



The Semaphore

November 1996

Volume 39

Number 3

Newsletter of the Rochester NY Chapter, National Railway Historical Society

November 21 Program

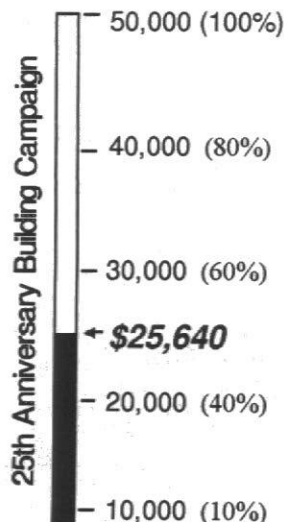
"Ferroequinological Before and After, Sequel II"

The next membership meeting will be held at the 40 & 8 Club on November 21 at 8 PM. The program for November, titled "Ferroequinological Before and After, Sequel II", will be presented by Chapter member **Duncan Richards**. Duncan returns once again to amaze and dazzle you with new interesting before and after life slices of railroad history. He will use simultaneous double screen images to portray some comparisons of local, regional and national changes. He will include time elapsed sequences documenting some unusual special event.

Program Committee

Jack Matsik (Chairman) 442-6269
Bill Limburg 586-9470
Dan Cosgrove 352-6931
Dave Luca (Board liaison) 288-0318

The Committee welcomes suggestions and ideas for future programs at forthcoming meetings at the 40&8 Club. Just contact any of the above committee members.



Former Philadelphia and Western Ry Car 168 arrives at R&GV RR Museum on November 7 at 7:45am. An hour and half later, it was on museum's tracks to await transfer to NYMT tracks. Rand Warner, Bob Mader and Jim Dierks oversee the operation. Jim arranged this acquisition for NYMT. Note the new gravel added to the yard. The following week, sister Car 161 should arrive.

More photos on page 8.

About Cars 161 & 168

Philadelphia and Western Ry. Co.

by Sheldon S. King

The P&W opened a line to Strafford from the newly completed 69th Street Terminal in 1907. Line was built into Norristown in 1912. Norristown was reached by a 3850 foot bridge over railroads, canals and the Schuylkill River.

Cars 160-170 (11 cars) were built in 1927 and 1929 by Brill of Philadelphia, a leading manufacturer of electric railway equipment. They were originally equipped with trolley poles and an off-center door. At that time, there was street running in Norristown.

Fall Excursion Season Ends 20% Increase in Riders

From: Bob Miner, Trip Committee

Here we are in November. Where did the summer and fall go? For me working in Sodus, to get the coaches ready for the fall trips, passed the time fast. September and October really flew as Marie and I started filling ticket orders and the trips to Newark were run.

On behalf of NRHS, Rochester I want to thank all the people who contributed, their time and effort, to the Fall train rides, from Sodus to Newark. A special thanks to those who came out more than once and a real big cheer to the few who came out every time. Marie Miner for 6 hours a day with tickets and Jan Dittmer for being the head go-for, to purchase the snacks and such that were needed on the train.

Jim East spent lots of time getting the parking lot magicians, snack car servers, souvenir car managers and coach supervisors. Marie lined up ticket assistants and I got helpers to clean the coaches.

Continued on Page 4

Continued on Page 2

Fall Excursion (Cont. from Page 1)

Thanks again we could not do it without you.

This fall our profits were higher than in the past 3 years. We sold 5203 tickets this fall, or 92.9% of the available. That was 859 more than last year. There were 2 rides a day for 7 days.

Except for the rain on Oct. 19th the weather was fine. No one even ran into the locomotive.

My records show that we first ran on a Santa Train in 1988. In 1989 we ran on the LA&L that summer and OMID that Fall. In 1990 we ran a "railfan special," That covered OMID from Webster to N. Rose to Newark. Summer and fall trips were run over OMID and we are still there. Some summer trips were run out of Webster but I can not remember which ones. From 1991 to 1992 we ran summer and fall trips. From 1993 to 1996 we ran only fall trips.

Jim East escorted several Amtrak trips in 1996, as he has done in past years. All were sold out and enjoyed by those who went. The trips were to way out west with stops at Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, Zion, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Glenwood Springs, Colorado; Williamsburg, VA and soon to New York City to Radio City Music Hall's Christmas Show. Can't wait to see what he is doing in 97.

Looking to the Future

Development Committee Forming

Jeremy Tuke is looking for members interested in participating in the Development Committee.

This committee will be responsible for developing financial and other resources for support of Museum visions, goals, programs and projects. A priority will be to develop a fund raising program. The Committee will meet monthly and report to the Board of Trustees.

Anyone interested should contact Jeremy at 359-8944.

"The Perfect Christmas Gift"

Last month, Mike Byrne gave in detail the concept and status of the Chapter's Wall of Fame. Following is a summary of this article to serve as a reminder of a possible 'perfect' gift for your Holiday shopping.

Our Wall of Fame has 200 brass name plates attached to a walnut plaque and is mounted at The Rochester and Genesee Valley RR Museum. We have men from local railroads and companies as well as railroads as far away California. All occupations and positions are there.

For a tax deductible donation of \$50 you can put your friend's or relative's name, railroad, job description, and years of service on a brass name plate to be hung alongside other railroaders'. We will send a receipt for the donation and a nicely detailed letter suitable for gift giving that shows what the plate will look like. PS: Leave this article by your wife's or children's car keys if you want them to get the message that you want to be on board!

