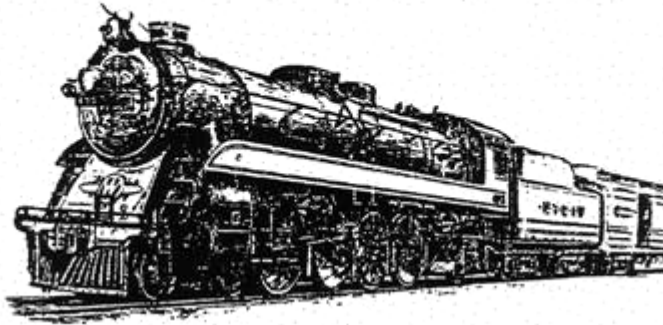


# THE MOUNTAINEER



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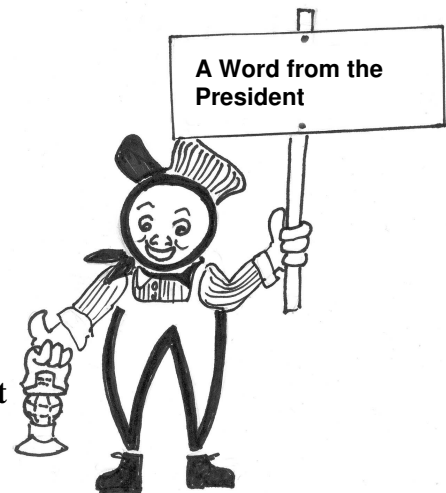
**SEVEN YEARS AND COUNTING!** Remember that James Bond movie in which the countdown guy keeps announcing the minutes left for the villain's rocket to take off? He says it frequently as the time counts down, in a monotone way, as Bond desperately tries to save the day. As a fan of James bond films, that countdown always stuck in my mind when counting something. I think the movie was *You Only Live Twice*, when Sean Connery was 007. Only here, in this instance, I'm counting up.

Yes, it's hard to believe that seven years as the Society's President is now complete. Lucky seven, as they say. Thanks to you, the membership, for your continued support in allowing me the privilege to serve, and for electing me to an eighth term.

I'd like to wish all of you belated Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and a Happy, Healthy New Year.

I'd say 2009 was a good year for the Society. Publications went above and beyond with our Observer book, calendar and newsletter. Regular meetings continue to be well-attended. Our programs are consistently interesting and well-received. Middletown RR Day was a wonderful event, creating a fantastic buzz among the presenters, vendors and local residents. We embarked on a serious and large scale digitization project of archive material. The annual Convention was again a great success with over 100 people in attendance. Our membership reached 700, and interest continues to flourish via our web site, Yahoo discussion group, and with other historical groups. Also, two new Division Representatives were appointed. Many thanks to all who made and make it happen. You know who you are.

With that said, I think it's fair to say our Society grew in many areas. As we embark on a new year, I'm looking forward to our Society's continued growth and success, and the camaraderie that has developed through our meetings, event gatherings, special projects and in the general interest of the New York Ontario & Western Railway. As always, you can be a part of it. All helping hands are welcome. Have a great "Twenty-Ten".



*George S. Shammas*

## **Back in Time to Where My Interests Began - Part I By Doug Barberio**

About twenty-four years ago I was entering Tony Boffa's Italian restaurant on the corner of East Main St. and Railroad Avenue in Middletown on my first date with Cathy, my wife now for the last twenty-two years. As we entered the restaurant there were several side tracks filled with box cars painted for the Middletown & New Jersey. There was a hulk of a steam locomotive as well. Well, this caught my attention, and over the next few years I repeatedly visited the East Main St. Depot and came to know the late Pete Rasmussen, owner and operator of the M&NJ, his son Harold, the late Herbert Gordon Sr. flagman, the late Charlie Decker flagman, the late Ray Brown, railroad historian and brakeman on the M&NJ, the late Carl Detwyler, road superintendent during the 1960s and 70's, and Peter Brill who was a brakeman and conductor. It has been a long time. You recognize a few names here, do you not? Peter, I am proud to say, has become a very close friend and together we founded the M&NJRHS in 1994. You may have noted many of the names on this list are now deceased. There were a few local railroad fans as well such as the late Drew Meola, and the late Jim Thorn, former O&W Trustee and photographer. Well, many of us know the feeling of loss and it sticks in your gut if they were good friends or family and you wish you could go back in time for just one more day. The M&NJ has now become the property of East Penn. I know absolutely no one on the railroad today that runs a former Amtrak GP-9.

