



# The Semaphore

Newsletter of the Rochester NY Chapter, NRHS  
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## Program for November 19:

### Darrel Rathbun Presents ..

The program for the November 19th membership meeting at the 40&8 Club will feature Darrel Rathbun with another of his interesting slide programs.

He agreed on short notice to do this program, so had not yet selected his slides to show. However, it will be pictures he took on his many contemporary rail fanning trips.

## Program Ideas Desired

Do you have any ideas for a program, or two, for our membership meetings? Or maybe even consider presenting one yourself?

Don't have enough to fill an hour? Then team up with another member to share the time!

Jack, after many years of planning our programs, is looking for fresh ideas and materials. Give anyone on the Program Committee a call - soon!

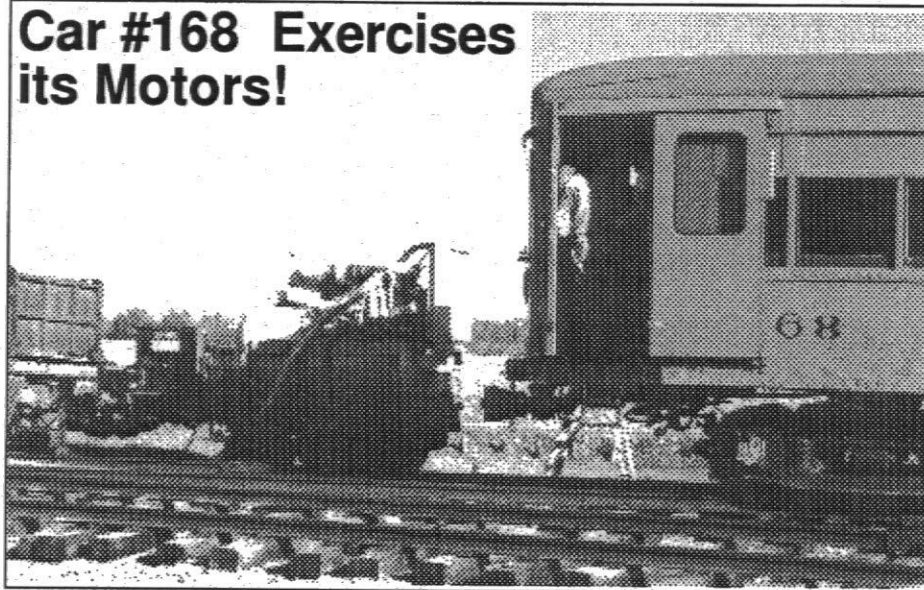
## Program Committee

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

## Looking for a railroad book or video for the holidays?

If you are looking for a specific book or video this holiday season to give as a gift to someone special or as a gift to yourself, consider purchasing it through the Chapter Store. Our Store Keeper, Don Wawrzyniak, already has a good stock of books and videos for the holiday season, but if he doesn't have the title, please remember he can and is willing to try to special order it. In most cases, we are able to purchase it for you through the Chapter Store. You get a discount competitive with the vendors in the magazines, and the Chapter gets a little extra money to help us fund our many projects. So please consider calling (288-4133) or emailing (donwawrz@frontiernet.net) Don to see if he has or can get you your book or video.

## Car #168 Exercises its Motors!



Car 168 arrives at its power source: a 250kw diesel-generator + rectifier mounted on a trailer. (The door covers the '1' of '168') [Gale Smith photo]

## Trolley Electrification

by Facilitator: Rand Warner

### Progress:

On Saturday, October 24, we hit a new major milestone - the first live operation of a trolley car on our complex.

Using a 250kw diesel generator set with a rectifier, disconnects, instruments, circuit breakers, and pigtail cables, we were able to check out and exercise NYMT car #168, formerly of Philadelphia & Western, over a 150-foot length of track, a number of times.

This event came off successfully due to intense work by a large team, a generous donation by a local contractor, and out of town expertise.

The 250kw Onan/Allis-Chamber diesel generator set was donated by MacDonald Electric through arrangements by Rand Warner.

The generator set was checked out and started up by Onan representative, Tracey Dornier.

George Knab directed the mounting of the generator set and all other equipment on our Army bolster trailer, assisted by Rand Warner, Joe Scanlon, Dick Holbert, Bob Mader, Bob Miner, Jim Johnson and Neil Bellenger.

Fred Perry, from St. Louis, drove all the way in on Friday, worked with us Saturday, and drove home again Saturday night and Sunday! Fred built, brought in and hooked up the 800amp/500kw rectifier unit. Fred is a trouble shooter for the St. Louis light rail system, and also active with the Museum of Transportation at St. Louis.

George Knab, Scott Gleason and Dan Waterstraat delivered the unit to the NYMT test site, with the trailer rig attached to our International 10-wheel dump truck.