For more information or to order a plate call Mike Byrne at 225-5659.

Pizza served at October Meeting

Dave Veltre, who operates a bakery at 26 Parkway, furnished two large pizzas at the October meeting. Those attending were especially hungry as both were consumed.

Dave was the author of the featured article, "The Silver Meteor Experience," in September's *The Semaphore*.

Elmira Society forms

Late in 1995, a group got together to form the Elmira Railway Historical Society (ERHS). Meetings are held each month and feature a guest speaker or slide/video program. Meetings are open to the general public but presently do not have a permanent place.

Membership is \$8 per year. Their address is ERHS, P.O. Box 162, Elmira, NY 14902. They have sent some brochures which will be available at our meetings.

Member Committee Report

Thomas A. Way, Chairman

Welcome to these New Members:

Richard & Maria Anderson*

86 Rutgers St. # 1

Rochester, NY 14607-2818

* Family Membership

Robert L. Nichols**

104 Linden Tree Ln. #8

Webster, NY 14580

672-6356

Notes and Other Tidbits

New Membership Applications are available, with the new dues structure. The new rate will be reflected on the Dues Renewal Notices that should be in the mail (but - aren't). ** A 'tentative' member is one who has filed the short application form. I cannot submit their names to National by using these forms; I need the official applications.

Decorating the Depot for the Holidays

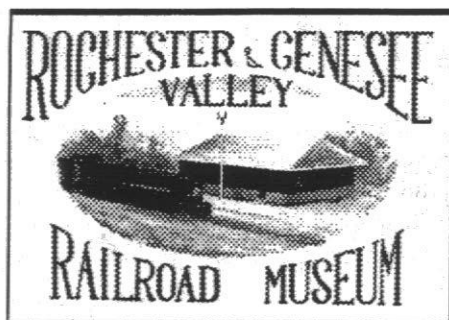
Come out on Sunday, November 24 to help in decorating the R&GV RR museum for the Holidays. Refreshments will be plentiful! Session starts at 1PM.

Harold J. Ahlstrom, 1912-1996

Mr. Ahlstrom, a long-time member of the Niagara Frontier Chapter, NRHS, died October 5.

Harold joined the Rochester Chapter in 1939. In December 1941, the Buffalo Division of the Railroad Enthusiasts became affiliated with the NRHS, and shortly thereafter, Harold transferred his membership to the Buffalo group.

He was an active member of the Buffalo Chapter, serving as its National Director beginning in 1964. He also was a prolific writer which included a monthly column, "Carbarn Comment" in their newsletter; the Chapter's first booklet *The Last Decade of Buffalo Trolleys* and authored other books for Fenton Historical Society in Jamestown and the Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society on trolley and steamship subjects. He also served as the Chapter's Historian. (*Empire State Express*, Nov. 1996).



Rand Warner, Chairman, 425-8587

Steaming Along

Your steam committee has been actively investigating and inspecting steam locomotives in New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont and New Hampshire. We have been reviewing data, taking trips to look at locomotives, checking out transportation options, boiler repairs, boiler insurance, and summarizing pros and cons of various possibilities.

Thanks to John Redden, Gene Redden, Ron Amberger, Harold Crouch, Chris Hauf, George Knab, Joe Scanlon, Bob Cowan, Patrick Sofin and Rand Warner.

Wheels A-Rolling

Dave Johnston, from Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), has loaned us a Fairmont wheel gage, through NYMT. Norm Shaddick, Jeremy Tuke, Rand Warner and Bob Miner will be checking all track car wheels with this new gage. Norm Shaddick has found several new-old stock track car wheels in the bowels of the Tool Car. We will supplement these new wheels with further purchases already authorized by our Board of Trustees. Over the winter, we hope to replace any worn wheels on our track car fleet so as to be in good shape to start next year's season.

Look up, LOOK UP - AGAIN

High tech is here for Rochester Chapter. We now have an aerial surveillance system in place. Dave Goodman, in his home-built airplane, is out spotting things for us. Already he has found some interesting heavy equipment. Who knows what kind of railroad or trolley items or artifacts he might turn up for us next !!

Electrification

Trolley electrification is proceeding forward on many fronts. Charlie Lowe and Eric Norden are working on the next batch of bracket arm assemblies. Jim Johnson and Charlie Lowe are prepping and refurbishing insulators. Neil Bellenger and Eric Norden have practiced putting in our first real pole at our first real location. Rand Warner and Neil Bellenger have repaired the auger truck with a new carburetor and muffler.

Bernie Cubitt has inspected and documented a local interurban car body. Charlie Lowe and Rand Warner have inspected and documented a regional trolley snow plow. Charlie has also inspected a local city car body. Rand Warner has prepared an inventory of local and regional and upstate trolley car bodies and other related artifacts. Rand is also inspecting and investigating diesel generator sets and rectifier units.

Our former Rochester, Lockport & Buffalo interurban waiting room station, recently moved in, is getting restoration attention from Dave Luca and signs for it are being made by Bernie Cubitt.

And now, saving the best for last ... By the time you read this, not one but TWO, OPERABLE suburban/interurban cars from Iowa will have been delivered to New York Museum of Transportation, thanks to arrangements by Jim Dierks. More on this event in next issue.

