

OUR NEWEST ARRIVALS: Two more General Electric center-cab switchers join the R&GVRRM collection! The two units were moved to safe storage on Kodak Park property after RG&E's Russell Station was decommissioned down this summer. These two locomotives will further enhance our unique collection of historic diesels with ties to Rochester's railroad heritage. PHOTO BY JOE NUGENT

Two new engines to Industry

Versatile and nimble centercab switchers join our museum roster

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While the Rochester area lost another major rail customer with the closing and decommissioning of Rochester Gas & Electric's Russell Station near Charlotte, the Rochester Chapter was the recipient of the donation of two General Electric centercab diesel locomotives. One is a model that is already familiar to Chapter members, a 45-ton siderod switcher, very similar to our 1941. "Old Yellow" never carried a number while at RG&E, but was built in April 1950 as Quebec Iron & Titanium #3. The second engine also has an interesting pedigree. RG&E #8 is a 110-ton switcher originally built as a demonstrator unit by GE. It later served as the switcher for General Electric's transformer plant in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Upon retirement

from GE, it was acquired by the Berkshire Scenic Railway Museum in Lenox, Mass. It served there for many years until it was deemed surplus and purchased by RG&E for use at Russell Station in the 1990s.

With the end of power generation operations at Russell, the two engines were deemed surplus. Thanks to the efforts of many Chapter members behind the scenes, arrangements were made to accept the locomotives as donations. The units were moved to Kodak Park property for safe storage until we have enough room at Industry to display them. Once at Industry, both units will be given a full inspection and steps towards reconditioning will be determined. Help us welcome our two newest arrivals!—*Otto M. Vondrak*



www.rochnrhs.org

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TRAIN BULLETIN

SHORT NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS REGARDING
THE ROCHESTER CHAPTER NRHS



The Livonia, Avon & Lakeville ran a special train with business car "Traveller" on October 22 to honor the memory of Kevin McGarvey, the railroad's Chief Mechanical Officer of many years. In fitting tribute, LAL 418 was named in his honor. The 418 joins an elite short list of named locomotives on the LAL, including the "Brackett Clark" (425) "Chester Haak" (420) "E.R. Allen" (72) and the "Commander Peter Barry" (20). Engine 418 is an ALCO RS-36 acquired from the Ontario Central, and is originally of Nickel Plate heritage. PHOTO BY CHRIS PLAYFORD

UPCOMING CHAPTER PROGRAMS

A list of upcoming programs has been provided by Harold Russell. If you are interested in giving a presentation at an upcoming chapter meeting, please contact Harold at haroldrussell@juno.com.

November 20, 2008 - An Overview of Passenger Rail Service in Germany and the United Kingdom by Sam Rosenberg.

December 18, 2008 - The American Orient Express by Bob Achilles.

January 15, 2009 - Western American Railroad Slides from Long Ago by Ron Stacey.

February 19, 2009 - Steam Freight Photo Charter by Irene Szabo.

March 19, 2009 - Rochester's Street Cars by Charlie Lowe. Bring your streetcar-related photos, artifacts and models to share with our members!

April 16, 2009 - The Dansville & Mount Morris Railroad by Douglas Morgan.

May 21, 2009 - Members' Slide Night and Chapter Elections - Everybody is Welcome!

LIFETIME MEMBERS AND RENEWALS

In October, our Lifetime chapter members received membership renewal notices from the NRHS that did not correctly reflect their lifetime membership status. This issue has been brought to the attention of the NRHS and should now be remedied. NRHS renewal notices were sent out to all members, please make sure you have filled it out and returned it promptly.

—Sam Rosenberg, Membership Chair

BY-LAWS VOTE AT NEXT MEETING

The insert in this month's *Semaphore* are the changes to our By-Laws that the membership will vote on at the November Membership Meeting.

—Dave Luca, Chapter President

JOIN ROCHESTER CHAPTER NRHS
Annual Dues: \$53.00
Rochester Chapter NRHS
P.O. Box 23326
Rochester, NY 14692-3326

PLAN AHEAD: Next Meeting:
December 18
7:00 PM at 40&8 Club



ROCHESTER & GENESEE VALLEY RAILROAD MUSEUM

VISIT OUR WEB SITE: WWW.RGVRRM.ORG

MUSEUM MANAGERS

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with assistance from
Jeremy Tuke and Rand Warner

MOTIVE POWER DEPT.

