

THE MARKER LIGHT

NUMBER 3

THE PORT HURON & DETROIT RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WINTER 2008

CASTLEBLAYNEY SAVED!



CASTLEBLAYNEY IN HER BERTH BEHIND THE ROUNDHOUSE ca. 1980

COVER: She's coming back home soon! (Cover photo from the Andre Menard Collection)
PG. 2: From Where I Sit; 2009 Premier Edition Calendar!
PG. 3 & 4: Spring and Fall Membership Meetings
PG. 5: Castleblayne Saved!
PG. 6: Non-Profit Goals; Castleblayne Arrival Notice; Join!; Purpose; Board of Directors



It's certainly the best news we could have had, to learn that Castleblayne is returning home. The event is especially historic on many levels. For one, this car we recently learned and confirmed, is the Chesapeake and Ohio's first heavyweight Pullman car, numbered *Car #1*. Built for President Harahan in 1926, it's survived all these years to come back to us. It's simply remarkable. Second, the generosity of DeWitt Chapple who donated the car to the Society cannot be over celebrated. Mr. Chapple shares our belief that rail history must be preserved and we owe him a debt of gratitude. Third, your board of directors has worked behind the scenes to make this a reality. It began with the dogged persistence of Cecil "Bud" Gilbert. Without his dream of wanting to see the car return, this wouldn't be a reality. He saw the possibilities, made frequent phone calls to the Gold Coast Rail Museum and a few to Mr. Chapple himself. So be sure to shake his hand.

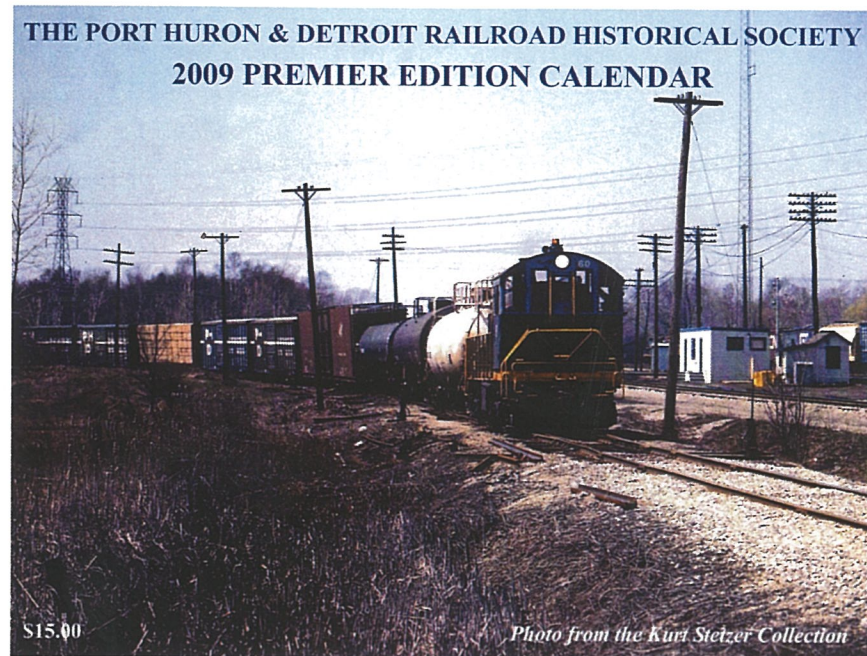
We've done quite a bit in just a year. We have this classy new calendar, our state nonprofit number has been acquired with the Federal version forthcoming. Step by step, the necessary "ducks" are being put in their places. Through the generosity of Ted and his brother, the office is now our official headquarters. Our priority now is to begin a capital fund drive to help restore the building.

Our goals include a website and another Spring membership picnic at the "wye". So now is the time to sign up, tell a rail-pal, and join the Society.

FROM WHERE I SIT

Whenever something like this starts fresh, it's always wise to "get in on the ground floor". Well, here's your chance! Sandy Duffy, Editor

2009 PREMIER EDITION CALENDAR!



The PH&DRRHS is proud to announce that the 2009 Premier Edition Calendar is available. The calendar features the first 6 months of vintage historical photographs followed by the exquisite photography of Kurt Stetzer, who spent the last year on site, capturing the railroad before the sale.

The layout is very clean and includes a red and blue line separated below each month, echoing the blue box car striping.

For collectors, this will be a limited-run printing, and should be immediate collector's edition material.

The inside pages feature the Purpose of the Society and 10 Reasons to Model the PH&DRR.

It's the perfect gift for rail fan and collector alike. Members are encouraged to alert fellow rail enthusiasts so they can also obtain this limited edition publication.