Steel on Our Stillwell

The Erie Stillwell Coach restoration team, led by Chuck Whalen, is making great progress. New steel panels, formed up by Dave Behnke, are now rapidly covering the east side of the car. Chuck, Bernie Cubitt, Rick Isrealson and others are making the rivets fly. The west side of the car was completed last year, and it certainly looks like the east side will be completed this year. Thanks to our volunteers, and to our "Partners in Panels" sponsors, who collectively made this monumental task possible and achievable.

The 'graphics' on the cover shows the current status at press time.

Pine Falls Progressing

The *Pine Falls*, one of our most popular exhibit displays for kids and adults alike, is getting lots of attention. Gale Smith has worked in the kitchen (with much more to do - Ed.). Dave Luca has polished the plastic window glazing on the east side so you can really see out for the first time. Gale and Dave have been cleaning, restoring and reinstalling the light fixtures and lenses in the lounge area. Dan Waterstraat, a new member, has also joined the CLEAN TEAM. Gale has been weatherproofing the badly deteriorating west side against the oncoming fury of the next Rochester winter.

Wanted List

- Proportional dividers for Engineering Dept.
- Track gages for Track Dept.
- Gage rods, single or double end, for track reinforcement.
- Trailer mounted chipper for clearing brush.
- Hydraulic grapple for knuckle boom truck.
- Ice tongs for MDT Reefer display.
- Small, portable rock crusher for making ballast.
- Aluminum double-acting ratchet track jacks.
- Good track bolts for 80# DU rail joints.
- Good track bolts for 90# Subway rail joints.
- Copper or aluminum feeder wire #2-0 to #4-0 or larger.
- Stranded copper hookup wire, insulated, #4-0 or larger.
- Bucket truck to assist in our trolley electrification project.
- Pole trailer for our utility auger truck.
- Skid steer loader for a multitude of small tasks.
- Small, portable, gasoline powered air compressor to be able to take easily to flat tires on heavy equipment.
- Good wood poles, 35 feet or longer, for electrification.
- Landscape ties for Finger Lakes Live Steam group - Marengo.
- Bolt-on type car stops for ends of temporary tracks.

Thanks to ...

Dave Goodwin and George Knab for info on heavy equipment.

Dave Lanni for donation of another large air compressor, another assortment of jackhammer bits and offer of vertical steam boiler.

Bernie Cubitt for trolley information.

Rand Warner for signal book, large assortment of cotter pins, and tie remover/insert attachment for backhoe.

Joe Scanlon for information on subway artifacts and for our new building.

De Mowers for diesel locomotive information.

Carl Englund for track diagram information.

Jeremy Tuke for locks, keys and lantern parts.

Dan Waterstraat for computer organization chart printouts.

Ron Amberger for steam loco inspection data.

Jim Dierks for extensive notes from ARM convention.

Bob Miner for trip to Buffalo for passenger car snubbers.

George Knab and Charlie Harshbarger for finding and delivering starter to Sodus on emergency/crisis basis for HEP set.

Harold Crouch and Ron Amberger for steam loco inspection info.

Rand Warner for electronic credit card reader station.

Bob Miner for track standards requirements data.

Chris Hauf and Sherri Machaski for steam loco data base.

Cal Bulman for info on Depot artifacts.

Bruce Stoddard for large anvil and assorted crane cables.

Don Jilson for transit coupler adapter, ground throw derail, switch stand parts, MU Jumper cables and other hardware.

George Knab for replacement drive chain for Barber-Greene crawler conveyor.

Dave Behnke for making new steel side panels for motor compartment of Roe-Mobile track motor car.

P&W Railway: Cars 161 & 168

(Continue from Pg. 1)

In 1931, P&W bought the famous "Bullet" cars from Brill. The 160-170 series all were rebuilt with smaller diameter wheels in order to make the anticlimbers the same level as those of the "Bullet" car. The motors of Cars 160-167 and 170 were upgraded so that the cars were capable of speeds up to 70mph. Cars 168 & 169 were not changed until after World War II.

Philadelphia & Western and neighboring Philadelphia Suburban Transportation Co. were merged in 1954. The Strafford line on which Cars 160-170 were assigned was abandoned in 1956. SEPTA took over operations on Philadelphia Suburban Transportation Co. ca. 1970.

Age and accidents caught up with both the Bullet cars and the Strafford cars, as 160-170 were usually known. Some Strafford cars, including 161 and 168 were sold in 1990, for service on a Mississippi River dam at Keokuk, Iowa.

NYMT has indeed been fortunate to secure these cars, which will operate between its Museum on East River Rd. and the NRHS Rochester Chapter's Rochester and Genesee Valley Museum on Rte 251.

NTRAK to display at Perinton Square Mall

The Genesee & Ontario Model-n-gineers will be setting up an NTRAK layout in a vacated store at Perinton Square Mall. This Mall is located at the Routes 251 and 31 intersection.

The layout will be operational before Thanksgiving and will be up through the upcoming Holidays. Hours of operation have not yet been determined.

Besides the layout, other train related items will be on display. They may be receptive for our chapter to display items, especially brochures as John Becker and Gale Smith are members of this group. *What do we have for suitable display items?*

Community Wishbook

If you subscribe to any of the Wolfe publications, you probably noted the "Community Wishbook." Did you also note the "wishes" of our Museum and our sister museum, NYMT?

NYMT wishes for a skilled carpenter to construct a wood cab for a steam locomotive; roof repair; electricians for trolley electrical work and landscaping.

