

ISSN 1053-4415

The Sentinel



A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE PUBLISHED BY THE BALTIMORE & OHIO RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

\$8.00

VOLUME 43, NUMBER 1

FIRST QUARTER 2021



Message from the President

Happy New Year fellow members!

It looks like 2021 is going to be far more enjoyable than 2020. Winter and Spring will continue to have shutdowns and restricted activities. We will be following the same. There will be no Founders Day Dinner, nor RPM meetings this coming Spring. We will make a decision on the Western Mini-Con in April. Hopefully the Eastern Mini-Con in July and the annual convention will go forward so members can attend in person. The limited archives staff is still working on organizing and cataloging our resources, but we restrict attendance to workers only and will reconsider researchers after June 2021. Other activities in the second half of the year will be considered after the summer starts.

The mortgage will be paid off in April and we are about \$4,000 short of reaching our goal. For everyone who contributed to the Mortgage Fund, a big thank you. If we exceed the needed contributions, our treasurer will contact the donor to request the funds be administered to a different account.

As always, articles for the *Sentinel* are needed, so get your pen or keyboard busy

and get your ideas and knowledge in to Ken Wing. Please include photos and maps if you have some to complement the text. If not, make a list of specific needs so we can check the archives. Ken and I are in discussion about starting a B&O and Chessie modeling section in the back of the *Sentinel*. The B&O modelers were the majority of the founders forming our society. Active modelers keep societies going, and with the B&O being gone for 34 years, to keep the society viable we must encourage historical railroad modeling. Yes, there is a need for historical articles about the railroad's past, but why not dovetail modeling with the history? We need to build a bank of modeling articles on accurate modeling of rolling stock, signals, structures, and operations to make operating a B&O model railroad enjoyable. When constructing an article, please take clear detailed photos—a photo is worth a thousand words. Drawings help, and when talking about operations, schedules and flowcharts are helpful to understanding.

The book projects are about to bear fruit in the next 12-to-16 months. With the

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 39)

The Sentinel

The official publication of
**THE BALTIMORE AND OHIO
RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

P. O. Box 1608
Sykesville, Maryland 21784

E-mail: info@borhs.org

Website: borhs.org

Missing *Sentinel*: storemanager@borhs.org

The Baltimore and Ohio Historical Society is a non-profit corporation dedicated to preserving and disseminating historical information about The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

Copyright ©2021 ISSN 1053-4415



SOCIETY OFFICERS

Greg Smith - PRESIDENT
president@borhs.org

Grant Berry - VICE PRESIDENT
vp@borhs.org

Allen Young - SECRETARY
secretary@borhs.org

Chris Winslow - TREASURER
treasurer@borhs.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bruce Elliott (2020) **Mike Shylanski** (2021)
Henry Freeman (2020) **Tom Dupee** (2022)
Travers Stavac (2021) **John Howard** (2022)

Bob Hubler (Past President)

Officers' terms expire annually. Directors' terms expire in October of the indicated year. All directors may be reached at secretary@borhs.org.

EDITORIAL STAFF

Ken Wing, EDITOR—sentinel@borhs.org

Clifton Linton, Gene Stebbins,
and **Richard Zeren**, ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Nick Fry, ARCHIVIST

John Teichmoeller, B&O MODELER

Craig Close, RUNNING LIGHT EDITOR

Roberta Poling, Thunder Grafex, Ltd.,
GRAPHIC DESIGN—roberta@thundergrafex.com

Contributors welcome:

Articles, manuscripts, photographs, reviews, and other historical data are solicited for publication. Original material will be returned upon publication. Send all material to:

Ken Wing, sentinel@borhs.org
or mail hardcopy material to
P.O. Box 1608, Sykesville, MD 21784

COMPANY STORE

Orders: **Company Store link at borhs.org**
storemanager@borhs.org

MEMBERSHIP

membershipchair@borhs.org

One year regular membership is \$45.00. For other classes or inquiries, write to the Society's P.O. Box address, or email membershipchair@borhs.org.

For an address change, write to the P.O. Box address, or email address@borhs.org

Memberships, once accepted, cannot be returned.

