



# The Semaphore

Newsletter of the Rochester NY Chapter, NRHS  
P.O. Box 23326, Rochester, NY 14692-3326; Published Monthly

March 2001  
Volume 43, No. 7

## Program for March 15:

### Member's Slide Show

By **YOU**

Bring your favorite slides, taken recently or way back when, either current or ancient history, to this meeting to share with fellow Chapter members.

### Program Committee

Tom Forsyth (Chairman) 442-0125  
Bill Limburg 586-9470  
Dan Cosgrove 352-6931  
Dave Luca (Board liaison) 288-0318

The Committee welcomes suggestions and ideas for future programs. Contact any of the Committee members.

### Library Hours

2 to 5 PM

Sunday, March 18

Library Phone: 872-4641

(This will be the last Sunday hours until next fall; in April we will return to Monday night)

### Reserve June 2

### Annual Banquet at Gateway Inn

Have you been storing Chapter property over the years? If so, please see page 5.

### A Reminder to send your dues for 2001

Your renewal will add the fuel to keep the steam up!!!

### A Reminder

The Chapter's address has been changed. The old PO Box was closed several months ago. Mail still keeps coming there and forwarding to our new box will soon expire! It is now: **P.O. Box 23326, Rochester, NY 14692-3326**

## First Aid Class Scheduled

Dave Hulings and Mike Byrne have agreed to do another First Aid Training class as a follow-up to the one they did last year. Again, this is NOT a certified course so no cards will be issued. Please sign up if possible by calling Mike (225-5659) or Dave (265-4525), but anyone can come without signing up if desired.

All Chapter members, Explorers and NYMT members are invited to attend. We think this is a great thing for Museum Guides, Fall Foliage Car Hosts, Track Car Operators, and those that work at the museums. We plan to cover the same info as was done last year but have a lots of new

items to review, so those that attended last year should again feel welcome. If you have any item that you would like us to cover that is First Aid related please forward that info to Dave or Mike.

The class is scheduled for **Saturday, March 24 from 9am till 12 noon at the Henrietta Volunteer Ambulance Headquarters** located at 280 Calkins Road. To reach the facility exit 390 at Hylan Rd. and head east (away from Marketplace Mall), at Calkins, turn right and the base is on your right just before the 390 overpass. Park in the back (watch out for emergency vehicles), enter the back room from the glass door on the side of the building. Coffee and donuts will be provided.

MB

## Second Winter Campout

Rand Warner, Coordinator

Our Second Annual Winter Campout was held the weekend of Feb. 10. We had 15 people signed up, lost one to sickness, and another to a family emergency part way through.

The weather cooperated with snow on the ground and plenty of crisp cold air, so we really needed the caboose stoves Saturday night.

John Redden and Norm Shaddick had switched out *not one, not two, but THREE* cabooses for this event, and our ever faithful Kodak diesel #6 towed the caboose train up to Scanlon's Curve for the festivities.

Festivities Saturday night included a Happy Hour, a steak dinner with lots and lots of trimmings, and assorted desserts including fresh home made cookies from Chris Hauf. Rand Warner provided the supper, and all our participants helped with preparation, cooking and serving from the three cabooses.

John Redden provided an extravaganza, many course breakfast, and again everyone pitched in to help out.



Eastman Kodak 80-tonner #6 sits with three of the R&GV RR Museum's cabooses. This was home for the 2nd annual Winter Caboose sleeper. (Digital photo by Chris Hauf)

Since we didn't get a blizzard, we were able to return the train to the yard and get everyone home by noon Sunday. Yes, EKC #6 did start very nicely after the long cold night!

This years attendees included recent and long time members and volunteers, Young Explorers and Dads.

Hope you can join us next year. Maybe we'll have to have four cabooses!

## 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Bus Tour Planned

(60 Years since the last trolley ran in Rochester)

by Jim Dierks, NYMT

March 31 is fast approaching, and with it the 60th anniversary of the final run of Rochester's streetcars. Just past midnight on the evening of March 31, 1941, Peter Witt car 1249 pulled into the East Main Street car barn, after finishing the "last run" on the system. She came in smashed and battered by hooligans who were downtown that night celebrating the end of trolleys and the completion of the transition to buses on all of Rochester's transit routes.

Ah but 1249 wasn't really the last run after all! You can find out more about this, and many other details of the last days of streetcars in Rochester, if you sign up for the bus tour being organized by our friends at the New York Museum of Transportation.