Jim Johnson, Dick Holbert, Neil Belenger, Charles Harshbarger, Dan Waterstraat, Rand Warner, Norm Shaddick, Rick Israelson, Chuck Whalen, Dick Luchterhand, Bob Miner, and from NYMT: Paul Monte Jim Dierks and Ted Strang, assisted with setup and tear down.

Under Fred Perry's direction, the rectifier was installed on the trailer and cabled in to the dc disconnect breaker, and the pigtail lead to P&W Trolley #168. Fred showed us how to install CAD-WELD rail bonds on the running rails, and also installed a jumper from the east rail to the west rail.

Rand Warner started up the generator set and after some warm-up time, Fred began a systematic checkout and start-up of Trolley #168.

(Continued on Page 5)

## Fall Foliage Trips Wrap-ups

### Marie Miner's Report:

I want to thank all the people who have helped me over the past ten years, especially, my husband, Bob. This year a special thanks for help in dating the tickets to Barbara Proseus and for working in the ticket booth at Sodus, Nancy Willard, Sue Whipple who was with me a record three times, Carol Van Horn and on "that" Saturday, Jane Weber. Also the long suffering parking lot people who took such good care of the Ticket Booth.

I am preparing an outline of procedures that have evolved in ticket selling over the years. It is my hope that a couple or two couples, who live in or near Webster will come forward and take on this job so that we can keep the mailing address that people have come to know. The Chapter has built up a good reputation over the years that should continue. Except for some bumpy track and a lot of hard work, it has mostly been fun.

As our recording said we are all sold out. The last ticket is gone. See you on the train. Good-bye.

Marie Miner, Ticket Agent.

### Thank You Track Car Operators

Jeremy Tuke extends a hearty *thank you* to the track car operators who devoted at least one of their Sundays to 'transport' visitors between the two museums.

### Bob Miner's Report:

This was the tenth year the ex-NYC coaches have provided an enjoyable ride for the public. We have received many "thank you's" over the years from all ages. Children love the rides. Parents were happy their children rode on a train. Older folks remember how it was when the train was the only way to go on long distance trips. I still think the train is the only way to go.

My records go back to 1987 when the chapter contracted with Empire State Railcar to use their coaches to run a trip. In 1990 I started keeping track of the miles put on the cars. Today I have recorded almost 7,000 miles. I have also recorded that we have sold almost 50,000 tickets. The Chapter purchased the coaches and now they are paid for so we own them free and clear. The good news is we covered expenses and even made a decent profit this year.

Of concern, however even with adequate scheduling, we sometimes fall short of members to staff the parking lot and associated areas. Parking is our biggest problem connected with running these train rides. Our parking in Sodus is at a business and we have to honor the rules set forth by them. That is why having enough people in the parking lot is top priority. We must keep open access to the business for their trucks. It takes three people just to show the cars where to park and four or five are better.

(Continued on Page 5)

## Membership Report

by Christopher Hauf, Chairman

### Welcome to this New member:

Eric Drum  
234 Oakwood Lane  
Webster, NY 14580  
(716) 671-5954  
Interests: Library, Publications, Historical research

### 1998 Year to Date Members

Regular.....	237
Local.....	9
Family.....	45
Total.....	291

## About Renewals

### - and a Gift!

Renewal season is upon us and members should see their renewals very soon. We will again do a discount for early renewals, but the time period has yet to be set since the renewals have not arrived from the NRHS yet. Also this year as a little incentive to renew and maybe to give a little extra to one of our many projects, the Board has decided to give every member (family members receive one per family) a 1999 Rochester Chapter NRHS Railroad Calendar. This is our gift to you to say **THANKS** for the support over the past year! We could not have done it without you!