It's that time of the year again! The temperature is dropping and the snow is trying to fall from the sky. As the winter season approaches, the motive power department is hard at work getting our fleet of diesels ready for the cold weather. A crew of Dave Scheiderich, Norm Shaddick and Joe Nugent checked the coolant in our winter-operable locomotives. Batteries were also checked for proper water levels. In the coming weeks, the locomotives will be moved into their final locations for hibernation. Their batteries will be kept on charge throughout the winter.

Speaking of batteries, **Lehigh Valley 211** is ready to receive its new batteries. A team of Dave Scheiderich, Ron Amberger, Joel Shaw, and Joe Nugent worked together to clean out the rusty battery boxes. After hours of needle scaling, wire brushing, priming, and painting, the boxes are ready for service. Jim Johnson tackled the task of renewing the battery cables. Furthermore, Mike Dow donated enough plastic decking material to create blocking for the batteries. This material will be used to keep the batteries off of the steel floor of the box. Best of all, this material will not hold water!

Rochester Gas & Electric 1941 also received some attention this month. Mike Dow worked on sand blasting the radiator shutters. They are now ready for degreasing, primer and paint. Joe Nugent began removing the felt cowl seals on the radiator shutters. He also freed up the mechanism that adjusts the louvers of the shutters. They now move freely. Lastly, the 1941 restoration team is still in need of an experienced welder. Contact Joe Nugent if you'd like to lend a hand!



NYMT car 161 pauses at the compact new "Midway" station at the current end of wire at Scanlon's Curve. The new platform also involves a plank walkway to help our visitors safely cross from one side of the rails to the other. PHOTO BY MIKE ROQUE

U.S. Army 1843 received a well earned power washing by Luther Brefo. It was coated in oil after serving our museum all summer long. Luther is also working towards stabilizing some of the flaking paint on this locomotive.

That's all for now! The motive power crew is always looking for additional volunteers. Starting in November, we will meet at noon on the first Saturday of the each month. Feel free to join us!

—Joe Nugent,
Motive Power Superintendent

EMPIRE STATE EXPRESS CARS

Rehab work on the Empire State Express passenger cars continues with our team working Saturdays and Tuesdays, usually starting about 9:30 AM, both days. The regulars are Don Wawrzyniak, Bill Blaesi, Dale Hartnett, Lynn Heintz and Dave Peet. Dave Luca and Bob Achilles are attacking the steam heating pipes in Car 1. This will simplify repairing the interior wall panels and allow for installing electric baseboard heat in the car! During September and October, we completed 6

large and 7 small windows, and completed reinstalling the windows in Car 2. Five windows are left to rebuild in Car 1. We have the replacement polycarbonate glazing on hand for these. More help would be appreciated to start repairs to the interior walls where age and water leaks have damaged the wall panels. This work needs to be done before any interior painting. If you can help with this effort, please come on out to Industry on Saturday or Tuesday, or see Dave Luca for instructions! Money donations to buy polycarbonate sheet and wall panel material will be gratefully accepted and put to use immediately! Current scorecard: 78 windows rebuilt (62 this year) with 43 left to go.

—Dave Peet

DIESEL OPS CLOSE OUT SEASON

Although the trolley wire has been extended a great distance this year by the intrepid efforts of volunteers at the NYMT, the trolleys haven't quite made it to Industry just yet. But with the construction of a substantial temporary platform by NYMT's Charlie Lowe at the south end of the wire near MP 0.5 ("Midway"), trolleys



MUSEUM NEWS CONTINUED



can now transfer passengers to diesel trains easily here, and the platform's central location on the line makes for a virtually even distribution of ride time between modalities. This new capability affords expanded possibilities for our regular operations, including replacing some or all Sunday track car operations with full-size diesels-powered trains as soon as 2009. The added attraction of increased train operations could attract even more visitors to our joint museum operation next year.