The tour, by chartered RTS coach, is slated for **Saturday afternoon, March 31. Leaving promptly at 1:00 p.m.** from the RTS facilities at 1372 East Main Street, there will be photo stops, run-bys, and other surprises. With local traction expert Charles Lowe providing the play-by-play, the tour will trace the route of the last trolleys from Charlotte to the four corners and out Main

Street to the Blossom Road loop. From there, the tour will return to the starting point for a guided tour of the RTS bus facilities and a close-up look at the equipment that now operates on the streets of Rochester and the surrounding area.

NYMT's Bulletin #3, "The Last Days of Rochester Streetcars", will be available on the bus at special reduced price. The thoroughly researched 20-page, illustrated booklet was written by Lowe and will be a great memento of this anniversary event.

Tickets are \$10 each, with proceeds going to the museum electrification program. Space is limited, so mail you order now! Send your check, made out to New York Museum of Transportation, to NYMT. P.O. Box 136, West Henrietta, NY 14586. Be sure to include your name, address and phone number. Your tickets and further instruction will be mailed back to you.

With all the interest in trolleys generated by last fall's operation off the overhead, the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary tour should be a great way to keep the "juice" flowing. See you on board!

### Rochester & Niagara Falls RR history

This railroad, now known as the Falls Road, when under NYC jurisdiction, was constructed in the mid 1850's by joining several other roads.

Our library has received a request from a California graduate student desiring information for his dissertation, specifically:

- 1) Employment records for one Theodore Judah, who was an engineer (civil?), and
- 2) Did the RR use a two-story brick enclosed water tanks?

A history book on NYC gave about a two page summary of this road. Our archives does have a ledger from this RR, which we need to research.

### LV Station picture request

Chris Hauf has received a request for photographs of the interior of the Lehigh Valley Station on Court Street — as a railroad station, not as a restaurant. We have not found any in our archives.

Do you any such photographs, or sketches, or floor plans of this station when it was use for this purpose? If so, we would like to add them to our archives as well as fill this request. All photos will be carefully copied and returned quickly to the original owners. Please call Chris at 716-381-8583 or e-mail to <crhauf@frontiernet.net>.

### Track Motor Car Operation Training Sessions Schedule

#### Classroom Sessions:

Classroom sessions will be conducted **Saturday, March 31** and **Saturday, April 7, 2001** Classes begin at 10 AM SHARP at the Industry Depot or NYMT (to be announced).

#### Classroom and Hands-on:

A combination classroom and hands-on session will be **Saturday, April 21, 2001**. Class at Industry Depot or NYMT (to be announced). Class begins at 9:00 AM, Hands-on Training begins at 10:30 AM (Weather-permitting).

#### Hands-on Sessions:

**Saturday, April 28, 2001** and **Saturday, May 5, 2001**. Classes at NYMT or Industry Depot. Classes begin at 9:30 AM

Operators will be required to attend at least one Classroom and one Hands-on session to be qualified

Please call or contact Jeremy Tuke at 359-8944 or <jnm2k@frontiernet.net> if you have questions.

Also, please call if you have NOT been previously qualified but would like to operate this year so I can get you on the list!

## Year 2001 Special Events

Special Events for the coming year have been discussed and finalized at the last two meetings of our joint R&GV RM/NYMT Transitown Executive Committee:

May 13: **Season Opening**

June 30/July 1: **Trolley Days**

July 22: **Model Steam & Gas Engines**

Aug. 18/19: **Diesel Days**

Sept. (open)

Oct. 28: **Season Closing**

This Special Event schedule will be published on the back of our joint R&GV RM/NYMT brochures for 2001.

### Membership Report

*Beth Krueger, Chair*  
*Janet Dittmer, Assistant*

No additions or corrections for this period.

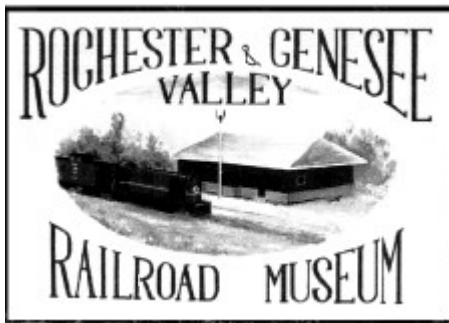
Have you renewed your National and Chapter Membership for 2001? If not, we invite you to do so at your earliest convenience. Otherwise, this may be the last issue of *The Semaphore* you will receive!