The calendar will be available at the Port Huron Train Show in April. Proceeds will help support the Society's efforts in restoring the office, which was recently donated to the Society by the Frantz brothers.

SPRING 2008 OPEN HOUSE

On June 21, the Society held its first Open House at the former offices of the PH&DRR. Over 50 people came and enjoyed the beautiful summer afternoon. Among the notables were former agent **Grace Paterson** and Superintendent **William Munce**. **Bill Jehl**, who put some time in as a section man, also appeared. Executive Secretary **Patricia Roberts** showed up as did *South Park Historical Society* President Lynn Secory and daughter Jill. Hubert Smith of Marine City came up and gave the PH&DRRHS its first donation, a pair of railroad lanterns used by his father.

Members and guests were greeted by the sounds of *Breathe Eazy*, a high school jazz band. As Chef Bud Gilbert mastered the Johnsonvilles, guests registered, signed in and toured the offices. For ex-office employees, it was a bittersweet reunion, seeing their former rooms in such disarray.

The office is now the official headquarters of the Port Huron & Detroit Railroad Society and it's a rare opportunity to be housed in the very spot where the former shortline operated on a daily basis for over 67 years. Immediate plans are to re-roof the western, older part and replace every single window pane. Already men have volunteered for the job and have discovered that not all windows are sized the same!

Fortunately, there are ex-employees around that are more than willing to help authenticate the restoration. In the future, students, archivists, and rail-fans will be able to study and explore the files for projects in rooms set aside for them. The upstairs offices will be used by the Society use to help run the museum.



The Breathe Eazys performing on site.



Treasurer Joe Mericka with Mrs. Duffy, Jr. observing.



Hubert Smith presenting two lanterns to the Society.



Chef Gilbert and Dennis Klymko signing up a new member.



Pat Roberts looking down from what was once the office of President George Y. Duffy.



Ex-Gandy Mike Jehl relives memories with Bill Munce.



Bill Munce, Sandy Duffy & Grace Paterson share smiles.



Grace at her office door,



...and Bill at his office entry.

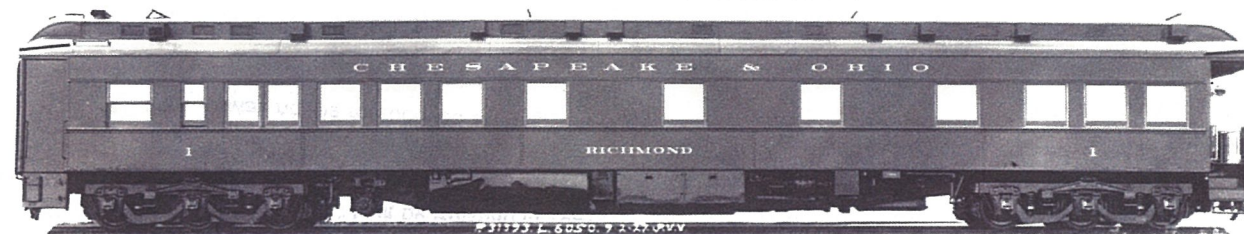
FALL 2008 OPEN HOUSE

It was a little chilly when about two dozen of us showed up at the office! But rail boys are a hardy group and, with some cider and donuts, we made it an afternoon.

Inside, in the agent's office, we set up a table with a monitor and watched a Powerpoint presentation on the PH&DRR. What was really a nice surprise was a "wye" move put on by the CSX, during the meeting! All of us agreed that we were all at the front-row center for such an event.

A few came from Canada who had read about the Open House online! We promptly signed 'em up!

CASTLEBLAYNEY SAVED!



It was headed for the scrap heap, but one man on the Society's board just didn't give up. "Bud" Gilbert had it in his craw that the *Castleblayney* had to return to her home base. And he kept at it with numerous phone calls and persistence until the impossible happened.

Conversations with officials at the Gold Coast Rail Museum in Miami and owner, Mr. DeWitt Chapple, let both parties know that the PH&DRRHS was interested in preserving the car.

Bud kept at it. Soon, he'd won Mr. Chapple over, and an offer was forthcoming. A phone call from Sandy Duffy resulted in a gentleman's agreement to donate the car to the Society and swap the 6-wheel trucks for those on his current car, the famous *Chapel Hill*, the former Marjorie Merriweather Post private car, *Hussar*. If the Society could come up with the freight costs to transport the car from Miami to Port Huron, the car was ours!

What no one realized until just recently was the incredible provenance behind the history of this unique railcar. It turns out that this was the first heavyweight Pullman business car ordered by the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway, in 1926! It is *Car #1*, named *Richmond*. When delivered in 1927, it cost \$69, 859.99. *Car #1* was ordered for C&O President W.J. Harahan. He would be the boss until 1929.

