



The Semaphore

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

April 2003
Volume 45, No. 8

Program for April 17:

The Adirondack Railroad

by Tom Trencansky

Notice:

Meeting Time Change

Store open at 7-7:30PM

Business Meeting will start
PROMPTLY at: 7:30 and ends at 8:00

Program: 8:15 PM

During the Program, the Store will be
CLOSED.

Library Hours

7 to 9:30 PM

Monday, April 21

Library Phone: 872-4641

Track Car Training Schedule

April 12: Classroom & Hands on with cars (weather permitting)

April 26: Hands on with Track cars

May 10: Hands on with Track cars

May 18: *Opening Sunday*

All classes are to start at 9 AM and will be held at the NYMT

Please mark your calendars!

Election of Trustees in May

Call for Nominations

If you would like to be a candidate in the forthcoming Election of Trustees to the Chapter's Board, please contact John Kernan in the near future. John's address is 96 Beacon Hill Dr., N., Penfield, NY 14526-9536; Phone: 585-671-8719, or e-mail: john.kernan@kodak.com.

Serving on the Nominating Committee are: John Kernan, John Redden, Rand Warner, and John Weber.

The ballots will be distributed in the May issue of *The Semaphore*, and will be due at the May 15th meeting.

Depot Guide Training Scheduled: May 3

by Dale Hartnett

One of the Chapter's most successful programs for several years has been the Track Car Operator training classes.

We're now ready to take the next step in training with our new Depot Guide Training class.

The first class will be held on Saturday, **May 3 at 9 AM at the NYMT**. New and returning guides will have an opportunity to share experiences, get questions answered and view our Museum's Depot Guide tape.

It's important that we tell a consistent story to our visitors, as well as help promote various Chapter activities for those who may want to get more involved.

The session will last no more than 60 minutes and there's no registration fee. All you have to do is show up.

If you have questions, contact Dale Hartnett at 585/232-3700 (days), 585/243-0139 (evenings) or dhartnet@foxrochester.com.

Annual Pancake Breakfast Coming: MAY 10

by Dale Hartnett

The Young Railfans will sponsor the annual "**More Than You Should Probably Eat**" pancake breakfast on **Saturday, May 10 from 8-10 AM at the Industry Depot**.

Bring an appetite because you'll need it for the pancakes, sausage, eggs and home fries. Refill your plate as many times as you like!

Proceeds from the pancake breakfast will be used to support the Young Railfan program at the R&GVRR Museum.

The breakfast is also a good way to kick off a "pre-opening work day" as we need many hands to finish preparations for the Museum's season opening. May 10 is also the final day of Track Car classes. "A good day of Track Car Operating starts with a good breakfast!"

Guests are invited to join us, so bring along the entire family.

NOTE TO SUBMITTERS

Because of the elections, please submit your articles to the Editor by Wed. April 30!

Museum Musings

by John Redden

Our Museum has a lot of appealing qualities that make it a nice place to spend some free time. If you've ever considered volunteering on a Saturday, perhaps this will give an idea of what to expect.

There are some nice amenities that are provided for (and by) the Volunteers. They give the Museum a friendly atmosphere, that helps to improve our productivity and the enjoyment of our Volunteer experience.

One of our members picks up a couple dozen doughnuts every Saturday morning, and another member makes a couple of pots of coffee, first thing in the morning. The coffee, along with the doughnuts, hot chocolate and tea, provide a nice "break area" for volunteers.

The Museum has a refrigerator and microwave oven in the Baggage room. Various snack foods and soft drinks are available for sale there, and there is room for volunteers to store their lunches in the fridge. One of our members takes time out of his day to take lunch orders late in the morning. He then calls in the order to the local sub shop in Scottsville, which usually delivers to the Museum around noon. We usually gather for lunch, somewhere in or near the Depot.

We also have a small portion of the Chapter Store located at the Museum, that is

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Special Events 2003

May 18 (Sun.)

Joint Operation Opening Weekend. Both Museums will open. Track car rides resume, weather permitting.

May 18 (Sun.)

"The Return of Casey Jones"

July 13 (Sun.)

"Model Boat, Steam & Gas Engine Rally"

August 23-24 (Sat. & Sun.)

"Diesel Days"

Oct 28 (Sun.)

Last day of Joint Operations. Track car rides end.

Greetings

from Lauren Maslanka

Many of you are already familiar with the project I have been working on but I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself and my project to those of you who may not be aware. My name is Lauren Maslanka and I recently became a member of the NRHS last year. I am a graduate student at the University of Buffalo and I am currently working on my final thesis project. The final project will be a documentary film about train history and restoration, rail enthusiasts and the impact of the railways on U.S. history.

The scope of this project is very broad at the moment. This is because I would like to allow the story to emerge on its own as I spend more time learning more about some of the projects going on as well as learning more about the people's own train experiences.