To explore one possible operating scenario, R&GV train crews operated 1654 and the Erie and Penn Central cabooses between Industry and MP 0.8 (the Diesel Days transfer point), meeting the trolley at Midway every half hour on the museum's last two Sundays of our regular operating schedule. These operations were not advertised, so although there were new visitors who were treated to an unexpected train ride on their first visit, the museum's regulars were surprised and delighted by the special operations. All in all, we safely and efficiently carried 197 passengers on October 19 and 143 on October 26, two gorgeous fall days in Western New York.

TOP LEFT: Our Penn Central caboose at the new Transfer Point platform, built by volunteers from NYMT and NRHS. Conductor Mike Roque is protecting the movement. **TOP:** Trains meet the trolley at Scanlon's Curve! Car 161 prepares to change ends for the return to NYMT while RGV 1654 and the Erie Caboose get ready to bring visitors down to Industry Depot. **ABOVE:** This telephoto shot from Milepost .6 shows Car 161 negotiating the s-curves at the top of the hill. **PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER PLAYFORD**

With the possibility of additional train operations next year, the The Railroad Operations Department needs your help to staff train crews. Classroom training will be held again this winter, and hands-on training will resume in the spring. If you're interested in any part of railroad operations at the museum, contact Mike Dow or Mike Roqué at operationsdept@rgvrrm.org.

—Mike Roque, Railroad Operations Department

OPPOSITE PAGE: Two pages from January 1931 issue of *Railway Life*, the employee's magazine of the Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh. The article is told from the point of view of the headlamp of the first train to Rochester on the BR&P. That lamp was once part of the collection of the Rochester Chapter, and has since passed to a private collector. For the previous two pages, see last month's *Semaphore*.

joined the rails of the Union Pacific from the East with those of the Central Pacific from the West. (See *Railway Life*, May 1929). Mr. Brown, once owner of the *Rochester Morning Chronicle*, formed a partnership in 1871 with Henry Matthews

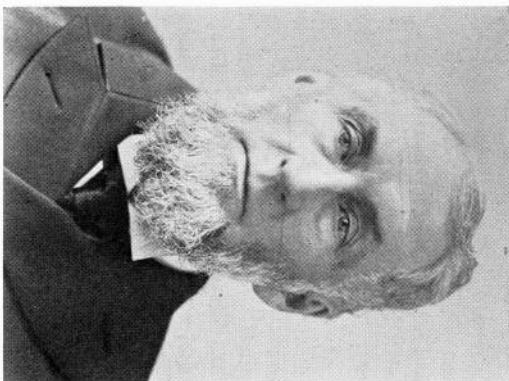


D. D. S. Brown.

and Colonel Pond, publishers of the *Rochester Democrat*, the consolidation resulting in the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, now a very influential member of the Gan-nett group of Western New York newspapers. Mr. Brown was also the father of our oldest commuter, Judge Selden S. Brown of Scottsville.

Donald McNaughton was our first General Ticket Agent and Attorney. His family, together with many others from Scotland, settled in Mumford, N. Y. Mr. McNaughton was very influential in building the State Line Railroad. The McNaughton family have always been with us and are today represented in our company by conductor W. H. McNaughton and his niece Edna McNaughton Michaels.

And now, after these personal reminiscences, let us turn to my first trips over



Donald McNaughton.

the new railroad. When in 1874 we had track laid from Lincoln Park to Le Roy, President M. F. Reynolds, on behalf of the board of directors, issued an invitation to the Mayor and Common Council of Rochester, as well as to influential citizens, to be our guests on an excursion of inspection from Rochester to Le Roy and return. A New York Central train brought the guests from Rochester to Lincoln Park where they transferred to our cars. My locomotive, the "Oliver Allen," all shining and bright, was to pull this first excursion. Andrew Robbins was at the throttle and I think Conductor Frank Arrowsmith was in charge of the train. Stops with ceremonies and speeches were made at every station. One particular incident was a prolonged ceremony at Mumford, where Oliver Allen had, a year previously, turned the first shovel-full of earth in constructing our new railroad. At Le Roy there was a big crowd waiting to greet us. Folks from all over the countryside drove to town to see the new railroad train.

Perhaps I should tell you of some of my first engineers. There was Amos and

Andrew Robbins—yep, "Amos 'n' Andy" way back in 1874! Andrew Robbins was later our master mechanic. Then there was Joe Green and Shorty "Shel" Hess. I wonder how many remember this little bow-legged engineer?