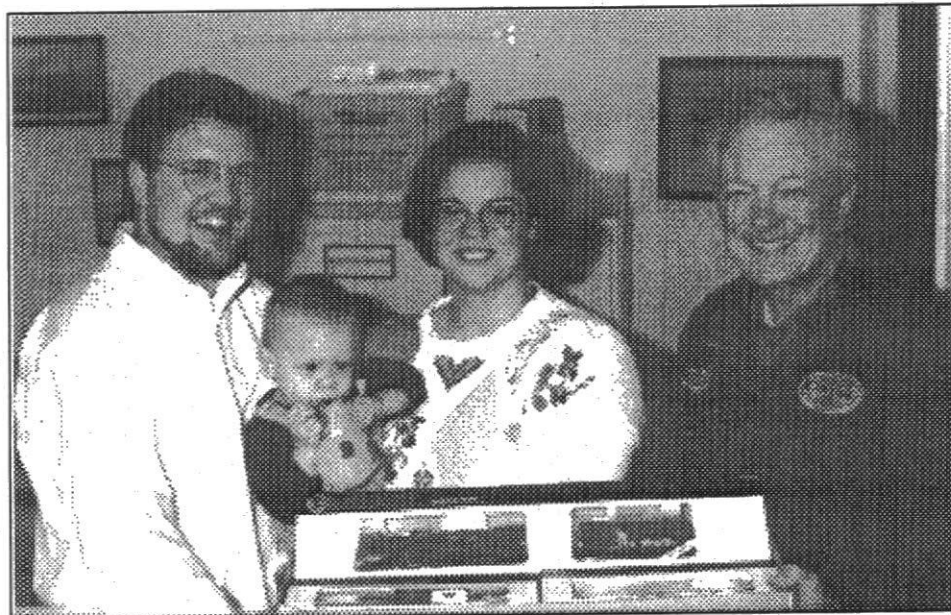
## Excellent Sales at Batavia Show

Barb and Morgan Proseus, along with John Weber and Lynn Heintz, managed the Chapter Store's table at the recent Batavia train show. Sales were excellent.

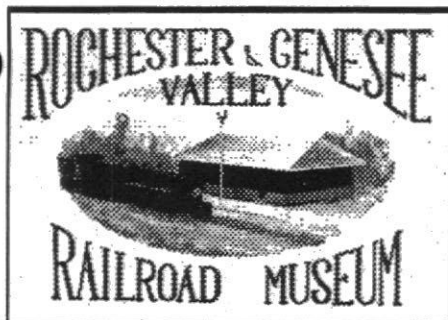
## Raffle winner

During each Fall Foliage Trip season, a raffle is held for a train set. This year, the prize was a limited edition O-gauge Lionel steam D&RG freight train set through arrangements with Gardner, The Train Doctor of Alden, NY.

The winning ticket was drawn at 4 o'clock on October 18, the final trip of the Fall Foliage Excursions. And the winners were The Gorton family of Webster. On Monday, Jason and Tara with son Liam arrived at the Library in Webster to receive their prize from Bob Miner. The Gortons had purchased their winning ticket during their trip the previous Sunday. Although 'Thomas, the Tank Engine' may have been a better prize this year for Liam, the Lionel set will be of future interest - and of current interest to Dad!



Bob Miner presents Jason, Liam and Tara Gorton of Webster their raffle prize, an O-gauge Lionel RD& steam freight train set. [Gale Smith photo]



Rand Warner, Manager, 425-8587

## General

October has been an amazing month! Things are really shaping up fast inside and outside our new building.

Our painting frenzy continues as weather permits.

Our long standing dream of real trolley operation has come to life.

Thanks for making it happen!!

## Infrastructure

Rand Warner

Together, the Rochester Chapter, NRHS, and the New York Museum of Transportation, operate our rail museums complex; to give our visitor a unified and integrated experience.

To manage the joint experience for our visitors, we have a joint executive steering committee, with representatives from both organizations, that meets monthly.

One of the efforts of this steering committee, which we call TRANSITOWN for lack of a better name, is to allocate disposition of the profits from our jointly operated museum store.

For several years now, these profits have been used to improve our infrastructure for the benefit of the visitor's experience. To date, these improvements have included:

- Improved parking areas.
- Improved walkways.
- Improved loading areas.
- Improved display areas.
- Procurement of trolley poles.
- Improvement of track structure.
- Expenses of putting together diesel generator power supply for trolleys.

Additional infrastructure improvements are planned for 1999, including some carry-over efforts from 1998.

Specific areas of safety improvements, recommended by our insurance people in some cases, would also be logical candidates for our infrastructure improvements in coming months.

## Railway Express Truck

By the time you read this, hopefully, our 1937 Ford V8-60 Railway Express Truck will be on site.

This rare and desirable acquisition has a good body and is complete mechanically. We need to replace the tires before moving it in on a trailer. Missing cab glass is all in the flat and easy to replace.

The body has surface rust, but no holes. You can still see where the Railway Express logos were located.

The red paint on the wheels and frame is still in amazingly good shape.

Lynn Heintz has spare parts for mechanical and dash instruments. Bob Mader, George Knab and Art Mummery have all

worked on V8-60's.

This truck will lend atmosphere to our site, will be useful for pickup and delivery, can be our parade vehicle, and will be easy to license with a historical plate.

Let us know if you have or know of 7.50 x 17 tires or front fenders.

We expect to move this truck in using George Knab's tandem axle trailer pulled by Joe Scanlon's heavy pickup.

Our emerging rehab and restoration team includes at least the following people - Lynn Heintz, George Knab, Bob Mader, Art Mummery, Rand Warner, Dave Luca, John Redden, and Joe Scanlon.

Let us know if you'd like to get in on the action with this project.

## Construction and Equipment

Supt. Joe Scanlon

### Progress:

"Miracle Man Mader" has done it again. This time it's the Balmar backhoe tractor which hasn't steered right in years. Now it's almost as good as new again.