If you have a question concerning your membership and/or status, call Janet at 288-0318 or e-mail: daveluca@frontiernet.net.

### NRHS National Convention Schedule

2001 Convention will be held in St. Louis June 19-23. Three mainline excursions are planned, possibly two with steam

2002 Convention will be held in Williams, Arizona where the Grand Canyon RR will be at least one of the several planned trips.



Rand Warner, Director, 425-8587

## Double Blitz

Our February 10 Saturday morning monthly Blitz session actually turned out to be **two** blitzes. What a blessing!

The **scheduled** Blitz for the Erie Stillwell coach was supported by Chuck Whalen, Bernie Cubitt, Dale Hartnett, Bob Miner, Tom Webster, Rand Warner, John Redden, Norm Shaddick, Dick Luchterhand and Randy Bogucki. They cleaned out the car of unrelated stored items, removed remaining walls of the tool room, took down overhead ceiling panels, tried out replacement seats for fit, worked on windows and window fittings, removed soffit trim strips, cleaned and swept the floors, and reorganized all items remaining in the car.

The **second** Blitz involved the much needed cleaning out of the Restoration Facility of unnecessary stored items and reallocating these items to more appropriate areas. As a result, we can once again get down through the center of the building; new projects have been initiated in this space.

Thanks to Jeremy Tuke, Joe Scanlon, Jim Johnson, Charles Harshbarger, Art Mummery, Scott Gleason, Neil Bellenger, Dick Holbert, Tom Webster, Tom Tucker Dick Bean.

New projects now located in the Restoration Facility include the ATC dozer, D-4 cat dozer, and Ford Auger truck. Other projects to be relocated include the REA Express truck, Burro crane, Miller welder, Ingersoll compressor, Plymouth loco and TC-3 track motor car.

## Visitor Operations

*Don Shilling, Supt.*

**Progress:** Don has designed, collected and set up a new display board, facing the Depot west wall interior. This display depicts the evolution of the steam locomotive from its infant beginnings to its final maturity before being displaced by diesels. This new display should prompt a lot of interaction with our 2001 visitors.

## Next Blitz Project

*Rand Warner, Coordinator*

The timing of the monthly Saturday AM Blitz Projects will be moved from the second Saturday to the third Saturday. This will allow us planning time at our 2nd Thursday Operations/Volunteer meeting, and will also allow us to announce the Blitz Project at the 3rd Thursday Membership meeting night.

The Blitz Project for **Saturday AM, March 17<sup>th</sup>** will be for all of us to work on the clearing and rearranging of the Construction Equipment area on the west side of the LA&L RR track. This is in follow up to a display concept from Dale Hartnett, which has been embraced by our Construction leadership. It will build on the work already started by Dan Waterstraat.

This Blitz Project for March will coordinate well with our already scheduled April Blitz Project, which is for general cleanup of Depot, grounds, display cars and areas, in preparation for season opening on May 13<sup>th</sup>.

## A Sizzling Idea for Steam!

*Rand Warner for Development Committee*

Did you know we could have a remanufactured Chinese 2-8-2 steam loco for about \$165,000, Port Of Entry at New York City?

If a couple people made arrangements to leave us a house in their wills, assuming they had no other relatives, we would have enough money to launch a real steam program!

These Chinese 2-8-2's are very good locos, as any of you who have ridden behind them know; easy steaming, economical of fuel and water, and very reliable. There are currently about three running in the USA. They do not look foreign.

The beauty of getting a recently built (1980's/1990's) and recently remanufactured (late 1990's) loco is that you really know what you are getting, you have put a cap on your investment, and you get a warrantee with it.

How about putting some steam fizzle into our lives?

**Plans:** Put in tire stops in parking lot on west side of LA&L RR, using easily removed wood phone poles.

Lay out updated training program for this year's guides and tour hosts, and prepare needed handout materials.

Continue work to make our Depot grounds and displays more user friendly and handicapped accessible.

Paint stair step units and other ancillary items for visitor operations.

## Storage Systematizing

*Jeremy Tuke, Coordinator*

Our six semi trailers from KBH have been numbered by Dick Luchterhand and allocated to various uses by Jeremy Tuke, with input from all our committees.

Jeremy has published a listing of allocated uses for not only the six storage trailers, but all our other indoor and outdoor storage capabilities.

The last trailer load of surplus electrical gear from Alstom has been unloaded by Jim Johnson, Charles Harshbarger and Dick Holbert.

A large gang helped empty the Restoration Building of items to be stored elsewhere on Saturday, Feb. 16.

