

The Diner Digest

SPRING 2006



The Newsletter of the
Erie Lackawanna Dining Car Preservation Society

Moving Forward

By John Boehner

When the Erie Lackawanna Dining Car Preservation Society was founded, our mission for the Society was to acquire Lackawanna Diner 470. But then we received a donation of a sleeping car, purchased a second diner, and acquired access to a coach and second sleeping car. Consequently, our vision has changed; we are moving forward with the restoration of an EL 1960's era through-line passenger train, with an emphasis on a "dinner in the diner" experience. We are not aware of any other organization in North America that has formed for the single purpose of restoring a pre-Amtrak passenger train. As our goals were tied to one specific railroad, we knew we would be appealing for the funds and support of a very narrow group of people. Of course, we knew we could count on the people interested in Erie Lackawanna passenger trains, and we were later able to include the Nickel Plate Road folks with the donation of *City of Lima*. As time marches on, there will be fewer and fewer people who can recall passenger travel on the "Friendly Service Route" or the route of "High Speed Service."

Our members have an interest in Erie Lackawanna or the NKP service or in the private passenger service before Amtrak. Whatever your reasons, you decided to become a member and contribute to the success of this Society. Many of our members have graciously shown their support by purchasing items from our store and

making individual donations. However you show your support, your Directors would like to take this opportunity to say "thank you!"

Which brings us to where we are today. Your Society has been very successful in raising the funds to purchase Diners 741 and 470. We gratefully accepted the generous donation of former NKP 10-6 Pullman sleeper *City of Lima*. Erie Lackawanna Equipment Leasing, LLC has acquired former-Lackawanna/Erie Lackawanna *Phoebe Snow* 62-seat coach 1318, and former-CN six section/six roomette/four bedroom sleeper *Green Bank* in support of the *Lake Cities Project*. We are very pleased at what we have achieved so far.

We have set a goal of completing *City of Lima* and returning it to service this year. This will put a strain on our finances, but we know this has to be done. I ask you to please consider

