

# The Semaphore

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

May 2000  
Volume 42, No. 9

## Program for May 18:

Notice: This Meeting will NOT be at 40&8 Club (unless you want to attend a wedding reception!)

### The Yard at Blue Island, Illinois

by Victor Parmenter

The May 18th program will be a slide program given by Chapter member Vic Parmenter. It will cover the Blue Island Yard and the operation of the Indiana Harbor Belt Railway.

Vic related this interesting story to me:

"I started riding on trains when I was 6 months old and haven't quit yet. Dad was working at the D&H Cornith, N.Y. station, so Mother and I would go down to see Grandma Beecher in Atlanta, N.Y. Grandma lived not very far from the double tracked DL&W mainline from Hoboken to Buffalo and the Erie branch, which originated in Corning and ended up in Rochester. At Avon, the squat Erie soft coal burning locomotive was removed and electric MU cars were substituted to haul the train to the old Erie station in Rochester (so I have ridden many times past our museum's station). The old Erie station in Rochester was in the vicinity of the National Casket Company on the west side of the Genesee River."

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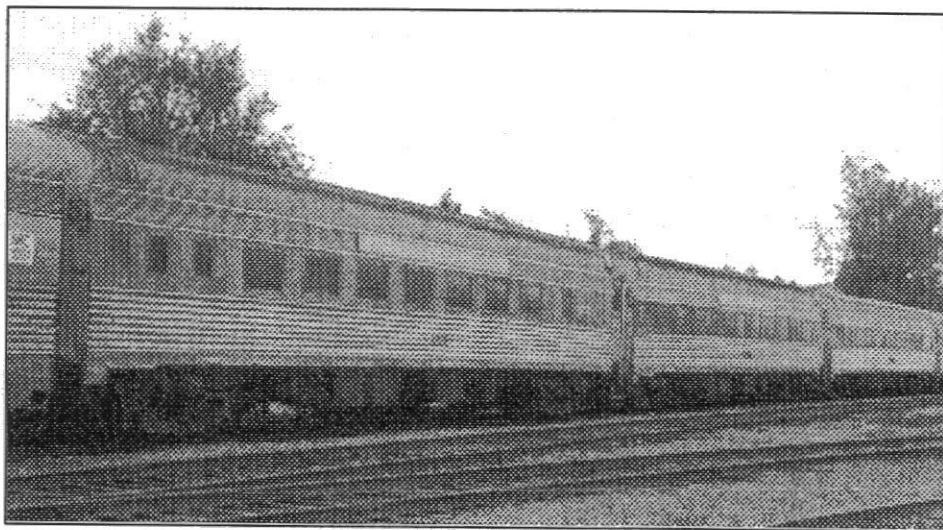
This is the last program arranged by our retiring Program Chairman, Jack Matsik. Jack has promised to do a program of his own come this Fall. Our thanks of appreciation for providing a range of interesting programs over the past several years.

### Program Committee

Tom Forsyth (Chairman) 442-0125  
Bill Limburg 586-9470  
Dan Cosgrove 352-6931  
Dave Luca (Board liaison) 288-0318

The Committee welcomes suggestions and ideas for future programs. Contact any of the Committee members.

## The May meeting will be held in one of the cars of the Chapter's Excursion Train Set in Webster!



The set is located in the former Hojak yard, near the Chapter's Library in Webster. On Route 250, just North of the Route 104 overpass, make a right at May Street (or a right just before the railroad grade crossing) to the end, where there is plenty of parking. We advise that you do not park in the first two rows near the Nursery School, in case they have an evening session planned.

### Tom Forsyth is New Program Chairman

Tom Forsyth has stepped forward and volunteered to be the Program Chairman for the Chapter's meetings. Tom, who joined the Chapter several years ago, was actively participating when illness interfered. During that period, he arranged a substantial contribution for the Restoration Building fund. Welcome back -- and aboard!

### Summer Library Hours

7:30 to 9:30 PM

Monday, May 22

Library Phone: 872-4641

### A Reminder

The Chapter's address has been changed. The old PO Box has been closed. It is now:

P.O. Box 23326  
Rochester, NY 14692-3326

### It's Election Time!

This year, all officers and two trustees are up for your consideration. The ballot is enclosed. You may either bring it to the May meeting, or mail it so that it reaches the tellers by May 18. Nominations will be accepted from the floor.

#### For Officers, the candidates are:

President: Christopher Hauf  
Vice President: Steve Oagley  
Treasurer: Dave Luca  
Recording Secretary: Jeremy Tuke  
Corresponding Secretary: Tom Forsyth  
National Director: Bob Miner

#### For Trustees:

Joe Scanlon  
John Weber

According to our Bylaws, Ira Cohen was not able to run again in the position of Treasurer; Don Shilling wished not to continue as Corresponding Secretary.

