

The Semaphore

Newsletter of the Rochester NY Chapter, NRHS
P.O. Box 664, Rochester, NY 14603; Published Monthly

June 1998
Volume 40, No. 10

Program for June 18

"Having Fun at the Depot"

As usual for the months of June, July and August, we enjoy the 'fruits of our endeavors' by holding our membership meetings at our **R&GV RR Museum**. Usually someone is there by 6 PM. Sometime during the evening a very brief business meeting will be held.

Guests are welcome. We do caution against bringing children who are too young to be aware of the dangers around railroad equipment.

Subway Trolley Car #60

Coordinator: Rand Warner

By the time you read this, Car #60 will be on our property! Four separate road trips were required for preparations for the move.

The first trip, at the end of April, by Neil Bellenger, Charles Harshbarger, Dick Bean, Chuck Whalen and Rand Warner, resulted in dismantling the shed around the car, removing the rear vestibule floor, filling that opening with plywood, and tarping the car entirely.

The second and third trips by Dave Luca, Chuck Whalen, Rick Israelson and Chris Hauf resulted in freeing up the car wheels, brake shoes, and brake rigging.

The final trip, by Bob Miner, Norm Shaddick, Dave Luca, Janet Dittmer, Bernie Cubitt, Bill Chapin, Dee Mowers, Rick Israelson and Rand Warner, resulted in opening the fence for the Silk Road Transport tractor trailer, building more track to relocate the car, and loading the car on the special rear-steerable trailer for the ride to Rochester.

Publicity for the arrival has been handled by Arlene Koscianski and Rand Warner.

Fund raising development and publicity is being handled by Chris Hauf, Jeremy Tuke, Rand Warner, Dave Luca and Arlene Koscianski.

Now the challenge is to rebuild and restore a 100% complete former Rochester piece of history and nostalgia back to operation.

Thanks to Sam & Anna Grover, and

Car #60 Arrived at R&GV RR Yard at 9:45 AM, Friday, June 5, 1998



Arlene Koscianski for donations and pledges of more donations to the Trolley #60 effort.

RW

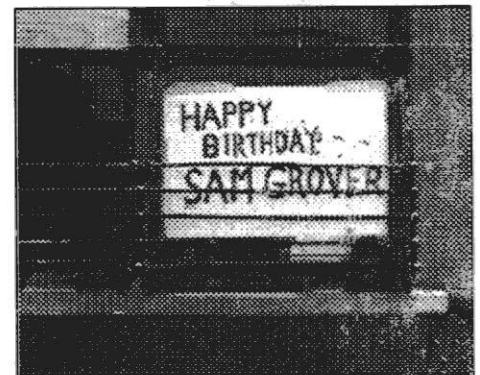
Car 60 quickly unloaded

The R&GV RR crew, having considerable practice over the past two years, had Car 60 in our yard by 11:00, and the truckers, Silk Road Transport were on their way!

Plans are to devote an illustrated section of the next issue of *The Semaphore* to Subway Car #60.

Excellent Media Coverage

Channels 10, 13 & 31 covered Car 60's arrival; coverage was on at least one noon news program. Also the *Democrat and Chronicle* featured the car on the front page of Section B - in three color photos!



Sam Grover's Birthday Present! - though it didn't quite arrive on his 96th birthday on May 21. However, Sam, who was instrumental in saving this last Rochester subway car, was present for its arrival. Rand Warner made sure that this placard was in the window.

Election Results

At the May membership meeting, elections for the six officers and two trustee positions were held. The Chapter's By-laws limit the terms of the officers to three two-year terms; hence Dave Luca could not be a candidate for President, but could be for a Trustee position.

The results were:

President: Chris Hauf

Vice President: Steve Oagley

Treasurer: Ira Cohen

Recording Secretary: Jermy Tuke

Corresponding Secretary: Don Shilling

National Director: Bob Miner

Trustees: Charles Harshbarger and Dave Luca. John Weber was selected for the trustee position, vacated by Chris being elected President; he was third highest with the votes tallied.

Annual Banquet Enjoyed

Eighty-one members and guests attended the Chapter's Annual Banquet, held at the Rick's Prime Rib Party House. They partook of an excellent buffet, in this editor's opinion. The feasting portion was concluded with song and birthday cake for Janet Dittmer.

The multifaceted program included the introduction of the new officers, a work of praise from Geoff Gerstung, VP of Northeast Region of NRHS, presentations of this year's Fairmont Award and a new one, the Lunkenheimer, the year in review by Chris Hauf, and concluded with Dr. Gerald Bertoldo, our guest speaker, telling us the history of Locomotive #12 in slides and video.

Photos of this event are on Page 9.

Thirty-eight lanterns sold

The order for 38 lanterns has been placed. Proceeds from this sale will go to the Restoration Building Fund.

Land Mark Society Members Visited

On Saturday, May 30, about 200 members of the Western New York Landmark Society visited the NYMT and R&GV RR Museums. We hope they will return for future visits (and maybe join?)

Rail-Camp's Last Call

If you have a teenager who would like to attend NRHS-Steamtown's Rail Camp on July 19 to 25, please contact Dave Luca, 288-0318, or Bob Miner, 671-3589.

President Luca Steps Down

After three full terms (6 years, the maximum permitted by our Bylaws) our Chapter President, Dave Luca, is passing the torch to Chris Hauf.

Our Chapter has surely been greatly blessed by the strong and pro-active leadership of Dave and first lady "Saint Janet". Dave has actively worked on and supported every Chapter Committee during his Presidency. He has also been very responsive and resourceful in quickly filling any vacancies for officers or chairmen with capable personnel.

During Dave's tenure, we have seen remarkable growth in every facet of Chapter activities and operations, including a great increase of interaction with other organizations.

This did not all happen just by accident or coincidence. Thanks for a truly outstanding job by a real **Dynamic Duo!!!**

RW

Apprentices needed for Passenger Department

There is a need for 10 or 12 members to step forth to supplement the current crew of Bob Miner, Dave Luca and Charles Harshbarger in this Department.

The objective is to have sufficient personnel available to handle all aspects of maintaining, preparing and operating the Chapter's Excursion Set.