Progress is also continuing on the Pettibone Hi-Lift forklift, thanks to Bob and Art Mummery.

George Knab and Art Mummery have consolidated supplies in the two Army cargo containers.

Dan Waterstraat has primed and painted our Trojan diesel loader - "all in a day's work".

Joe Scanlon is working several more sweet deals - stay tuned.

Bob Mader has used the Balmar backhoe tractor to dig assorted drainage ditches.

### Plans:

Continue excavation and grading around new restoration building.

Develop and implement a plan for water removal/drainage for areas surrounding new building.

Develop process for panel track production for new building site.

Pick up 1937 Ford V8-60 Railway Express truck for delivery to Museum.

Continue work on Army crawler crane to make fully operational in support of track relocation, switch relocation, and panel track installation at new restoration barn.

Work on construction equipment in southeast corner of new restoration barn over the coming winter.

Determine in-house vs. out-house excavation options for cut in bank for trackage into new restoration barn.

## Library Report

by Charles Robinson

Work continues on cataloging and labeling the many books that have been donated over the years to our library. Right now the book count is about 850. Members Teresa Kellet, Stephen Oagley, Gale Smith and John Stewart along with recent 'recruit', James Stewart, have been working on Monday evenings at the library to complete this task. The progress has been outstanding but slows on occasion when another interesting rail book is discovered for all of us to review. We are fortunate that members have been willing to donate such books to the Rochester Chapter.

Dave Luca has started to reinstall the hot water system for the library so that proper water connections will be available for the dark room when it is finally installed.

## Wanted - - -

### Donations to:

- ☐ Ballast Buddies Fund
- ☐ Trolley #60 Fund
- ☐ FGEX Wood Reefer Fund
- ☐ Steam Locomotive Fund
- ☐ MDT Steel Reefer Fund
- ☐ EKC #6 Prime Mover Fund
- ☐ PRR N5c Caboose Fund
- ☐ Restoration Building Fund
- ☐ Power Tool Fund
- ☐ Excursion Trainset Windows Fund
- ☐ Erie Stillwell Coach Fund
- ☐ RL&B Waiting Room Station Fund
- ☐ Library Fund



## New Restoration Building

Proj. Engr. Joe Scanlon

### Progress:

Fast Trak has completed missing panels on southwest corner and trimming of personnel doors on east side.

Joe Scanlon, George Knab, Scott Gleason and others are working on grading inside and outside the building.

Dave Luca and John Redden are coordinating construction of panel tracks inside the building. Panels are moved in, using a special two-wheel fixture designed and built by George Knab.

The Track #6 lead has been disconnected from Switch #7 and the lead has been relocated eastward to line up with the first track inside the building along the west wall. This job was coordinated by George Knab with help from Scott Gleason, Dan Waterstraat and others, and again, using special fixtures provided by George.

### Plans:

Coordinated installation of six coil-up doors by contractors.

Complete panel track connection from Track #6 into first the west, and then the east, tracks in building.

Move into the building those cars selected for work over the winter.

Move into the southeast part of the building the heavy construction equipment to be worked on over the winter.

Continue with plans and implementation of interim utilities – water and electric – to get us through the winter.



Continue track construction into the building on the north end, and out of the building on the south end.

Bob Miner and Art Mummery will be working on a generator set to power the building over the winter.

*This track, which was originally located on the mound in the right of the picture, was moved to be aligned with the west track now in the Restoration Barn. [Gale Smith photo]*

## Track & Right-of-way

Acting Supt. Rand Warner

### Progress:

Track construction, removal and relocation activities all around the new restoration barn were reported under "New Restoration Building."

Sources for additional track and track supplies are being investigated with contractors and suppliers.

Walter Morey has assisted us with critique of our alignment at Switch #6, and our options for washout repairs near Switch #5.

Joe Scanlon is working on possibilities for large concrete blocks for a retaining wall at the washout area.

George Knab is working on steel piling possibilities for a retaining wall at the washout area.

### Plans for the balance of 1998:

Repair the washout area near Switch #5 so we can resume unrestricted operational movements.