Other gangs have helped to empty the PRR RPO car and the Erie Stillwell coach of unnecessary stored items at our January and February Blitz projects.

Dan Waterstraat is cleaning up, cleaning out, and reorganizing stored materials along the west side of LA&L RR; in preparation for relocating our access road and reorienting our parked construction equipment to face forward to the east. This will make a better appearance and presentation to our visitors as they come down the hill to R&GV RM on track cars, and it will also make it easier to create and change localized displays/dioramas of specialized construction

## A Bicycle Trip?

This Spring sometime, after the trail is dry and the weather is not yet too hot, we ought to consider a mountain bike trip down the old Pennsy ROW trail from Rochester to Letchworth Park (and Nunda?)

The trail is mostly wide and level now after a lot of hard work by the Genesee Valley Trail group.

There are lots of points of railroad interest along the way, such as mines, former plant locations, junctions, etc.

We know there must be at least half a dozen, maybe a dozen Chapter bikers who might enjoy such a trip, maybe even an overniter.

If this appeals to you please call Duncan Richards (586-9626) or Rand Warner (425-8586) with your thoughts, and we'll try to get it organized.

**A Reminder to send your dues for 2001**

**Your renewal will add the fuel to keep the steam up!!!**

## Restoration Facility

*Dave Luca, Rand Warner, Coordinators*

Scott Gleason, Neil Bellenger, Dick Holbert, Jim Johnson, Dan Waterstraat and Charles Harshbarger have run our Niagara Mohawk 240v/200a, single phase power into the southwest corner of the building, tied into a distribution panel with breakers and outlets.

They are now running wires through conduit laid in a trench, across the south end of the building, to connect with and feed the panel at the southeast corner of the building. Thus all our single-phase building power will be fed from the new overhead line coming in from Route 251. This will free up additional power capacity at the Depot circuit breaker panels (and several feet of heavy-duty extension cords).

Rand Warner and Jim Johnson have made up a drawing for internal discussion, which shows all the anticipated power distribution efforts at the Restoration Building for the next couple years, addressing all our single phase power needs. After review, this drawing will be discussed with the trustees, for funding approval.

Three-phase power from the diesel generator trailer is still in the works on a lower priority basis. The roll up door operator for the trailer is in for repair at Batavia.

All the roll up overhead doors (6) in the building have recently been readjusted by the original installer.

It sure is nice to have adequate power so we can all use power tools, etc. without blowing breakers and shutting down progress on projects. Thanks guys, we sure have come a long way in just two years!

## Track Cars

*Jeremy Tuke, Dan Waterstraat, Supts.*

**Progress:** TC-3 was moved off Track #6 and into the Restoration Building by Joe Scanlon and Art Mummery.

Mark Wiczorek (of Young Railfans) and Tom Webster have removed bad radiator from TC-3 and Rand Warner is taking it to be repaired.

Jeremy Tuke has already established a schedule for training classes for 2001 season. (See Page 2)

**Plans:** Repaint TC-3 and Crew Car for 2001 season use.

Replace TC-3 radiator, tune engine, and check starter drive.

Check wheel wear on all track cars. Replace wheels as necessary.

Conduct operator training classes and schedule operators.



## Communications, Signals & Power

*Neil Bellenger, Supt.*

**Progress:** The big effort has been to bring in Niagara Mohawk 240v/200a single-phase power from Route 251 to the Restoration Building, as reported elsewhere.

The other big effort has been to refurb the auger truck and bucket trucks for the 2001 season of use. A large crew, led by Neil Bellenger and Scott Gleason has been working on hydraulic, mechanical, engine and exhaust system details on the auger truck. Thanks to Dan Waterstraat, Dick Bean, Rand Warner, Dick Holbert, Bob Mader, and others.

Another large effort has been to unload, sort, log and store away all the materials donated by Alstom in recent months. Jim Johnson and his elves are working this effort.

Charlie and Jesse Marks, Nathan Dunn, Mark Wierzorek and Dale Hartnett are rebuilding antique outdoor wooden phone boxes. Thanks to our Young Railfans for another fine effort.

**Plans:** Complete current phase of Restoration Building wiring.

Complete inventory of Alstom electrical supplies.

Put auger truck back into operational service.

Run two bucket trucks through our shop before Spring startup.

Coordinate plans for overhead trolley wire work with R&GVRM and NYMT.