Rand submitted a list that mirrors the current 'Wanted' listing plus a stencil cutter for museum signage and a thread tap and die set for electric conduit.

Planning Train Trip Soon?

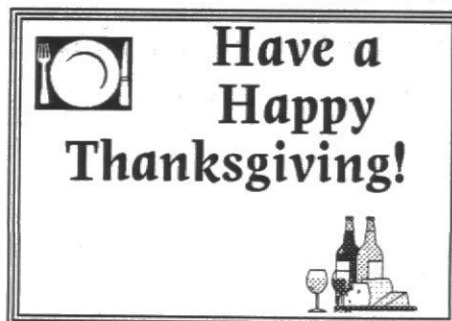
Remember V.I.P. Travel Service will donate their commissions on all AMTRAK & VIA tickets to the Chapter's Building Fund for bookings prior to February 1, 1997. Call (716) 454-7100. Several members have already partaken of this offer.

Don Shilling to give Course

Our master of dioramas, Donovan Shilling, will be hosting a course on "Looking at Old Rochester" at the Winter Session of Gannett School of Science & Man at RMSC.

Scheduled for six Wednesdays, January 8 thru February 12 from 7-9pm. The cost is \$37. For information, call 271-4552, x514.

(Editor: I have attended Don's course several years ago, and as you might expect, it is 'lively' and informative.)



Casey Jones Memoranda Discovered

by John Redden

Carl Englund, Trainmaster and Terminal Superintendent for Conrail at Rochester, recently related an interesting story and passed along some documents that are very good reading material.

Years ago, he was outside the Illinois Central's Memphis train station when the railroad was cleaning it out. They were preparing to vacate the building so that Amtrak could move in. A large amount of railroad paperwork was going into the dumpster when a file-folder landed at Carl's feet, with the name "J. L. Jones." It turned out to be the file for none other than Casey (John Luther) Jones! They were the original documents from 1900 that had been stored in a filing cabinet for decades.

The documents consist of memos from A. W. Sullivan, General Superintendent to J. T. Harahan, Second Vice President, both of the Illinois Central. They are dated in the Spring and Summer of 1900, shortly after the now-famous wreck. The Subject is "Collision trains 1 and 83, Vaughan, 4/30/00."

For those not familiar with the details leading up to the wreck, the following paragraph is copied from one memo. It describes the situation at Vaughan at the time of the wreck.

The town was crowded with trains that night, with four of them trying to clear the main track for train number 2, and Jones' train number 1: "Trains 1st 72, 83, 1st 26 and 2nd 26 were at Vaughan station for No. 2. First and 2nd No. 26 occupied the house track, which was clear, and 1st 72 and 83 occupied the passing track, which lacked about ten car lengths of holding the two trains. After seeing the two sections of No. 26 in at the south end, 1st 72 and 83, while moving south on passing track to clear No. 1 at north end, stopped before going into clear on account of air hose bursting on a car in 1st No. 72; the rear of No. 83 fouling the main track."

Train 1 failed to stop in time to avoid colliding with the rear end of No. 83, in the process damaging the engine (382) on train 1, as well as the caboose and rear freight cars of No. 83.

As the ballad states, the fireman, Simeon Webb, jumped shortly before the crash, but Jones stayed with the engine and perished.

There has been speculation for decades that Train 83 was not properly protected by its flagman, giving Jones insufficient warning to stop short of 83's caboose. This question was apparently raised at the time of the accident, and was addressed as follows:

"Flagman J. M. Newberry of No.83, who was provided with necessary signals, had gone back a distance of 3,000 feet to protect while the movements above outlined were being made. After placing a torpedo on the rail at a point 3,000 feet from the obstruction, he continued north a further distance of 500 to 800 feet, where he signaled No.1 to stop."

The memo goes on to say: "The explosion of the torpedo was heard by the crews of trains at Vaughan station; by Fireman S. Webb. . . of No.1, and by the postal clerks and baggageman of

that train. Fireman Webb states that between Pickens and Vaughan stations, after putting in a fire he was called to the side of Engineer Jones, who lost his life in the accident, and they talked about the new whistle which had been put on the engine at Memphis; Jones stating that going into Canton it would arouse the people of the town. This was the first trip with the new whistle and Jones was much pleased with it."

The theory that the employees at Vaughan collaborated to "hang" the responsibility for the accident on Jones in order to cover for the supposed negligence of flagman Newberry does not seem to be supportable, especially considering the number of engine and train crews in the town that night. A conspiracy of this sort would have required the participation of all of the crew men from four trains, as well as the postal clerks and fireman on Jones train. The memos make no mention of any witness account which conflicted with Newberry.

In fact Jones' own work record seems remarkably bad, and severely weakens this conspiracy theory. Excerpts from one memo follow (edited slightly to fit the format) and show that Jones was no stranger to trouble on the railroad.

"Suspended

- 10 days February 14, 1891, for collision Water Valley Yard;
- 5 " January 17, 1893, running through switch at Carbondale;
- 5 " for running through switch at Villa Ridge;
- 10 " December 6, 1893, for striking flat car in siding;
- 15 " January 4, 1896, rear end collision extra north and No.92 at Toone, Dec. 20, 1895;
- 30 " June 16, 1896, for gross carelessness in handling orders at Jackson, Tenn.;
- 30 " September 3, 1896, sectional collision near Hickory Valley, August 27, 1896;
- 10 " September 22, 1897, for not recognizing flagman who was protecting work train;
- 30 " for having left switch open at cross over in north yard, resulting in train No. 21 running in on siding May 22, 1899."