## Depot Tour Guides

Here is the May and June Schedule for those volunteering as Tour Guides at the Depot. All days are Sundays; the hours are 11:30 to 5:00.

### May 14:

Gale Smith

### May 21:

Steve Oagley  
Tom & Tony Way

### May 28:

Chuck Goodman  
Al O'Brien

### June 4:

Dick Anderson  
Bill Blaesi

### June 11:

George Bauerschmidt \*

### June 18:

Lynn Heintz \*

### June 25:

Tom and Tony Way \*

*If you encounter a conflict, please trade with one of the other people listed here. \*Additional guide desirable.*

## Sick List

George Knab has paid us several recent visits "to supervise". We're pleased to see him getting increasing use of his left arm and leg.

Art Mummery has been in and out of surgery recently and is already back to work.

Cliff Rogers of our Tuesday afternoon Subway car crew has had a hip problem and pneumonia, but we're glad to see him out to visit and "supervise".

Inda Cubitt, Bernie's wife, broke her hip recently and was hospitalized. We're glad to hear she is back home again, and is already climbing stairs!

## Displays for this Season

In the DL&W Baggage car, you'll find: (1) a typical baggage for the timer period; (2) several boards displaying timetables of various railroads; and (3) display of safety devices, including Operation Lifesaver materials.

In the MDT reefer (#14053) find artifacts and photos of Merchants Despatch Transportation and the East Rochester Despatch Car Shops.

At the Depot, see below.

## Former Rochester Depots Subject of New Display at R&GV RR Museum



Don Shilling, our Historian, as put together a display of photographs of former railroad depots in the Rochester area. This display is in the waiting room of the R&GV RR Museum.

*Don Shilling photo*

## Membership Report

Beth Krueger, Chair-person

### Important -- Read This First

If you received a final notice from the National, plan to continue your membership, and have not yet contacted me, please do so immediately! If you have paid your dues AND also received a final notice from the National, please contact me (if you have not already) so we can remedy the situation.

Thank you for your patience.

### New Members:

*Please welcome:*

Mr. Harry J. Christman, Webster, NY

Mr. Brett Hendershott, Student Member.

Interests: rolling stock, restoration, museum operations, and track car operations. He is a member of our Young Railfans and attended RailCamp last summer.

They will be officially nominated for membership at the May 18 Membership Meeting.

### Member Recruitment

Please bring any potential members to a summer Depot meeting (June 15, July 20 and August 17). Show your guest(s) all the great projects we are working on and invite them to become part of the Chapter's "Vision". The Depot is located in Industry, NY on Route 251. Complete directions to the Depot are listed on the back of our Rochester Chapter Year 2000 Calendar.

By the way, these Calendars are FREE; to pick up a couple at the next meeting and pass out to potential members (or visitors).

### Contact Information:

Beth Krueger Phone: 716-288-1304 (home); 716-292-2732 (work); E-mail: bk-krueger@frontiernet.net

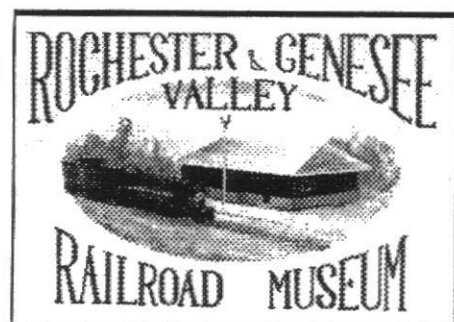
## Editor is on the Net -- Finally!

After much prodding, I have finally ran a phone line across the room, via the basement, to the computer and signed up with an ISP.

The e-mail address is: [gale299@frontier-net.net](mailto:gale299@frontier-net.net).

### 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.



Rand Warner, Director, 425-8587

## Development

Jeremy Tuke is finalizing arrangements with local home centers for donations support to restoration projects.

Donovan Shilling has arranged with Robert McKnight for a substantial donation towards concrete flooring for our Restoration Building.

Rand Warner is working with Alstrom/GRS on donations for our Signal Dept. and Steam Program.

Chris Hauf is working on materials for further grant application and support to the restoration of Rochester Subway Car #60.

Dee Mowers has suggested donations for windows for our Excursion Coaches wherein we would put a brass plaque at each window with the sponsor/donors name.

Dick Bean is working on a grant application for the Burro Crane restoration.

George Bauerschmidt arranged a project with a local firm that netted \$600 to the Steam Fund.

Tom Tisher has indicated a willingness to coordinate designated donations to our Restoration Building for concrete floor, pit(s), utilities and auxiliaries.