Nearing full power!!! Thanks to our Electrical Crew, the new electrical panel and bunker has been installed in the Restoration Building and has been connected to our new temporary 200 amp service. (Digital photo by Chris Hauf)

## Drainage

*Joe Scanlon, Coordinator*

### A PRIORITY CONCERN!!

Following our Master Drainage Plan of last year we need to:

1) Continue north-south ditches at top of all west facing slopes.

2) Regrade our top area around west side of barn, to properly drain eastward, away from edge of slope, and also away from building walls.

3) Ditch along base of Weaver's hill so we drain north to culvert at Switch #6.

4) Add rip-rap and cover crop to west facing slopes as necessary.

5) Keep run off from plateau/fill area from getting over west edge and down to Depot area.

6) Raise and regrade/reballast Siding/Track #5 to prevent mud from getting into Depot/yard areas.

7) Collect runoff that is coming down intermediate level area, to prevent eroding our new access road.

8) Lay out catch basins and collector pipes south of Restoration Building.

## Buildings and Grounds

*Dave Luca, Supt.*

**Progress:** The Restoration Building has received the major emphasis in effort as reported elsewhere.

Charles Harshbarger has suggested a revised drainage concept for the Depot and immediate area: to separate storm drains, sanitary drains and outside French drains, and replace bad plumbing pipe. We need a sketch to support a meeting, so that we can coordinate on this continual problem area.

Dee Mowers, Dale Hartnett, Rand Warner, John Redden and others have identified several potentially available outbuildings for acquisition consideration.

**Plans:** Conduct Depot drainage meeting and formalize plans for problem resolution.

Review available small out-buildings to prioritize for any acquisition plans.

Empty RL&B waiting room of stored materials from R&E #1941.

Make plans for 2001 season landscaping and gardening efforts.

Continue work on acquisition of Northwest Quadrant lands for 2001.

## Carbarn Comment

**Progress:**  
Rochester Subway  
Car #60:

Dave Luca started removal of roof panel sections and Cliff Rogers, Dave Rogers and Rand Warner now have the car pretty well daylighted, with about 8 or 9 panels removed.

A template has been made of the exact roof section curvature, and we have requests for quote in on the several different roof panels, the side trim panels, the roof end sections, and new body bolster for the trucks.

Rand has obtained 100 linear feet of angle iron and the Tuesday afternoon crew is reinforcing the location of the roof struts "carlines", so that we can't lose our alignment for roof sections and window channels.

Cliff Rogers has doped out a scheme for expandable, modular scaffolding that is working out well. We are now expanding from the second to third section of scaffolding.

**Plans:** Get competitive quotes on sheet metal sections and other parts.

Obtain replacement side trim sections first.



At this point, five of the roof panels have been carefully removed. One panel was in reasonable condition and will be used as a pattern for the new roof. Anyone want to adopt a roof panel??? Please contact Rand Warner for details. (*Digital photo by Chris Hauf*)

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## Track & Right-of-Way

*Rand Warner, Acting Supt.*

**Progress:** The new track along the west side of the Restoration Building continues to be extended, now passing the building SW corner by two rail lengths. Rand Warner, Rick Israelson, John Redden, Dale Hartnett and others are helping.

Jeremy Tuke, "Salvage Salesman of the Month", has discovered yet another piece of former NYC track.

John Redden is getting quotes on new 6"x8" ties and switch timbers to support 2001 season construction.

Joe Scanlon has inspected our embankments and slopes for any signs of weakness.

**Plans:** Relocate replacement switch timbers from R&GV RM yard to NYMT work sites.

Add rip-rap to top of slope facing LA&L ROW, north of present rip-rap.

Acquire additional new and/or relay ties and switch timbers for 2001.

Lay out location and grade for next track into barn, for 2001 season.

Resume tie, timber and ballasting efforts at several NYMT work sites.

Stage materials for next track into Restoration Building.

Extend south by two more rail lengths, the new track along west side of Restoration Building.

Add rip-rap to west side of all our present culverts on our main line.

## CHAPTER PROPERTY

by Jeremy Tuke

Since the Rochester Chapter, NRHS was founded back in the 1930's, we have had various "homes" around the city including the New York Central Station on Central Avenue, the Kodak City Model Railroad Club on South Avenue, and the Rochester Museum and Science Center.

Presently we meet at the 40 & 8 Club on University Avenue, but there is now something different about the Chapter; we now have an excellent research library facility in Webster, NY and the unique Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum at Industry, NY. Until the Chapter had these two facilities, we had no secure repository for the various artifacts and documents that have been donated or bequeathed to the Chapter over the years. However, many members have generously offered to store these items in their homes for safekeeping.