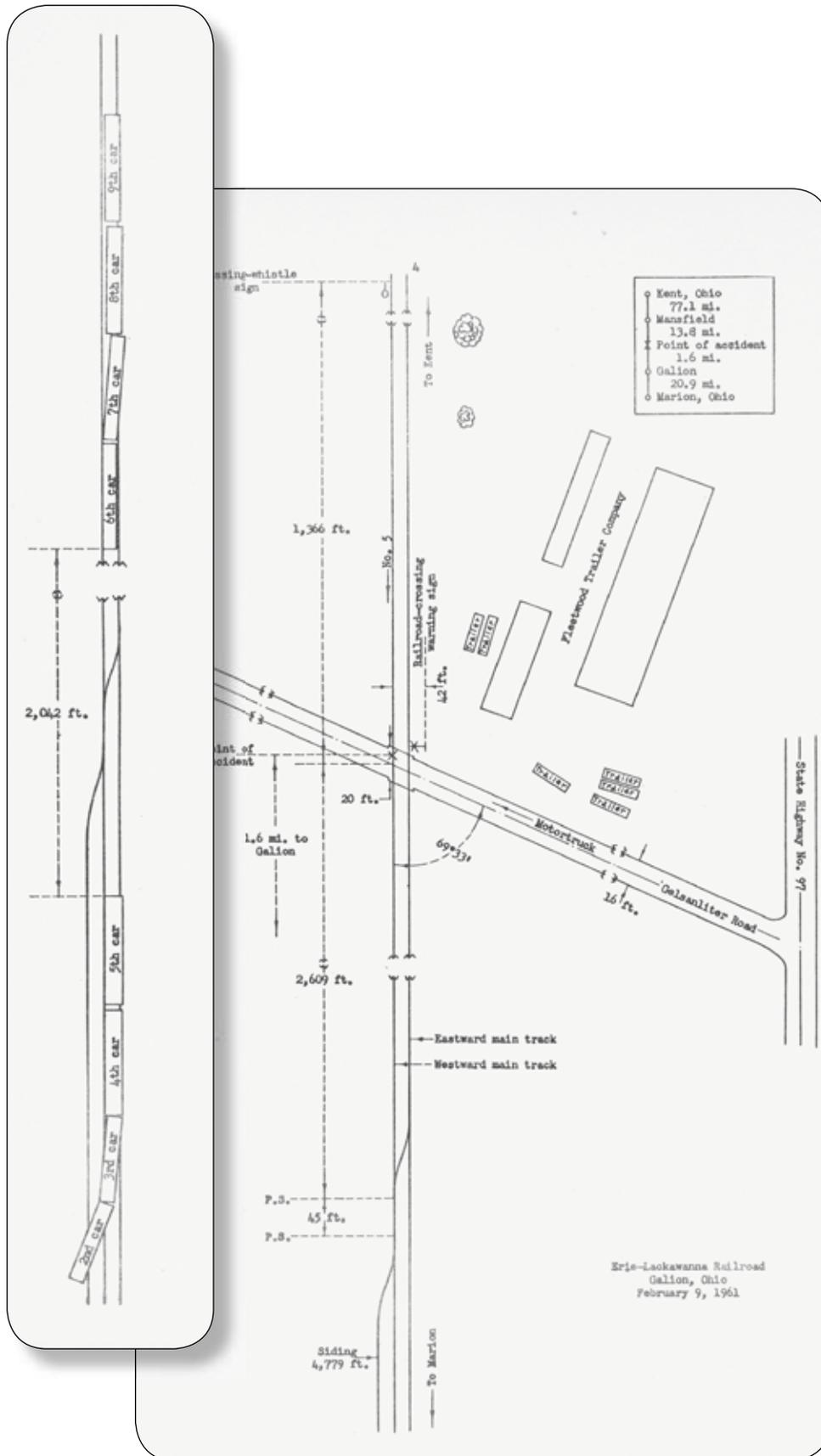
assisting with an additional donation when you can manage it. My wife and I will be sending a contribution for \$50.00 to the restoration of *City of Lima*. If every member could send that much, we would have over 50% of the cost to repaint the car. The cost of repainting the car, and the air brake COTS (Clean Oil Test Stencil), will be the most expensive items that need to be completed. With the knowledge that our membership will support our decision, we have asked Midwest to schedule *City of Lima* for repainting.

We are taking the necessary steps to achieve our mission. As elected Directors, we are making the decisions to make this happen. But without your support and resources, this project would not be possible. The Society's success is in your hands. This is not just our personal mission, it is yours also. With all of us together, we will move FORWARD!



Working past midnight, a Midwest Locomotive welder cuts through the last of the old side supports on the hallway side of Diner 741 on Jan. 27, 2006. (Photo by Michael Steinberg, ELDCCPS.)

Incident Near Galion, Ohio



A part of our organization's mission is to research the historical record of Erie Lackawanna's through-line passenger service. Erie Lackawanna enjoyed a reputation of maintaining an excellent safety record, in particular the operation of the company's through-line passenger operations. However, we are aware of three derailments, all unfortunately involving *The Lake Cities*. The first was in Galion, Ohio; the second was in Kent, Ohio, Dec, 28, 1962; and the third in Ravenna, Ohio, sometime in 1962. The accidents at Galion and Ravenna were not caused by any negligence on the part of Erie Lackawanna, but the collision at Kent was known to be caused by human error. We are searching for accurate information on the Ravenna accident. The following is an account of the collision and subsequent derailment at Galion, Ohio.

The collision of *The Lake Cities*, westbound Train No. E-5 and a motor truck occurred at a crossing 1.6 miles east of the station at Galion, Ohio, at Gelsanlitter Road on Feb. 9, 1961. The crossing was protected by standard crossbucks. No. E-5's consist included E8s 828 and 825, one baggage car, two express cars, another baggage car, three coaches, one diner-lounge and a Pullman sleeper, for a total of nine cars. The second and third head cars were equipped with tightlock couplers. We can say with some certainty that the coaches assigned to No. E-5 on this trip were all former-Erie heavyweights, as only former-Lackawanna coaches in the 1300 series were equipped with tightlock couplers.