As the Fall Foliage Trips using our Excursion cars is our biggest source of funds (even better now since the cars are paid off), it is imperative to bolster this operation.

If interested in joining, contact Bob Miner at 671-3589, or Dave Luca at 288-0318.

Work on Excursion Cars Underway

Wednesday afternoons and evenings will usually find Bob Miner or someone else working in Webster on this train set. Also, Monday evenings, when work is also being done at the Library.

Among the projects are window replacement, 'bumper' installation, painting, and cleaning - plus various mechanical and electrical systems maintenance.

To aid in scheduling duties, please call Bob or Dave.

Note Burning Suggested

The Collis P. Huntington Railroad Historical Society sends congratulations on owning the Excursion Fleet and suggests we hold a note burning ceremony - great for publicity! [*The Gondola Gazette*, May 1998]

Membership Report

by Chairman: Chris Hauf

Welcome to these new members:

Robert C. & Jane K. Stevens

1 Green Ridge Rd.

Pittsford, NY 14534-2408; 586-7042

Mike Dow

10 Maple Ave

Oakfield, NY 14125; 948-8543

William Knab

1325 English Village Dr.

Rochester, NY 14626; 225-2161

James G. Knowles

146 Bryan St.

Rochester, NY 14613; 254-3899

Robert M. Lipman

47-1 Highman Dr.

Henrietta, NY 14467; 334-3751

Richard A. Luchterhand

87 Cape Cod Way

Henrietta, NY 14623; 334-9228.

Please note these change of addresses:

Harold J. Hutchinson

2284 Charlton Rd.

Stanley, NY 14561-9511.

David W. & Anne Jacobs

455 Rochester St.

Avon, NY 14414-9503.

1998 Year to Date Statistics

Regular.....	223
Local.....	8
Family.....	40
Total.....	271

This is an all-time high!

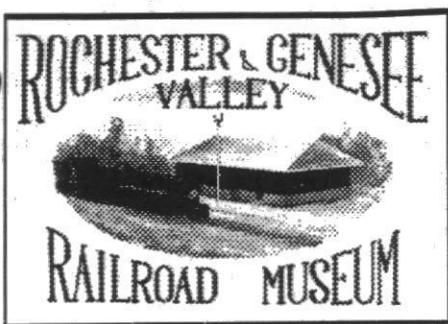
Donald Wawrzyniak new Stores Manger

Donald Wawrzyniak has volunteered to take on the responsibilities of operating our Chapter Store. Duncan Richards, our previous manager, says he will be available to give his lively and enthusiastic 'what's new' presentations at the meetings.

Don joined the Chapter in March of this year. We appreciate his quick response to take over this important Chapter function, which helps to keep us financially solvent.

CD Recording of Steam

O. Winston Link, noted for his photography of N&W steam, also record same back in the 1950s. The original has been remastered and improved and put onto a CD. It is available for \$20 + \$5 s&h from Gift Shop, Roanoke Chapter NRHS, P.O. Box 13222, Roanoke, VA 24032-1322. Visa or Master Card orders: 540-982-3595 (10:00 am - 5:00 pm). [*Turntable Times*, May 1998]



Rand Warner, Manager, 425-8587

New Restoration Building

Facilitator: Rand Warner

Don Shilling's Capital Fund Campaign is almost up to \$90,000!

Joe Scanlon has put out a bid package to local vendors and replies are in receipt.

Building features and location have been set up thru recent meetings and discussions.

Rand Warner has interfaced with Town of Rush building inspector.

Grade stakes and location corner stakes are being set by Joe Scanlon.

George Knab and the equipment operators expect to complete excavation and grading in about a month.

John Redden, Rand Warner, Joe Scanlon and George Knab expect to relocate Tracks #6 and #7 within a month, to clear the west side location of the new building.

Our schedule goal is to start construction of the building shell by August, and to have a useable enclosure by Fall, so that we can be working indoors, instead of outdoors, this coming winter.

Signals, Signals and Signals

Supt: Neil Bellenger

Relay case wiring is essentially complete at Switch #6 thanks to Jim Johnson, Mike Dow, Neil Bellenger, Dick Holbert and Charles Harshbarger.

A complete set of crossing signal equipment, former LV RR, donated by Marvin Thiel, has been picked up and delivered by Bob Mader and Rand Warner.

Our total signal system to date has included dwarf signals, dispatch board, semaphore signal, color light signal, and most recent, a 3-color light signal.

The signals, relay boxes and associated gear make our right-of-way much more realistic and interesting to our visiting public.

Steam Loco #12

Foreman: Ron Amberger

Gerry Bertoldo has provided more history and boiler paper work.

Rand Warner has investigated more contractors for boiler lagging.

Ron Amberger is indentifying local and regional suppliers and vendors.

Gene Redden has obtained flue tools on loan.

Bill Blaesi and Gerald Bertoldo have offered a supply of coal.

The bell and whistle have been picked up and delivered by Gerry Bertoldo and are being restored by Jeremy Tuke.

Kevin Klees has offered to build a flue cutter tool.

Jim Johnson and Kevin Klees are working on the turbo generator.

John and Gene Redden, Ron Amberger and Gerry Bertoldo are identifying resources for flues.

Harold Crouch, Dave Conrad, John and Gene Redden, Leonard and Raymond Roe, Ron Amberger and Rand Warner are working on resources for special tools and skills.

Dan Waterstraat and Rand Warner are chasing new pilot beams.

Jeremy Tuke has restored front and rear headlights (they are on display in the Depot).

Ron Amberger is recruiting RIT students to get involved in the project as part of Mechanical Engineering studies.

Ron Amberger has photographed and tagged all parts and sub assemblies removed from the locomotive.

MOW Equipment Latest Developments

by Norm Shaddick, Supt.

Dave Luca rebuilt a badly leaking work-head cylinder on the Jackson Tamper, and it recently went back into service tamping and leveling the main line under the guidance of Operator Mark Pappalardo.

The Roe brothers are back in operation once again, and are in the midst of giving Track Car 3 a much needed paint job. Hard to keep a couple of good men down!

