

THE SEMAPHORE

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCHESTER & GENESEE VALLEY RAILROAD MUSEUM

VOL. 62 NO. 5
MAY 2019

NEXT MEETING:
May 16
ALL ABOARD!
Enjoy a ride on
your museum railroad!



Conductor Jim Otto provides car counts to his engineer as the train backs down into the Hill Block towards Industry during our hands-on training session on April 13. Several first- and second-year trainees gained valuable experience throughout the day. Of course, any day we are running trains can be a training day! Training is not just limited to trains, we're happy to provide training for any of our heavy equipment, just ask! PHOTO BY OTTO M. VONDRAK

Spring Fever

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Though the thermometer doesn't always seem to agree, Spring is here! Your museum enjoyed a great start to the 2019 season with a day of sold-out Easter Bunny Train Rides on April 20! Despite the overcast weather, we safely served more than 600 happy visitors.

A week later, we hosted a special meeting of officers from railroad museums from around the region. Inspired by the "Winterfest" event joining trolley museums together, we decided it was time to make serious outreach to our neighboring organizations. We are all enjoying substantial periods of growth, despite the vast differences among us. After a tour of both NYMT and RGV facilities, I helped lead a question-and-answer roundtable discussion that touched on several topics that affect us all. How do we increase visitors and revenue? How do

we attract more volunteers? How do we stay relevant and attract a new generation of preservationists? None of us had all the answers, but together, we all came up with some really good ideas to try out.

Which brings us back to Industry... Despite all the increased activity at our museum, we often find ourselves short on volunteer help (see page 5). How do we reverse this trend? It may sound trite, but every contribution counts, no matter how big or small. How do we draw you in? Is there too much communication? Not enough? Do the tasks seem too intimidating? Have we completely missed your offer to help?

I always welcome your feedback on how we can make our museum better. Please email me at ovondrak@yahoo.com or call me at (585) 820-2341.

—Otto M. Vondrak, Museum President



www.rgvrrm.org

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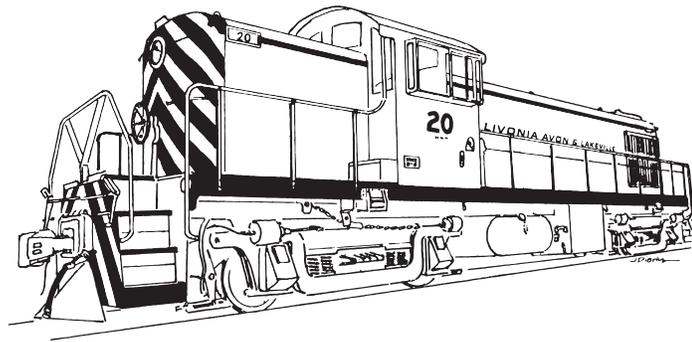
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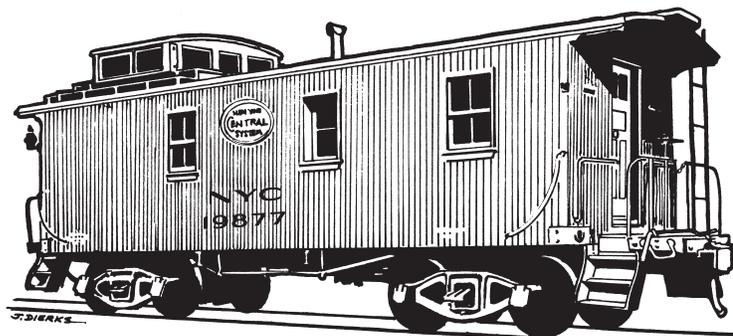
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2019 SCHEDULE

Subject to change. Visit RochesterTrainRides.com for details.

- April 20 - Easter Bunny Train Rides**
- May 18 - Rails & Ales Train Rides**
- May 19 - Vintage Rails Wine Tasting**
- June 15-16 - Fathers Day Train Rides**
- July 27-28 - Princesses & Superheroes**
- August 17-18 - Real Steam Train Rides**
- August 24-25 - Real Steam Train Rides**
- Sept. 21 - Oktoberfest Rails & Ales**
- Sept. 22 - Ciderfest Rails Train Rides**
- Sept. 28-29 - Military Salute Train Rides**
- Oct. 12-13 - Pumpkin Patch Train Rides**
- Oct. 19-20 - Pumpkin Patch Train Rides**
- Oct. 26-27 - Pumpkin Patch Train Rides**
- Nov. 30 - Santa Trains to the North Pole**
- Dec. 7- Santa Trains to the North Pole**
- Dec. 14 - Santa Trains to the North Pole**



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MONTHLY PROGRAM

Meetings return to Industry Depot starting **May 16**. Starting a half-hour earlier at 7:00 p.m., following a brief business meeting we will enjoy rides on our museum railroad and a tour of current projects in the Restoration Shop. Warm-weather meetings continue at the depot on **June 20, July 18, and August 16**.