Our first conductors were Frank Arrowsmith, Ralph Meade and Dave Phillips. I can't seem to remember many of our first station agents, but there was C. M. Barnes at Saxton Street Station, Rochester. Mr. Barnes is now Commissioner of Street Railways for the State of New York located at Rochester, N. Y. Then, in 1877, George Hadley came to us as agent at Mumford and is now on our retired list. Pensioned conductor William Troan worked with the construction gang that built the first 26 miles of road to Le Roy.

Upon learning that I was going to tell a story of my early experiences, a little lady now living in Elmira, N. Y., wrote me a lovely letter and sent a picture of herself as a girl when her home was in Mumford. At that time her name was Ida B. Bostwick. Here are some particularly interesting excerpts from her letter:

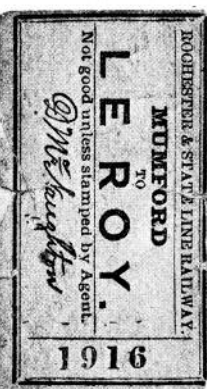


Ida Bostwick Hyde.

"The building of the old State Line recalls many memories of interest to us villagers, particularly as the two men, Oliver Allen and Dan McNaughton, who were connected with it, were 'our folks'."

"I am sending you an old ticket that I bought in 1878 but never used. I took many trips to Rochester when the trains only ran as far as Lincoln Park."

"There is another trip I want to tell you about. Mr. Allen furnished a train and invited the Sunday Schools of Mumford

This is the ticket Mrs. Hyde so kindly sent to *Railway Life*.

and Caledonia to go up over the road for a picnic. I need not tell you that the invitation was very generally accepted. It was a glorious September day and we marveled at the beautiful scenery as we passed through the Wyoming Valley at Warsaw. At Rock Glen we crossed a high wooden trestle. Arriving at Pike's Crossing, just south of Eagle, we unloaded and walked to a lovely grove on the banks of Eagle Lake. In the afternoon, the train returned and took us home. It was a day I will always remember. We had a happy day and had been guests of the new railroad."

And so, with my little story nearing its end, I want to tell you that through the courtesy of the Allen family I was presented on March 11, 1915 to the Rochester Historical Society and I hope that many of my old friends will come to Building No. 9 at Edgerton Park in Rochester and pay me a visit. We will "reminis" of the "good old days" when our new railroads and our young country grew up together, each dependent upon the other.

A brief history of NE Junction

By John Redden

In the first decade of the 20th century, the economic prospects for railroads were promising, and the Erie was looking to expand its capacity. A large portion of their mainline from Chicago to New York was single track, with sharp curves and steep grades, especially on the east end of the railroad.

Therefore, a number of major track improvements were undertaken by the Erie during the 1905-1910 time period. Among these were the additions of a second main track over much of the route and the construction of several low-grade freight-bypass lines across New York State: the Graham Line, located east of Port Jervis, the River Line, from Cuba Junction to River Junction, and the Columbus & Erie Railroad, that spanned the New York and Pennsylvania border at the far western end of the state.

The Columbus & Erie, or "C&E" ran approximately parallel to the original Erie route, provided a second main track that was 13 miles in length, and bypassed the steeper grades of the original mainline via Brady Lake. It joined the old mainline at the tiny hamlet of Niobe, New York, on its east end, and at Columbus, Pa. on its west end. The C&E was completed and opened to traffic on December 2, 1908.

A two-story interlocking tower was constructed at Niobe in 1909, using a Saxby & Farmer mechanical interlocking machine in a 36 lever frame. This machine was standard technology for that time, using mechanical interlocks built into the machine, and rod lines running to outlying switches and associated switch locks. It also had electrical apparatus for detecting track occupancy and for operating the signals that guarded the plant. The structure of NE Tower was reinforced concrete for the foundation and first floor walls, topped by a wooden second story, and roof. This arrangement was used to construct several Erie towers of that vintage. A companion tower of similar construction was built at the other end of the C&E, at Columbus, Pennsylvania. For several decades, these two towers guarded the portals to the Columbus & Erie.