Scott Gleason is providing info and expertise that will help our Steam Fund monies to go further on locomotive restoration for the Vulcan and Heisler locos.

Bob Miner has found a customer for a piece of heavy equipment.

Don Shilling is hosting a series of photo shoots at R&GV RM by Kodak and RIT that will result in revenues to R&GV RM.

## Don't Forget ....

The May 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting is at the Excursion Fleet near the Chapter's Library in Webster.

## Season Opening

**Progress:** Bob Miner is working on our John Deere and Cub Cadet lawn tractors.

Rand Warner, Rick Israelson, Chris Hauf and Don Shilling have cleaned and scrubbed inside the Depot.

John Redden, Dick Holbert, Norm Shaddick, Rick Israelson, Jeff Carpenter and others have relocated our locomotives and cars to clear the tracks for our track car operations and loading.

Dee Mowers, Rick Israelson, Rand Warner, Bill Chapin and others have cleaned up around the outside of the Depot.

Track car crews are trained by Jeremy Tuke and Co.

Tour guide crews are trained by Don Shilling and Co.

Track is inspected and repaired by John Redden, Rand Warner, Dave Luca, Norm Shaddick, Rick Israelson, Dale Hartnett, Jeremy Tuke, Jeff Carpenter, and others.

Fire extinguishers have been checked and upgraded by Steve Huse and Rand Warner.

**Plans:** Sweep out and tidy up all rolling stock open to the public.

Mow lawns and tend to flowers and shrubs.

Complete new/expanded displays in DL&W baggage car and MDT reefer.

## Live Your Dreams

Come live your dreams with us at the R&GV RM.

You say you want to run a diesel locomotive. Come join our Diesel Team - restoring, maintaining and operating our diesel fleet of seven assorted units from industrial switchers to yard switchers to road switcher, and in the future - cab units.

You say you want to run a steam loco. Come join our Steam Team - restoring, maintaining and operating our steam fleet of a Vulcan 0-4-0T saddle tanker, Heisler 0-4-0F fireless, more to come, and steam operated construction and industrial equipment.

You say you want to run a trolley car. Come join our Car barn Gang to work on our Rochester Subway Car #60, RL&B interurban #206, or the sweeper line car project. More possibilities yet to come for the future.

You say you want to run a bulldozer. Step right up - talk to our Construction and Heavy Equipment people and sign up for training this Spring.

And the list goes on and on: Gandy Dancer, Signal Maintainer, Station Agent, Conductor, Brakeman ... and so on.

## Safety

Safety is our most important attribute. Safety is EVERYONE'S concern.

Safety has been stressed in the recent training series for track car operators and museum tour guides.

Safety is always stressed in our rule book training sessions.

Safety is always stressed in our training for our excursion train car hosts.

Safety is a major concern at our Transi-town Executive Committee meetings.

Safety is a major training concern as we get into more widespread use of new welding and cutting equipment.

Safety is a top priority in our heavy equipment operator training.

First aid kits and locations are reviewed and updated annually.

Fire extinguisher types, readiness and locations are updated annually.

An emergency response training session was held over the winter.

Lists of safety concerns in each functional area of R&GV RRM are being prepared and circulated.

A disaster response plan is in review and preparation.

**SAFETY REQUIRES ETERNAL VIGILANCE BY ALL OF US!**

## Outreach

Dave Hulings and his **Operation Life-saver** crew have received additional training and are available to talk to groups. They will be working, and will have a display set up, at the Fairport Canal Days event this Summer.

Dale Hartnett has a new class of **Young Railfans** already underway - with help from his experienced Explorers. We look forward to their participation in Dale's program.

Chris Hauf is coordinating our interfaces with the **Erie-Lackawanna RR Historical Society Convention** here in Rochester in September. Our Erie Depot and Museum with our Erie RR and Lackawanna RR exhibits will be featured as part of their overall program. We also hope to be doing something jointly with LA&L RR for this convention event.

Don Shilling is coordinating interfaces with the **NMRA Fall Regional Convention**, also to be held here in Rochester in September. Their group will be out to our Museums in search of authentic prototype modeling information.



## Construction & Equipment

Supt. Joe Scanlon

**Progress:** Art Mummery, Dick Bean and Bob Mader have the Ford fork lift motor almost all back together. Art had to order the parts three times before they came in right.

Dan Waterstraat and Scott Gleason have the side boards mounted on the Army dump trucks and are servicing them for Spring readiness.

Dan is working on the diesel powered road roller – water got into the engine over the winter.

Bob Mader has the Balmar backhoe and the two Georgia buggies up and running.