Bob Mader has our recently acquired Tie Extractor up and running, after an engine swap. All systems appear to be operational. Next job is to find a tie needing extraction, (shouldn't be too hard) and give it the acid test.

In preparation for opening the track-car rides for the season, the Bellenger crew car

has received a fresh coat of paint, thanks to Chris Hausler, Chuck Whalen and Norm Shaddick.

Dick Bean continues to attack the Burro crane, piece by piece, and it's beginning to have the appearance of a genuine artifact. The Construction gang has removed the boom making it easier to move about the yard.

Bob Mader and Norm Shaddick have repaired a gusher leak on the water pump of TC-2, and the unit was quickly returned to service to support season operations.

Track Teams

Acting Supt: Rand Warner

Thanks to leadership of Dave Luca and John Redden, we are replacing bad ties on South leg of loop at NYMT and in other areas north of BOCES crossing.

Mark Pappalardo is right behind them with the tamper machine.

Bob Mader, has our tie extractor fully operational, and it is now staged at NYMT, ready to work.

Scott Gleason & Dan Waterstraat are boxing out the area at the location for the new switch for the lead tracks into the new barn.

Track #7 is being relocated in panels, to clear excavation for the new barn.

The bad culvert north of Switch #6 has been rebuilt prior to our season opening.

Thanks to all our gandy dancers: Dave Luca, John Redden, Bill Chapin, Dale Hartnett, Scott Gleason, Dan Waterstraat, Rick Israelson, Chuck Whalen, Mark Pappalardo, Bob Mader, Norm Shaddick, Jim Johnson, Dee Mowers, Neil Bellenger, and more.

We hope to dismantle and relocate Switch #7 and the stub ends of Sidings #6 and #7 in the month of June.

Rehab of the south leg of the NYMT loop will permit more short term storage of cars while we are building the new barn and barn lead tracks.

Rehab of switch timbers in the NYMT loop switch will be our next priority for the Tuesday night track gang.

Buildings and Grounds

Supt. Dave Luca

George Knab has relocated our NYC flagman's shanty to east side of Depot, just east of Track #5, where restoration work will continue.

(Continued on Page 4)

Buildings & Grounds *(from Pg. 3)*

Bernie Cubitt is continuing rehab of the Rochester, Lockport and Buffalo waiting room and really has it looking good.

Joe Scanlon, George Knab & Co. are grading the parking lot across the LA&L tracks from the Depot, in preparation for crushed stone topping.

Dirt fill from a nearby commercial construction project is allowing us to further widen the land strip we have reclaimed on the west side of LA&L.

Thanks to ...

Dan Waterstraat for not one but two new tires and tubes for Ford forklift.

Charlie Harshbarger for making his new trailer available for hauling Chapter materials.

Jan Dittmer & Dave Luca for more scenic plantings around our buildings, on our grounds, along our right-of-way and at the Webster Library site.

Jerry Gillette for new fluorescent lamp assembly for shop.

George Knab for rigging materials.

Rand Warner for more tools, materials, equipment and supplies.

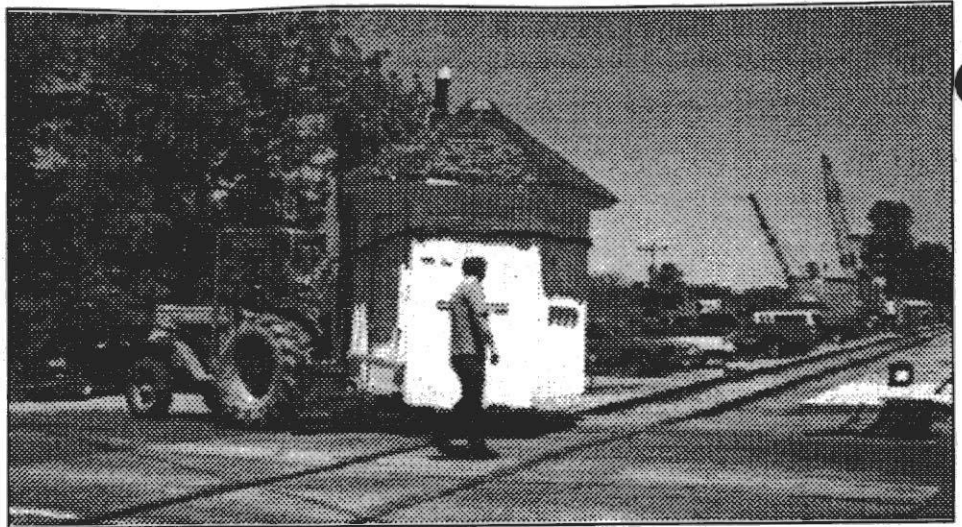
Wanted

- Screw base, 32-volt bulbs in any wattage, clear or frosted, for our passenger cars.
- Hydraulic fluid for our construction fleet.
- Pushbrooms, regular brooms and dust pans for our buildings and cars.
- Top of the line computer for our Library at Webster.
- Fire extinguishers and first aid kits for our buildings, locomotives and cabooses.
- Grease guns to keep on each piece of construction equipment.
- Low profile track jacks for ballast work.
- Tie plugs to extend the life of relay ties we are now installing.
- Track bolts for 90# subway rail.
- Heel blocks for 80# and 90# RA rail.
- Mail bags, old luggage & steamer trunks, milk cans for displays.

Notice to Exchange Newsletters

Sending your Chapter/Club newsletters to: The Semaphore, Gale Smith, 299 Seneca Park Ave., Rochester, NY 14617-2433 will facilitate the exchange of news or ideas.

This editor does read all newsletters received through exchange.



George Knab, with the trusty Ford front-loader, transport the NYC flagman's shanty from the west side of the LA&L tracks to east of the Depot. *(Bernie Cubitt photo)*

Dispatcher Duties

By Dan Cosgrove

To work as a train dispatcher, I believe that you have to really try to understand all the forces working for you and against you, and you must realize that things like the effects of weather and the pluses and minuses of the tools you have to work with are going to regulate every move you make. I like to think that my experience in the signal towers had a profound influence on what I did as a dispatcher.