All museum meetings are **FREE** and open to the public. Please bring a friend and help spread the word about our museum.

—John Stewart, Program Chair

SOLD-OUT EASTER BUNNY TRAINS START THE 2019 SEASON

We kicked off our 2019 museum operating season with a successful event on April 20. Despite temperatures dropping down into the 40s and a constant threat of rain, your museum hosted more than 600 visitors who came to ride our trains, hunt for eggs, and meet the Easter Bunny! Every train was sold out, and we filled both cabooses and the open-air flatcar with happy riders. We also trained some volunteers to help out



TOP: Our monthly meeting on April 18 featured some of our local interurban history. Jeremy Tuke brought out a large scale model of a Buffalo, Lockport & Rochester car that was donated to our museum, while members brought examples of timetables and artifacts. **ABOVE:** Graphic designer and historian Steve Boerner explained how his research into the Erie Canal at Adam's Basin led to his interest to create a three-dimensional computer generated model of the scene, complete with boats, buildings, tracks, and of course, the Rochester, Lockport & Buffalo interurban!

in the ticket office and gift shop. Overall, it was a great way to start off the season. Thanks to all the volunteers who contributed to our success! Thanks also to Nick Haddad at **Mascots Unlimited** for providing a fun and friendly Easter Bunny, and to Laura Pufpaff at **Spirit Wind Farm** for supplying our petting zoo exhibit.

**REGIONAL MUSEUM MEETING
APRIL 27**

The world of historic railway preservation is continually evolving with the times. Across New York State, several organiza-

tions are working to preserve our railroad history through various activities, whether it's restoring and operating trains, organizing excursions, or maintaining a museum. In an effort to foster cooperation among groups in Western New York, your museum hosted a special meeting on Saturday, April 27. Officers from several organizations across the region were invited to attend, including **New York Museum of Transportation, Central New York Chapter NRHS (Syracuse), Friends of the Railroad (Victor), Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society (Shortsville), Medina**



LEFT: Many new volunteers joined us for hands-on training on April 13, where we had two train crews operating together to get our display yard and excursion train ready for the season. We also had Hilton Boy Scout Troop 125 join us for camping and service projects throughout the weekend.

Easter Bunny Train Rides

BELOW LEFT: The Easter Bunny rides the rails once more, as conductor Dave Avery assists our special guest down the stairs.

BELOW: Thanks to all of the volunteers who helped make our April 20 Easter Bunny Train Rides a huge success. Despite the gray weather, every train was sold out to capacity.



Railroad Museum (Medina), Niagara Fronter Chapter NRHS (North Tonawanda), Pittsburgh & Shawmut Railroad Historical Society (Angelica), Salamanca Rail Museum (Salamanca), and Western New York Railway Historical Society (Buffalo, Williamsville, Orchard Park).

Activities began on Saturday morning with a meet-and-greet at Industry Depot, before boarding our special train for a ride to our Midway Station. There, we met the trolley for a ride up to NYMT. Trustee Jim Dierks led a brief tour through the collection of trolleys housed in the hay barn, and also showed off their new exhibit featuring the old Midtown Plaza Monorail.

We then boarded the trolley for the return trip to Midway. Visitors transferred back to our diesel train for the trip to the Res-

RIGHT: It doesn't matter if the sun isn't shining, everyone is excited to meet the Easter Bunny and have their picture taken!

BELOW RIGHT: The Egg Hunt is filled with many colorful eggs to choose from... It's so hard to pick which ones! At least, for this young visitor...

toration Shop. We hosted an informal luncheon and a tour of our facilities, including the restoration projects currently underway. Our volunteers and project managers were eager to show off their progress, and our visitors were impressed to learn more about our preservation efforts.

When we originally planned the meeting, we thought a late-April schedule would give us a chance at some milder weather. Instead, we were greeted with a snow



shower and temperatures in the 20s! In the interest of comfort, we boarded the train once more and our roundtable discussion was reconvened at Industry Depot.

President Otto Vondrak led the roundtable discussion, first asking each organization to introduce themselves and talk a little bit about their activities. From there, we enjoyed a question-and-answer session that explored several topics, from attracting and retaining young volunteers, to marketing and advertising, to managing projects, and more. As a result, we learned quickly that all of our organizations face similar challenges, but approach the solutions in different ways.

This was the first such organized meeting of railroad museums in more than ten years. The attendees agreed it was a good

meeting, and future events should be planned, with Medina Railroad Museum offering to host the next gathering.