**Plans:** Get all our dump trucks and loaders into service.

Get the Army crawler crane into service.

Get the Army bulldozer into the shop for engine work or swap.

Get our other bulldozers and road grader(s) into service.

### UPDATE

On Saturday, April 29, we DID have our Trojan loader, Huber grader, two army dump trucks, and Galion roller in operational use grading, stoning, and rolling the roadbed for the new siding along the west side of the Restoration Facility – great work guys!!

## M.O.W. Equipment

Supts: Dick Bean, Bob Mader

### Burro Crane

There WILL be a Burro crane in your future. The diesel engine was installed by Art Mummery, Bob Mader, Joe Scanlon and John Redden. Now we have to hook up a lot of stuff for motor mounts, generator, starter, fuel, water, radiator, etc.

### Tie Extractor

John Redden and Rick Israelson are painting and priming this unit. Top coat is orange. We think the hydraulic work is completed. Now we need to sharpen up the fingers that jam into the tie to push it out. Then hopefully into real service.

### Regulator

We would really LOVE to have a workable regulator. It could help us in so many different ways – ballasting, plowing, ditching, sloping, and truing up the ballast slopes. Rand Warner is continuing to pursue acquisition possibilities.

## Our Shops Take Place

Our Restoration Facility shops potential is increasing rapidly as we acquire shop equipment.

### Metal Shop

Cincinnati and Bridgeport mills on hand. Pedestal grinder and surface grinder on hand. Medium size lathe to be picked up. Power hacksaw in use. Drill press available from Tool Car.

### Wood Shop

Lathe on hand. Bandsaw, router, jointer and planer to be acquired.

### Welding Shop

MIG welder and Plasma cutter on hand. Fire extinguishers to be acquired. Power supply being hooked up. Training to be scheduled.

### Shop Shed Extension

Vendor(s) being contacted for 20' x 60' for 30' x 60' shop extension along east edge of existing building. Roof to be at same slope as existing building roof. Roof would start under the translucent panels on side of building.

### Concrete Floor

Robert McKnight's gift of \$5,000 towards our concrete floor would give us enough concrete inside the existing building to set up an interim shop capability until we have enough money for the shed extension.

## Carbarn Gang

### Rochester Subway Car #60

Jim Moore is removing all wood from the roof area, including walkways and ventilator supports.

Dave Baer, Hiram Colwell, Bob Van-Valkenburg and Rand Warner are continuing to remove wood from the end vestibule areas.

We are getting quotes on replacement steel sheeting for the roof areas.

John Redden, Duncan Richards & Co. have restored the headlight from Tom Kirm.

### RL&B Interurban Car #206

Work is concentrated on the smoker section restoration. Chuck Whalen is removing paint. Bernie Cubitt, Bill Chapin and Chuck have removed interior ceiling furring strips. Rand Warner and Dave Baer have delivered six borrowed seats. Lynn Heintz has provided borrowed baggage racks.

## Sweeper Line Car Project

The former Philadelphia Sweeper #143/147 from Old Forge/Thendara is becoming our R&GV RM line car.

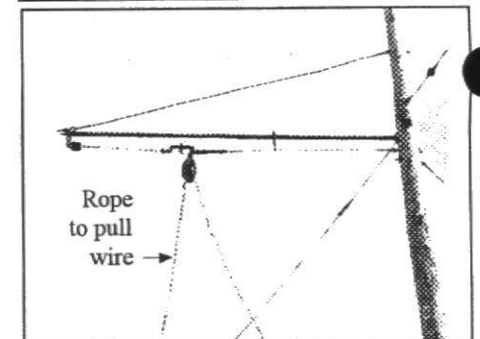
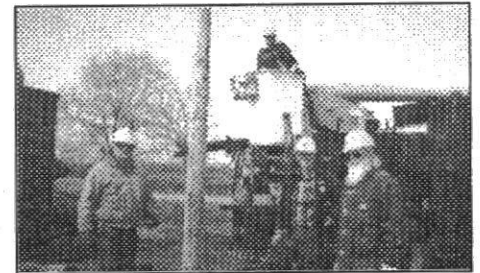
Neil Bellenger has gutted the interior. Prepping and painting the ends has started.

Replacement side sheathing wood is being collected through Lynn Heintz.

A replacement roof will be installed.

## Overhead Installation

There is a veritable forest of overhead guy wires, pull offs, span wires, back bones, and bracket arms erected at NYMT. Pulleys are hung to pull the trolley wire. Thanks to Scott Gleason, Neil Bellenger, Dick Holbert, Dick Luchterhand & Co. and all the gang at



NYMT who prepared the overhead items to be erected. That bucket truck from RG&E sure works great!