So in the approximately nine years prior to the collision, he had been suspended nine times for a total of 145 days! Based on the testimony of all of the employees present at the scene, as well as the prior work record, one could reasonably conclude that Jones was solely responsible for the wreck that claimed his own life.

There is additional evidence to support the belief that Jones was a reckless engineer. Another quote from one of the memos follows: "He (Jones) had been assigned to passenger service between Memphis and Canton about sixty days before this collision occurred, and at the first opportunity thereafter Superintendent King had talked to him about the importance of the trains to which he had been assigned; instructing him to use good judgment, especially in stormy weather; to keep a close lookout for signals at all times, particularly in

Casey Jones

(Continued from Pg 6)

approaching and passing through stations and yards; adding that the trains he would handle had been successfully handled by other engineers who were on the runs and that satisfactory time had been made by them. He particularly cautioned Jones not to attempt to do any reckless running with the view of establishing a record of making fast time, or better time than the other men on the runs."

Most of the remainder of the information in the memos pertains to the expenses incurred by the Railroad as a result of the wreck. The estimate of damage is listed as follows:

Engine No. 382.....	\$ 1,396.25
I.C. Caboose 98119	430.00
2 freight cars.....	455.00
I.C. baggage car 217.....	105.00
I.C. mail car 51.....	610.00
Track.....	102.50
Freight.....	100.00
Wrecking expense	125.00
Total.....	\$3,323.75

In addition, there were several injury claims from passengers and employees, ranging from one dollar, to twenty-three dollars. For example, Simeon Webb, who was Jones' fireman, received five dollars for body bruises from jumping off engine 382. All of the injury claims were from employees and passengers on Train 1. The crew of train 83 were not injured, having jumped off of their train.

Thanks to Carl Englund for providing copies of the memos.

Cleveland's Light Rail Ridership Explodes

In July, the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority opened a 2.2 mile line extending from Tower City (Terminal Tower) to the Waterfront.

The prediction was that 600,000 riders would use the line in its first year. But 250,000 have used it in the first three weeks! Nearby businesses have reported a 20% increase in lunch-time business.

(Source: *NARP News*, Sept. 1996)

Hojack Trestle Demolished

(Dan Cosgrove forward sometime ago info he received from Bud Meech an article by Don Cook appearing in the November 1, 1995 issue of the *Construction Equipment Guide*. It was illustrated with three photos of the demolition of the Hojack bridge at Waterport.)

"The crew from Pennsylvania pulled down the old Penn-Central railroad bridge at Waterport, New York, recently and closed the history of the grand old patriarch.

"A railroad bridge was first built in 1875 crossing the gorge of Oak Orchard River. A second bridge was constructed in 1892 because it was felt the original trestle was unsafe with heavier trains utilizing this rural run. Floor ties were laid 2.5 inches apart. Like many railroads phasing out of business, the "Hojack" was last used in 1978."

Charles Pelleschi of Summerhill, PA, likes the area for fishing and wished to purchase a small parcel of land. He submitted a purchase bid to Penn-Central for vacated railroad property off Park Avenue in the town of Carlton. Much to his surprise a deed showed up one day in his mail box.

Also to his surprise is that the Hojack bridge was included in the package! He decide to remove the structure. "The span is about 800 feet from bank to bank and 90 feet at its highest point over the stream below."

He counted 610 railroad ties with about a dozen missing with many being of black walnut or oak.

It took a construction company from Pennsylvania a little over a month to level, cut up and haul the steel away working mostly with a four-man crews. The trestle was in good condition.

(This article originally appeared in the Medina, NY *The Journal-Register*.)

TTCS supplies "Centruy Limited"

The Toy Train Collectors Society has forwarded a complete set of their magazine for our archives. TTCS went from a newsletter to this magazine format in the Spring of 1993.

Puffer Belly now day care center.

Numerous attempts have been made to transform the former vinegar factory and RR depot in Webster into a successful restaurant establishment. It started as Hojack Restaurant and ended as Puffer Belly. It is now Railroad Junction, a day care center of children from kindergarten through sixth grade. The railroad motif has been retained, which the children like.

This is not the original location of the depot building. It originally sat on the west side of Route 250 along the Hojack Line as a railroad station. In 1972, the station was moved to the east side of Route 250 on May Street.

At one time, a former restaurant tried running dinner trains from this location. Still on the property are cabooses used as gifts shops and hair salons.

Attempting to Reduce Grade-crossing Accidents

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority in the Los Angeles area is testing the use of cameras to photograph motorists who drive around lowered crossing gates. Local courts then impose fines of \$104. Process is being used on 17 Blue Line grade crossings.

In Mystic, the Connecticut Dept. of Transportation in cooperation with ABB Traction have undertaken a one-year study of quadrant gates which fully blocks the street crossing. Intelligent electronics and radio communications with the trains monitor the situation. If a vehicle intrudes in the train path, the oncoming train is commanded to stop before reaching the crossing. When the crossing is cleared, the train then proceeds. (Source: *Railfan & Railroad*, Dec. 1996, pg. 59.)