After a home accident that had me on the ropes and in the dumps, for some reason the spring of 1985 and all the memories photographing the M&NJ and time spent in the depot kept surfacing. This has been reinforced by having to pack up the portion of the M&NJRHS archives inside my home for a project to paint and change the room in our basement. Yes, it is the family room, and despite having a train room that has yet to see anything but bench work, it is amazing my wife has not thrown me out or called a law firm. If she only knew twenty-four years ago what would become such a passion and collection, I wonder if she would have said "OH NO" instead of "I do"!

This movement of material into the train room has required that I go through the M&NJRHS collection as well as my own collection of maps and photographs. I found to my surprise over five archive binders for the O&W and the Erie and one each for the LNE, L&HR, M&NJ/M&U, DL&W and NYS&W. Hey, I am not counting the binders of train orders and other paperwork for the O&W and Erie! There are also many commercially available railroad books. Then I found all the photographs I took of the M&NJ from 1987 to the early 2000s. Things, I suppose, happen for a reason. Technically I am still working on the Observer, but in the Middletown area. I will admit until this project is done, working on Campbell Hall and Maybrook on the Middletown Branch Part II has slowed to almost a halt. However, I found interchange reports for the O&W to the Erie and M&U during the late 1930s and early 1940s. I also found a track diagram of the south yard that included MS interlocking at Railroad Ave. and all the switches controlled by the tower. I also took a look into the O&WRHS archives for the hell of it and found two pictures that show the W class 310 interchanging on the M&U and a number of photographs of O&W steam on the M&U. Would I have uncovered any or all of this information without my interest to take a nostalgic trip into the past alone to see the M&NJ/M&U and those who are now departed? I think I would have found this after I finished the Observer project.

As far as the Middletown & New Jersey and the Middletown & Unionville documents are concerned, the more I have to move them and find ways to store them, I am even more fortunate to find pertinent information for the M&U/M&NJ and for other roads, especially the O&W. It brings back memories of discussions in the M&U depot with the guys and operations of the modern M&NJ from 1960 until the late 1990s. I think I have found a way to honor all my friends at the M&NJ, and that in no small part led me to the O&W, Erie and other eastern roads. You do not often get an opportunity to go

back in time to where your interest in something began in your life for anything or anyone. I will tell you how the trip back in time was in our next Mountaineer issue. I have to run now. I have to take my Delorean out of my garage and put the plutonium in the Flux capacitor. The real trick will be finding a long enough road that was in existence as of December 1, 1913 to get the car up to 88 mph. I could use the railroad itself since I found the train orders for that day. HMM?

## **"And the Cats Game Back"**

**Tom Girard has more trouble trying to get rid of his Sand Bar Fishing Cat.**

Tom Girard, yardmaster at the O&W depot, is having a serious time getting rid of his celebrated "Sand Bar" trout catching cats. Not long ago he shipped them north on the O&W with the request that the trainmen drop them at Mountindale. The boys, to have a little joke on Tom, let them out of the bag in the North yard and they were home in less than 15 minutes. Tom was mad, but concluded to keep the felines. For the past week the cats have been bringing home and depositing on the back stoop numerous baitfish – every morning a fresh supply. Tom thought at first that the cats had been fishing through the ice in order to get in training for the trout fishing season, but concluded to play detective and watch them. He says he saw the cats "go down the line" as far as his neighbor Perry's Hotel and crawl in through a broken pane in the cellar window and directly each came out with a bait fish in its mouth.

Perry had a lot of baitfish in a tub in his cellar and had intended to take Girard on a fishing trip when they were to try the automatic tip-ups which Perry patented last fall. Girard felt so badly about the matter that he concluded to send the cats away again before Perry should find out the cause of his losing so many baitfish, so putting the cats in a bag with coupling pins and a few links he gave them to a brakeman with instructions to take them south over the O&W and drop them from Orrs Mills bridge.

The brakeman on the return trip from Cornwall informed Tom that he had carried out his instructions and dropped the bag from the bridge. Sunday morning, the two cats were sitting on the sill of the Girard house kitchen window. And when Tom saw them he "near had a fit." The brakeman had dropped the Bag from the bridge all right, but removed the cats before doing so.

