

The King's New Clothes

By Tony Bucca

If you've traveled north on Route 9N out of Greenfield, you've probably seen the red caboose on the corner of Porter Corners Road. It was a couple of decades ago (a short time history-wise) that then Town Supervisor Glen Hammond was able to purchase the circa 1920's wooden caboose from the Delaware & Hudson Railway for the princely price of \$1.00. At that time, Town Historian Jane Lynch put out a call for volunteers to refurbish the old depot on the corner of Porter Corners Road.

The caboose sat patiently on a siding at South Corinth. In 1988, a group of individuals did a preliminary tour of the condemned building. It had been used as a residence until the middle 80's, and had fallen into dis-repair.

By 1990, the caboose had been flat-bedded to a pair of rails placed next to the old depot, and with the help of the inmates of the Mount McGregor Correctional Facility, the depot got a new metal roof and a coat of paint. Local scouts did some landscaping, and the site settled into a convenient place-marker for travelers on the north-south route.



The caboose is seen here sitting on the siding in South Corinth in 1988. Below, Town Historian Jane Lynch shows volunteers what they're up against as they inspect the 1887 building.

After the renovations, New Town Historian Mary DeMarco put together a display on one side of the depot, to make it look much as it would have to passengers waiting for their train.





By the fall of 2006, the shrubbery was growing into the side of the caboose and obscuring the view of the depot. The paint was fading, so in November, I approached Town Supervisor Al Janik about the possibility of giving everything a fresh coat of paint and a hair-cut. About a month after meeting with Al, I got a call from Mary DeMarco that someone had run off the road and impacted the caboose. The driver of the vehicle didn't survive the fiery crash that scorched the end of the caboose and bent-up the steel steps.

In the spring of 2007, a committee was formed of locals who wanted to save their caboose. With an insurance settlement from the accident, the C.R.O.C.K.S. (Citizens Restoring Our Caboose at Kings Station) set to work sprucing up the area. Shrubs were cleared away, and we were able to assess the damage caused between decades of water infiltration, and the fire.



The group peeled off two layers of plywood to get down to the oak framework. A fresh layer of plywood was applied, then covered with V-groove bead-board fir, to back-date the caboose to a more historically accurate look. Hours were spent scraping the metal roof of rust. Custom-formed gutters were applied, then the whole was covered with a rubber-roof. Two more coats of "caboose red" were applied, and all the grab-rails were given a coat of safety-yellow. All of the exterior metal-work got a coat of black paint, including the wheels.





I traveled to The Cooperstown & Charlotte Valley Railroad to get stencils that had been salvaged from the Delaware & Hudson's Oneonta Roundhouse. We used these to letter the outside in the summer of 2009. Later in the fall, town volunteers and some Skidmore students from a Human-Dilemmas course got together to give the depot a fresh coat of light green paint. The trim of dark green still has to be applied at this point.

Since we used funds from an insurance settlement, and volunteer labor and expertise, we've been able to re-furbish our little jewel at NO cost to our town. We're looking at future uses for the site, which could be a stop on the Saratoga to North-Creek train that hopefully will start up in the near future.

Anyone that would like more information can contact me at 587-4546, or at photony@att.net.