In This Issue

THE CASE OF THE MISSING RED CABOOSE BY DWIGHT JONES.....	3
BRIDGE TO A BETTER LIFE BY BOB WITHERS	9
RIDING THE HELPERS BY CHARLES ROGERS	21
100 YEARS AGO ON THE B&O CURATED BY BRIAN ROCHON.....	34
1844 B&O NEWS, DECODED FROM RAILROAD MORSE BY ABRAM BURNETT.....	35
RUNNING LIGHT	38
ARCHIVE CENTER AND BUILDING REPORT.....	39

On the Covers

FRONT COVER: Typical three-unit Burnsville helper set during the mid-1970s. Parked on the helper spur, this set consists of GP38 4816, GP40 4232, and a second GP38.

BACK COVER: [Top] Freshly-painted 904000 soaks up some sun outside of the Parsons Yard roundhouse in Columbus, Ohio, on November 23, 2003. The car was named "Spirit of the B&O" as stenciled above the bay window.

[Middle] Wearing its first red anniversary scheme the 904000 was photographed in the Low Yard at Parkersburg, West Virginia, on September 15, 1991. Lettering was different on each side.

[Bottom] At 8:30 PM on June 7, 2017, 904000 trailed train Q635-07 over the diamond at Little Miami in Columbus, Ohio, with sister cabooses 904033, still retaining its original 1980 Chessie System paint scheme 37 years after being built.

(All three photographs by Dwight Jones)

THE CASE OF THE MISSING RED CABOOSE

By Dwight (Sherlock) Jones



Only about a month old, the 904000 is shown on the caboose track at Parkersburg's High Yard on August 24, 1980, awaiting its next pool-service assignment. (Dwight Jones photograph)

IT was a dark and stormy night. Fog was so thick that one hardly could make out the flickering street lights along the rain-soaked streets. A coyote howled in the distance. Or maybe it was a wolf? It was not a night fit for man nor beast. Well, maybe I have exaggerated a little for story embellishment. It may have just been a normal, bright sunny day! In any event an email arrived on May 10, 2017, from one of my CSX friends who was a manager at the CSX Russell, Kentucky, Rail Welding Plant.

"Dwight, can you rub your crystal ball and tell me where our little red caboose is? Lost in New York somewhere near Fonda..."

This sounded odd and intriguing so I gave him a call to find out more about this. "Lost? What do you mean, lost?" I inquired.

As the story unfolded, it went to New York State on its assigned welded-rail train with a load of new rail. After unloading, the empty rail train returned to Russell, but there was no red caboose with it. Apparently, someone in Transportation removed it for some reason. Numerous CSX emails

had been sent to everyone in that area, but no one had acknowledged where it was. The rail train was in the process of being loaded again at Russell and CSX had no caboose to send out with it!

I thought, "Wow, either they are extremely desperate, or they have an overly-high opinion of my research abilities! Me, a lowly railfan, trying to help CSX find a missing caboose, when they have all of the technology resources!" I was both flattered and very curious myself. If nothing else, this could make for a fascinating story—someday.

First, a little background. The "little red caboose," as it is known at Russell, is the CSXT 904000, former B&O 904000, the first caboose from the last batch of cabooses built for B&O by Fruit Growers Express in 1980. For this reason, it has been a favorite of mine since construction in 1980. To celebrate its celebrity status, it has been through several paint schemes in its life. In 1987 I was given permission to paint a slogan on the side of the car celebrating the 160th Anniversary of the B&O. A few years later, while it

was assigned at Parkersburg, several fans helped me repaint the whole caboose red and reletter it with vintage B&O style lettering in white, again celebrating the B&O anniversary. Next, it was fortunate to be selected as one of four C-27A cabooses to be assigned to welded-rail-train service and be repainted by CSX as a "pumpkin" MofW-assigned car. The pumpkin moniker originated to describe MofW equipment that CSX painted orange. In the case of the 904000, it even was given a pumpkin stencil under its side bay window (we're not admitting who was responsible for that, but it was not officially sanctioned by CSX). The welded-rail-train cabooses had all of their plumbing, electrical, and other caboose appurtenances stripped from the interiors but they retained their original eight caboose seats. They were used to transport the MofW workers who manned the loading and unloading operations of the welded-rail trains to and from the work sites. No caboose, no way to transport the workers. So, it was indeed important for a welded-rail train to have one of these employee transport cars. To be perfectly



On October 12, 1987, the 904000 was photographed in the yard at Russell, Kentucky, after being deadheaded from Richmond, Virginia, for this photo session to record the anniversary lettering applied to the car at Lima, Ohio, at a B&O gathering. The railroad had removed the car so quickly from Lima that photos were not made (and we did not get the slogan on the opposite side either)!