Tom has been looking for the man with a shotgun and if he finds him it will be the last practical joke on Tom Girard. - Biff.

## **Archive scanning project update– Jeff Otto:**

Thank you to our two new volunteers helping with the scanning, Tom Matthews and Louis Weinberg.

The searchable list of scanned documents on our website (NYOW.org) is continually growing. There is a link for the Scanning Project near the top of the main page. It will take you to a project description, which has a link to the list.

Ontario & Western Railway Historical Society  
46<sup>th</sup> annual convention November 14, 2009

The 2009 O&WRHS Convention and Dinner held at The Orange County Community College on November 14th was attended by over 100 persons. The Northern Division programs by Walter Kierzkowski, John Taibi, and Drew James were packed as well as the modeling session with Mal Houck, Bill Schneider, and Joe Bux. George Shammas and Carl Ohlson had awesome displays of their person collections of memorabilia from the O&W and the O&W's milk industry.

Bill Schneider received the "John Hobbs Chryn" award for his contributions to the society. Bill "built" the 2010 Society calendar from the ground up using photos from the over 450 Bob Collins negatives he digitally scanned for the Archives.

Many thanks go out to our membership for their support of the annual raffle. The raffle raised over \$1,750 for the society. The models for the raffle were donated by The Old & Weary Car Shop and several prints were donated by Society President George Shammas. Other items came from the archives sales department.

The Society Sales Table, headed by Walt Kierzkowski and Art Robb, did rather well. Many thanks to Jeff Otto and Ray Kelly for helping with the set-up. Thanks to Ron Vassallo for the Audio Visual set-up and computer stuff.

Once again, I am very proud to have chaired this event. Every aspect of the convention went flawlessly. The programs were well-done, the model and memorabilia displays were spectacular and the food and fellowship were priceless.

This only leaves one question: any suggestions for a theme for the 2010 convention?

Again, thank you to all who helped and attended.

Al Seebach

Ontario & Western Railway Historical Society  
2009 Grand Raffle Winners  
Drawn at the 46<sup>th</sup> annual convention November 14, 2009

- 1** A Bachmann 4-8-2 Heavy Mountain Locomotive Lettered N.Y.O. & W. No. 456 and a Custom-Built 8300s Wood Caboose No. 8328  
Glenn Linneman, Clifside Park, NY
- 2** Stewart Hobbies F-3 A & B Unit Set No. 821 Super Detail  
Harry Doolittle, Wickensburg AZ
- 3** Bachmann Observation Car "The Orange" in the Mountaineer Scheme  
Mr. Messler, Oceanside NY
- 4** Framed Artist Proof of the Mountaineer on Iona Trestle  
Walter Kierzkowski, Monroe NY
- 5** Framed Pen & Ink Print of the Mountaineer Ltd. At Meadowbrook  
Brad Haines, Wrightsville, PA.
- 6** Broadside of O&W Coney Island Excursion in 1884  
Robert Jackson, Goodyear AZ
- 7** O&W in the Diesel Age  
Bob Karig, Lancaster PA
- 8** \$1000 NYO&W Gold Bond  
Peter Kennedy, Hackensack NJ
- 9** 1977 Edition of The Final Years  
Harold Braun, Gathersburg MD
- 10** 1913 NYO&W Rule Book  
Harry Doolittle, Wickensburg AZ

Calendar - January to June 2010

January 8

Membership Meeting - 7:30PM

Mulberry House Senior Citizens' Center, Middletown NY

Program - The Middletown Branch: Then and Now, by Ray Kelly

January 30-31

Amherst Railway Society Railroad Hobby Show, 10AM-5PM

Eastern States Exposition Fairgrounds, West Springfield Mass

February 5

Membership Meeting - 7:30PM

Mulberry House Senior Citizens' Center, Middletown NY

Program - O&W movies, by Ron Vassallo

February 12

M&NJRHS meeting, 7:30PM

United Presbyterian Church on Roberts St. Middletown NY

February 27-28

First Thaw - Saturday 9AM-4PM, Sunday 9AM-3PM

Allentown Fairgrounds Agricultural Hall, Allentown, PA  
March 5  
Membership Meeting - 7:30PM  
Mulberry House Senior Citizens' Center, Middletown NY  
Program - O&W Hardware, by Carl Ohlson

March 7  
JCRHS Train Show 9AM-4PM  
Mother Seton High School, Clark NJ - Garden State Parkway exit 135  
Sponsored by Jersey Central Chapter NRHS. O&WRHS Sales table will be present.