With the development of the Chapter's Library and Conference Center Complex as a secure repository for archiving everything from books to passes, postcards, timetables, maps and other items along with the ability to securely store items at the Industry Depot site, your Board of Directors would like to request the return of all Chapter property.

The Board is aware of several members who have kindly stored various items for the Chapter over the years, however, we want to make sure we haven't missed anyone. So if you have any of the Chapter's property, we would like to have the opportunity to bring these items "back home", properly catalogue them, and put them to good use.

The availability of these artifacts and materials will make it possible to create new displays for the public's enjoyment, create additional resources for researchers using our library and archives, and allow us to better understand the Chapter's assets and property. Now that we have the ability to safely store these materials, many of you can free up space in your basements, attics and garages. Some of the items outstanding include locomotive hardware, timetables, artwork, meeting minutes, films, slides, rulebooks, passes and other materials.

Please contact either Jeremy Tuke (359-8944/jnm2k@frontiernet.net) or Chris Hauf (381-8583/crhauf@frontiernet.net) if you have Chapter property stored for safekeeping. We will be happy to discuss what materials you have and arrange to move these materials to the appropriate location for processing and storage. Your help is greatly appreciated!

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## M.O.W. Equipment

*Dick Bean, Bob Mader, Supts.*

**Progress:** Rick Israelson is continuing work on the Tie Extractor/inserter. He is now installing auxiliary transport wheels liberated from an extra heavy duty hand truck.

The Burro crane has been outside the Restoration Facility for January and February while we were working on the wiring conduits and trenches.

Rand Warner is continuing to search for a dedicated Ballast Regulator for our Museums.

**Plans:** Complete auxiliary wheel installation on Tie Extractor and also repair starter motor set up.

Relocate Burro crane back into shop to continue engine hook up.

Follow up on donation of used Ballast Regulator.

Put Tamper and Dump Car into rip-rap service for slope reinforcements.

## Passenger Equipment

Bob Miner, Supt.

**Progress:** Momentum from our Blitz Day on the Erie Stillwell coach is continuing. Bernie Cubitt is continuing on window work. Dave Luca is taking down ventilator doors. Dale Hartnett, John Redden and Chuck Whalen are taking down soffit trim strips and panels. Bernie Cubitt has doped out a scheme to mount replacement seats from Pittsburgh car.

We have several proposals for future use of the recently emptied PR/RPO car: for active display car; for support car to Excursion Train Set; and for temporary shop car with long work bench areas for volume projects.

**Plans:** Get samples of replacement soffit panels for Erie Stillwell coach, and complete closing in of all windows areas. Continue removal of ceiling panels and soffits.

Decide and formalize plans for near term usage of Pennsy RPO car.

Plan and start work on ceiling rehab for MU Power Car.

Plan and start work for interior rehab of Pine Falls car.

Expand displays in DL&W baggage car for 2001 season.

## Freight Equipment

Chris Hauf, Supt.

**Progress:** The PRR N5c caboose continues to get attention from Chris Hauf and Tom Tucker on bad metal removal.

The BR&P caboose back date project is continuing, with new wood sheathing going on the west side, by Dave Luca, Bob Miner, Chris Hauf, Tom Tucker and Dale Hartnett. Bob Miner, Dale Hartnett and Nathan Dunn of Young Railfans are installing new roof sheathing..

**Plans:** Complete bad metal removal from Pennsy N5c and lay out plans for new metal replacement.

Complete side and roof sheathing on BR&P caboose and plan interior work, and window rework/relocation.

Resume work on NYC wood caboose exterior and roof areas.

Complete last of work on Erie Steel Caboose #254.

Resume work on B&O bay window caboose.

Complete plans for FGEX wood reefer work by groups in April and May.

## Motive Power Report March 2001

by J. E. Redden

The focus of this month's report is on the Plymouth model BL locomotive. This seven-ton engine came to us about a year ago, as a donation from Genesee Scrap and Tin Baling Corporation. It was located, for many years, at the old Odenbach ship building facility on Dewey Avenue. We believe that this engine was built in the early 1920's, and therefore, is one of the oldest internal combustion locomotives in existence. It might have originally been built for the Merchants Despatch Car Shops in East Rochester, since they owned an identical unit. But we have been unable to confirm this theory. It arrived at our Museum with most of its major components intact, but suffering from decades of exposure to the elements and vandals.