Phoebe Snow 'died' 30 years ago

This upcoming Thanksgiving Weekend will mark the 30th anniversary of the elimination of the famed *Phoebe Snow* trains. Both the eastbound and westbound trains concluded their runs on the following Monday back in 1966.

An Interview**Robert Fitch**

I was born in Rochester and, once I left the hospital with my Mom, spent the next 18 years living on Penfield Road, next to the NYC Mainline overpass.

I went through the Brighton school system and then went off to what was then known as Clarkson College. Their freshman campus was at Malone, NY and on my first trip there (I started in March, 1947) the Mohawk and Malone locos got snowbound somewhere near Big Moose Station. After about 12 hours, we were moving again, but my stomach was growling since all I had to eat was a shot glass of tomato juice. At Clarkson I earned a degree in Civil Engineering.

After graduation, I was drafted and fortunately was sent to the Engineer School at Ft. Belvoir, VA, where I taught Engineer Officers and Non-coms how to build bridges, then sent them off to Korea while I taught the next class. I returned to Rochester after that stint and worked most of the rest of my career for Monroe County, first as a Senior Engineering Aide and finally as County Supt. of Highways and Director of Transportation. I retired in 1986.

My interest in railroads started while watching trains from my folks second floor bathroom window. Then visits to family in Norwich, NY sealed this interest where I could sit on the embankment at the end of Westcott St. and watch little NYO&W 0-6-0 Mother Hubbard switchers work the yard, or else go to the Front St. crossing on the DL&W where I could talk with Geo. Yarrington, the crossing guard who worked from an 'elevated' cabin. Currently I enjoy looking at steam railroad and trolley photos and, as my kids move around the country, I have fun learning about and photographing the rail lines near where they live.

I joined the Chapter in 1985 and became Recording Secretary in '88. The membership had to endure my monotone voice reading minutes until I left that job in '94. Currently I'm involved cleaning the coaches and parking cars at the Cold Storage lot every Fall and helping out with Depot Tours and the NYMT Store during the summer.

My most memorable RR experience occurred in 1944 while I was visiting my Aunt in Norwich. She asked a friend, Conductor Gould of the NYO&W, to arrange a ride in the cab of a locomotive for me. At that time the O&W was running a wartime commuter train 3 times a day to the Scintilla Plant in Sidney, NY getting the 'Rosie the Riveter's' to work and back. Since the first leg of the trip was up the hill to Oxford by way of the very high and long Lyon Brook Bridge, I had to ride in one of the coaches to Oxford. Once at the station I boarded a little 4-6-0 Mother Hubbard for the ride to Sidney with Engineer Rae at the controls. What fun it was to pull the whistle cord at each crossing and hear that beautiful sound of the steam leaving those pipes. And what a thrill it was to view the passing countryside from that cab high on the side of that locomotive's boiler. My return trip was in one of the coaches but, back in Norwich, I was treated to another cab ride, this time on a yard engine with a conventional cab. This gave me an appreciation for the hard work put out by a fireman hand stoking the fire, and how hot a cab could get on a nice summer's day.

Since I was interested in old O&W photos, one of the men I'd met on the trains sent me over to retired engineer A.L. Weeden's home where he showed me his photo collection and allowed me to have a number of his photos copied. (Mr. Weeden was one of the contributors to the Helmer book on the O&W and how surprised I was to find pictures of Engineer Weeden and some of his locomotives in a scrap book of old Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers clippings at a B&B in Chama, NM in 1994.)

I must admit that one of life's greatest pleasures is now working the parking lot in Sodus and seeing the happy faces of the families as they disembark from our Fall Excursion trainset. As they were driving from the parking lot on October 20th most of the people waved at me. (I've not seen this happen at the garage behind the Eastman Theater on concert night.)

Robert L. Fitch 10/24/96

A (RR?) Joke

This joke was recently heard on Garrison Keillor's *Prairie Home Companion* radio show and has a 'slight' connection to railroads.

Two men were walking in a meadow and came across a hole in the ground. They looked in but could not see the bottom of the hole. One tossed in a stone and waited to hear it hit bottom, but no sound. He then picked up a much larger rock and tossed it in the hole. Still no sound of it hitting bottom.

The two men then picked up a nearby railroad tie and they dropped it in the hole. While they waited to hear a sound, a goat zipped by and went into the hole.

As they pondered the situation, a farmer came by as asked if they had seen a goat. The men replied that a goat had just ran by and jumped into the hole.

The farmer replied: "Can't be my goat. It was tied to a railroad tie."

Mystery Location Photos?

Your Editor has observed that several Chapter newsletters publish photos of present-day or long-gone locations or structures related to railroading. These are entitled as "mystery photos" and asked for identification.

Now that *The Semaphore* can incorporate photos (although of mediocre rendering), it might be an interesting feature. Any submitters?

CN Loco Roster & StL&H Timetable, CP 3-year plan

The August 1996 issue of *Rail & Transit*, published by Upper Canada Railway Society, may be of interest to those following Canadian railroads.

It contains the Locomotive Roster of Canadian National Railways as of July 31, 1996. Also the timetables for St. Lawrence & Hudson Railway timetables for 1) Montreal-Toronto-Chicago and 2) Montreal-Toronto-Philadelphia routes. The latter has Binghamton, Buffalo, Niagara Falls times. And Canadian Pacific's three-year plans for transfer of rails or abandonment of same.

This issue will be in the Newsletter Library box at the meetings.