When I started posting for the position of train dispatcher, steam ruled, and all our efforts were made using steam engines as the tool of choice. Anyone familiar with diesels and with the current power systems available can point out all the advantages to diesel or electric over steam and they are right – however, I came in to a railroad that had successfully used steam for over one hundred years and knew all its faults and all its advantages and were prepared to do whatever was required to make them reliable.

I started in dispatching in the early 1940s, and I had the choice of working both single track and multiple track railroads, that were as different as night and day and at the same time were similar in most phases. A single track dispatcher would say contemptuously of the main line dispatchers that they were running trains like street cars and that all they had to do was record the times the trains passed the towers and their work was done. While there was a grain of truth in what they said, you had to know much more than how to put times down on a trainsheet. You were constantly checking

actual timers against correct times. Did the tower man note anything unusual about the train – did the crew give an indication of trouble. So, no, the main line man didn't sit there and you didn't relax vigilance, not ever.

Main line dispatchers would say that the single track dispatchers jobs were trivial affairs. Well, in ways, both were right – and both were wrong. The main line man could not simply let all the fast freights run on the freight tracks the whole journey from say Buffalo to Syracuse simply because they were freights. He was duty bound to try to get the fastest trip he could out of all trains, and if he found time between passenger trains to allow a fast freight the use of the passenger track partly because the speed was 60 miles per hour as opposed to 45 mph on the freight tracks. Plus every time a freight train could scoop water on the fly (track pan were only on passenger tracks), he'd save 45 minutes to an hour delay. Crews and dispatchers were both aware of this and both took advantage of it if they could. An engine crew on a westbound fast freight for example would cross their forearms as they passed SSJG at Park Street in Syracuse and the operator would relay that information to the operator at SS2 at Syracuse Junction, who would report to the mainline dispatcher.

"I have LS-1 on the bell on 3 and he's asking for 1." The main line dispatcher might very well respond, "OK, OJ, put him on 1 behind second 9" which meant that the freight would follow the second section of train 2nd 9 on track 1 and would be able to scoop water at Seneca River and if he held up behind 9, he might also get the pans at East Palmyra – and if his luck held, he

Dispatcher

(Cont'd from Pg. 4)

might stay behind the passenger train and scoop again at Churchville water pans and again at Wende – and given that he has the fast track all the way, might easily make Gardenville yard in Buffalo with 5 hours running time – not bad for a fast freight.

The single track dispatcher working, say, the West Shore from Syracuse Junction to Gardenville Yard in Buffalo had a much different territory and different problems to handle. His operators do not sit back with signals displaying green at all times. Every train moving in his territory is moving by train orders issued by the dispatcher and following strict procedures. There were zones of traffic on the Shore – for example the line from Jordan to Lyons Junction and to SS-WD at Lyons was heavily used by coal trains from the Pennsylvania Division to Dewitt Yard in Syracuse. Coal trains and the returning empty coal hopper trains dominated this area. The Shore was slightly slower than the main line but it had easier grades. While the main line grade up Byron Hill restricted steam engines to 2,500 tons up the hill, much heavier trains soared up grade from SS-33 at Chili Junction to Oakfield, so many trains with heavier tonnages were diverted to the Shore for the trip west.

Our first unit ore train was BP-1. BP-1 was an iron ore train out of Benson Mines, New York on the Hojack that came down to SS-JG at Park Street, and then headed west to Belle Isle Yard which was located just south of the New York State Fairground, to change crews and then head west on the Shore. BP-1 was unique to us and was easily the heaviest standard train we had. In fact it was the only one who frequently had double headed steam as power, as we had no other trains that needed double headers. Due to the fact that the sidings on the Shore had slightly wider clearance than the main line, most all of our dimension trains operated on the Shore. For this reason, the famed Moonlight, BD-28, came down the Shore at least once or twice a week. When a number of wide cars, high cars, heavy cars and repaired cripples were ready to come east, BD-28 would be called to take on the chore.

The single track dispatcher working manual block stations with train order operation tried to judge his trains by the size and number of engines they had, the quality of the weather, the quality of the engineman – and this could at times be a big factor in determining who was going to move smartly along and who would be inclined to just drag

along with their train. If you judged rightly, you might make moving meets, which were not all that easy to engineer. In a moving meet, neither train stopped. One would get in the siding and the opposing train would move along and as soon as he cleared the siding, the train on the siding would drift onto the main and would be on his way with a minimum of delay. If you could make all your meets moving meets you would have a perfect day. But truthfully, they were very difficult to achieve.

I think my signal tower experience had a lot to do with the way I ran my railroad. It was funny, even though the office was in Syracuse and later on, in Rochester, in my mind I operated my railroad from a point in my imagination. If I was running the east end of the main line, I mentally sat in SS-20 at Wayneport and all trains came to me there and departed from there going east. If I was running the west end of the main line, I was in SS-40 at Batavia and the trains came up the hill or departed down from there in either direction. On the West Shore, I was at Oakfield and all trains approached or departed from that point. I don't know but it seemed logical to operate from one fixed point, and it sure worked for me.

Many years ago, I had a friend who could not understand how sitting at a desk could be tiring. "You mean you sit at that desk and talk on the phone and after eight hours you are tired?" Many a time I sat at the desk sweating out a move I had made – I might have a fast freight ahead of a passenger train and this at a time when we were not allowed to let a passenger train enter a block between towers behind a freight. I had the tower man at SS15 at Lyons holding a passenger at SS7 while we waited for a freight to hit the approach at SS15 – all of a sudden I would hear "15 – on the bell on 1" "OK, 15 let him go and let 39 go at CP7" and the slight tension would drain out of my body, and then I'd call Palmyra: "next on 1 is for track 3". This would give my freight a chance to scoop water at East Palmyra and then ease him over on to track 3 at Palmyra so he could stop at Wayneport and get coal and a fire cleaning without delaying a passenger train. I took a number of chances to get trains over the road, but when your trick ended, it felt good to know that you did your best. Dispatching can be exhilarating but it can be very stressful, and many days I went out of the place slightly tired to put it mildly – certainly not from hard work. The heaviest things I picked up was my pen and my phone, but the responsibility was heavy, believe me.