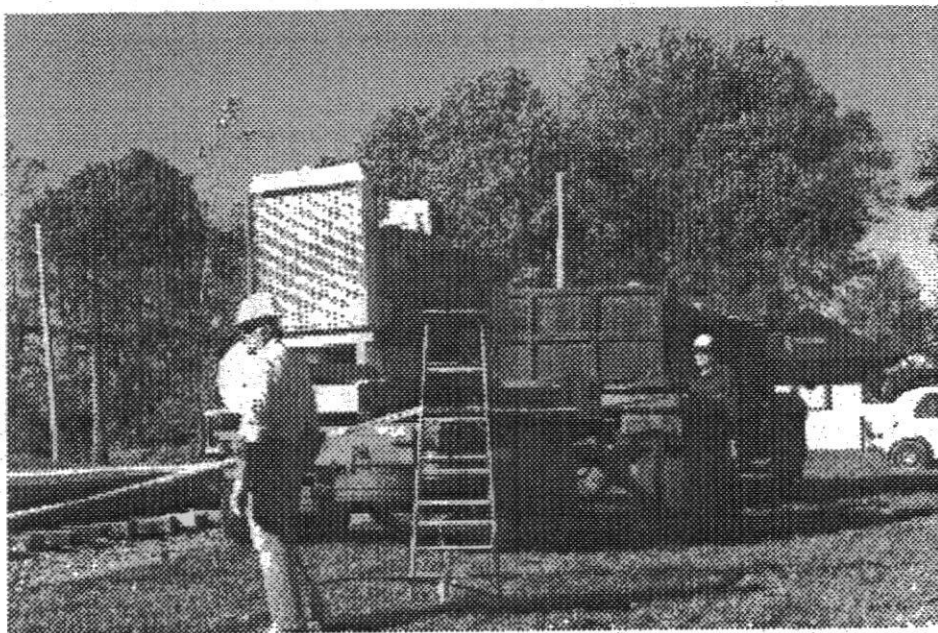
Relocated Switch #7 northward to serve the lead tracks into the new barn.

Rehab/relocate Switch #6 to provide reliable entry to the barn leads from our main line.

*An inside view. The floor has been graded and leveled. The TrackMobile rests on one of the two groups of panel track being placed. This track is temporary so that equipment can be brought in over the winter; when sufficient monies are available, a concrete floor will be poured.*

[Chris Hauf photo]





## Car 168 Exercises

(Continued from Page 1)

Very shortly, we all were thrilled to see #168 moving back and forth over about 150 feet of track under Fred's guidance.

Fred then gave brief instruction on throttle, brake, reverse, etc. to a number of people including Jim Dierks, Ted Strang, Rand Warner and Bob Miner.

### Plans:

Saturday, October 31, weather permitting, we want to get our electric people and our locomotive people through a brief training and familiarization exercise on Car #168, so that we can all can apply our collective expertise to future trolley operations and maintenance procedures.

With equipment, materials and our new knowledge and experience, we hope to extend the range of operation of Trolley #168 along the level part of the NYMT loop on the south side of the NYMT barn. This will give us an operating range from the crossing by the R&E waiting room to the crossing at the flagman's shanty, as well as the passenger loading track.

In order to make this operation possible under real overhead wires, we will have to erect more poles along this new route. Holes can be bored and poles set using our Chapter line truck and crew.

With reasonable success we could have the above described operation function in 1999.

Our range of operations could be substantially extended if we had a tag power unit available. More on this option later. Stay tuned.

Here is the power source for Car 168: Onan/Allis Chamber diesel generator set + rectifier mounted on a trailer. The cable to Car 168 is on the left. (Gale Smith photo)

## Miner Reports:

(Continued from Page 2)

Now let's talk about safety. All the riders have to cross Maple Ave. to board the train. We need road crossing person and some one to help the handicapped get to the train.

A very big THANK YOU to all the members and their spouses, sons, daughters and friends who did come way out to Sodus to help make our Fall Train Rides on The Ontario Midland Railroad a success. As usual I can not name you all. You know you did the job and the Chapter is grateful for your dedication. Several of you came out more than once and some came out every Sunday.

Dave Luca and I spent many days working on the coaches to get them ready to run. Thanks to the help of others we got the brake valves off, sent to Pittsburgh Air Brake for cleaning and testing and put back on the coaches. People polished the windows, fixed holes in the interior walls, painted things and a host of other jobs that had to be done. Bob Fitch and Gale Smith came out every Thursday to wash seats. Others came out once or twice to do the same. Steve Huse came out every Monday to help me vacuum clean the coaches.

Mike Byrne got us a lot of publicity by advertising in pennysavers and contacting the media.

## Picture This

1. A Rochester & Eastern trolley loads passengers at our R&E waiting room station, transports them "back" for a ride in "old times", and discharges the passengers at another R&E waiting room station at another location on our joint electrified trackage. All the pieces exist. With your help we can make it happen for the visiting public.

2. A Rochester, Lockport & Buffalo restored trolley car boards passengers from the former East Lake Road waiting room now on site and restored, and then transports the visiting public passengers to yet another RL&B station from another location on the original line, and relocated to our joint electrified trackage with NYMT. All the pieces exist. With your help we can make it happen for our visiting public.

Steve Huse and Chuck Goodman showed up early on Sundays to get the parking started before the crowds arrived. Jerry Lederthiel and Marie Miner assisted on very short notice on one day.

Jan Dittmer bought all the refreshments and brought them out to Sodus for sale on the train. She organized all the people to work in the concession car and souvenir car.