Night of Nightmares

by Dan Cosgrove

A friend of mine told me this story a long time ago. My friend worked as a signal towerman on the New York Central as I did and was working the midnight trick at Port Byron of the West Shore, which was a manual block railroad where trains operated by train orders.

One night my friend came in a little tired -- it had been a hot day and this was prior to the time of air conditioning in the home and he had not slept well. Some time after midnight he heard the dispatcher issue order for two trains straight through from SS6 at Jordan, New York to SSWD, which was the northernmost Pennsylvania Division tower located just south of Lyons, New York. Straight operation; nothing spectacular simple run by of two trains.

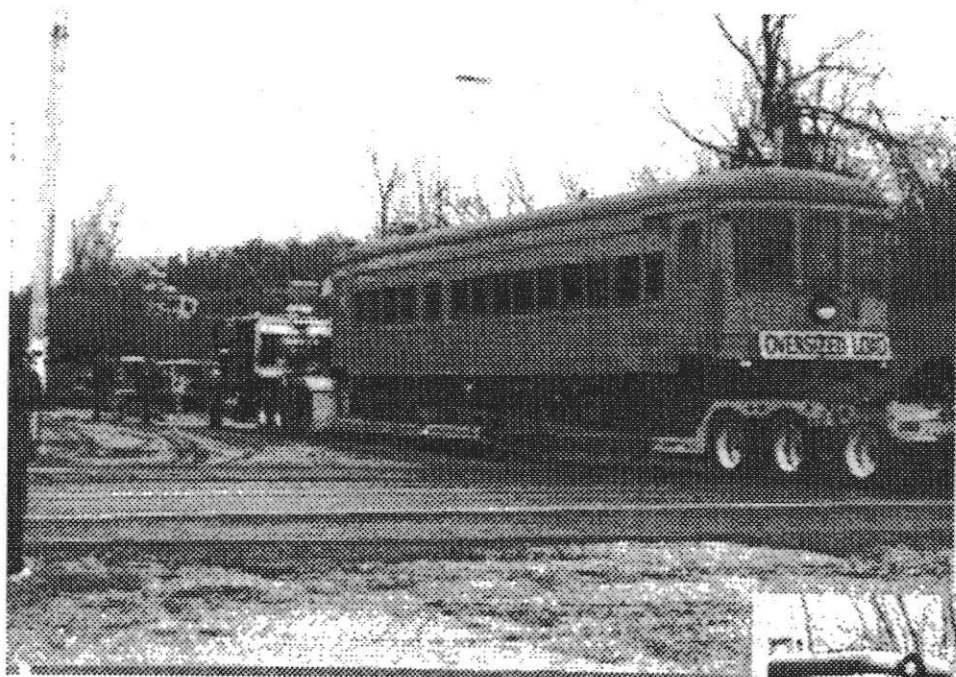
In manual block territory it was the practice of the towers to keep their home signal at red and to clear when the train approached. When the engine could see the red signals, they promptly blew for the board and usually if all was well they would have it immediately. The first westbound train blew for the signal, and the operator gave him the green and watched the train go by, waved to the crew and noted the time on the sheet, and dropped right to sleep.

Time passed. In the distance the operator heard a westbound whistling for the signal, so he cleared the signal, highballed the crew and noted the time and slumped down in the chair for a minute or two. Suddenly he bolted upright and very awake. Two trains had passed westbound -- and he remembered exactly what he did. He had given both westbounds a green signal! The first train

was entitled to it, the block ahead was clear all the way to South Clyde the next open block station. But the second train should have had a yellow signal indicating to the crew that there was a train ahead.

Between Port Byron and South Clyde was Seneca River where almost every train stopped for water. In his mind's eye he could see the scenario at Seneca River -- the first train would stop at the river to get water and the flagman would go out and protect the rear of the train. But the unsuspecting second train would roar up at track speed and even with the warning of the flagman, would be hard put to stop in time to not hit the caboose of the train ahead.

Shivering with dread the operator started to call the dispatcher to tell him what he had done, when South Clyde called -- to report the passing of the first westbound train. The first train did not stop for water, but the second train did. My friend told me that he never ever slept while on duty from that time on. This is a true story.



Above: The tractor-trailer rig aligns Car 168 with a yard track. Silk Road Transport of Arkport, NY supplied the transportation.

Above right: Jim Dierks of the New York Museum of Transportation looks over his newest acquisition for NYMT. He arranged to acquire two of these cars from Iowa. The second car is scheduled to arrive in a week.

Right: The R&GV's EKC #6 diesel prepares to ease the car from the transport trailer by way of a long drawbar.



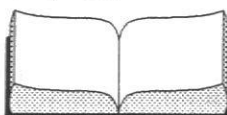
Gale Smith photos

Good Times Publishing, P.O. Box 4545, Utica, NY 13504, (315) 768-1730, announced two new publications.

The Adirondack Rail Corridor is authored by Jonathan G. Searles. Its 64 pages give facts, figures and story of the fabled Adirondack rail corridor. The book sells for \$8.95 plus 8% sales tax. Order now for free shipping and handling. The author will autograph if requested.



The



Bookshelf



The price is \$12.95 plus 8% NYS sales tax. Free postage and handling if ordered now, and author will autograph if requested.

Mr. Kelly available for speaking engagements.

Mr. Kelly hosts a daily talk show on radio station WIBX and a weekly TV show on WKTV. He is available to speak club meetings. Arrangements can be made through Good Times Publishing at (315) 768-1730.