The End

A Brief History of the New York Museum of Transportation

(Our "Sister" Museum "Up the Hill")

by Donovan A. Shilling

Where does one go to hear that nostalgic clang, clang, clang of an old trolley bell? Where can one touch a genuine interurban car that may have carried grandma or grandpa zipping along at 60 miles an hour to Geneva in 1914? And where can one see the oldest electric trolley in New York State? It's at the **New York Museum of Transportation**.

As most of us know, it is located at 6393 East River Road in the town of Rush, just two miles south of the New York State Thruway. That's the building complex that closely resembles modern dairy farm situated on a large plot of rolling green pasture land. Undoubtedly you also know that housed within the museum is the region's best collection of trolleys, interurban cars and motor vehicles as well as its vast assortment of artifacts dealing with early rail and public transportation.

History buffs researching a particular phase of local transportation history may find a rich collection of books, documents, negatives and photographs there. But that's not all. Visitors enter through the gift shop, are welcomed and directed to the museum's visitor center. Here one gets an introduction and a graphic map highly useful in a self guided tour. This includes examples of public transportation, especially trolleys, related artifacts and other exhibits located in the exhibition hall.

Theodore H. Strang Jr., president of the Board of Trustees and Museum Director, related some of the early history of the N.Y.M.T. In 1972 a working dairy farm stood on the site managed by the State School at Industry. It was a model dairy complex with its operation carried out by the young men assigned to the school.

A hurricane called Agnes changed all that. Down in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, the raging waters of the eastern branch of the Susquehanna River spilled across the countryside. Flooding waters swept through the Magee Transportation Museum located, unfortunately, too close to the river's edge. The complex became a ruined, muddy mess forcing the owner to make the bulk of the collection available for sale. When news of this reached Rochester a consortium of businessmen, fascinated with the concept of rescuing a lot of Upstate New York's priceless trolley artifacts, acquired that portion of the museum's sodden contents in 1973.

(Continued on Page 8)

Editor's Note: For many, it's vacation time. These two contrasting trip reports by Bill Heron on West Coast railroads may be of interest if your plans include this area.

Trip Report

California Western Railroad

Reported by Bill Heron

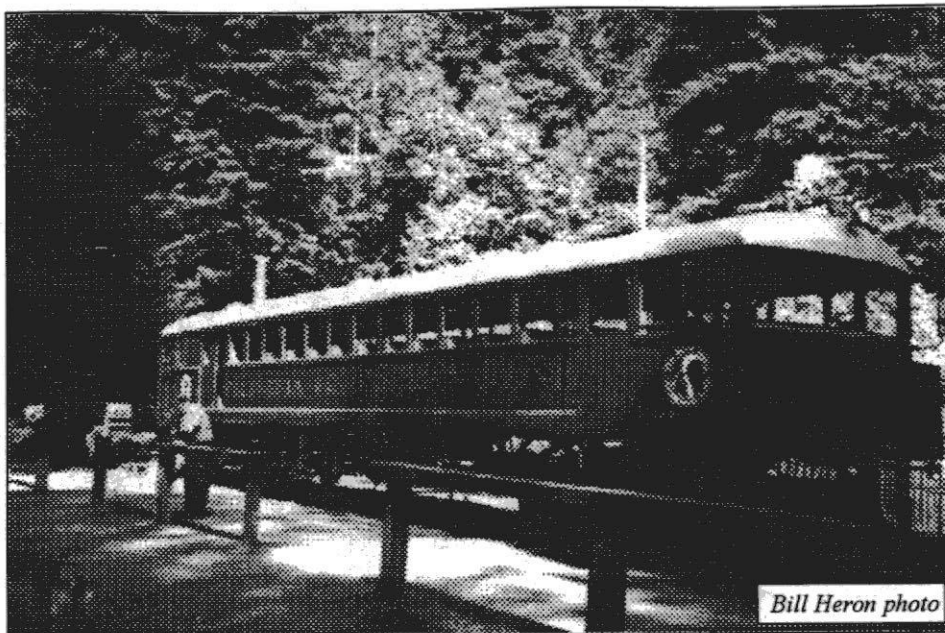
The California Western is located in northern California. It is an east-west line, extending about forty miles from Fort Bragg, CA on the Pacific coast to Willits, CA just east of the coastal mountains. Conceived as a logging line, construction started in 1895, with passenger service beginning in 1904. When built the line's purpose was to bring logs west to Fort Bragg, CA for processing or shipment elsewhere by water. Today the line hauls very little freight; passenger service is the life blood.

In 1925 a decline in passenger traffic resulted in the replacement of steam operated passenger trains in favor of rail cars. Local people began to refer to the rail cars as the "Skunk" train. It was alleged that the car's original gasoline engines could be smelled before they could be seen. The name stuck and is actively promoted by the present day owners of the railroad.

At present the motor cars, the "Skunks", operate mostly during the off-season. There are two round trips a day from Fort Bragg to the half way point, Northspur, and one round trip all the way to Willits. Motor cars M100 and M300 are used. I rode M100, built in 1925 and furnished with a gasoline engine. This has been replaced by a Cummins diesel which drives the second axle on the front truck through a four speed manually operated transmission connected to the axle by a chain. The engineer on my trip was so adept that I suspect few of his passengers realized that he actually was shifting gears.

During busier times passenger cars are pulled by a GP9, of which the California Western presently has two. There also is a 1924 Baldwin 2-8-2, #45, which usually goes only as far as Northspur because the steep grades from there to Willits are a bit too much for it. The 45 is an oil burner. Once it consumed bunker C, then diesel fuel and now it disposes of used motor oil. I was told that this fuel works well and is processed a bit between the crankcase and the fire box, mostly filtering I surmise.

The engine hauled passenger trains are called "Super Skunks". The cars consist of a few Harriman commuters from New Jersey which have had their electrical apparatus removed and a few ex SP commuter cars.



Bill Heron photo

Here's a note of local interest. The California Western has purchased three GP9's and two passenger cars from Victor, NY. All were somewhere between Victor and Fort Bragg as of the end of April 1998. Incidentally it costs \$11,000 to have one GP9 moved across the country. Two of the GP9's will be refurbished at Fort Bragg and put to work on the Super Skunks. The third has been sold to another west coast operator. The passenger cars will become part of California Western's fleet following refurbishment.