In 1934, air conditioning was installed and in 1946, it was renumbered *No. 8* and the name *Richmond* dropped. In 1948, a number change resulted in *No. 13* which it held until a final renumbering to car *No. 23*, in 1956. At that time, it was

in the C&O shops for a rebuild, with more modern curved windows replacing the older square versions and the vintage clerestory roof filled in to match the newer lightweight fleet then in service. With stainless steel fluting added, the transformation was complete.

When the management decided to dispose of the car in 1971, the Duffy brothers found out and obtained it for a mere \$6000! When *Car #23* came on line, they hired a prominent local interior designer, Jack Ehlinger to give it *panache*. He removed a stateroom, to enlarge the rear lounge. The remaining rooms received different wall coverings, ranging from a black with brown cane to palm fronds against a crème background.

Soon it was a regular sight, behind one of the road's Alcos, heading to Marine City, for dinner at *The Little Bar*.

Under PH&DRR ownership, it traveled extensively to short-line railroad meetings and private car owners conventions. Daughter Kathy Duffy even enjoyed a cross country honeymoon by rail in the late 70's.

After the forced sale of the railroad in 1984, George and Kay Duffy were able to buy the car back and used it until George's death in 1988. Kay donated the car to the Gold Coast Museum group, where it languished and endured Hurricane Andrew.

Current owner Mr. Chapple shares our interest in preserving *Castleblayney* and we owe him our gratitude for making this effort possible.

A real tip of the hat goes to Bud for lighting the fuse!

BOARD GOES AFTER FED NON-PROFIT

Recently, the Board of Directors received their State of Michigan non-profit Status. They immediately authorized a submission for the Federal non-profit status, which takes about 6 months to obtain. The reasons to do this are these:

First, for donors, it's an excellent tax write-off.

Second, we'll need a capital fund drive to restore the office, which Ted Frantz and his brother Peter generously deeded to the *Society*, with very attractive terms. By the way, we are fortunate that we are one of the few rail historical societies whose headquarters are in the actual building of the railroad we honor! However, it needs a great deal of work to restore. A new roof, heating and plumbing, ceiling repair and massive window replacements are just the beginning.

The next project is to begin negotiations with CSX to save the roundhouse. There are only three left in the entire state and we have to make every effort to make sure this historic structure be renovated into the rail museum of the first level.

And then there's *Castleblayney*! So you see, we have much on our plate. One by one, we'll get her done!



Stevens, Klymko, Gilbert, Sawdon and Duffy, August 19.

The purpose of
The Port Huron & Detroit Railroad Historical Society is:

To collect, archive, preserve, and present, all for the education of the community, historical documents, photographs, drawings, artifacts and equipment relating to The Port Huron & Detroit Railroad Company and its predecessors, The Port Huron Southern Railway and The Detroit Bay City & Western Railroad;

To obtain, restore and maintain the roundhouse at 32nd Street for use as a museum, as well as other structures, artifacts, and rolling stock, as they may become available;

To accumulate, conserve, and index all data relating to the above-named railroads for the use of scholars, rail fans and scale modelers.

CASTLEBLAYNEY ARRIVAL NOTICE

The pending arrival of *Castleblayney* depends upon a number of factors becoming aligned. Consequently, this historic event will be advertised only by email. The plans are for a limited number of people invited, with a reception following the spotting of the car.

If you wish to be included on this list and notified when the car leaves Miami, please register by email to WHLRYDR@aol.com.

We will only notify by email!

PH PORT HURON and DETROIT RAILROAD CO.
- St. Clair Blue Water Route -

D PORT HURON & DETROIT RAILROAD
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP CARD

NAME: _____

JOINED: _____ MO _____ YR

PRESIDENT: _____

JOIN TODAY AND HELP RESTORE THE OFFICE!
The Port Huron & Detroit Railroad needs your talent. We need volunteers to help out on committees. Membership, publicity, web design, resource development and acquisitions are just a few of the areas that you can help out with. See Bud Gilbert and become active! \$20 a year! Join or renew today!

**BOARD of DIRECTORS
2009**

- D. Scott Beedon**
- George Y. Duffy, Jr.**
- Ted Frantz**
- Thomas J. Gaffney**
- Cecil "Bud" Gilbert**
- Dennis Klymko**
- Joseph Mericka**
- Bruce Sawdon**
- Allen Stevens**

OLD PHOTOS? WE'LL SCAN & RETURN!
EMAIL WHLRYDR@aol.com or
CALL 810-984-1931

GET OTHERS ON THE MAILING LIST!
EMAIL budgilbert@sbcglobal.net or
CALL 810-388-0026