The first major change to this arrangement came about in November of 1945,



The tower at NE Junction Tower (Niobe, NY) poses for its portrait, on April 29, 1984. Originally built for the Erie Railroad in 1909, this tower had been operated by Conrail for only eight years. The tower closed in 1988, and parts would be salvaged by Rochester Chapter. PHOTO BY RON STAFFORD

when a Union Switch & Signal CTC machine was installed in NE Tower. This was a "high-tech" addition, that consisted of a steel cabinet full of relays, switches, and indicator lights. It controlled the trackage between NE and CM, as well as the rebuilt and remotely-controlled interlocking plant at Columbus. This allowed for the retirement of CM tower in Columbus at that time. Through the following decades, changing operating practices allowed for the gradual removal of various tracks and signals at both NE and CM.

Ownership of the tower passed from the Erie Railroad to the Erie-Lackawanna in 1960. Although the motive power and rolling stock changed over the years, and passenger trains were gradually eliminated in the 60s, the freight traffic levels kept

the tower operators as busy as ever. However, after a tenuous fifteen-and-a-half year existence, the bankrupt Erie Lackawanna was merged into Consolidated Rail Corp. (Conrail) on April 1, 1976. Much of the western end of the former EL was immediately abandoned in Ohio and Indiana, and most of the remaining trackage in New York and Pennsylvania saw a significant reduction in traffic.

By the late 1980s, there was but a single scheduled through-freight passing NE on a daily basis, in each direction, along with the occasional extra coal train. What had been a 24-hour, seven-day operation, was now open and manned only "as-needed." Towards the end of operations, the office was opened just to set up the plant

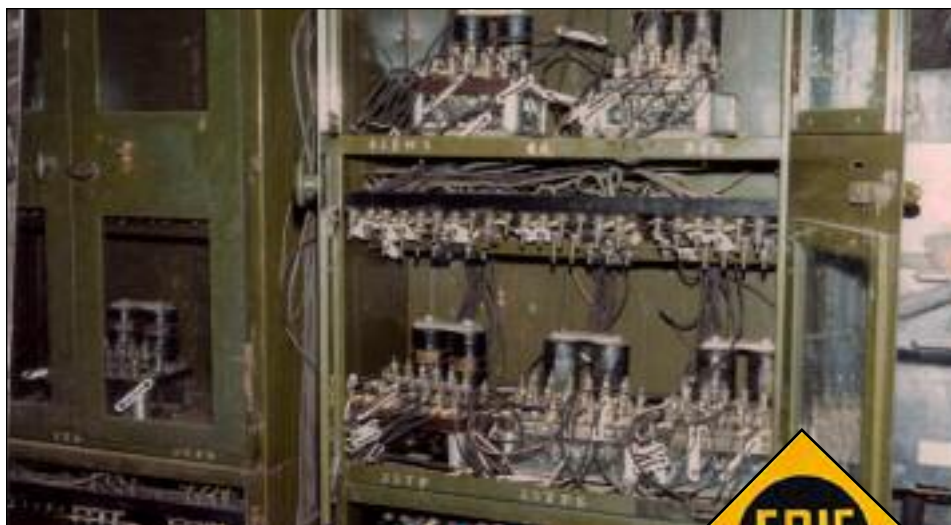
for each of the two trains per day. The interlocking plant that had started as a fairly complex junction of two mainlines, now consisted of a single switch and its related signals, at the end of a passing siding. The “writing was on the wall.”

On April 15, 1988, NE Tower was closed, and was immediately marked for demolition. The tower was given a brief reprieve, when legal action was brought against Conrail by New York State officials. The suit claimed that Conrail was in violation of a previous agreement, from the time that the railroad had accepted money from a New York transportation bond act. This suit was settled fairly quickly, but it gave the Rochester Chapter a small window of opportunity to inquire about the disposition of the tower. This inquiry led to our members obtaining official permission to disassemble and retrieve most of the remaining hardware from the tower in the Fall of 1988.

Next Month: Rochester Chapter Gets an Interlocking Machine...

Electro-mechanical technology at its finest: the electrical relay cabinets and Armstrong interlocking machine levers at the abandoned Niobe tower. Although disconnected, the mechanical and electrical hardware was largely intact when these pictures were taken in September 1988.