April 9  
Membership Meeting - 7:30PM  
Mulberry House Senior Citizens' Center, Middletown NY  
Program - John Treen's NYS&W, by Doug Barberio

April 11  
Kingston Model Railroad Expo  
Gold's Gym at LaGrange - Titusville Rd.  
O&WRHS Sales table will be present.

April 16  
M&NJRHS meeting, 7:30PM  
United Presbyterian Church on Roberts St. Middletown NY

May 2  
5th Annual Franklin Model & Toy Train Show, 9AM-3PM  
Littell Community Center near intersection of Rt. 23 and Rt. 517, Franklin, NJ. Info available from John at 973-697-6539  
sponsored by the Franklin Historical Society and the Sussex County RR Club

May 7  
Membership Meeting - 7:30PM  
Mulberry House Senior Citizens' Center, Middletown NY  
Program - Local Area Railroading, by Tom & Sean Woltman.

June 4  
Membership Meeting - 7:30PM  
Mulberry House Senior Citizens' Center, Middletown NY  
member flea market/swap night

June 11  
M&NJRHS meeting, 7:30PM  
United Presbyterian Church on Roberts St. Middletown NY

Programs are subject to change without notice. Check out our website - [nyow.org](http://nyow.org) - for the latest updates.

My name is Leon "Lee" Reisinger from Topeka, Kansas. - An Open Letter

I was born and raised in Middletown, living my entire childhood near enough to the M&U/M&NJ that I often fell asleep to the sounds of the Erie humping cars in the East Main Street yard. I can easily remember the black/silver, maroon/silver, and the more recent blue colors of the 44-tonners, and I loved Sunday afternoons when the #103 would spew its black smoke around the neighborhood. When we weren't riding it, my brothers and I would often "race" the 103 on our bikes down the old O&W roadbed which extended Railroad Avenue east from Charles Street. More than once, walking that same roadbed home from school, the 44-tonner would stop near Houston Avenue with its return loads and the engineer would ask if I wanted a ride - "you bet" - And I rode with them, dropping off cars and ending up at East Main Street station where I would watch them put the engine to bed and then hang out for a few minutes before heading off to do my homework.

Today, I have plans (actually, have had them for several years) to "loosely" model the M&NJ in HO scale. I will model the East Main Street yard pretty accurately since I remember so much of it and I'll have Erie and O&W passengers and freights zooming past with connections to each. From Middletown to Unionville I will use plenty of modeler's license and may even include a connection with the D&H at Hanford. Of course, MY railroads never went out of business and continue to thrive to this day. My M&NJ is busier than ever and my O&W and Erie trains run regularly.

My interest in railroading is apparently hereditary. Although my father, George Reisinger, held several jobs in his life, the one he spoke of with the most emotion was that of crossing guard for the Erie Railroad at East Main Street. He worked in the elevated tower at East Main Street for several years and was responsible for the protection of that crossing before automation eliminated his job.

One of my uncles, Oliver Tompkins, worked as a hostler for the NYO&W until its demise. He was classified as an engineer and would occasionally move engines between yards as necessary. I think he may have worked out of Maybrook but I'm not certain and have heard few stories about him.

My maternal grandfather was Leon Clyde Tompkins, for whom I was named. He was a big man who, as I understand, was a passenger conductor for the NYO&W. Before his retirement he most often worked somewhere between the Middletown (or Maybrook) and Hancock areas. I'm told he might have conducted one of the cars on the final passenger train to Middletown in 1957. I've been told I rode the O&W many times, maybe even the final train, but I cannot remember it. I have his beautiful conductor's watch (which still keeps perfect time), all of his keys (including other roads), and his fare punch book - but I'd like to know more.

**I need your help!** In all of the historical records and photographs I've seen, I have yet to find anything with my uncle's or grandfather's names on it. I'd love to know more about their work relationship with the Ontario & Western. If anyone knows any stories or has seen or heard either of these names in the O&W records I would very much appreciate knowing about it. If anyone knows where I might look in the records, I would make a special trip to Middletown to make the search. Thanks for whatever help you can offer.

Lee Reisinger

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