Many projects and videos I have seen on the subject deal only with the trains themselves. I wish to delve a little bit deeper, asking one main question: What makes us appreciate them on a personal level? That is to say that I want to learn more of the personal stories and learn more about OUR histories through our train experiences.

As we all know, much of our history as a nation revolves around the railroads. I feel that this is important and a topic often lost in many of the wonderful, yet kind of cold, metal films about trains. How do they affect us on a personal level as people and as a culture? Where and when did our own appreciation begin and how? It is this kind of approach, I believe, that will enable us to really stimulate an involvement and appreciation of trains that for many people, wasn't there before.

If you like to provide any comment or input about the project, please do not hesitate to let me know. Also, if you would like to share your personal train experiences or would like to be interviewed, I would love to speak with you at your convenience. Filmed interviews would be relaxed and informal – just a chance for you to share your stories and memories.

If you are interest in sharing a story of know someone that might be interested, please contact me via email: laurenmaslanka@lycos.com, or feel free to let me know at the next monthly meeting.

Thank you for all your help! See you next month!

Photographs and Information Needed

by Harold Russell

Lehigh Valley Depot, Rochester, NY

We are working on drawings of the Court Street Depot, hopefully for *Model Railroader*. Scott Hemenway has given me much information including some excellent black and white photographs from Bill Chapin. However, some bits of information are uncertain and additional photos will be helpful.

Lehigh Valley Interlocking Tower, P&L Junction.

We need information on the interlocking tower that once stood at P&L Junction. Accurate drawings can be made from photographs and by measuring the foundation. Photographs of any LV Interlocking Tower will be a great help.

If you have any photos that you could loan me, I would greatly appreciate it. Payment will be made by the magazine if published.

Harold Russell, 585-427-9159 of E-Mail,

Do you know?

- A telegrapher who can send/receive code using railroad telegraph instruments (We need to find two telegraphers).

- Anyone who can donate a good quality mat cutter or dry mount press to the Chapter?

- Anyone who has a catalog depicting early 20th Century construction equipment, especially 4-wheel contractors' side dump cars?

Contact Dale Hartnett at 585/232-3700 (days), 585/243-0139 (eves) or dhartnet@foxrochester.com

Mike Byrne leaves Publicity Post

After many years, Mike Byrne is relinquishing his position as our Publicity person. He oversaw, among other items, that our Fall Foliage Excursions had the necessary publicity in local/surrounding media to enable us to have a large portion of our trips sold out.

Thanks for your dedicated accomplishments!

Replacement Solicited

A member (or members) is being solicited to take on this important task of promoting these trips as well as other activities of the Chapter and R&GV RR Museum.

Please contact Jeremy Tuke, 585-359-8944; e-mail: jnmk2k@frontiernet.net; 14

Membership Report

Janet Dittmer, Chair

Welcome to this new member:

Larry Baker

9410 Ridge Road, Brockport, NY 14420
585-637-4586

Larry is a machine operator.

Thomas Ely

8987 Taft Rd., Bloomfield, NY 14469-9545
585-624-2771; tely@frontiernet.net

Interested in Trips

Luke Irvine

76 Nettlecreek Rd., Fairport, NY 14450
585-425-4272;

SUPER7CR@ROCHESTER.RR.COM

Interested in Trips; Rolling stock restoration; Publications; Historical research; Museum Operations; and Track car driver.

The National Office will be sending out 2nd renewal notices in the middle of April, not April 1 as previously reported.

Joe Scanlon, Art Mummery leave Board

Joe Scanlon, who has been on the Board for several years, and Art Mummery, who was a more recent member, have resigned from the Board to attend to their responsibilities in the construction field.

We thank them both for the many accomplishments in promoting and fulfilling the Chapter's goals. They both will remain active at the Museum.

Randy Bogucki has been appointed to fill one of the vacancies until the elections in May.

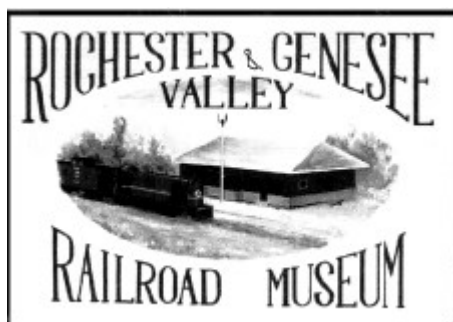
Larry, 40&8 manager dies

Larry, the ever present bar tender and overseer of the 40&8 Club facilities, recently died. His death was unexpected. His absence has been experienced by those who use these

Bob Pinsky, National VP, dies Mar. 15th

Robert Pinsky was Vice President of the Society since 1996 and joined in 1985. He was responsible for the Society's membership records and Editor for both the *NRHS News* and *NRHS News Extra*.