Train No. E-5 was operating on the Kent Division, First Subdivision at 70 m.p.h.—the permitted track speed for passenger trains operating in the territory. *The Lake Cities* was running two hours and six minutes late, departing the previous stop at Mansfield, Ohio (MP 268.7), at 2:29 p.m. As the train was approaching Gelsanlitter Road

Illustration of accident site from ICC Report. Photo inset: details the position of the train cars after impact.

and its next stop at Galion, Ohio (MP 284.1), a 1957 International motor truck occupied the crossing directly in the path of the quickly approaching passenger train at 2:45 p.m. The occupants of the truck were a driver and a helper.

The engineer of No. E-5 stated that he activated the locomotive horn to sound the prescribed crossing warning in the vicinity of the whistle board located 1,366 ft. east of the crossing. Around 200 to 300 ft. east of the crossing, the engine crew noticed the truck, which was transporting a cargo of eggs from local farms, approach the crossing from the south at a speed of about 25 to 30 m.p.h. The engineer immediately sounded the horn in a series of short blasts to warn the driver. A witness who was driving on adjacent Highway No. 30S heard the engine horn and observed the truck move onto the crossing—and into the path of the westbound train.

As the motor truck entered the crossing, the engineer immediately placed the automatic brake valve into the emergency position, but due to the speed of the train and other physical factors, its speed was not immediately reduced. After the impact, the two E8s and the head baggage car, which had separated from the rest of the train, stopped at a point 1.2 miles west of the accident site, by the siding. Parts of the motor truck were found wedged under the front truck of the second head car, which caused the initial derailment approximately 170 ft. west of the crossing. The westward main track—from a point 136 ft. west of the derailment location for a distance of an additional 284 ft.—was destroyed. At a point 3,320 ft. behind the diesels and the first car, the two express cars, baggage car and the first coach were stopped. The second separation occurred between the fifth and the sixth head cars (between the first coach and the second coach). The sixth and seventh cars, both coaches, the diner-lounge and the sleeper stopped 2,042 ft. behind the fifth car. The engines and the head baggage car remained on the rail; the

remainder of the cars were derailed, upright, but “in various leaning positions.” The third coach, the diner-lounge and sleeper were all heavily damaged. As a result of the accident, there was one passenger fatality and injuries to 38 passengers, three dining car employees, one Pullman employee, No. E-5’s flagman, and three dead-heading employees.

The motor truck was completely destroyed and parts of it were found west of the accident site along the EL right-of-way. The cab of the motor truck was found 64 ft. west of the crossing and north of the track; the rear axle was located at a point 2,813 ft. further west of Gelsanliter Road and 48 ft. north of the track. Amazingly, the driver of the truck and his helper were only injured. At the time of the accident, the helper testified that he was asleep and was not at all certain if the truck stopped at the crossing. The driver said that he did not see the approaching train until the truck was on the track, and he then attempted to shift gears to move out of the way.

The investigation revealed that following the impact, the broken eggs coated the rails, wheels and braking systems of *The Lake Cities*. The fluid from the eggs acted as a lubricant, and this caused the brake system on No. E-5 to not operate at its maximum efficiency.

It was noted that for the preceding 30-day period before the accident, an average of 23 trains moved over the crossing on a daily basis. On Feb. 15, 1961, a count of 1,274 vehicles crossed the EL mainline in 24 hours. The report noted that several buildings of the Fleetwood Trailer Company would have blocked the view of the approaching train. However, at a point 90 ft. south of the crossing, the driver could see eastward from 1,000 ft. to 1.6 miles as the distance to the crossing decreased. The weather was cloudy at the time of the collision, but had no bearing on the incident. Not surprisingly, the Interstate Commerce Commission concluded that a motor truck fouling a rail-highway crossing in front of a train caused the derailment.