Jim East contacted people to help as car hosts and parking lot attendants. He set up the assignments so the jobs would be covered.

Marie Miner worked seven days a week for six weeks on tickets: answering the phone from 3pm to 9pm weekdays, sending out the tickets ordered by phone and mail. She was in the ticket booth every day a trip ran. She thanks those who did help her at Sodus in the ticket booth.

It takes a lot of people to make the train rides run. Each day we needed five car hosts, four parking lot attendants, three concession persons, three store clerks, two mechanical people and two ticket booth people = 19 per day. We ran two rides a day for seven days: five Sundays and two Saturdays. It seems to me that if a lot of members can give several days to make the Fall rides go, more of the members could afford to give one day a year to help out. (These trips are our largest source of income that allows us to develop our museum, Ed.)

Next year Marie and I will be out of town for the first two weeks in September so will not be able to help organize the Fall rides.

Thanks again to all who helped make the Fall rides a success.

**Bob Miner, SPE CTC**



## Trip Report:

## Seashore Trolley Museum

Reported by Bill Heron

No introduction seems necessary for a site as well known as the Seashore Trolley Museum. Its roots go back to 1939 making it the oldest trolley museum in the US and perhaps in the world. Its collection of more than 250 vehicles is the largest in the US and perhaps in the world. Unquestionably, for trolley aficionados, Seashore is "Mecca".

For the record, there are at least four direct links between Seashore and the Rochester area. First, a Rochester chapter member, Charles Robinson goes to Kennebunkport regularly to perform the happy duty of operating trolleys.

Second, a good part of the overhead structure on Seashore's 1.8 mile "mainline" originally supported wire on the Rochester Syracuse and Eastern interurban line. When the RS&E ceased operation, a utility company acquired the roadbed and the overhead structure. Years later, the utility changed to another means of support for its power lines and Seashore was able to obtain a share of the overhead structures.

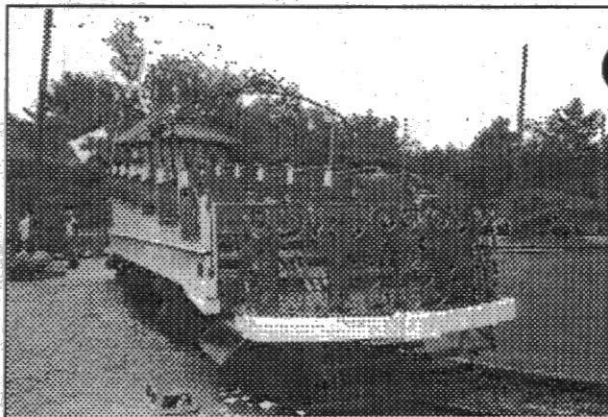
Third, Seashore owns former New York State Railways Rochester Division car 1213. This "submarine" has the twin distinctions of being the only 1200 series car to survive and the only example of a pioneer Peter Witt design car in existence anywhere. Peter Witt, Cleveland's City Clerk and later Transit Commissioner, conceived of the concept of the car-type that bears his name and the first production lot of 130 cars was built by Kuhlman, a Cleveland firm, during 1915 and 1916. None have survived.

In 1916, an order was placed with Cincinnati Car Company for 75 more "Peter Witt" cars. In the meantime, Cleveland decided that they really didn't want these cars. Eventually 25 did go to Cleveland and the remaining fifty were acquired by New York State Railways for the Rochester Division where they comprised the 1200 series. Number 1213 was acquired by Rochester's Chief of Police Henry Copenhagen in 1941 and moved to his home in Webster where it served as a play house for his grandchildren. The car was donated to Seashore in 1984 by Chief Copenhagen's grandson.

The fourth Rochester-Seashore connection has to do with the Rochester and Sodus Bay Railway. Seashore has R&SB car 113, the oldest US interurban car known to exist anywhere. It was built in 1900 by Jackson

and Sharps and was used for initial service on R&SB's 40 mile route, one of the longest trolley routes built up to that time. After the R&SB shut down in 1929, car 113 began a second career, serving as a summer cottage and then as recreation room for a trailer park.