The acquisition of this additional equipment is a tangible sign that the California Western is thriving and growing. As soon as possible additional trains will be added to the summer schedule with service operated out of Willits as well as out of Fort Bragg.

The best part of all is the ride. This is one of the most scenic tourist lines I've ridden. It's not the Durango & Silverton nor is it the Cumbres, but it is well above average. The line follows Pudding Creek out of Fort Bragg and then plays tag with the Noyo River most of the way. It truly is the "Red Wood Route". The tracks are lined with them. There are a number of camps, large and small along the route, and the California Western provides US mail service to many of them. The engineer drops the sack out of his window at the proper spot and gives a blast on the whistle. On the way back sacks are picked up to be taken down to Fort Bragg.

The line traverses two tunnels, one of 1200 feet, the other of 800 feet. There also are numerous bridges, close to forty all them all told. The engineer on the Skunk I rode gave a well delivered, interesting commen-

tary. He talked when there was something to tell us and also when he thought we deserved a bit of amusement. I would rate him well above average among rail commentators I have heard. In addition to talking, he of course operates the vehicle, collects the tickets, handles the mail and helps passengers on and off the car. All employees of the California Western are paid professionals.

The California Western is a great experience. It's a long way from Rochester and it's sort of out in the boonies of northern California. The nearest big city is San Francisco and that's about 250 miles to the south. But if you ever get anywhere near this line, make a special effort and go out of your way to experience it. You'll be very glad that you did.

Trip Report

Mount Rainier Scenic Railroad

1998 Open House & Railfan Day

Reported by Bill Heron

You may have seen the ads in the railfan magazines or perhaps heard of it elsewhere. Whatever, this year, as has been done for several years previously, the Mount Rainier Scenic Railroad held their annual Open House and Railfan Day. Because geared steam locomotives fascinate me and because this event is the only opportunity I am aware of to see a Shay, a Heisler and a Climax all operating, I went. It turned out to be not as satisfying as I had hoped.

(Continued on Page 7)

Mt. Rainier RR

(Cont'd from Pg. 6)

The Mount Rainier Scenic Railroad utilizes a few miles of a dormant part of the Tacoma Eastern. This trackage, built around 1906 was acquired by the Milwaukee Road in 1918. The line was built primarily to serve the logging industry. With the Milwaukee's demise the city of Tacoma obtained ownership. The plan was to move visitors from Tacoma to Mt. Rainier via trains. This has not happened as yet. Thanks to El Nino, world's favorite scapegoat, the line suffered damage over the winter. In the area where the MRSR operates, storm damage has curtailed the length of the ride they can offer to patrons.

Normally the MRSR operates tourists trains from Elbe, WA southwesterly toward Morton. Morton itself is no longer reachable. Thus, the ride for this season will be less than ten miles one way. Daily operations are set for June 15 to Labor Day, with weekend only trains for a few weeks before and after.

For Railfan Day, however, great things were promised; five live steam locomotives. Five steam engines did run, but not particularly to my satisfaction. While the MRSR is a for profit corporation and has a cadre of paid employees, a lot of the labor is supplied by volunteers, not a bad thing in its self, but not a good thing at the MRSR. Bluntly, no one seemed really to be in charge during Railfan Day, nor was there any sort of authority figure who seemed to know what was going on.

The day's activities were listed to start at 10:00 AM. The crowd was there at Elbe, but the most important part of the train, the geared engines, was not. Nor was the train fully made up. In desultory fashion a 2-8-2 took a car or two from one place or another and joined it to another segment of the train elsewhere on the track. For more than hour as these sporadic events took place, no announcements were made as to what was going on or when the train would leave. People with radios were walking around chattering to one another, but none of those I spoke with was able to provide any information.

Finally we were told to board and the train moved northwest from Elbe on trackage that I was told by a "fan" was seldom used. The consist was pulled by a 1916, 70 ton Baldwin 2-8-2, #15, borrowed from a nearby, affiliated tourist line, the Chehalis-Centralia Railroad, and by MRSR's own 85 ton 2-8-2T, "Minaret" type, # 17, built by American Locomotive Co. in 1929. There was supposed to have been a photo runby somewhere along this stretch, but it did not

take place. "lack of time". This ten mile round trip segment of the day ended back at Elbe where the three geared locomotives awaited us.

All five engines pulled the train two or three miles east toward Mt. Rainier, passing a large herd of elk along the way. At a junction, the train turned south and crossed a new bridge over the Nisqually River. A photo runby took place at the bridge. Unfortunately, the blind side of the Shay was the right side, the place where all the action takes place. We then proceeded toward the Mineral, WA area where the MRSR has its shop and storage area. We paused at some S-curves and the day's most extensive photo runby activity took place, including pseudo trains made up to look like a logging train, a work train and freight.

Our next move was to the shop area. This is where I expected great things, e.g. each of the geared locomotives moving past us slowly so that all the action could be clearly observed and the differences among the three brands studied. No such thing happened. For one thing the Climax had gotten sick and for another the day was getting late.

The MRSR currently has five steam locomotives that are more or less operable, plus a number of others that clearly need a lot of work. The five include the Minaret Mikado referred to earlier as well as a 1924 Porter 2-8-2, #5 which has been MRSR's mainstay. Currently it is in the shop for retubing and a new smokebox in preparation for the Federal Railroad Administration's new steam rules.

The other three are the geared engines, #11, a 90 ton, three truck Shay built by Lima in 1929, #91, a 90 ton three truck Heisler built in 1930 and #10 a 70 ton three truck Climax built in 1928. Together, these three represent the "high water mark" for geared steam locomotive technology. Thus, they provide some means for comparing the strengths and weaknesses of the three brands.

For Shay, the strengths were seniority, proven reliability and the backing of Baldwin and Lima. For Heisler, the key word was "quality". Heislars were regarded as the Cadillacs of geared engines. For Climax, the key word was "price". They cost less when purchased but ate you alive with maintenance later on.