Activity on our smallest locomotive has picked up considerably in the last few weeks. On February 10, Joe Scanlon, Art Mummery, and several helpers loaded our 7-ton friend onto Joe's tilt-back truck, and carried it up to the Restoration Building. Unloading was accomplished the same day, without incident. It was placed on the East track in the building, and it moved on rails for the first time in several decades. Rather surprising, to us, was the ease with which the unit rolled - four guys were able to push it into the middle of the building, without much effort. On February 17, the Young Railfans, especially Mark Wiczorek, helped by removing the engine hood, the electric starter, and the air cleaner. On February 20, Rick Israelson, Chuck Whalen, and John Redden drained, and removed the oil pan from the Buda prime mover. This was a tricky job, due to the size and weight of the pan. Unfortunately, we discovered a sizeable mouse-nest inside the pan! We didn't find any of the "critters" in there, though. On February 24, an even larger group accomplished more. The grille and framework around the engine were removed by Foreman Kevin Klees and John Redden. They also started to remove the bearing caps for the number one main and number one connect-



The Plymouth is unloaded on to the panel tracks on the east side of the Restoration Building. The hope is to return this little "critter" back to operational condition. (*Digital photo by Chris Hauf*)

ing rod. Inspection showed that the likely biggest problem will be corrosion in the number one cylinder, due to rainwater seeping in through the engine exhaust. Later, in the day, Randy Bogucki, Bob Mader, Tom Webster, Chris Hauf, Bill Chapin, and Norm Shaddick worked on removing the front coupler and the remains of the drive chains.

Thanks to everyone who has helped on this project. Stay tuned to *The Semaphore* for future developments.

## Library Report

Charles Robinson, Chairman

The library will be opened Sunday, March 18 between 2 and 5 PM for general use. We still are adding more books to our collection. Get out of the winter winds and come read about the rail adventures in the Sunny South.

Jerry Gillette is industriously repairing the pages of the last remaining Wally Bradley album that had not received archival storage protection. Jim Stewart has now started stamping our shelved books with the Rochester NRHS stamp just in case a borrower may forget who owns the book. Steve Oagley has repaired the heating plant's cover. It got knocked off again by the remains of the tarp flapping against it. We are now on the verge of filling the last remaining empty shelves.

Another box of surplus *Trains* has been removed by Lynn Heintz. The cold weather has delayed our summary execution of the remaining surplus magazines at the dumpster.

Hope to see you at the library soon.



## Construction & Equipment

Joe Scanlon, Supt

**Progress:** Dick Bean and Bob Mader are working on Ingersoll compressor under Art Mummery.

Chris Hauf and Tom Tucker are working on ATC dozer and Cat D-4 dozer under Joe Scanlon's direction.

Art Mummery has one good Miller Welder on rubber, relocated and ready to use.

Joe, Art and Rand Warner are scoping out removal of remaining guards and pans on bottom of Army D-7 dozer, so we can thoroughly analyze engine.

**Plans:** Relocate International 4x4 1-ton truck to Restoration Building for rehab.

Complete rehab, tune-up and painting of ATC dozer and put into operational service.

Complete work on Case Teraloader and put into full operational service.

Start work on Koering hydraulic excavator as soon as weather permits.

Finalize Big Bertha Army dump truck for operational service.

Resume rehab of Cat 12 grader as weather permits.

## Thanks to ....

**Gale Smith** for several cash donations for *Pine Falls*, etc.

**Dick Holbert** for several cash donations.

**Rand Warner** for cookware and utensils for *Pine Falls* and NYC caboose.

**Bob Van Vanlkenburgh** for loco pictures, 12 assorted steam traps & pipe cutter.

**Alstom Signaling Division** for another batch of wire, cable and hardware.

**Al Pastorell** for lumber, doors, pallets

## Wanted

- Pole trailer for our electrical line crew.
- Hilti impact drill for masonry.
- Skid steer loader.
- Outdoor electric or gas powered run-around cart.
- Cantilever jacks for passenger car work.
- Trolley poles, retrievers, marker brackets, flag brackets.
- Tongue & groove wood sheathing for RL&B Car #206 and Line Car #01.
- Relay 6x8 ties and switch timbers.
- Rip-rap supply.