(Dwight Jones photograph)

correct, I should note that later CSX added a fifth welded-rail train and a fifth C-27A caboose to accompany it.

With the big planned birthday celebration at the B&O Museum to pay tribute to the 175th anniversary of the Baltimore & Ohio, I was wondering how I could come up with a way for cabooses to play a role in the event. The plan I developed was to repaint the 904000 red (again), see if it could be displayed at the museum for the celebration, and then get released back to its welded-rail assignment. There it could travel the entire CSX system from Florida to Michigan delivering rail and hauling back old rail, and at the same time get a lot of PR for the B&O and the Museum. Of course, everyone knows what happened with the snowfall in Baltimore, collapse of the roundhouse roof, and cancellation of the big party. But the repainted 904000 did get a dedication of sorts at Hagerstown thanks to the fine folks at the Hagerstown Roundhouse Museum and the cooperation of CSX. The local TV station even covered the unveiling.

I submitted my drawing of how I wanted to paint the 904000 to one of my good CSX contacts in the mechanical department in Jacksonville in August of 2002,

over a year in advance of the scheduled museum celebration. It was a good thing that I did, because it took a full year to get the final CSX approval for the project. I was paying for all the paint and supplies myself, so there would be no cost to CSX or the museum (although I had not even clued museum personnel into what my plan was).

CSX has two welded-rail plants, one at Russell, Kentucky, and the other at Nashville. Based on scheduling, the welded-rail trains get sent to whichever plant management decides. When approval was received for the 904000 repaint, its train was at the Nashville plant. So, it was removed from its train and deadheaded to Columbus, Ohio, and placed into what is one of the last (only?) remaining roundhouses on the railroad. There I spent the better part of two months working on the car, sometimes assisted by my brother.

The local car department hooked their Ford tractor to it, and pulled the completed car out of the roundhouse on November 22, 2003. It was placed on the turntable for some “builders” photos.

One other characteristic of the former cabooses assigned to welded-rail-train service—they have been graffitied from head

to toe multiple times. Even though CSX later repainted two of them, they almost immediately were attacked again by the field artists (or vandals), pick your choice of term. Because of this, I did not expect the 904000 to last long in its red anniversary paint. Since I was paying for the paint, I elected not to paint the roof to save money. As things turned out, this was a mistake.

The graffiti artists have left the 904000 alone, after nearly 17 years now, even though they continue to attack the other four welded-rail-train cabooses (yes, I am knocking on wood having said this). After several years the roof began to rust, and the stain from this rust was streaking down the sides of the red 904000. So I again obtained the required permission, signed the release, and on the weekend of August 16 and 17, 2014, while the car was at Russell waiting for its train to be loaded, I gave the roof a good coat of Rustoleum silver, repainted the top roof side sheets and smokestack black, repainted all safety appliances yellow, repainted trucks and underframe black, and added Safety First stencils to each end. I also changed the 175th Anniversary lettering to say 185th.

So that brings us up to date with the email of May 10, 2017, indicating that the



The volunteer painting crew assembled at Parkersburg in the fall of 1991 to completely repaint the 904000 in this special red tribute paint scheme with white lettering. On September 15, 1991, it was photographed in the Low Yard at Parkersburg. By this date it was in assigned service between Parkersburg and Huntington, West Virginia. (Dwight Jones photograph)



CSX repainted the original four welded-rail-train cabooses into their orange MofW colors at the Fruit Growers Express shops in Jacksonville, Florida. The author photographed the freshly outshopped car at Moncrief Yard in Jacksonville on February 13, 1995. (Dwight Jones photograph)

little red caboose was now lost. And yes, it did have an electronic car-identifying module welded to its side, but it must not have been working.

So what could this railfan do to help CSX find their caboose? Not much, I reasoned. In fact I thought it was pretty funny that they would even ask.

I was even added to their email communication string as they sought to find the missing car. Emails were being sent to everyone in the New York area begging for help in locating the AWOL caboose. One manager in Jacksonville even issued an email stating that if anyone could find the car, they would receive a \$50 gift card!

Now that was some motivation.