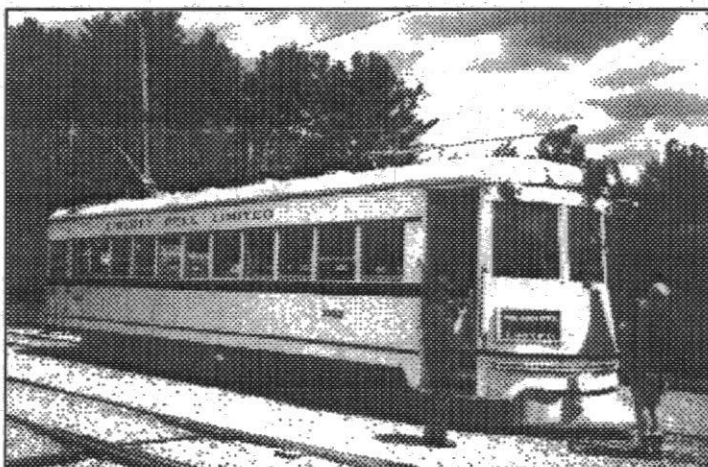
On the day I visited Seashore, I was able to ride three quite interesting members of the operating fleet. My first ride was on #1267, built in 1907 by the Twin City Rapid Transit Company in their Snelling Shops. TCRT stands out as having constructed most of its trolleys in contrast to most traction lines which bought from trolley manufacturing companies. Number 1267 is a "gate" car, a Minneapolis-St. Paul specialty. It has wide steps at the rear and a large platform with folding wire gates instead of doors for entrance and exit.



My last ride also involved a classic, Montreal Street Railway #2, an open car with stepped rows of seats which provide patrons with theater-like visibility. Montreal Street Railway built #2 in 1906. Fully restored to original condition, #2 is painted white and sports ornate metal work and lots of gleaming brass. Seashore acquired the "Golden Chariot" in 1963 from the Montreal Transportation Commission. Clearly it now

is and always has been a "one-of-a-kind".

Seashore's "main line" does give visitors a chance to enjoy a demonstration of some very interesting and significant equipment. Unfortunately the ride is a bit short. There are hopes of extending the main line, using more of the ex-Atlantic Shore Line road bed over which the present line travels. This



Ride number two was aboard a special car not usually used for routine tourist rides. The car was #1030, an all-aluminum car built in 1931 for the Indiana Railroad by American Car & Foundry. It had been converted by the Indiana Railroad in 1934 to parlor car configuration. It was the only high speed car converted. When the Indiana Railroad phased out trolleys in 1941, this car went to Lehigh Valley Transit where it was renumbered from its Indiana number, 55, to 1030 and as such ran on the Liberty Bell Route. Eventually LVT reconverted 1030 back to coach seating. Seashore acquired it in 1951 and it was completely restored and re-reconverted to parlor car configuration. My ride on 1030 was a delightful experience. The operator briefly gave it its head and I estimate that we reached about 45 mph, at which point there wasn't enough track left to do more.

would be a very nice improvement. Something that is not so easy to fix is that in common with many tourist lines, there isn't much scenery along the way. The line is generally straight and is bordered by a cleared area that gives way to a scrubby growth of small trees, shrubs and bushes. Our own line linking the NYMT and the Rochester & Genesee Valley Museum is considerably more scenic, (or am I prejudiced?). Likewise, the two mile line at the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum better qualifies as "scenic". A bigger point, however, is that there is no place other than Seashore to experience so many different and unique trolleys. In a real sense they are the scenery, and generously laid on.

[Photographs by Bill Heron]

## Do you know of a source?

Dan Waterstraat is looking for some help. To complete his restoration work on the Chapter's Trojan loader, he needs a source of rubber gasket material to hold windows into the cab. If you can help Dan find exactly what he needs, please drop him an email at clearblock@ibm.net or give him a call at 582-1149.

## Freight Equipment

by Chris Hauf

Chris Hauf has begun in earnest the restoration of our new PRR N-5C cabin car. He has been working to seal the roof of some leaks before the snow flies. To do so, he has had to remove the remainders of the old PRR Train Phone mounting brackets. The resulting bolt holes have been temporarily patched with wood blocks and silicone rubber. The plan is to create a replica Train Phone antenna and place it on the roof as part of the restoration, so it was necessary to only temporarily seal the holes. Work will continue on the cabin car throughout the winter and help is always welcome.

Dale Hartnett has continued his restoration of the steel work at the ends of the NYC caboose with almost all of it being cleaned and primed by now. Bernie Cubitt has finished replacing all of the stair treads guaranteeing us sure-footing for many years to come.

John Redden has nearly completed the exterior painted of the B&O wagontop. It sure looks sharp in its B&O blue with its yellow ends.

## Thanks to .....

**Dan Waterstraat** for meters and shunt for our trolley power supply substation.

**George Knab** for hardware and fittings for our trolley power supply substation.

**Bob Achilles** for donation of NYC RR concrete milepost marker.

**Sam and Anna Grover** for check towards Subway Car #60 restoration project.

**Robert McKnight** for check towards coil-up doors for new restoration building.

**Gale Smith** for checks towards Subway Car #60 restoration project and towards the Restoration Building Fund.

## The First Day: 2-16-42

by Dan Cosgrove

I got off the bus at the stop nearest to the railroad tracks – it was 10:20 PM. I was at the stop for the regional market at Syracuse on Park Street. The railroad I saw was the Lake Line, and this area would change to Carousel Mall in the distant future. But this was February, 1942, and I was slated to work as a leverman at JG. I could see the building adjacent to the tracks which resembled a section man's shanty, only larger. I climbed up the bank and headed down the six feet to the tower. Well, it certainly wasn't a tower; it was a small building at grade, set closely to the tracks. I went in the building and introduced myself to the operator, and told them I was their new leverman for the 11 to 7 trick. It was cold outside, probably no more than 15 degrees, but the tower was toasty warm; the large pot bellied stove was really hot and the warmth radiated throughout the place.