RAILS & ALES - MAY 18
VINTAGE RAILS - MAY 19

Your museum will be hosting two exciting events in May that highlight the contributions of our local craft beverage industry. Our third annual **Rails & Ales** event will be held on **May 18**, and our first annual **Vintage Rails** wine tasting event will be on **May 19**. Both events run from 12:00 to 4:00pm. Tasting stations are set up at either end of the train ride, and refreshments are available for purchase. Tasting tickets are \$20.00 each purchased on-line (\$25.00 at the door), designated drivers are \$15.00. Adults 21 and over, please. For event de-



LEFT: Rob Burz prepares to thread a blind rivet to complete a roof repair on LV 95100.

BELOW: Project manager Sam Rosenberg dons a "bunny suit" of a different type to remove grease and debris from the underbody.

BOTTOM: Bill Bachmann and Joe Steimer fit in the final pieces of the southwest corner ceiling.



HELP WANTED

These positions have an immediate need!

PUBLICITY MANAGER

Part-time position. This volunteer would coordinate posting museum event listings to various community websites, and sending out press releases to local media. Help identify new outlets for event promotion. Copy would be provided, but willingness to write and edit is a plus.

TICKETING MANAGER

Part-time position. Help manage our on-line event ticketing system! Using Eventbrite, this volunteer would set up ticketing for individual events, monitor sales, and respond to customer service inquiries. A willingness to help with Group Sales and Private Tours is a plus.

GIFT SHOP MANAGER

Your Museum Gift Shop is in need of a manager who is motivated and enthusiastic. This volunteer would be in charge of ordering products, stocking shelves, pricing items, adding items to our PayPal point-of-sale system, and keeping track of inventory. Previous retail experience is a bonus, but not required.

OUTREACH AND DEVELOPMENT

Help make connections with our local community and be an ambassador for your museum! Arrange speaking dates, make connections with other organizations, help find donations and grants, and more. You can help us grow!

TRAINING AVAILABLE!
DON'T WAIT,
please call
us TODAY!



(585) 820-2341



ROCHESTER & GENESEE VALLEY RAILROAD MUSEUM

tails and a full listing of vendors, please visit www.RochesterTrainRides.com.

**FATHERS DAY TRAIN RIDES
JUNE 15-16**

Celebrate Fathers Day Weekend with FREE train rides for Dad (with additional paid child or adult fare)! Enter our historic 1909 Erie Railroad train station and purchase your ticket from the friendly agent inside. You will be welcomed by friendly volunteers as you enjoy your ride aboard our restored vintage trains. Enjoy our special exhibit of a 1957 GM Transit Bus restored by volunteers at Regional Transit Service. See our progress on the restoration of Rochester Subway Car 60! Trains depart every half-hour from Industry depot between 10:00am-4:00pm. Adults (18+)

\$12.00, Youth (5-17)/Seniors (65+) \$10.00, Fathers ride FREE (with additional paid child or adult fare)! Visit www.RochesterTrainRides.com for details.

**ONLY 15 TICKETS LEFT FOR
JULY 19-21 WEEKEND RAILROAD
TOUR OF ALTOONA, PENNSYLVANIA**

There's only 15 seats left for our special Weekend Railroad Tour of Altoona from July 19 through 21, including visits to the **Railroader's Memorial Museum, Horseshoe Curve National Historic Landmark, an Amtrak ride from Altoona to Johnstown around Horseshoe Curve, a tour of Curry Rail Services** located in the old PRR Hollidaysburg Car Shops, a visit to **Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site**, a ride behind ex-Bath &

Hammondsport steam locomotive no. 11 at the **Everett Railroad**, a visit to and rides at the **Rockhill Trolley Museum**, and a tour of the shops at the **East Broad Top Railroad** PLEASE NOTE: *You must make your own arrangements for lodging and food.*

Get on board! See the complete trip itinerary and reserve your tickets on-line at RochesterTrainRides.com.

—Dave Shields, Trip Chairman

PCRRHS RESTORATION GRANT

The Penn Central Railroad Historical Society has awarded the museum a \$2,000 grant to be applied towards the repainting of our Railway Post Office. David Kehrer is leading the project to redecorate our car as it appeared as PC 6516. Built in 1910 as Pennsylvania Railroad Class M70, it was



**REGIONAL
MUSEUM
MEETING**

ABOVE: Visitors from several railroad museums across our region prepare to board the trolley at Midway Station on April 27. A brief tour of NYMT followed.

ABOVE RIGHT TOP: Visitors enjoy a tour of the Restoration Shop and a break for lunch.

ABOVE RIGHT: A lively roundtable discussion was held in the waiting room at Industry Depot. Several topics were touched on, including recruiting and retaining active volunteers.