## Rail Bonding

In order to have a fully functional trolley power system, we must have a return path for the traction power. That path is provided by the running rails. To maintain low resistance and low losses, we now have to bond the rail joints where the trolleys will run. Fred Perry provided training, tooling, supplies and guidance for this task. Now we are ready to put that background to good use.

## Substation Power Supply

Several possible locations and configurations for our 250kw 600v dc diesel powered substation are being investigated by R&GV RM and NYMT. We are also looking at options for a weather protection enclosure for the power supply.



## Thanks to ...

**Bob Mader** for a "whole lotta" hand made wood tie plugs.

**Ron Amberger** for coordinating donation of Bridgeport mill, surface grinder and pedestal grinder from **Jasco Tool & Machine Co.**

**Rand Warner** for track lights, drafting light, compressor sprayer and assorted hardware and tools.

**Robert McKnight** for \$5,000 donation towards new concrete floor for our Restoration Building.

**George Knab** for heavy rubberized canvas tarp for covering south end of RL&B interurban #206.

## Wanted

- ☐ Good useable pallets, pallet baskets, or pallet boxes - metal, wood or plastic.
- ☐ Good front clip for '39 Ford 1-ton truck - for our Railway Express Truck - fenders, grill and hood.
- ☐ For our wood shop: jointer, router, band saw.
- ☐ Operable skid steer loader, Bobcat type.
- ☐ Backhoe tractor, gas or diesel.
- ☐ Tandem axle tractor trailer dolly, to fit fifth wheel hitch pin.
- ☐ Good safe step ladders - wood, metal or fiberglass.
- ☐ Cantilever jacks for passenger cars.
- ☐ High or low profile track jacks, single or double action.
- ☐ Sponsors for 4' x 10' sheets of metal to replace roof on Rochester Subway Car #60.
- ☐ Good 50-53 foot flat car for our line car project.
- ☐ Good brooms and dust pans for our various project areas.
- ☐ Floor model drill press with at least 1/2" chuck, 120 volt.
- ☐ Tongue and groove side sheathing, clear fir or cedar.
- ☐ Stencil cutting machine.
- ☐ Laminating machine for at least 8-1/2 x 11".
- ☐ Carpet runner for *Pine Falls*, 24" x 32 feet; red or maroon with design preferred. Used, good condition OK.

## Headlight donation

Member **Robert Kewin** of Rochester and friend **Bob Hemings** of Hawaii recently donated to the Chapter a headlight from the tender of a NYC Class B10 0-6-0 switcher. This was obtained from the tender of locomotive #6627 when it was in a dead line at the Atlantic Ave. service facilities in the early 1940's. Thanks for their thoughtful donation of this interesting local railroad artifact.

JKT

## Help needed

### Just the job for electronics oriented person!

As part of the Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum's collection is the track diagram from New York Central Signal Station 33 (Chili Junction). This track diagram came out of the tower and shows all of the tracks at that tower and is almost 10 feet long. The diagram has lights to mark the switches and trains through the interlocking. The track diagram is currently on display in the DL&W baggage car, but it would be great if we could get some of the lights to light; make the sign an interactive display.

If someone is interested in a small electronics project to get this net artifact lit back up and properly on display, please contact **Chris Hauf** (381-8583; crhauf@frontiernet.net).

CH

## Looking for MDT/East Rochester Artifacts

**Chris Hauf** is continuing to build the R&GV RR Museum's display concentration on the Merchants Despatch Transportation and the East Rochester Despatch Car Shops which is located inside one of our two MDT refrigerator cars: MDT 14053. He is looking for additional photographs, paperwork of any kind, and artifacts to put on display. Photos and paperwork can be easily copied if needed and the originals returned. Hardware artifacts may be donated or loaned to the Museum for display in a locked display case inside the car. If you have something you would like to contribute, please contact **Chris Hauf** (381-8583; crhauf@frontiernet.net).

CH

## Don't Forget ....

The May 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting is at the Excursion Fleet near the Chapter's Library in Webster.

## 2000 Calendar of Special Events for Combined Museums

**May 14:** Return of the Rochester Subway 'Casey Jones' track car. Demonstrations of the restored Casey Jones track car will be held throughout the day.

**May 28: Rail Safety Day.** The museums will feature displays & demonstrations highlighting railroad safety.

**July 22-23 (Sat. & Sun.): "Model Steam & Gas Engine Rally"**. Come out and see special displays presented by the Western New York Model Steam & Gas Engine Association. On tap is the NYMT's new calliope.

**August 19-20 (Sat. & Sun.): "Diesel Days"** The museums will highlight the diesel locomotive during this two day celebration with six operating diesels from the small 45-ton switcher to the large 1000 & 2000 HP road switchers. Locomotive rides are planned.