He was 55 years old, a resident of Oak Park, IL. Mr. Pinsky is survived by his wife, Dr. Ellen Pinsky, who serves as the Society's Assistant Secretary.



Museum Musings

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maintained by a couple of Chapter members. Current issues of Trains, Railpace, and Classic Trains are available to purchase.

The bathroom remains heated year-round, so we are able to use the sink and toilet facilities, regardless of the outside temperature (it wasn't always this way). A nice recent addition is the hot water faucet in the bathroom has been made operational again, thanks to one of our members.

In the Winter months, some of our efforts are directed at battling the elements; shoveling snow from sidewalks, plowing the parking area, and gathering wood for the stove in the agents office. This stove is kept hot all day, and makes a nice spot for any Museum business or social gatherings that might occur during the day.

Upon arrival, volunteers sign-in at the Work Log. This gives them a way to keep track of their hours at the Museum, as well as their travel-mileage, which is tax-deductible. It also gives everyone an idea who is around the Museum, in case phone calls, or other needs arise.

Several regular volunteers are retired railroad employees. On frequent Saturdays, they can be found around the Depot, ready and willing to share their experiences with others. This is an element that many of us value greatly, being able to connect to an era of classic railroading, from those who experienced it firsthand. This adds greatly to the Volunteer experience, in our opinion.

Depending on the weather, the time of the year, and whatever special activities might be scheduled, we usually have between ten and twenty-five people who volunteer on Saturdays. The projects are about as varied as one can imagine around a railroad museum. Typical work includes track maintenance, equipment restoration, construction equipment maintenance & restoration, day-to-day "running" maintenance on engines, cars, and track cars, and "housekeeping" chores like cleaning, flower gardening, painting, and lawn mowing. æ

Frequently, we have a track car, or

Managers

Railroad: (Motive, Rolling stock, MOW, ROW)

John Redden: 388-9124; ejreden@frontiernet.net

Infrastructure: (Buildings, grounds, shops, construction, communications, signals & power, heavy equipment)

Dave Luca: 288-0318; daveluca@frontiernet.net

Visitor Experience: (Visitor, Train & Track Car operations, 4-Q Vision, Special events)

Dale Hartnett: 243-0139; dhartnet@wuhf.sbgnnet.com

locomotive operating to handle various chores on the railroad. We sometimes need to re-arrange equipment for our public displays, or for restoration or general maintenance. And quite often, we'll fire up a locomotive or track car, just to give our volunteers a chance to ride and have some fun on our railroad.

New volunteers are always welcome, and encouraged to come out to the Museum on a Saturday. We try to match their interests to jobs around the Museum. We believe that the Museum provides a great combination of friendship, history, and hands-on experience with actual railroad equipment, structures, and operations. If you've been considering a volunteer role on Saturdays, we would encourage you to come out and give it a try.

"Jobs" List Helps Guide New Museum Volunteers

by Dale Hartnett

Every Saturday, year-round, you'll find between 10 and 30 volunteers working at the Chapter's Industry museum.

Many volunteers have ongoing projects that last for months or years. Others perform ongoing maintenance or tend to regular housekeeping chores.

Yet for the occasional volunteer or newcomer, it may seem difficult to "plug in" to museum activities.

With this in mind, we have established a "job list" that's posted near the Depot's baggage room door. There volunteers will find a list of short-term jobs that need to be done, along with details on skills and equipment needed, safety considerations and contacts for more information.

Volunteers can choose tasks that fit both their abilities and interests. Project leaders can solicit help for their favorite projects by listing their needs on the Job Board.

If you're never volunteered at the museum before, it's never been easier. Give it a try!

**Have you visited our Website at
www.rochnrhs.org/?**

Calling all Track Car Operators

by Harold Russell

Hands-on track car training will be held April 26 and May 10 starting at 9 AM. Bob Achilles is now responsible for all track car operations relieving Jeremy Tuke after many years of dedicated service. Harold Russell and Dave Soble will assist him with operator scheduling.

To qualify as a 2003 track car operator you must have attended a classroom session and participated in one session of hands-on operation. In mid May we will then mail you your operator's card for 2003. We then can schedule you for operation. Weekend scheduling is the responsibility of Harold Russell, telephone 427-9159 or e-mail: haroldrussell@juno.com.

Check your calendars now and see which dates you can operate. You will be contacted by him using e-mail or US mail. You can reply by telephone or return e-mail if you like. You can also call him. Feel free to request which track car you prefer, TC-1 or TC-3, and whether you want to be the primary or secondary track car.

New operators are expected to serve as Alternate Operators for one or two sessions before they operate solo.

Dave Soble does the weekday scheduling. He will contact the operators who are available weekdays by telephone. At present there are eight weekday trips scheduled but more can be expected as the school year winds down.