If you happen to be going to Mt. Rainier anyway, you might stop by the MRSR since it's on your way. The engine you are most likely to ride behind is #17 the Minaret, or possibly #11 the Shay. I would not recommend a special effort to ride this line.

An Interview**John Redden**

John was born in 1961, in Olean, NY. He grew up just north of the city, in the town of Hinsdale, where his parents still reside. He attended Hinsdale Central School, graduating in 1979. He then enrolled at St. Bonaventure University, and majored in Computer Science. He graduated in 1983 with a Bachelor of Science degree. That autumn, he had started working on a graduate degree, when Eastman Kodak offered a job at its Elmgrove plant. He accepted and has worked in various divisions of Kodak ever since.

Through the efforts of Chapter First Lady Janet Dittmer, John was introduced to his future wife Elaine in 1994. In June of 1997, Elaine and John were married and now reside in Penfield. In addition to his parents in Hinsdale, he has two brothers and a sister who live in the Olean area, one brother near Rochester (all married), as well as nine nieces and nephews. All members of his immediate family have at least some interest in the Chapter and railroads, and all of them visit the Museum from time to time. His father has been a Chapter member for over ten years, and Elaine and her parents also recently became members.

Two busy railroads ran through the Pleasant Valley in Hinsdale. On the west side was the Pennsylvania line from Harrisburg to Buffalo, and to the East was the main line of the Erie-Lackawanna. These crossed in North Olean, at X Tower. John's recollections of the area operations of these two railroads were outlined in a *Semaphore* article several years ago.

His early interest in railroads was sparked by train watching with his Father at X Tower, as well as visits with his Father's many railroad friends. One particularly memorable event was a cab ride on the Arcade and Attica steam engine number 14. "I was about 10 or 11 at the time. It was the last run before retirement for a friend of Dad's, long-time A&A engineer Emmett King. Unfortunately, this is the only opportunity that I have had to ride a working steamer. But this one opportunity gave me the chance to watch my Dad hand-fire a steam engine. I was a very skinny kid, and when Emmett had me whistle for the crossings, I had to pull so hard on the cord that it nearly lifted my feet off of the deck. We whistled for every cow crossing between Arcade and Curriers. The other part of the trip that sticks in my mind was looking back over the tender to the open vestibule of the

first coach. There were a couple of kids about my age, undoubtedly wishing that they were in the cab. I'll never forget that trip."

His current interests include many facets of the hobby. He has been an HO modeler for about 25 years, although he does not currently have a layout. He shoots 'about fifteen or twenty' rolls of film per year on trains. He and his Dad have made an annual trip to the Altoona area for the past twenty-two years. He enjoys collecting railroad artifacts, and also likes to research the history of Western New York railroads. His primary interest has always been in the Erie Lackawanna and its predecessors. Although later he became interested in the BR&P/B&O/Chessie, and living in Rochester for the past fourteen years has shown that "The New York Central wasn't too bad either."

John was first introduced to the Chapter by a Kodakery article in 1985 that included an interview with Rand Warner. On the third Thursday in June that year, he visited the Museum for the first time and by lucky coincidence, attended his first monthly meeting. It was held in the recently acquired M.U. car, and the entertainment consisted of a short ride, with EK-6 as power, as well as videos of recent steam excursions with engine NKP 765. John remembers thinking: "Here was a place with free train rides, train videos, food and beverage, and the opportunity to get hands-on experience. This was the place for me." He joined shortly thereafter.

His past chapter activities have included a variety of projects around the Museum, and service on various committees. He has helped in acquiring and maintaining a number of different pieces of the rolling stock collection, and particularly likes the hands-on experience of locomotive maintenance and trackwork.

He currently serves as Trustee, Superintendent of Motive Power, and Superintendent of Operations. He also serves on the Safety Committee and as Operations Committee Chairman. He is a past member of the Lakeshores Division of the NMRA, the Nickel Plate Historical & Technical Society, and the Motor Car Collectors of America.

John had some final thoughts about the Chapter: "I am honored to be associated with this group. Everyone wants to be on a winning team, and the Rochester Chapter is just that. Our members can really take pride in their accomplishments. We have some wonderful talent that is contributing in many areas, and I believe that we have some of the best leadership around. Too much of our hobby dwells on the fading glories of the

past. But in our organization, we're able to look to our best days, which lie ahead."

NYMT History (From Page 5)

Thus in December, 1974 a unique museum was formed. A provisional charter was granted by the State Board of Regents for the operation of a non-profit museum to be called the **New York Museum of Transportation at Riverton**. The mission of the museum is "to display and operate items relating to electrically powered trolley and interurban rail cars, steam engines and steam powered rail cars, horse-drawn rail and road vehicles, and other types of vehicles of historical interest."

Dramatic changes have occurred since then. The dairy complex now houses the museum. Further, there's our happy connection made with the Rochester Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. The Chapter's **Rochester and Genesee Valley Railroad Depot Museum**, housed in an old Erie Railroad station, is just a rail spike's throw to the south. Today a two mile, standard gauge railroad connects the two museums. An open air track car ride to the museum and return is an enjoyable ride and what's more, it's all included in the ticket price.

James E. Dierks, trustee and specialist in interpretive exhibits, does a skillful job with displays. He's revitalized and enhanced the exhibits making them more attractive and understandable. One display is a 1896 rail vehicle, the oldest electric trolley to be seen in New York State. Perhaps the most impressive restoration is being done by museum member Eric R. Norden. Eric, an experienced woodworker, is using his skills to return a former New York State Railways interurban car 157 to its previous glory.

Built in 1914 by the Niles Car Company, it replaced a Rochester & Eastern car destroyed by fire. The new car was the only one of its model ever to be constructed. For forty years after being taken out of service in 1930, it served as a home to a clergyman who had it positioned overlooking Irondequoit Bay.

Later, no longer occupied by its owner, the forlorn and weather worn structure was transported to the Bloomsburg Museum. In 1973 it was returned to upstate when the museum consortium acquired it and other artifacts from the flood. Years later Eric began his ambitious task of restoration. Today one side gleams with fresh dark green paint, gold lettering, opalescent glass panes over the windows and new brass hardware

fittings. Even half completed the trolley looks splendid. Presently Norden is spearheading a fund-raising campaign to cover materials needed to keep the project alive.