**Oct. 29 (Sunday) Last day of Joint Operations.** Track car rides end. R&GV RR Museum closes for the season. NYMT remains open from November through April at reduced admission rate.

## Railroad.net ....

... is John Stewart's Web Site. As a newcomer to the web, this editor was very impressed, particularly with "Dunkirk, NY; One Railroad Town". It is an interesting story on the history of Dunkirk and its dependence on not only the railroads that serviced the city, but also the manufacturers that supported this industry.

Besides the above, you'll find information on the Lima Locomotive Works. Of interest to me, as that is where my father, a blacksmith, worked briefly during World War II - until he smashed his finger in a steam hammer!

Then there is the Rochester Subway ... complete with a view of Car #60. The Rochester Subway was compiled by Otto Vondrak. Mr. Vondrak is an RIT graduate, and currently employed by the new *Rochester Magazine*. (Hmm ... an interesting connection!) A copy of *Rochester Magazine* came with the latest *WXXI Program Guide*, I was impressed enough with its content to subscribe.

It appears that John thinks along the same lines as your editor, as his web site contains lots of information on my favorite railroad, Nickel Plate, along with links.

Also Lehigh Valley, New York Central, Buffalo, Rochester and Pittsburgh, and the Syracuse area are covered.

## Library Report

Charles Robinson, Chairman

The Rochester Chapter Library in Webster (next to the Chapter's railroad coaches) will be open for general use on Monday evening, May 22 between 7:30 and 9:30. We were pleased that a number of members came out to use the library during the last general use evening.

Renovation of the library and conference center is off to a good start. Rand Warner has applied a temporary plywood flooring over the portion of the front steel platforms to insure that no one can be injured in the rusted through holes in the platforms. Dave Luca has obtained the flooring for replacing the siding on the west side of the building. Bob Miner and myself assisted Dave in loading the siding into the storage car for safekeeping. The next step is to apply a bevel to the flooring edges to simulate the siding notches that were typical of railroad wood siding. A priming step for this siding is contemplated after that and then we rip open the old siding to find out how the structure has held up. Hopefully a prompt closure of the siding will be possible. Thanks to Rand, Dave and Bob for contributing to these important steps in library maintenance.

The staff continues to upgrade our collection. Jerry Gillette is cataloging the important Erie drawing collection Gale Smith and Bob Miner have finished copying Lloyd Klos' scrapbook on the Rochester electric railways thus making a copy for general use in the library and another for the NYMT collection. Jim Stewart, Steve Oagley, Bob Miner and myself are constantly organizing parts of the collection into orderly accessible storage. Bill Limberg is working on adding to our shelves in the periodical room where we have run out of shelving.

The Chapter has received another donation of railfan materials from the Curtis Boyer estate for which we are most grateful. This donation has included additional issues of *Vintage Rails* to fill out our collection. Kalmbach railroad photo albums, additional Rochester and New York State railroad postcards and photos plus other miscellaneous items.

John Stewart has loaned his collection of 'tear' sheets from various magazines and other papers, all protected in sleeves, for various New York State Railroads - past and present. They are arranged by railroad and occupy almost a full file drawer.

The Chapter is entering an important phase in repairing the Webster facility. It is contemplated that a few dedicated Chapter

members will be able to accomplish the repairs without too much assistance from others. However, it may be necessary to call on other Chapter members for help if we run into problems or become shorthanded. If we do need additional volunteers, I hope that the other members will be willing to spend some time on this project.

## TTCS' Century Limited is Back

After about a year of suspension, The Toy Train Collectors Society is again publishing their informative *The New Century Limited*.

Since this group has a strong Western New York State presence, many of the articles pertain to area railroads or surroundings.