Snowfighters – Continued

by Rand Warner

Randy Bogucki has our snowblower working again. He has had the motor apart and back together and has the unit running well again – just waiting for one of our Upstate New York late April snowstorms!

The snowblower was donated several years ago by Bernie Cubitt.

Thanks to both of you!

Motive Power Update

by John Redden

Gasoline Locomotives

We have more work on the Plymouth, to report this month. The remaining exhaust manifold flanges were completed by Gene Redden at his home shop. All five of these flanges have since been brazed onto the manifold by Kevin Klees. Kevin is also in the process of rebuilding the friction-wheel drive assembly. Dale Hartnett has worked on cleaning up the linkages between the cab controls and the sander valves.

We have developed a valuable new source of information on the Plymouth. A member of the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum, near Pittsburgh, graciously offered to copy and send documents related to the Plymouth model BL. This is the first reference material that we've been able to locate, that directly describes our model of locomotive. Included are several builder's photos, as well as the specification for the model BL. This is of particular interest to us because, after three years of re-search, we have been unable to locate any photos, or any other detailed information on Plymouth Locomotive Works' model BL. Thanks to Dave Hamley for providing this information.

Bob Mader assisted in a couple of important ways, with our Whiting Trackmobile #2. It was needed for some switching duties one day this month, and we were unable to locate the keys. Within a few minutes, Bob had "debugged" the starter switch, provided his own jumper wires, and had the Trackmobile hot-wired for that day's service. The following week, Bob located the missing keys, which had apparently been mis-filed.

Diesel Locomotives

The restoration work on the 45-tonner, RG&E 1941, continues forward. Art Mumery and Dick Holbert have installed new seals, flexible drive couplings, and alternators on each of the prime movers. John Redden has started replacing coolant hoses on the prime-movers. Neil Bellenger is investigating various options for a new engineer's seat. Mark Wiczorek drained the air compressor crankcase oil for each compressor, and cleaned their air filters. Thanks to Bill Blaesi, for leads on battery acquisitions for this engine. Jim Johnson and Dick Holbert are investigating various options for illuminating the loadmeter panel.

Dick Holbert has donated more communications equipment for the Motive Power fleet. The 1843 will be equipped with a new (to us) radio after its Spring startup. Also,

thanks to Luke Irvine for his offer to donate an operable, relatively modern locomotive radio to the Museum.

Norm Shaddick, Chris Hauf, and John Redden continue to do various light maintenance tasks on the larger locomotives that are in Winter storage.

Rolling Stock Update

by John Redden

Larry Baker has resumed work on the Dansville & Mt. Morris Fairmont speeder. He is currently removing the wheels for inspection, cleaning and painting.

After many months of preparation by several people, the Fairmont track crane has a beautiful new coat of yellow paint. Thanks to Chris Hauf for doing final prep and painting. Rand Warner has purchased new lumber for the decking, and has delivered it to the restoration facility. Jeremy Tuke has plans to cut and fit this lumber shortly, and then the crane will be placed back into service. Stay tuned.

Chris Hauf has started adding tongue and groove facing to the existing plywood cabinets inside the BR&P caboose. This skillfully allows us to retain the fully intact, circa 1960 cabinetry, while backdating the interior toward its original appearance. Chris has received assistance from several regular Chapter members, as well as the Young Railfans.

We are actively pursuing a number of leads on possible rolling stock acquisitions. More on this, as details develop.

Track Department Update

by John Redden

The frog assembly for Switch 5 is nearing completion. We have installed thirteen new rivets, in order to properly anchor the parts to the mounting plate. Also, all of the 1 1/8" bolts (about a dozen), have been replaced with new material.

Randy Bogucki, Tony Mittiga, and several helpers have cleaned out the old, dirty ballast in the tie cribs, in the area of the frog. This will facilitate the replacement of bad timbers, and the re-alignment of all of the timbers, prior to the frog's re-installation.

Dale Hartnett has offered to shoot grades with a transit, in the vicinity of Switch 5, in order to help properly align the rails, frog, and guardrails.

Randy and Tony continue to work regularly at the North end of the railroad. This month, they have cleaned out flangeways of accumulated dirt and debris, to prepare them for springtime track car operations.

Several track inspections of the Railroad have been performed by Rand Warner, Randy Bogucki, and Dick Holbert. Comprehensive plans are being developed for long-term track maintenance and improvements. Rand has inspected the culverts for the entire railroad and generated a report, describing locations where remedial action needs to be taken.

More Track Work

Acting Supt. Rand Warner

A draft Trackwork Plan for 2003 has been developed and circulated for comment by Rand Warner.

A walking inspection tour of our main line track and right-of-way will be conducted this month by Dick Holbert, Randy Bogucki and Rand Warner.