RIGHT: Trustee Jim Dierks gives a tour of the exhibits in the hay barn at NYMT, including Newark PCC trolley No. 7.





New York Central caboose 19877 (originally 19001?) has been placed in the shop to prepare for the installation of a new membrane roof and some light mechanical work.

rebuilt in 1935 as Class M70b, and finally in 1953 as Class BM70nb. Passed to PC in 1968, it joined the Conrail fleet in 1976 as part of the maintenance fleet. In 1994, the car was donated by Rochester Refrigeration Corp. to our museum. The car is currently home to our Signals exhibit, which opened to the public in 2017.

CABOOSE ROOFING PROJECTS

Charlie Marks is leading the effort to have a new membrane roof installed on both Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh 280 and New York Central 19877 this spring. A professional contractor will be engaged to install the materials that we already have on hand for the project. Usually made from sheets of synthetic rubber, the pieces are joined together to form a seamless surface that helps shed water. Properly installed, the membrane roof can last up to 20 years or more, helping further preserve our wood-bodied cars.

The NYC caboose was moved into the shop and parked over our inspection pit on April 27. While the roof is being prepped for installation, additional work will take place below to recondition the brake beams and other mechanical systems. In a curious note, while inspecting the underbody, “NYC 19001” was found stenciled to the center sill. It was painted over and replaced with “NYC 19877.” We also found markings indicating “major repairs” took place at Beech Grove in 1961, and another reconditioning at an unknown location in 1966

(possibly East Rochester). The car was officially retired in 1972, and arrived at our museum in 1987.

SOUTH UPPER YARD DRAINAGE AND EXPANSION

In 2016, we extended Track 6 by 300 feet south, adding much needed capacity for long-term storage. In 2019, we will complete the project by extending the “french drain” along Track 6, which will provide for proper drainage off the fill. A french drain is a trench filled with gravel or rock and/or containing a perforated pipe that redirects surface water and groundwater away from an area.

Once the drainage project is complete, we will prepare for the southward extension of Track 9. The goal is to increase our storage capacity for active, in-service equipment that is either not on display or not being used in a train.

THANKS TO JCREW LANDSCAPING

J Crew Landscaping of Rush has offered to sponsor our depot lawn for the 2019 season. Over the next few weeks, the crew will be out to rejuvenate and repair our lawn to prepare it for the rigors of our operating season! As thanks for their help, we have posted banners with their logo on the fence alongside the depot. Visit their web site at www.jcrewlandscaping.com.

• VISIT [FACEBOOK.COM/RGVRRM](https://www.facebook.com/rgvrrm) •



LEHIGH VALLEY

Mendon Petition Opposed

Unopposed was a petition of the Lehigh Valley Railroad to discontinue Livonia Station and remove the building. But the next hearing, on a petition of the Lehigh Valley to discontinue service and facilities at Mendon Station, met with opposition.

Basil E. Moore, Mendon town attorney, called Supervisor Harland P. Moffitt, T.J. Zornow, Wilfred H. Searjeant, president of Searjeant Metal Products Company; Mrs. Grace Habecker, Mendon postmistress, and Harry G. Nolan, coal company president. They opposed the discontinuance of the station as a deterrent to business. Richard D. Lalanne was attorney for the Lehigh. Decision on all three petitions will be made by the PSC after testimony has been sifted and evaluated.

—*Democrat & Chronicle*
January 25, 1950

2019 R&GV Priority Projects

The following priority projects have been approved by the Board of Trustees, effective January 15, 2019. These projects are considered essential to the growth and success of our museum. To contribute, please contact the project manager listed below.

- 1. South Fill Surface and Drainage**
—Scott Gleason, Mgr.
- 2. Track 9 South Extension**
—David Kehrer, Mgr.
- 3. RPO and Baggage Car Roof**
—Otto Vondrak, Mgr.
- 4. Complete Repairs to RG&E 8**
—Joe Nugent, Mgr.
- 5. Complete Caboose LV 95100**
—Sam Rosenberg, Mgr.
- 6. Complete Caboose BR&P 280**
—Charlie Marks, Mgr.



THE SEMAPHORE
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NEXT MEETING:

May 16

7:00 P.M. INDUSTRY DEPOT

PLAN AHEAD:

June 20

7:00 P.M. INDUSTRY DEPOT

Find us on Facebook! [facebook.com/rgvrrm](https://www.facebook.com/rgvrrm)



Several of our members recently made the trip to Wolsztyn, Poland, to take part in a program called "The Wolsztyn Experience," a unique partnership between British steam enthusiasts and the Polish State Railways (PKP). The program gives you the opportunity to fire and operate steam locomotives in daily revenue service. It is rumored this may be the final year for this unique program. PHOTO BY DAVID J. MONTE VERDE