

The Black Diamond

Official Newsletter of the Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society
May/June, 2007

Message From The Editor

Welcome to the May/Jun, 2007 edition of the “Black Diamond”. Please send any Society news and/or historical articles about Finger Lakes area railroads to me by U. S. Mail at P. O. Box RR, Manchester, NY 14504 or by E-mail at dhalderman@rochester.rr.com Thank you for your contributions.

David Halderman, Editor/President

LVRR Diesel Locomotive Rescue

The Sayre Historical Society Gets a Chance of a Lifetime

The Sayre Historical Society is no stranger to unique, unusual, and sometimes heavy items of Sayre’s history, recieved from many generous donors. However, the latest contribution takes the prize. It’s a 131 ton General Electric diesel locomotive.



The locomotive is one of 12 GE, model U-23B, diesel electric locomotives built in 1974 for the Lehigh Valley Railroad. Upon inclusion into Conrail in 1976, the “U-Boats”, as they were fondly known, were painted blue, renumbered, and reassigned to various portions of Conrail’s far-flung system. Upon retirement from Conrail, many were scrapped, and the remaining few were sold to private companies in need

of motive power. In 2000, one of the last remaining U-23B's was delivered to a motive power supplier and repair center for further distribution.

Greg Deibler, Sayre Historical Society Board member, became aware of this locomotive through numerous contacts. Aware that none of the original Lehigh Valley steam fleet remained, and only one of the diesel fleet was preserved, Deibler contacted the present owner of the locomotive, and over a period of several weeks, consulted with that owner regarding a possible donation of the locomotive to the Society. It would then be restored to its original colors and displayed in Sayre at the future Sayre museum.

This donation came with a very large condition: that the Society transfer it. The current plan for movement is to attach the locomotive to an active locomotive to move it from its current location, to Mehoopany. When it reaches Mehoopany, it will then be attached to a train and sent up to GE Rail in Sayre. There it will wait until funds can be raised for construction of a display track on the Sayre passenger platform that extends from the south end of the Sayre station to just above Packer Ave. Appropriate funds must be raised to defray the substantial costs to the Society to contract the move, and to hoist the locomotive into place. Funds may also be necessary to repaint the locomotive to its original Lehigh Valley colors.

If you would like to contribute funds to this project, please send your check to "U23B Project" c/o Sayre Historical Society, P.O. Box 311, Sayre, PA 18840. Contributor's names will be placed in a displayed record, visible to all who visit the museum. The Society is a 501(c)(3), not for profit organization, and contributions are tax deductible.

If you have any questions, please send an e-mail to the project manager, Greg Deibler, at sayrehistorical@yahoo.com and use "U23B" in the subject line.

Article from the Sayre, Pennsylvania, Historical Society website, www.sayrehistoricalsociety.com

Explore NY Grant

LVERRHS is currently partnering with Finger Lakes Scenic Railway and fourteen other railroads and museums throughout New York State on a matching grant. Grant monies will be used to promote our Society, museum, and the Fall Foliage

and Santa Train excursions. One website will be available that will link all sixteen of the participating organizations together. Tentatively, the website address will be www.nytrains.org, although the website is not up and running yet. Brochures will also be printed that will publicize all of the participating organizations and will be distributed throughout the state. Cooperative advertising is also planned in various magazines. The project is being chaired by Deb Najarro of Finger Lakes Scenic Railway. Other participants include the Upper Hudson Railway, Central NY Chapter of NRHS, WNY Railway Historical Society, Niagara Frontier Chapter of NRHS, Rochester Chapter of NRHS, Adirondack Scenic Railway, and museums in Cooperstown and North Creek.

Old Manchester Railroad Bridge To Be Replaced

By Craig Fox/ Figer Lakes Times, Tuesday, February 6, 2007

Manchester- The old railroad bridge over Route 21 will finally be coming down this summer.

Ontario County Public Works Commissioner Bill Wright said Monday that the more than 70-year old bridge, which acts as a barrier between the villages of Manchester and Shortsville, will be torn down and replaced with a gated railroad crossing.

The \$2 million to \$3 million project has been in the works for about seven years, and needs approval from an administrative judge and the State Department of Transportation because of its ties to railroad use, Wright said. "We had to justify the project and show why it's needed", he said. The bridge, near Lehigh Road and Red Jacket High School, is used by the Ontario Central railroad about three times a week, Wright said. However, it's become a safety hazard because of crumbling cement walls and other structural problems, Wright said, adding that extensive repairs would be needed.

The bridge - a subject of graffiti for years - is also dangerous because pedestrians don't like to use the sidewalks underneath it because they are dark, so they cross over the tracks above, he said.

With the elimination of the bridge, a railroad crossing and switching yard would be built at South Avenue. As part of its approval, the "at-grade" Route 21 railroad

crossing will also require trains to move at a slower speed so they will be able to stop if needed, Wright said. The crossing will feature a gate to stop cars, flashing lights, and pedestrian gates. The project will be paid for with 80% Federal funding, 15% State funding, and the rest by the County. Bids will go out in February.

Construction would start in June and be completed by the end of the work season.

Manchester Town Supervisor Bill Eddinger said the elimination of the railroad bridge will allow some nearby land to open for economic development.

Manchester Mayor Nancy Johnsen said that the entrance to the village will change without the bridge being there. “Certainly, the entrance to the village will have a new look, which I think will be an attractive one, she said. “It could be called an eyesore”.

Editor’s note: Article above is as it was copied from the Finger Lakes Times newspaper. I’m assuming the Mayor meant the OLD bridge was an eyesore, NOT the new grade crossing.



A westbound “Dog pack” of Alco C-420's and EMD GP-38's moves across the Rt. 21 overpass in Manchester sometime in the early '70s.

Train Excursion Update

On May 20th, there was a passenger train excursion run by the Finger Lakes Scenic RR, and co-sponsored by the LVRRHS. Promoted by the railroad as a “Mini-Museum/Wine & Cheese” trip, with wine and cheese provided by Long Point Winery and McCadam Cheese. The train boarded at Geneva and ran to Shortsville, with a one hour layover for tours of our museum and an art exhibit at the Depot restaurant. The Society members did some re-arranging of displays in the museum, and a small model display was put together and member's models of LV engines and freight cars were on display for the public.

At this time, there are no scheduled excursions planned until October, when we have tentatively scheduled “Fall Foliage” trips for the weekend of October 13th and 14th (watch for more information on our website, and/or in local newspapers). Also this year in November, we intend to host our usual “Santa Train” rides again, the weekend after Thanksgiving.

Society Meetings and Open Houses

Society meetings are held on the third Sunday of each month, at 3:00 PM, at the LVRRHS Station Museum, located at 8 E. High St., Shortsville, NY. Our open houses are being held on those same days, from 1:00 to 3:00PM.

2007 Membership

This year has already brought new challenges for us. With the Finger lakes Scenic RR changing the structure of their trip sponsorship and promotion, it has become even more expensive for us to hold rail excursions. There are also projects needing to be done at the museum, some of which will require substantial effort and money, such as the rebuilding of the entire porch/deck on the museum building. Any donations towards this project, and/or donations of labor would be greatly appreciated. And as always, any new memberships will be welcome and appreciated.

FGLK #2201 in special LV commemorative paint, idles next to the LVRHS museum building, while passengers board for the 2006 Fall Foliage trip.



Courtesy of Ed Gardner

Officers and Trustees of the Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society

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Please visit the Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society website at:
www.lvrhrs.org for information, updates and future excursion plans.