Dick, Randy and Rand are also developing a long-range 10-year Track Infrastructure Investment Plan for submission to R&GVRM and NYMT management for review and approval.

A waling inspection tour of all our existing drainage culverts has been conducted - see Drainage write-up.

We are planning to pick up donated 70#/yd. to 100#/yd. track material from a nearby regional railroad this spring.

Track work priorities for 2003 will emphasize safety, drainage, and preparation for trolley operations.

As part of our Restoration Building Capital Facilities Program, we will be working on installation of Tracks #7 and #8 into the barn this year, in conjunction with the BIG DIG.

Combined Museum Operations

Staff is urgently needed at the New York Museum of Transportation, our sister museum, in the ticket and gift shop areas.

If you can help out for any of the upcoming Sundays, please contact Bob Miner at 671-3589, or e-mail to: alfred_m_2002@yahoo.com; or Jim Dierks at 473-5508; jdierks@worldnet.att.net.

Your help will be greatly appreciated!

Timber Train

After noting a reference in Winter 2002 "Scenic Rails" to "Timber Trains, Lynn Heintz sent a query. The reply, from Adirondack Scenic Railroad was that it is a new train set purchase from Canada, to replace some of their older rail cars.

Drainage

by Rand Warner

Good drainage is the most important contribution to the quality, integrity and longevity of our trackwork.

Without proper drainage, track sinks and/or tilts, ties and switch timbers rot, and ballast become contaminated with mud.

Without good drainage, our past investments of time, attention, priority, energy and money can all be wiped out in short order.

We have a Master Drainage Plan, developed by CE's Tom Mctighe and Joe Scanlon, assisted by Dave Luca and Rand Warner.

This plan diverts run-off to the north and to the south, along our trackage, to prevent east-west infiltration of our roadbeds. It also faces vulnerable west facing slopes with rip-rap and vegetation to control run off in hard rains. It takes maximum advantage of our existing culverts, and encourages installation of additional culverts where warranted.

The plan is displayed on the wall of our Engineering Office at the Depot. Please take a good look at it, so that we can give some much needed attention to drainage this Spring.

Our culverts have all been inspected by Rand Warner and an annotated inspection report has been issued for follow-up actions.

Electrification

Facilitator: Rand Warner

R&GVRM

Coordination on the Trolley Power Substation has been completed with Underwriters and Town of Rush.

Coordination with Niagara Mohawk is continuing on interface power connection details -- three phase wye vs. delta, neutral grounding, installation support, etc.

Coordination has also been initiated with NiMo Engineering Department at Buffalo, and with Business Services group at Batavia.

Rail bond kits for double bonding of rails will be ordered and installed by Rand Warner & Co.

Scott Gleason & Co. are coordinating procurement, delivery and installation of poles and overhead.

R&GVRM has on hand, and operational, the replacement auger truck for setting poles.

NYMT

Charlie Lowe has provided design details for extension of overhead construction through S-curves south of Loop Switch at NYMT.

We need to obtain materials for down guy anchor cables and the auger anchors themselves—to support overhead installation.

NYMT has on hand bracket arms, insulators, ears, etc. to make up additional pre-fab subassemblies needed for overhead construction.

Preparing subassemblies for overhead, extending the overhead and installation of double bonding on rails can all proceed independently of sub-station activities.

Gift Shop Help Needed!

by Marie Miner

The number of people who are willing to work in the gift shop has dwindled considerably. As of this writing we are down to 8 women and men who are still able to contribute some of their time. This winter the list went down to **3!**

During the season from May to October we need at least two people to run the gift shop and sell tickets. It's not a hard job and training is available plus you will be working with an experienced person. All this calls for is a few hours of your time once or twice a season or more if you are so inclined.

Please, consider helping your museums in this way, for without a ticket and gift shop crew, we could not operate. Both museums benefit monetarily during our joint season. This is not just run by NYMT. Several of us belong to both organizations and a few to just one.

So let's make this a true team effort with NRHS and NYMT both represented. Track car drivers: get your wife or a friend interested in helping on the days you are driving. If you don't drive, consider ticket selling as your contribution to having a successful season.

Call Marie Miner at 671-3589 to volunteer your time in the gift shop! **DO IT NOW!**

Library Report

Charles Robinson, Chairman

The library is now switching to summer hours in April for our regular open library session. The library will be open Monday evening April 21 between the hours of 7:30 to 9:30 PM for those that wish to look for more information on railroads, check out books or view the tape collection.

Unfortunately the library chairman mistakenly announced in the last Chapter meeting that for it would be open on Sunday afternoon April 20. That was incorrect so please note the correct time above.

Bob Miner has generously donated a new long table for our periodical room. It is a stronger table than the previous one that had a reputation of subtly collapsing if too many magazines were piled on it. That table is now providing a better location for one of our computers and its printer in the front room. Bob also has rearranged some of our safes and book cases to provide more useful space. Thanks Bob!