From the Editor

As we celebrate the five years since forming ELDCPS, the theme of this issue is “moving forward.” As you will read in the car report, Midwest Locomotive has made tremendous strides in the restoration of Diner 741. NKP Pullman *City of Lima* is very close to being completed and sent east to Scranton. It is with this news that we once again come to our members and ask for your assistance. *City of Lima* presents us with an opportunity to create revenue that will go towards the operation and continued restoration of all of our cars. With the completion of *City of Lima*, we will move towards becoming an operation, rather than just an organization. Being able to create revenue will go a long way towards ensuring the success of the *Lake Cities Project*. Please read the car report and John Boehner’s editorial in this issue, and help us fulfill our mission.

Also in this issue, we are proud to introduce a new feature, *From the Passenger’s View*. We are always looking for Erie Lackawanna (and predecessors) passenger experiences. If you have an experience you would like to share, we would love to publish it in a future issue of the *Diner Digest*. You can e-mail it to me at mjs78@eldcps.org or mail it to our P.O. Box, attention Diner Digest.

We have certainly come a long way since March 8, 2001 and a single e-mail on the Erie Lackawanna Mailing List. With the continued support of our members, we can move forward and bring back the **experience** of the *Friendly Service Route!*

Michael Steinberg

From the Passenger's View

The last EL long distance passenger train was discontinued more than 36 years ago. That means you need to be at least 40 to have any first-hand memories of EL passenger service, especially eating in the diner. When Georgia Wheeler donated a "Phoebe Snow" plate to the Society, she also wrote about her experiences of riding the Phoebe Snow and her Aunt Dot. It is important to record the social history of the era of long-distance rail travel. Here is one of those stories. We welcome those who may have similar memories to consider sharing them with us.

I know that my Aunt Dot (Dorothea Meyer) would be pleased that others will enjoy the fond memories she had of trips on the *Phoebe Snow*. She might have remembered more fondly the return trips rather than the "going" as she would have had some

25-30 kids in tow.

Dorothea Meyer had a family farm in Potterville, Penn., where she ran a summer camp, mostly for city-bred types. She felt it was a life-changing chance for them to see how others lived. She was a kindergarten teacher in Maplewood, N.J., and most of the campers were former students. Maplewood families were high-end, so their lives were pretty upper-class. On the farm, things were quite different. As family members, we went to "Kinderfarm" gratis. "Aunt Dot" ran the program at Kinderfarm for some 25 years, ending in the mid-1950s.

Our method of travel was by train—the *Phoebe Snow* from the Oranges in New Jersey (Brick Church). We traveled in the tavern-lounge car and ate in the dining car. In Vestal, N.Y. we were picked up in an old school bus and taken to Potterville. On the

return trip, we each carried a jar of homemade currant jelly (we'd picked the berries on the farm and made the jelly ourselves). Inevitably a jar or two were mishandled and broken on the train station platform while greeting parents. It all must have been, as she hoped, life-altering for many.



At the Brick Church station. This must be "going" as no one is carrying jelly jars. Georgia Wheeler is the second girl from the right. "Aunt Dot" is in the white hat. In those days one always "dressed" to travel. (Photo courtesy of Georgia Wheeler.)

Bean Counter's Corner

Greetings from the Tax Desk

As I write this, we are in the middle of March, going through our busy season and looking forward to our annual Dinner in the Diner at André's. If you are looking for a tax deduction for 2006, please consider our organization. We currently accept cash, in-kind or non-cash contributions. ELDCPS is a recognized IRS Non profit.

The state of the finances

We currently have \$9499 in the check book. Approximately \$2000 is committed to fund-raising activities and we want to commit approximately \$5000 to the *City of Lima* painting and brake project. The exposure from

the April 2006 *Trains* magazine article has increased the online store sales. The high-sellers are RonRail DVDs, *EL Through Passenger Service in Color* and the "Memories of EL Dining Car Service" litho. Our authentic reproductions and our coffee are still strong sellers as well. These efforts have been awesome and we are starting to meet our sales goals.