Well, I thought at least I could do some web searches. That was a pretty popular caboose in its special red anniversary paint scheme. Photos of it turned up everywhere. Perhaps I could search some facebook sites or other web sites in New York State and turn up something? Yeah, right! Of course,

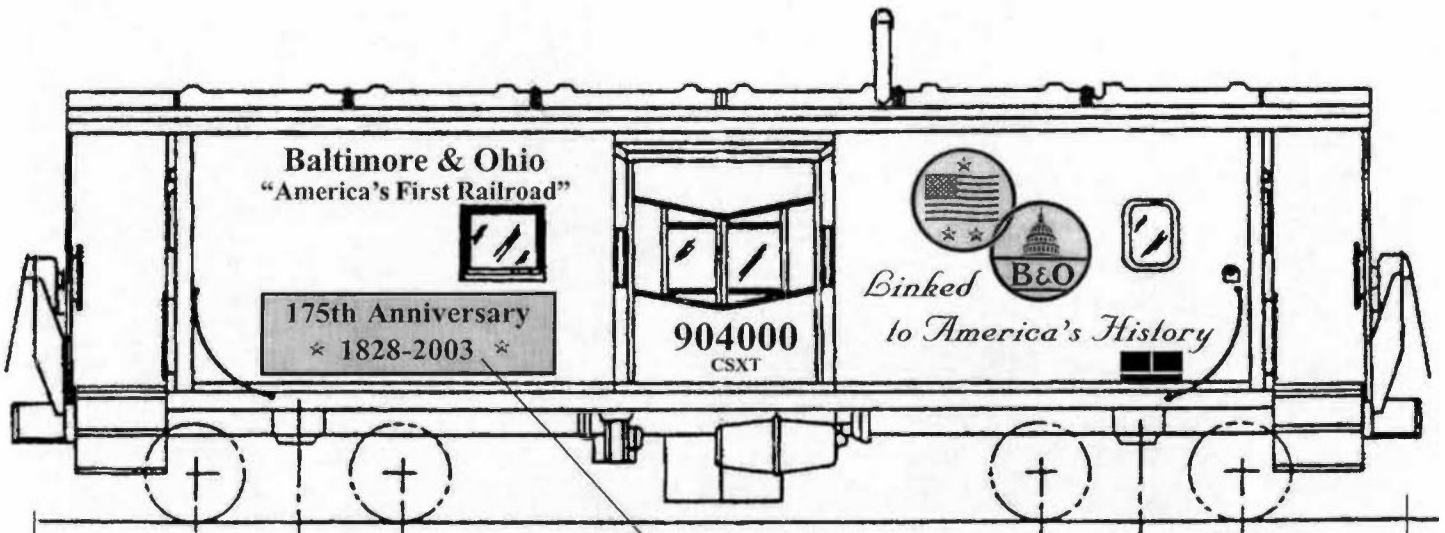
I found nothing, but at least I felt I was doing something to help the cause.

A few days later, finding some time on my hands, I decided to check YouTube videos. Almost immediately one caught my eye titled "B&O Red CSX Caboose Trailing 5 Engines at Dunkirk, NY." Well that sounds interesting; let's watch that video. This was a hot shot general-merchandise train making pretty good speed through Dunkirk. And, wait for it—on the end was the red 904000 caboose! Amazing. Only problem was that this video was dated as taken on February 20, 2017, nearly three months prior. Who knows where that caboose could be three months down the road? By the way, this video is still on YouTube as I write this so readers can search to find and view it.

First question was, which direction was this train heading? Fortunately, there were some large buildings in the background as landmarks. I studied these on a satellite image of the area and with this information, and the angle of the sun, determined that this train was westbound. I reasoned it was heading either for Cleveland or Willard. I had no contacts at Cleveland, but at Willard I knew B&ORRHS Director Tom Dupee had recently retired from CSX, and



With stencil in place, the pumpkin emblem is being applied to the lower side of the bay. All four of the orange MofW Rail Train cabooses received this interesting tongue-in-cheek humor emblem. (Dwight Jones photograph)



Colors

- Bright Red--body, ends, roof
- Safety Yellow--grabirons, step tread edges
- Black--trucks, underframe components
- White--Lettering

Special Anniversary Paint Scheme Baltimore & Ohio Caboose 904000
Date: 8-14-02
Dwight Jones 536 Clairbrook Avenue Columbus, Ohio 43228