Jerry Gillette, Steven Oagley and the library chairman are now working through our collection of photographs and grouping them in categories that will be listed to aid those that are looking for particular photographs. We have too many photographs to list them individually. There are some interesting historical railroad prints around Rochester.

Gale Smith has continued with the never ending work of assigning shelf numbers to our growing collection of rail books and logging them into the computer. Bob Miner has up graded the library's computer system.

Come out and see us Monday evening April 21 between 7:30 & 9:30 P.M.

Thanks to ...

John Redden for registration and use of his single axle 10-foot trailer for many Museum projects.

Keith Blackhall and **RG&E** for arrangements and donation of right-angle drive, etc. for Cummins diesel powered backup fire pump.

Steve Huse for twice yearly checkout of all our fire extinguishers and for change over to new style safety approved propane bottles.

Scott Gleason and **RG&E** for arrangements and delivery of a dozen wood poles for our trolley electrification project.

Dave Shields of **RG&E Power Quality** for technical support to questions on our trolley substation.

Rand Warner for tools, equipment, materials and books for Museum projects.

Charlie Lowe (NYMT) for donation of "RailPace" magazines.

Dick Holbert for donation of many back issues of "RailPace" magazines since it started.

Jim Johnson for endless deliveries of donuts for Museum volunteers, along with Saturday sandwich, and Tuesday/Thursday night pizza coordination.

Contributors to this issue

Janet Dittmer, Dale Hartnett, Chris Hauf, John Kernan, Lauren Maslanka, Marie Miner, John Redden, Charles Robinson, Rand Warner, and indicated sources.

Dramatic Rescue on Lake Ontario in 1902 Involved Local Railroad

[The following article was printed in the April 2000 issue of Central New York Chapter's *The Green Block*.]

This is the story of one of the most incredible rescues in the annals of maritime history on Lake Ontario, taken from pp 43-45. U.S. Live-Saving Service Annual Report for 1902. The rescue involved assembling a special New York Central train at Charlotte, near Rochester, during a howling blizzard. It typifies the grit people were made of in the old days. - Dick Palmer)

Gold medals were awarded to Keeper Gray and Surfmen Chapman, Downing, Eastwood, Eggleston, Henderson, Palmer, Rose and Seymour, of the life-saving station at Charlotte, New York, in recognition of their gallant conduct in effecting the rescue on December 15, 1902, of four men and one woman from the wreck of the schooner **John R. Noyes**, which was lost on Lake Ontario. The circumstances of the case are set forth in the following extract from the letter of the Secretary of the Treasury of March 12, 1903, transmitting the medals.

About 5:30 p.m. of December 14, 1902, the train master of the New York Central Railroad, at Charlotte, New York, received a telegram requesting him to notify Keeper Gray of your station that a vessel showing signals of distress lay at anchor about 3 miles off lakeside, 23 miles from Charlotte. and upon receipt of the information the keeper instantly prepared to go to her relief.

The harbor tug was frozen in the ice up the river, and, therefore, could not tow the surfboat to the scene, while to undertake to pull 23 miles against a head sea on a winter night and with unmistakable omens of a storm at hand would have been useless and foolhardy. Therefore, the keeper wisely resolved to proceed by rail to lakeside, and thence, if possible, reach the vessel. He promptly secured orders for a special train at Windsor Beach, and a gang of shovelers set to work to break out two flat cars standing on a siding. Owing, however, to the deep snow and other obstructions it was nearly two hours before the life-saving crew could get to the depot with the wagon carrying a surfboat, and it was an hour later when the train was ready.

Before leaving the station the keeper sent a telegram to the keeper of the Oswego Station, requesting him to dispatch a tug in search of the craft, with the view of saving her if possible, and also telegraphed lakeside for teams to be in readiness for his use at that point. The special train was delayed by a

freight train. which held the track so that lakeside was not reached until 9:35 p.m. and there the condition of the roads proved so unfavorable that sleds were necessary to transport the apparatus to the shore.

The journey of 4 miles was accomplished with extreme difficulty, great drifts of snow in places at least 6 feet deep obstructing progress, while here and there were very considerable stretches swept bare, over which it was impossible for four horses to drag the sleds, and the crew were frequently compelled to assist in hauling them. At 11:30 p.m. the shore was gained, and while the boat was being removed from the sleds the keeper proceeded to a bluff and burned a red Coston signal, with the hope that it might be visible to the crew of the distressed vessel and encourage them.