Currently, we are working on completion of IRS filing and short- and long-term planned funding. This type of funding is our largest financial need. Restoring, preserving and maintaining our fleet is going to take some key long term financial planning. Any members interested in helping or with

ideas on how to maintain this funding please feel free to contact me. Full financials for 2005 will be available upon completion of IRS filing and will be made available in the members section of our web site or by contacting Joel E. Long at 1-866-261-6703 or JLong@eldcps.org.

From the Commissary

By Tim Stuy

Back in 2002, the Society produced a reproduction service plate used by the Lackawanna in its two Budd-built diners for use on the *Phoebe Snow*. The original china was produced by Syracuse China while our china was produced by China Concepts working with Buffalo China. The pattern name of this china was, appropriately enough, “Phoebe Snow.” It was believed that only the 9 ½ inch service plate and the 8 ¼ inch dinner plate were marked “The Route of Phoebe Snow.” All of the other pieces were without this imprint, having only the rust-colored outer band on each piece. This pattern was ordered by the Lackawanna from 1949 through 1960. Like the “Zephyr” pattern flatware I discussed in the last issue, this china pattern has a distinctly modern look to it. Lackawanna President William White wanted the *Phoebe Snow* to be a streamliner on par with the trains being introduced on larger U.S. railroads, especially in the west. Thus, details like new china and silver for the diners were important to make this a truly modern train.

I mentioned it was “believed” that only the two larger plates were marked for this pattern. We were fortunate to receive a donation from Georgia Wheeler of an 8 ¼ inch plate, fully marked. (Please see the accompanying article, “From the Passenger’s View”) The smaller plate has a Syracuse China production date of 1949. Until we received this donation, a plate this size—fully marked with the logo—had not been seen! There is no way of knowing how many times

this size piece was re-ordered, although the Lackawanna re-ordered this pattern

seven more times, or roughly every year and a half while it was in use.

Items in this pattern are difficult for collectors to find. Only a few marked pieces are known to exist, and they rarely change hands. Perhaps other pieces in the pattern may turn up. Any that do turn up will be items belonging to passengers who rode the train and were able to take a piece home as a souvenir. A long-standing rumor says that, after the EL dropped the *Phoebe Snow*, it had all the remaining Lackawanna china destroyed. If that were true, it would explain the extreme rarity.

As previously mentioned, most pieces in this pattern were not marked and only had a rust-colored band and the Syracuse China mark on the back. Since this was a stock pattern, items without the *Phoebe Snow* mark have very little value. You should not pay more than a couple of dollars for stock pieces. Syracuse China used a date code on its china. For the year 1949 the code was DD, 1950 was EE, and so on. This should help identify specific pieces.



8 ¼ inch *Phoebe Snow* plate, donated by Georgia Wheeler. Backstamp is shown at left.



President’s Message

As I write this, we are in the final throes of winter’s frigid weather. I can certainly say I’m suffering from a case of “cabin fever” here! It’s probably an obvious observation that I would much rather be riding aboard one of our cars, enjoying the scenery along the Erie Lackawanna. And this year, if all the pieces fall into place, this will be a reality! Progress has been on-going at Midwest Locomotive—exterior repairs continue on 741, and Pullman *City of Lima* will be made road-worthy and have its attractive original scheme fully restored.

It has been a long road so far, but we are beginning to see the physical results of our progress and persistence. I believe the membership will be impressed when they see the results of our efforts!

We are certainly hoping to see you on board this year—stay tuned to future issues of the *Diner Digest* for more details.

Best regards,
Paul R. Tupaczewski

Car Report

Midwest Locomotive informed us in early January that they were able to hire several qualified craftsman to their staff. Starting in mid-January, this enabled them to assign two employees to Diner 741, eight hours per day, five days a week on second shift. As a result, we are pleased to report significant progress in the restoration process.