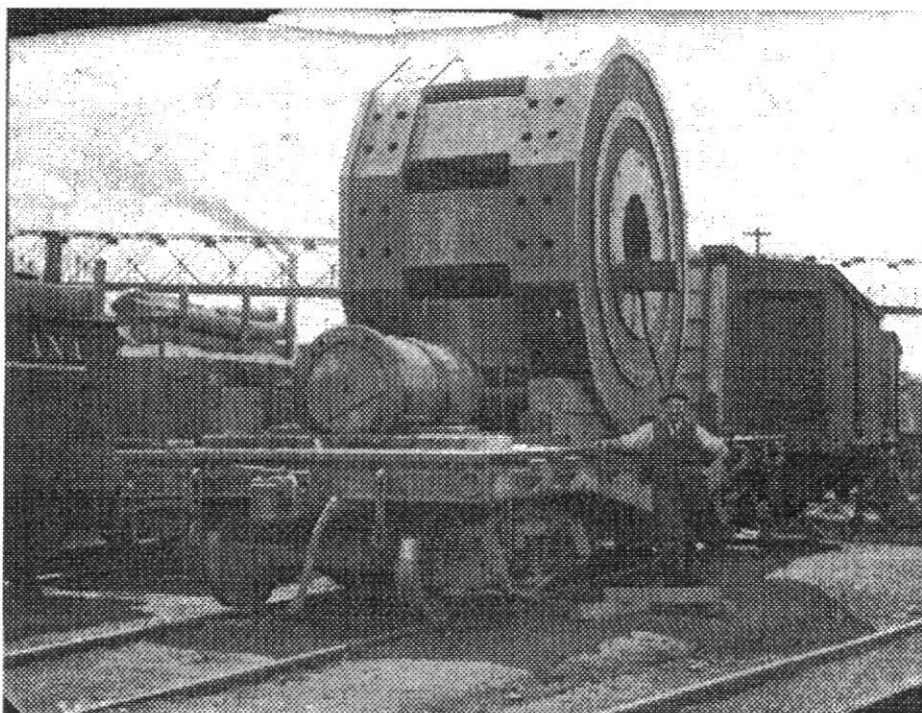
There is the story "The Ghost Building of Dansville" or "Dansville's 'Castle on the Hill'". You may also know it as Macfadden's Physical Culture Hotel on East Hill. It is now vacant and deteriorating.

Another is "Looking Back at Buffalo 100 Years Ago", which looks at railroads, street railroads and short railroad trips.

You will find the magazine at our library.

## Mystery Photo

Don Shilling found the following photo at a flea market, and desires if anyone can identify the occasion, and particularly the odd load. Call Don at 716-381-3171, or write to him at 1765 Five-mile Line Road, Penfield, NY 14526.



## Trip Report:

### Cape Cod Central Railroad

By Bill Heron

After a one-year gap, tourist train operation on Cape Cod resumed for the 1999 season. The new operator chose the name Cape Cod Central Railroad. Much is the same as before. The trip begins at Hyannis and goes generally north to a point in Yarmouth. From there, the rails lead to Sandwich and then to an unidentified terminus along the Cape Cod Canal. After a short lay over, the train returns to Hyannis via the same route. Passengers may get off or get on at Sandwich. Thus, one could detrain at Sandwich, do a bit of exploring there and then return to Hyannis on a later train. Most seem to choose an uninterrupted round trip.

The new operator has had to acquire his own equipment because the former operator took what he had when he left. Thus, the motive power currently used consists of a pair of M420 engines built in 1973 at Montreal. One is positioned on each end of the train for pull/pull operation. The coaches came from the Long Island Rail Road and were built in 1963. The veteran equipment is decked out in an attractive cranberry red livery, a definite improvement from the prior color scheme. The ex-Alaska Railroad dome car is no longer a part of the consist, the former operator having sold it to the Conway Scenic Railroad.

(Continued on Page 7)

## Cape Cod Central Trip

(Continued from  
Page 6)

It was hoped that, as in other years, dinner trains could be operated. Unfortunately, while equipment is on hand, refurbishment was unable to be completed in time for the 1999 season. Also, there no longer is a buffet car, a favorite for kids of all ages.

Food considerations aside, the trip remains a generally pleasant experience. There is some amount of "green tunnel", but there are plenty of good views of such things as cranberry bogs, salt marshes and sand dunes. On the negative side, the windows in the coaches definitely need to be replaced. They are scratched and cloudy and detract from the riders' enjoyment of the view.

As before, the train moves at a good pace, faster than one finds on many other tourist trains. The trip, particularly outbound is enlivened and augmented by a witty and informative commentary delivered in a delightful Yankee twang by a Trainman who obviously enjoys his assignment. The script is good and the delivery is delightful. If you pay attention you will learn such facts as that there are 365 ponds on Cape Cod, one for each day of the year.

If you're on the Cape and your system requires a "fix" of steel wheels on steel rails, don't hesitate to respond to the Conductor's call, "All Aboard".

## Book Review:

### The American Diesel Locomotive

By Brian Solomon

Reviewed by Bill Heron

This is an outstanding book! My rating would have to be 9-1/2+, not an absolute "ten" only because nothing is perfect.

This book is big enough to be able to include lots of gorgeous color pictures, more than 200 according to the jacket, as well as a few in black-and-white. The organization, the information and the author's style all contribute toward a far above average end result.