Before embarking, he also obtained from the person who sent the telegram as good an idea of her position as he could give. Then launching the boat the crew pulled outside into the heavy sea, but the weather was bitter cold, and the air was so filled with thick vapor covering the water that, after making an offing of about a mile, the keeper found it impossible to see a dozen yards ahead. Nevertheless, he kept on by compass until about 3 o'clock in the morning, and for almost three and one-half hours fruitlessly continued the search, burning several Coston signals. Finally, however, the bewilderment proved so disheartening that he felt compelled to wait for daylight, and therefore ordered the boat ashore.

At his request the people of the vicinity kindled a large bonfire, which was thought might possibly be seen from the vessel, while all hands were permitted to lie down for an hour and a half upon straw brought by the farmers. After breakfast, procured at a farmhouse near by, the keeper sent the entire crew along the cliffs for the purpose of sighting the vessel if possible when daylight should break, but no signs of her were discovered, and again he launched, leaving a man on shore with instructions to ascend to the top of a windmill standing on a hill, and, if he should pick her up, to signal which way the boat should go.

As soon as the lookout reached the top of the mill he discovered the schooner showing a mere speck in the distance, and upon his signal the keeper put back and made her out very well with the aid of marine glasses.

Taking note of her bearings by the compass he again launched, and, having the wind astern, soon made a distance of 10 miles off shore, when the wind came brisk from the east with a strong beam sea, which compelled him to proceed in the dangerous trough of the combing waves, and the weather so cold that the spray rapidly covered the boat and its occupants with ice. The conditions then constantly grew more difficult, and when the boat reached the wreck at 11:30 a.m., 20 miles off shore, the wind was blowing very hard and the sea was running high.

The vessel and her crew were in the most pitiful condition. She had lost her sails, yawl boat, and both anchors, had her cabin smashed in, was leaking fast, and was heavily encumbered with ice. She was simply a helpless wreck, drifting about at the mercy of the storm. All on board were suffering grievously from exposure for more than fifty hours and from lack of food for upward of thirty-six hours. They had lost hope, bidden one another good-bye, and were lying on the deck benumbed, despairing, and some of them hysterical. In a little while all would have perished. Having wrapped the woman in the keeper's overcoat and provided her with mittens the life-savers managed to place all hands safely into the surfboat, and, as nothing could be done to save the wreck, the keeper pushed off quickly with a view of gaining the land before darkness should shut them down. All were well-nigh worn out, and the return trip lay in the trough of the sea, which made it necessary to constantly head the boat up to the breakers, whereby her progress was much impeded. A little assistance was rendered at the oars by some of the shipwrecked men, when they were sufficiently recovered, and after an extremely trying experience the shore was reached about 4:30 p.m., a mile and a half from the launching place. There, however, on account of the formidable accumulation of ice, the boat could not land, and the crew were therefore compelled to carry the rescued persons ashore, through the water and ice, on their shoulders. Then they pulled farther down, where horses dragged the boat ashore for transportation. After partaking of a warm supper, kindly furnished by thoughtful women in the vicinity, the crew proceeded with the boat to Lakeside, and thence by train to Windsor Beach, the starting point, where they arrived about 9:30 p.m., December 15, having been engaged in this extremely hazardous enterprise more than a day and a night without sleep and with no rest,

(Continued on Page 7)

Lake Rescue

(Cont'd from Pg 6)

save for an anxious hour and a half in the open air spent upon a bit of straw spread upon the snow.

They were under oars from 11:30 p.m. of the 14th to 4:30 p.m. of the 15th continuously, with the exception of about two hours, having pulled in a heavy seaway nearly or quite 60 miles, and all were more or less frostbitten, some seriously. Grave apprehensions existed on shore lest they would be lost, and preparations were made to send out a rescue party if necessary throughout all these trying circumstances you nobly bore our part, and that you and your comrades freely jeopardized your lives is clearly established.

I find great pleasure in acting under the law as the medium for the bestowal of the accompanying gold medal, which is designed to bear testimony of extreme and heroic daring in saving life from the perils of the sea.

[The Editor thanks George Reed, Editor of *The Green Block*, who took the time and effort to retrieve this article from his files. I had saved this issue 'aside' sometime ago because of local interest to publish in a Winter edition (but as of this writing, April 5, 2003, winter has returned in the form of a 24-hour ice storm!). Anyway, as usual, I could not locate this issue so called upon Mr. Reed's assistance.]

NYC 1953 Conneaut, OH Wreck

Fifty years ago, on the evening of March 27, 1953, probably the most horrific railroad wreck in Erie Co., PA history happened. Just east of the Ohio-Pennsylvania state line, Train No. 5 *The Mohawk*, a west-bound New York-to-Chicago passenger train, derailed into a west-bound freight on the adjacent track. And moments later, Train No. 12, the east-bound St. Louis-to-New York *Southwestern Limited* plowed into the derailed cars of No. 5 that we strewn across its path.