EL Diner 741

As per the restoration plan, work progressed replacing the rusted I-beam supports in the sills under the hallway and kitchen. This work has now been completed, and new sheet metal is being welded in place along the lower side sheets of the car. (See photos.) This work should be complete by the time you receive this issue. The crew will then continue by installing new sheet metal at the car ends. At the kitchen end, hallway side, a new “U” shaped sill will be welded in place, and a horizontal I-beam support installed. Then the new floor can be installed in this area. A new kitchen supply door will be fabricated using the original door on the opposite side of the car as a pattern. The entrance at the lounge end will receive a new sill and floor, but will be closed off with sheet metal. When that work is completed, work will move to the kitchen floor and walls.

Electrical: We have contacted with Northwest Electric in Portland, Ore. to supply us with the electrical control panels for the air conditioning and diesel genset controls. These panels can be installed in 741’s electrical locker. Northwest can also supply us with heating strips which will be installed where the old steam pipes were located along the walls.

HVAC: At my request, in early February VP—Communications Michael Steinberg contacted Ben Butterworth at Illinois Transit. Ben is working at obtaining for us a used service-

able condenser and evaporator with blower motors and overhead heat capability. I have spoken with Ben, and they can also supply us with a new A/C compressor and electric motor.

Air Brake: We have decided to upgrade Diner 741’s air brake schedule from UC, which was originally installed on the car in 1925, to a more modern system. There are a couple important reasons for doing this. The first is that the UC control valve must be removed from the car every 22 months for cleaning and testing. The last time Pittsburgh Air Brake performed this service for us it cost over \$600.00 plus shipping. The second is that the UC system has the troubling problem of a tendency to slide wheels when operating with more modern brake systems, especially when the engineer makes a heavy brake application. Mike Jubeck at Pittsburgh Air Brake recommended that we have Midwest remove the UC equipment from 741 and install an ABDW system. PAB can supply Midwest a complete ABDW kit for \$3,000.00. After conferring with Midwest, we have

placed the order with PAB. They will have the kit ready to ship to Midwest in roughly 45 days.

Genset: Dave Wynn has been working with Bob Jackson at Northwest Electric to make certain the correct control system for the Cummins 60 kW genset is ordered. Midwest is going to have the unit completely inspected to ensure service reliability. At some point in the future, we would like to upgrade to a Stadco genset.

Barring any unforeseen circumstances, Midwest believes they will have Diner 741 completed by late spring or early summer. However, I might add that this is not something that needs to be rushed; we would rather have Midwest take the time to do the job correctly, so we do not have problems later on.

NKP Pullman City of Lima

All window work was completed on *City of Lima* in mid-January. Midwest has said that it will take approximately 30 days of work to place this car in service.

We have been working with EL-



Diner 741 at Midwest Locomotive on Jan. 16, 2006. All of the rusted areas of the side sheets have been removed, and repairs continue on the side-support beams. (Photo by Michael Steinberg.)

DCPS and NKPHTS member Peter K. Shepherd in obtaining the correct NKP lettering for COL. This problem is somewhat complicated, as NKP used several different fonts on their 10-6 Pullmans. With a little luck we should have the correct fonts shortly.

Please see my editorial elsewhere in this issue on *City of Lima*.

Lackawanna Budd Diner 470

The car is dry and secure. We are currently awaiting word on our funding request for 470.

Erie Lackawanna Equipment Leasing, LLC

EL Pullman-Standard Phoebe Snow coach 1318

One cracked outer safety glass window has been replaced, which was reported in our last issue. I have asked Midwest to begin work on 1318, as time and manpower allows. Diner 741 has top priority. To begin work, I have asked Midwest to install the Microphor tank and the A/C evaporator under the car. John Suscheck had rebuilt the starter on the Perkins 40 kW genset and had the unit serviced some time ago. Midwest's diesel man is going to give it a quick going over, and get it ready for installation underneath 1318.