Envisioning the future, Director Strang hopes for more dedicated volunteers to assist his busy staff, especially on Sundays. He foresees the day education center interpreting the museum's unique assets to larger numbers of the public, especially to students who can learn so much about the area's rich and colorful transportation heritage. With the combined efforts of both our Rochester Chapter and the NYMT good things are bound to happen!

Editor's Corner



It is most gratifying to note that items that appears in the Editor's Corner often brings forth response from our readers.

Fred Cupp, who now lives in Williamsport, PA, sent an e-mail to Dave Luca about several items.

The 100+ covered hoppers observed outside of Northumberland, PA are awaiting refurbishing. On the grounds is a shop for rebuilding and repainting these hoppers. Also Conrail has a contract with ACF Industries in nearby Milton. They build some covered hoppers and also mid-sized tank cars. While railfanning near Williamsport Fred often sees nice shiny looking cars north-bound towards Buffalo on ALBU (Allentown to Buffalo).

About the Lewisburg & Buffalo Creek train observed outside of Lewisburg, he wrote that the tourist operation has fallen on hard times. The original owner died a few years ago; his wife hired people to run the excursion and dinner train for a few years, but has apparently decided to abandon the operation. Fred has not learn of anyone to take over this operation. The equipment may be for sale, however the trackage is owned by the SEDA-COG short line operator group in central PA, which is a separate freight only railroad.

Fred added that there are only six regular trains a day on the "Buffalo line" - and two of them travel at night. He is hoping that Norfolk Southern takeover will increase the frequency. NS's potential presence is already seen with various upgrades to trackage: new switches, talking hotbox detectors with train speed output.

He also requested permission to reprint Vic Parmeter's article on D&H-Teddy Roosevelt story for the Bridge Line Historical Society newsletter. (Parts of this story were reprinted in *The Golden Spike*, Promontory Chapter's newsletter.)



Vacating President, Dave Luca, confers with newly elected President, Chris Hauf.



Dave Luca introduces Geoff Gerstung, Vice President of the Northeast Region, NRHS. Geoff complimented the Chapter's members on their ambitious and dedicated work.



Gerry Bertoldo was our guest speaker. His program was on the history of Loco #12 which he donated to the Chapter last year.

Views from the 1998 Annual Banquet of the Rochester Chapter, NRHS.



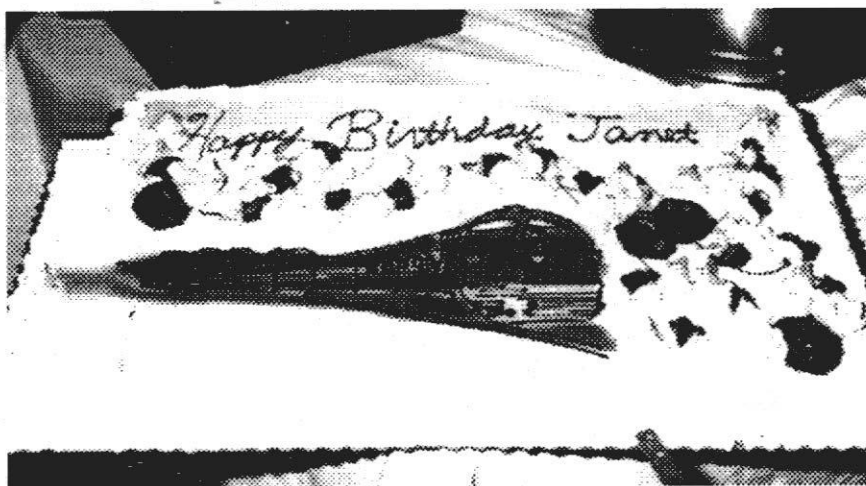
This year the Fairmont Award for recognition of service was awarded to Bill Chapin. Chris Hauf presents the award to Dee Bowers, who accepts the award for Bill Chapin who was not able to attend.



Above: Rand Warner looks on as Don Shilling, Master Modeler, presents a 'trophy' to Dr. Bertoldo. It is an 0-4-0T engine, labeled No. 12, of course, mounted on a wood base. Left: Art Mummery ponders the new Lunkenheimer trophy, a mounted shining brass whistle! The name derives from the whistle manufacturer. This award will rotate each quarter among the various R&GVRR Departments. The current holder will select the next recipient.

Plus a Birthday

Just so happened that Janet Dittmer's birthday was the same day. A specially decorated cake was offered as the desert of the evening - after a robust singing of Happy Birthday!



(As an aside, at the last membership meeting the attendees sang this song to Sam Grover - via cellular phone!)

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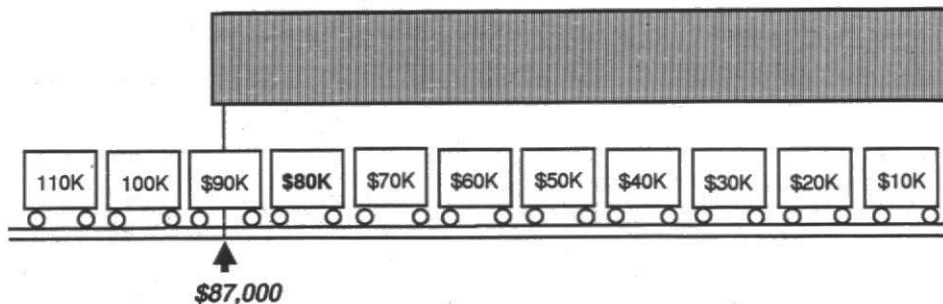
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Contributions to **The Semaphore** are welcomed and encouraged from all readers. They should be mailed to: Gale E. Smith, 299 Seneca Park Avenue, Rochester, NY 14617-2433. Phone: (716) 544-6221. Contributors using a computer are asked to send their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

The status of our Restoration Building Fund. Each 'car' represents \$10,000 in the fund. Surprise – the building moves rather than the train – easier to do!



The Semaphore

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 National Railway Historical Society
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Chapter Meeting & Program:

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**At the R&GV RR
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