The book starts by telling the reader clearly and factually why the diesel/electric propulsion system overtook steam power, which had predominated for almost one hundred years, and left it in the dust. Factors such as thermal efficiency, operational advantages and fuel costs are dealt with. Information regarding straight electric propulsion also is offered. Most of this deals

with traditional railroads such as the Pennsylvania, the New Haven, the New York Central and the Milwaukee Road. Only a brief mention is made of electric interurban lines. The advantages of the straight electric system are outlined, e.g., cleanliness, greater starting tractive force and simplified MU capability. A General Electric ad from the mid-20's is shown; it promises that 10 electric locomotives will replace 25 steamers. General Electric aside, the author goes on to cover the obvious disadvantage of a straight electric system, the initial cost of the infrastructure.

From there the book moves on to a topic of great interest to me - "doodlebugs". The author grants them the fancy name "railcars", but I like "doodlebugs" better. The McKen "Windsplitter" is well covered including its sponsorship by Harriman through UP, its development, its shortcomings and its eventual demise. Unfortunately, the Brill Co. and its much more successful line of doodlebugs is barely mentioned. I did, however, enjoy reading about East Broad Top's home made, (from a Brill kit), doodlebug, the M-1. It still exists and is said to be all-original. It also, purportedly, is the only 3-foot gauge doodlebug ever to polish American rails.

Next in the book comes a section on early internal combustion/electric trains and locomotives. Well known units such as the UP's M10000 are included as well as others not so well known such as a fascinating articulated trainset built by Goodyear in 1935. Its construction used large amounts of aluminum, it had a top speed of 109 mph and its maker called it the "Rail Zeppelin". New Haven bought two sets, the only ones ever built, and in service on the NH they bore the name "Comet".

Having covered the beginnings of the diesel electric locomotive on an overall basis, the author then devotes separate chapters to individual constructors, EMD, Alco, Baldwin and Fairbanks-Morse. In light of the great success that EMD has enjoyed it is interesting to read of the difficulties they had as they struggled during their early days with problems, particularly product development. It was only when they abandoned the Winton engine and created their own 567 that the promise of diesel reliability could be fulfilled.

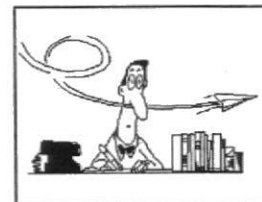
For the others, truly effective solutions for their problems never came and the result was that they fell by the wayside leaving EMD as the dominant builder until GE got serious about designing and building diesel electric locomotives. Strangely this book

does not have a separate chapter for GE. GE is, however, well covered in the final two sections of the book, "Power Race" and "Modern Power".

Earlier, mention was made of the pictures the author has included in this book. They deserve further mention. The book is printed on glossy, slick paper and the photographs are as sharp and clear as any one might see anywhere. The picture selection doesn't seem to have any particular geographic bias, but there are three that certainly have local interest for those of us who live in Upstate New York. The first shows a Rochester and Southern EMD SW1200, #107, basking in the sun at the Brooks Avenue yard in 1987.

The second is one of the few black-and-white pictures included in the book. It shows a Livonia, Avon and Lakeville Alco RS-1, #20, photographed in 1986. The third was shot during 1999 and shows a Depew, Lancaster and Western Alco RS-11, #1804, near Batavia.

Are you itching to get a look at this book? You should be because this is definitely one of the very best.



## Editor's Corner

The current issue (April) of *The Green Block*, newsletter of Central New York Chapter, NRHS contains two interesting articles.

Under the banner "Central New York Railroad History" is a story of a daring and successful rescue from a ship in distress on Lake Ontario that involved the NYC Charlotte's railroad men. It started on December 15, 1902.

The other was taken from a brochure put out by NYC announcing the 1941 Empire State Express. It described the trains, their makeup and luxurious accommodations.

Permission to reprint herein at a later date will be requested.

Still have two articles by Bill Heron in reserve. Always appreciate his input.

Finally —

## Don't Forget ....

The May 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting is in the Excursion Cars near the Chapter's Library in Webster.



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Chapter Meeting & Program:  
**Yard at Blue Island, IL**  
by Vic Parmenter  
**May 18, 2000**  
**>> Excursion Cars <<**  
at former Hojack Yard  
**Webster, NY**

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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 or TXT format, as well as a printed copy. **Deadline: First Day of Each Month.**

**Pouring the Restoration Facility Floor!**

The Restoration Building is up and running! Now we need to provide it with a concrete floor. We raised the dust to finish the space. Now we've faced with dust all over the place. One hundred dollars will buy a batch of concrete. The estimate for the floor is \$25,000; we'll need 250 batches (!). Help "cement" together a great project. Maybe we'll even let your write your name and date in a slab. [Don Shilling]

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R. McKnight	R. McKnight	R. McKnight	R. McKnight	R. McKnight