small home for trainmen,

the caboose got its debut in the 1840s, according to an edition of American Rail Age magazine.

The first "conductor's car" appeared on the Auburn and Syracuse Railroad. A conductor named Nat Williams needed a place to keep his records, so he fixed up a boxcar on the end of a train. He set up a makeshift office, using a wooden box for a seat.

The idea caught on, and railroads began building shanties on top of flatcars to house their conductors. Eventually the cars evolved into

the traveling red houses for trainmen and conductors, complete with icebox, mats, and coal burning stove. At first, these cars had flat tops. The cupola on top, according to railroad legend, appeared during the Civil War.

Bookwork was often done at night by oil lamp. Pails of water were kept by the stove for washing and cooking. The men who stayed in cabooses took pride in them as if they were homes, washing the windows, mopping the floors, and putting

fresh coats of paint on them when necessary.

Sometimes the men got a bit too possessive of their caboose. Joseph Super, a retired D&H conductor, once told The Daily Star, "You had certain conductors who thought the caboose was their own cabin. They wouldn't let anybody in except the crew."

Super said there were railroad employees who might hitch rides to distant work sites, seeking the caboose as a place to ride. Super said the conductors sent what were called "deadheads" to the front of the train for their rides.

With office space for the conductor and living space for two others, perhaps a flagman and a middleman, there wasn't much room to spare in a caboose. They slept in the caboose overnight until unions bargained for paid lodging.

For Oneontans, a caboose was once a clandestine meeting place for union organizers. It was 1883 when eight trainmen secretly met in a caboose in the D&H Railroad yards to form a pact

that evolved into the Brotherhood of Railroad Brakemen. That caboose is placed in state in Neahwa Park.

Those eight men had planned to form an affiliate of an Albany society that aided trainmen who were sick or disabled. But they could not come to terms with the Albany group and formed their own organization. It grew quickly and spread to other yards in the D&H system. The railroad donated the caboose to the trainmen's union in 1924.

By 1982, a national railroad-labor agreement committed the unions to negotiate for a gradual elimination of

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If you are interested in joining a group from here to attend the next meeting of the Utica & Mohawk Valley Chapter of the NRHS, Inc. on October 8th please tell Pat Gifford. Their meeting will be a video documentary "Riding the Rails" about people in the Depression riding freight trains in search of work.

On the way there we plan on taking a second look at a caboose that is slated to be given away to a non-profit organization. If we can move it from the off track setting in Utica we could apply for the donation. Pictures of the caboose and more details are going to be shared at our October meeting.

On Saturday, October 23 a day-trip is planned to begin at Utica Union Station and follow the route of the New York, Ontario & Western from Oneida to Sylvan Beach, Central Square, Fulton, Oswego and return. John Taibi, the Utica & Mohawk Valley Chapter's Director and former speaker here at the UV will be on board to narrate and point out sites of interest along the way. If anyone is interested please get in touch with Ralph Scopo at 847-9910 and he will see if there is room. The 24-passenger minibus driven by their President Doug Preston (a Birnie Bus Co. employee) said the fee is only \$22. lunch not included.

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What do we call a chiropractor for Pets???

An animal cracker!!!

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caboose. Railroad officials claimed that the caboose was obsolete and expensive to run. The unions claimed a caboose was necessary, as someone watched for derailing cars and other problems.

It became evident that new technology would slowly diminish the need for cabooses. Automatic block signals eliminated the need for a flagman. Switchman were replaced by dispatcher-operated power switches. The primary function of the caboose as an observation platform was no longer needed as new trackside equipment could easily spot safety defects.

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And so, the watchful brakeman was gone, too.

The caboose is now a thing of the past—all part of improved technology. It has been replaced by an EOT (end of train device), an electronic box that monitors the train from the last car. These things flash a strobe light as they pass railroad crossings. Waving to a human observer is just a memory.

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Mark your calendar now for the next two speaker meetings November 1 and December 6. Both will be at the New Berlin Library Conference room at 7 PM. Bring a friend. Speakers will have their books available for sale.

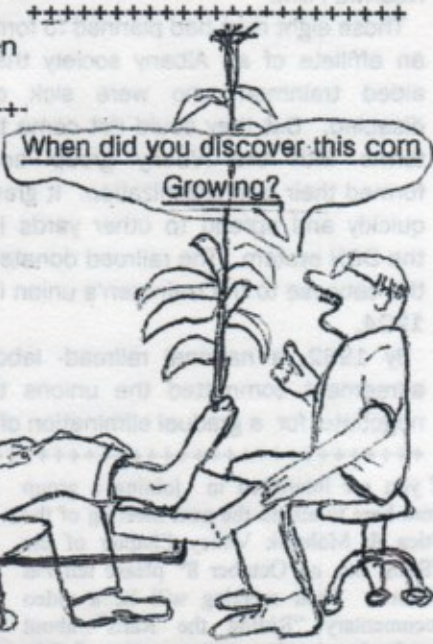


Picture above is the award winning float made by members of the UV Railway Society and Museum. This float was designed by Alan Fairbrother, one of our Members at Large. Members, Margie Behnke, George Wolfangle and Hezekiah Welch are returning it to the depot after spending the afternoon displayed near our Historical Sign on Genesee St. All who stopped were admiring it and came to the Museum for the free tour that afternoon. As usual on Saturday afternoons from 1 to 5 pm, George will be available for people to come so he can share his love of the "Rail" history at this growing Museum.

UNADILLA VALLEY RAILWAY SOCIETY & MUSEUM
MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME _____ You are invited to join the 141 people + Mail to UV Railway BOX 751
 Address _____ who are or have been members and + New Berlin, NY 13411
 City _____ receive our newsletters and enjoy our
 State _____ many events each year. Family, children
 ZIP _____ and all are welcome to join.

Rates Single.....\$15 All joining now are paid through 1-1-2012. You will
 Family.....\$25 receive a membership card along with the Pendragon
 Life Member.....\$250 Publications and notice of Monthly Speaker Meeting
 Join today and help keep the Museum open for future generations.



**I THINK I CAN
I THINK I CAN
WINS FIRST
PRIZE 4 UVR**



IMPORTANT COMING EVENTS PAGE 5

TO



Unadilla Valley Railway
 Society and Museum
 3 Railroad Avenue
 PO Box 751
 New Berlin, NY 13411