There was a miniature interlocking in the center of the room, and a track diagram. The layout was shown on a chart hanging from the ceiling and it showed a modest arrangement of switches and tracks. Eastbound, Track 4 went past the tower and then split into double tracks, Tracks 4 and 8. Westbound Tracks 3 and 7 came up to just east of the tower and then the tracks went from two westbound tracks to one, Track 3. West of the tower, just past the overpass over Park Street was a westbound switch that led to the north and this was the Hojack main.

All the switches were high stand hand thrown switches. What you did was you to throw the small levers in the tower to reflect which switches and signals you wanted to make a movement, and then you went out and threw all the corresponding switches by hand and when you had lined the switches and locked them, the signal would come in to reflect the movement you planned and the trains would come flying by.

And to me, they seemed to fly by – I had posted at Clark Street Wye at the entrance to Dewitt Yard, so I was used to the roar of the trains as they passed by, but I was not used to the speed as yet. When we cleared or the eastbound or westbound fast freights, it seemed like they were really flying, yet they weren't going much faster than 45 or 50, but the combination of weight and sound was impressive.

There were switches to Salina Yard and to the First Ward branch, and there was Track 10 shown on the track diagram which had an electric switch to connect the Hojack

main, and this track was signalled in both directions. I went out with the man I was relieving and he took me on a quick tour of the switches and I was on my own. I found the switches were easy to throw and locked very positively, so you knew they were safe, and once I learned that, I was set to go. At midnight, the operators changed, and I met a man only slightly older than I was, and as it turned out, we got along very well. Just east of the tower was the switch from Track 4 to Track 8 and our usual procedure was to send one down 4 and the next down 8, if we could. East of us we had manual block territory. The only place I ever saw or heard about 4 track manual block, but there it was. So we had to be careful to give them a yellow if there was a train ahead and to give them a green if we had a clear block, which meant that the operator was in constant conversation with Clark Street so he could clear up the track as soon as possible. Since it was manual block territory, it was required that the trains operating on the yellow should get a Form A telling them that we had no orders for them, and then a Form B telling them that there was one or two or whatever ahead of them. The reality was that we gave them a yellow and as they went by we would show one finger or two or whatever number of trains that was ahead of them in that block.

Every once in a while we would have an engineman who would stop right at the door of the tower and roar "I've got to have a Form B", and the operator would rip off a blank Form B off the pad and give it to him; he would then proceed down the track.

Sometimes a westbound fast freight would cross his arms as he passed our tower and we would then call the east end dispatchers and tell him that "LS-1 wants the high" – meaning that he wanted the passenger track if he could get it. If he could get on the high, he could run 60 mph as opposed to 45 on the freight track, plus if he was on the high he could scoop water at the track pans saving him 30 minutes at each water pan so if he did manage to get on the high iron, he could save as much as 2 hours or more on his trip to Buffalo, worth asking for.

The next morning I was at the bus top at 7:30 waiting for a bus to take me home. I had worked my first day as a signal man well, leverman at any rate. I had earned \$0.745 an hour – nearly \$6 a day, and I was working a six day week – end of the week I would have \$35 – at that time a very nice pay. I was tired, somewhat sooty, but thoroughly happy to have started my railroad career. Haven't regretted it yet.



Happy  
Thanksgiving

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.

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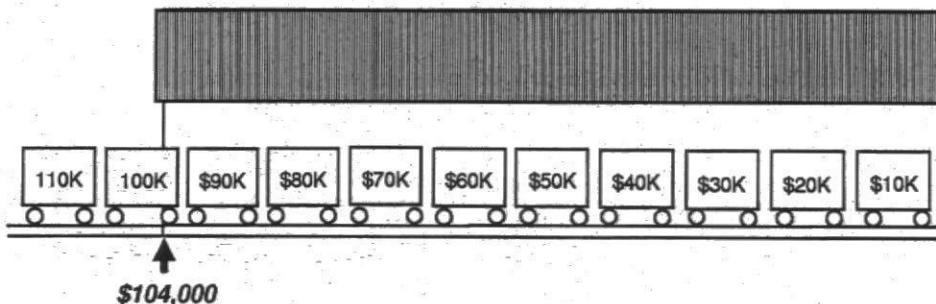
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