Relief trains were dispatched from Buffalo and Cleveland carrying doctors, medical supplies and Red Cross disaster teams to the site. They also carried away 21 people who had died and 49 injured.

The ICC and Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission conducted a joint investigation of the accident with a hearing at the Lawrence Hotel in Erie on April 1-3, 1953. They concluded that Train No. 5 had derailed

due to damaged track that resulted from a pipe that had fallen from the east-bound freight moments before the accident. The load of pipe had not been properly secured for shipment and inspectors of railroads on which this load travelled did not adequately inspect the load. Not all of the seals on the straps surrounding the pipes were secured; this allowed the pipes to shift and break a stake on the flat car, allowing a pipe to fall to the rails, causing misalignment of the track of the passenger train.

[A more extensive write-up of this accident, with follow-ups and photographs, of the wreck, is in the March 2003 issue of *The Lake Shore Timetable*, from which the above was condensed.]

Another Turboliner Obstacle

This is becoming the classical case of too many cooks in the kitchen! Recently, Amtrak refused to operate the completed Turboliner sets because of 1) incompatible with regular cars to allow hookups, 2) lack of training, 3) lack of spare parts, 4) cash constraints.

Now SuperSteel of Schenectady which is rebuilding four Truboliners waits for engines and transmission to be delivered from Amtrak. The cost is about \$65 million, which Amtrak states it does not have adequate funds (that I believe), but promises to deliver soon. [*The Business Review* website, 3/3/03.]

Basic RailCamp 2003: July 20-26

Only one session of RailCamp will be held this year because of personnel constraints at Steamtown. It is open to high school students from the 9th through finishing 12th grade. Most activities take place at Steamtown National Historic Site, with housing at University of Scranton. Tuition is \$550 per student, however, the actual cost is about \$750 with National requesting that Chapter sponsored student to consider paying the actual cost.

Hornell has 2nd transit contractor

Transportation & Transit Associates, is a subcontractor specializing in installing systems and components in railcars. Recently, they moved to the former General Marble building which will allow future expansion in the 113,000 square foot structure. The present work force is 80 employees with additional hires likely.

They also have a facility at Kanona, near Bath, in the former Mercury Aircraft property, employing 160 workers. [*Hornell Evening Tribune*, 4/2/03]

Off The Wires

Finger Lakes Easter Bunny Trip

On Saturday, April 19, the Lehigh Valley Historical Society in cooperation with the Finger Lakes Scenic Railway is cosponsoring Easter Bunny train excursions on the former NYC "Auburn Road" line between Shortsville and Clifton Springs on Friday, April 18 and Saturday, April 19. Five trips will operate each day from Shortsville to Clifton Springs and return. Trips will depart at 10:00 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 1:00 p.m., 2:30 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. each day from the LV Railroad Historical Society Museum in the old NYC freight station at 8 E. High St. in Shortsville. Fares are \$10.00 per person, children under three are free. Call 585-289-8022 for information.

Finger Lakes Railfair: April 26-27

The 2003 Finger Lakes Railfair will take place April 26 & 27 at "The Field", a large indoor soccer field complex, Lansing, NY, six miles north of the City of Ithaca on NY Route 34. The hours: Saturday: 10 to 5; Sunday: 10 to 4.

About 47 vendors/exhibitors are scheduled. The Railfair is sponsored by the Cornell Railroad Historical Society, NRHS

RJ Corman buys KY line

R.J. Corman (based in Nicholasville, KY) is to take ownership of the Lexington & Ohio RR on March 25. The L&O runs between Versailles KY and Lexington KY. At Lexington it interchanges with Norfolk Southern, at Versailles it connects with the Bluegrass RR Museum. The L&O was a subsidiary of Gulf & Ohio. The line is an ex-Southern Railway line and connects with Western Division at Lawrenceburg KY and with the Kentucky Division at Lexington. The line was built by the Louisville Southern. [via internet's RailroadHistorical-

AOE Trip

The American Orient Express, in cooperation with "Trains" Magazine is scheduling the "Grand Trans-Canada Rail Journey" for July 26-August 4, 2003. This ten day trip will run across Canada from Montreal to Vancouver, with motor coach side trips.

Fares run from \$4,290 to \$7,290 -- BUT you can save \$500 if booked by April 18. Reservations to: American Orient Express, 5100 Main St., Suite 300, Downers Grove, IL 60515, or call (800) 320-4206. The brochure will be available at the Chapter's Library.

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Chapter Meeting & Program:
**The Adirondack
Railroad**
by Tom Trencansky
933 University Ave.
Thursday, April 17, 2003

NOTE Time Change!
Store Opens: 7:00
Business: 8:00
Program: 8:15

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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: (585) 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. Also can send by e-mail to: gale299@frontiernet.net. **Deadline: First Day of Each Month.**

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] (Each block indicates \$1,000)