I will be also in touch with Bob Jackson at Northwest, as I will also need genset and A/C controls.

After Erie Lackawanna sold 1318 to the New York MTA in 1970, the car's interior was modified for commuter service. The woman's lounge was removed and additional seats added in this area. The walls will have to be reinstalled using the original locating supports. The walls were originally Haskelite 1/2 inch plymetal. One outer wall in the men's lounge will have to be reinstalled, including two lavatory doors for the woman's lounge.



New side supports have been welded into place to support both the exterior side sheets and the interior walls. Jan. 27, 2006. (Photo by Michael Steinberg.)

Several small parts will have to be obtained from Illinois Transit, such as Pullman-Standard door handles for the vestibule doors, a blind-end ceiling lamp lens, sinks for the woman's and men's lounges and another Microphor toilet.

Pullman American Way II

The car is dry, secure and stable. During our next visit, we will work on organizing the car and lubricate and position the upper and lower roomette and bedroom berths. Midwest has performed some necessary window work, and any with problems were replaced in December.

*Respectfully submitted,
John Boehner, VP—Operations, ELDCPS*



New side sheets installed on the hallway side of Diner 741 on Feb. 24, 2006. (Photo by Midwest Locomotive.)



Our mission is to preserve the passenger and dining car experience on the Erie Lackawanna and its predecessors through the purchase and restoration of Erie Lackawanna passenger and dining equipment.

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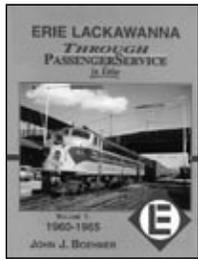
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ERIE LACKAWANNA DINING CAR PRESERVATION SOCIETY
P.O. Box 5821
Parsippany, N.J. 07054
www.eldcps.org

Review of *EL in Color, Vol. 1*

By Tim Stuy



ELDCPS is now carrying the newest release from Morning Sun Books, *Erie Lackawanna Through Passenger Service in Color, Volume 1: 1960-1965*. Au-

thored by Vice-President—Operations John Boehner, it covers passengers trains in the years immediately preceding the 1960 merger of the Erie and the Lackawanna and the first five years of service as Erie-Lackawanna.

The book follows the usual Morning Sun format by including many photos, many of which have never before been published. However, John's accompanying captions are a bit longer than most and provide quite a bit of operational details. This includes the results of

revised train schedules and following the movement of dining, parlor-buffet, sleeping and tavern-lounge cars.

The photos capture equipment, station action and some artistic shots. My favorite was a "mood" shot of an ex-Erie heavyweight diner at the end of an eastbound train in East Stroudsburg.

This book will help you discover how extensive early EL passenger service was, especially in comparison to the PRR and NYC.

We are offering the book through our online store for \$55.98 plus \$6.00 shipping and handling. (NJ and PA residents please add 6% sales tax.) Order online at www.eldcps.org/catalog or send check or money order to ELDCPS, P.O. Box 5821, Parsippany, NJ, 07054. By purchasing it from ELDCPS, part of your purchase goes toward the restoration of the equipment it celebrates.

New Video: "From the Glory Years to the Penn Central Black Years" from RonRail Pictures

This new 120-minute video contains the films of three railfans, Frank Miklos, Bob Underwood and Ron Wallace, as they share their memories of the New York Central, Pennsylvania Railroad, New Haven and Penn Central in the 1960s.

Includes commuter action in Boston, New York and Philadelphia; the B&A between Boston and Albany; and the Roger Williams and other long-distance trains.

This video is \$22.99 for ELDCPS members; shipping is \$3.00 per video. (NJ and PA residents please add 6% sales tax) It is available in VHS or DVD-R format. Order online at www.eldcps.org/catalog or send check or money order to ELDCPS, P.O. Box 5821, Parsippany, NJ, 07054.



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Parsippany, N.J. 07054
www.eldcps.org