Reviews Published in *Railroad History*

Reviews of two recent Chapter publications were published in *Railroad History*, Spring 1996 # 174, a publication of The Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, P.O. Box 1418, Westford, MA 01886.

They sent copies of the reviews, which you may find to your liking.

Souvenir Guide to the New York Museum of Transportation and the Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum, Edited by Richard C. Barrett.

"In a refreshing spirit of cooperation, the museums named in the title above and located 1-3/4 miles apart in the town of Rush, roughly 20 miles south of Rochester, New York, have joined forces to publish a joint museum guide. More than that, they have laid track between museums so that visitors may park at one location and ride to and from the other. The New York Museum of Transportation was founded in 1975, and its first aim was a trolley collection and operation. The Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum is an arm of the Rochester Chapter, NRHS, which has owned the former Erie Railroad Industry depot since 1971.

"The guide provides a succinct introduction to the organizations and museums, then describes their holdings. The more significant or interesting pieces of equipment generally rate a full page, with picture and history. Others are placed two or more on a page, but almost all,

except for some work equipment, rate a picture. In each section (steam locomotive, diesel locomotives, passenger cars, freight cars, trolleys, etc.) added text, meant mainly for the non-railfan visitor, explains briefly how the holding fit into the history of the development of that type of equipment.

"Neither museum is large, especially compared to some of the nationally known museums, but each holds some interesting and unusual pieces that deserve the treatment provided by this guide (and, incidentally, deserve continued support as well). Such a guide, and the spirit of cooperation displayed therein, should serve as a model for others."

Go Pullman, by Charles M. Knoll.

"Charles M. Knoll's organization of this book is best described as a scrapbook whose common thread is that of travel by sleeping car, primarily the products of George M. Pullman or his Pullman Company. Many topics included herein are well known, others much less so. The following list serves only as a sampling of the variety of topics: the earliest sleeping cars; the Pullman community south of Chicago; development of the national park system; sleeping cars (not all Pullmans) in Europe, Asia, Mexico, and South America; St. Louis 1904 World Fair; Boston Board of Trade Special; the Rexall Train; and narrow-gauge Pullmans.

In comparison with books such as Arthur Dubins' *Some Classic Trains* or *More Classic Trains*, or Lucius Beebe's

various books on passenger trains, relatively little of the book is about the equipment or descriptions of U.S. roads during the last hurrah of the privately operated passenger train. Similarity with such classics as Beebe's 1961 *Mr. Pullman's Elegant Palace Car* is restricted to some early photos and drawings.

"Although the author acknowledges the contributions of a number of individuals, museums, and libraries, the only sources tabulated at the end of this volume are books; the text and footnotes throughout the book list a variety of other sources. The lack of a table of contents and index makes locating topics difficult. Since the majority of the topics presented cover but one or two pages, the lack of a consistent story line and the tangential connection (or complete lack of connection) of many of the items to Pullman (the company or the man) make the book a less-than-helpful reference. Nonetheless, it is an interesting collection of topics that might otherwise never be readily available to the reader and historian and provides at least a first reference for the enthusiast. Virtually all topics that this reviewer can think of relative to Pullman travel are at least mentioned somewhere within its covers. Although several illustrations have been published before, they are generally in out-of-print publications. In all, the book is a treasure of mixed value."

Both reviews by: Richard G. Prince, East Stroudsburg University.

The Semaphore is published monthly by the Rochester, NY Chapter, National Railway Historical Society. It is mailed free to all Chapter members. Non-member's subscriptions are \$5.00 and run from January 1 to December 31. Chapter meetings are held the third Thursday and the Board of Directors meets the first Thursday of each month.

Rochester Chapter NRHS Officers:

President: Dave Luca

Vice President: John Weber

Treasurer: Ira Cohen

Recording Secretary: Jeremy Tuke

Correspondence Sec.: Don Shilling

National Director: Bob Miner

Trustees: Neil Bellenger, Charlie Harshbarger, Steve Oagley, John Redden, Joe Scanlon, Rand Warner,

The Semaphore Staff:

Editor: Gale Smith

Printing: Dave Luca

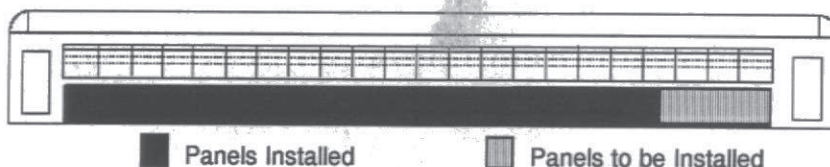
InterNet (World Wide Web) address:

<http://www.rochester.ny.us/railmuseum.html>

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 format, as well as a printed copy. **Deadline: The first of each month.**

Stillwell Coach Panel Installation Status:

This graphic of the Stillwell coach was extended to represent 22 panels (11 panels per side). All panels have been subscribed. To date, eleven, or those on the west side have been installed; 7.5 have been installed on the east side.

**The Semaphore**

Rochester Chapter

National Railway Historical Society

P.O. Box 664

Rochester, NY 14603

Chapter Meeting & Program:

Ferroequinological Before and After, Sequel II

by Duncan Richards

8:00 PM, Nov. 21,, 1996

40 & 8 Club

933 University Ave.

Non Profit Org.

U.S. Postage

PAID

Rochester, NY

Permit #826