## Book Review:

### Houston North Shore

by Charles C. Robinson and

Paul L. DeVerter II

Reviewed by Bill Heron

Once again a Rochester Chapter members steps into the limelight as a published author. Our own Charlie Robinson has coauthored a terrific book with a boyhood friend. It's all about the last interurban line built in the US, the Houston North Shore. This is a true "labor of love" as shown by the care, detail and commentary exhibited throughout the book.

When I finished this book one of the thoughts that popped into my mind was, "Wouldn't it be great if many, many other lines could receive such well-documented, thorough coverage as that given here to the Houston North Shore." One reason this book is so good is that Charlie and his friend Paul actually rode the Houston North Shore. Apparently they became railfans at an early age and rode the rails, not only the Houston North Shore, but others within their reach as well, and gathered information and took pictures.

Another factor that contributes to this book's outstanding coverage of its subject is that Paul DeVerter was in the right place at the right time. He happened to be on hand one day when the Houston Belt and Terminal "was cleaning out an attic one day". The attic contained, among a lot of other things, three file drawers of documents pertaining to the Houston North Shore. These documents formed the basis for this book.

The Houston North Shore was completed in 1927. It followed a winding route that ran generally east-west and connected Houston with Baytown, site of a large oil refinery. The mainline of the Houston North Shore was about 27 miles long. Shortly after its completion the line came under the control of the Missouri Pacific and this accounts for the fact that most photographs of the line's equipment show "Missouri Pacific Lines" on the letter board.

From the beginning, hauling freight was seen as an important contributor to the line's income. And, even today former Houston North Shore trackage is thriving as a freight carrier. The man who sired the Houston North Shore Harry K. Johnson, also was interested in real estate. An important objective for him in bringing the Houston North Shore to fruition was that the availability of reliable public transportation would be key to his plans to divide acreage he controlled into

lots for housing, thereby generating a nice profit.

Right after World War II, Missouri Pacific managers found that if they could abandon electric operations a considerable tax saving could result. This was pursued to its end and in 1948 the last run of an electric car took place. Interestingly Charlie and Paul were among those who rode the last run. They also used white chalk to decorate the car used for the last run with appropriate inscriptions.

For legal reasons the Houston North Shore was obliged to continue to provide passenger service after the electric cars were removed from use. Twin Coach busses were selected. These rail busses were modified versions of busses used on streets and highways. In fact, I can recall the first new city busses to be placed in service in Rochester after World War II. They were very similar to the rail busses used by the Houston North Shore. I also recall that the units in Rochester were not very reliable at first. Apparently their automatic transmissions had problems, but that's another story. The Houston North Shore's rail busses provided passenger service for thirteen years, after which passenger operations were abandoned.

This book has at least three great strengths. First it is very well researched and provides a complete record of the Houston North Shore as a passenger carrier. Second it includes a very generous assortment of pictures, 217 according to a summary on the dust jacket. Third, the style of the writing is commendable. Never dry, never pedantic, the authors tell it like it was with ease and affability. In other words, the book is a joy to read. Don't miss out on this one.

**RIT Train Show:** Sunday, April 8, 10am-2pm; RIT Student-Alumni Union.

**A Rockville Bridge Stamp?** This is the longest stone masonry arch bridge in the world. In 2002, it will be age 100. To honor this event, letters to have a special stamp produced should be sent to: Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee, U.S. Postal Service, Stamp Development, Room 4474E, 475 L Enfant Plaza SW, Washington, D.C. 20260-2437.

**April 8: Batavia Train Show** at Batavia Downs; 9:30 - 3:30. Chapter to have store there?

Happy St.  
Patrick's Day

Rochester Chapter National Railway Historical Society  
**The Semaphore**  
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Chapter Meeting & Program:  
**Member's Slide  
Show Night**  
**March 15, 2001**  
**40 & 8 Club**  
**933 Universtiy Ave.**

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Contributions to *The Semaphore* are welcomed and encouraged from all readers. They should be mailed to: Gale E. Smith, 299 Seneca Park Avenue, Rochester, NY 14617-2433. Phone: (716) 544-6221. Contributors using a computer are asked to send their submissions on any MS-DOS diskette in ASCII or TXT format, as well as a printed copy. **Deadline: First Day of Each Month.**

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**Pouring the Restoration Facility Floor!**

The Restoration Building is up and running! Now we need to provide it with a concrete floor. We raised the dust to finish the space. Now we've faced with dust all over the place. One hundred dollars will buy a batch of concrete. The estimate for the floor is \$25,000; we'll need 250 batches (!). Help "cement" together a great project. Maybe we'll even let you write your name and date in a slab! [Don Shilling]