PHOTO BY JOHN REDDEN



Editor's Corner

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The cold weather is upon us, and the Rochester area experienced its first snowfall at the end of October... Winter is definitely here! But just because it's cold outside doesn't mean we go into hibernation. There's plenty of work to be done, even when the thermometer begins to dip way down low. Thanks in part to our Restoration Building, we're able to complete some of this work indoors and under cover.

The holidays are coming up, soon Thanksgiving will be here and Christmas won't be far behind. Watch for announcements of special holiday themed train operations this winter where we may be assisting our friends at NYMT.

Hopefully everyone had a chance to enjoy our museum operations this season. It certainly was a summer of many changes, from relocating our static display equipment to building track and working with our friends at NYMT on electrification extensions. Maybe you had a chance to volunteer as a trainman or a depot guide or some other way? If not, there's plenty of time to get on board for next season. Rules classes and hands-on training will be available again soon.

Finally, don't forget your favorite railroad museum when it comes time to make your charitable donations. Every little bit helps!

—Otto M. Vondrak
Editor, *The Semaphore*



PHOTO BY OTTO M. VONDRACK

I had the rare opportunity to ride the restored Hickory Creek observation car from the bumping block at Grand Central Terminal due to temporary Amtrak detours. Truly an exquisite restoration, the car rides like a dream. A surreal experience to ride along the Hudson River in this classic car in 2008! —omv

EDITORIAL SUBMISSIONS: Any materials related to the activities of the Rochester Chapter, the Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum, as well as the history of Rochester's railroads are welcome for publication in the *Semaphore*. All written materials should be submitted as Microsoft Word or plain text documents, and all photographs as high-resolution JPEG files. Materials and inquiries should be emailed to the Editor at ovondrak@yahoo.com or call (585) 820-2341.

Chapter Meeting:

November 20

7:00 PM at The 40&8 Club

933 University Ave., Rochester

Next Chapter Meeting:

December 18

7:00 PM at The 40&8 Club

933 University Ave., Rochester

Off the Train Wire

—Compiled by Rand Warner

RAILWAY EXPRESS TRUCK: Lynn Heintz has received more parts from the Internet and Craigslist for our 1939 REA truck. Most importantly, he has finally received the rebuilt radiator from the specialty shop in Batavia. Lynn and Rand Warner disassembled the front end sheet metal so the radiator could be properly installed.

WEST SIDING: Luther Brefo & Co. continue to extend our new siding southward from our new switch. We now have eight panels of track in place. Look for the B&O tool car to be moved there soon.

WA&G SNOW PLOW: Jesse Marks and his crew have painted almost the entire main wood body of the plow with a coat of bright red paint—you can't miss it! Restoration work has come a long way on this interesting piece of equipment.

PINE FALLS: Mike Roque and crew ran an impromptu special excursion with the PRR *Pine Falls*, pulled by our ex-US Army Fairbanks Morse engine on October 10. A number of volunteers and some lucky visitors got to enjoy the ride up to BOCES Crossing and back. Mike and Rand Warner removed the stub end drive shaft from the generator motor under the *Pine Falls*.

NEW DRAIN INSTALLED: In our effort to keep water flowing to the proper places, a new French drain between Tracks 6 and 7, has been installed south of the Restoration Building. Chad Timothy dug the trench, while Dan Waterstraat, used our loader and dump truck hauled the dirt away. Dave Luca back filled the trench with drainage pipe and stone. He was assisted by Dave Scheiderich, Rand Warner and Mike Roque.

FILL 'ER UP: Scott Gleason and Dan Waterstraat & Co. have continued to add many more cubic yards of fill along the west bank of our new plateau south of the Restoration Building. They have experienced a slight setback awaiting repairs to our Trojan loader.

DEPARTING TRACK 1: Track 1 has once again been connected to live rail to facilitate relocation of our B&O baggage car (tool car) and our 40' NYC flatcar. Our ex-Army Trackmobile is in position, and the movement should be complete by the time you read this. Track will be removed and repurposed for use elsewhere on our museum railroad.

THANKS TO: Chad Timothy for arranging the use of the borrowed Kubota. Also thanks to Dale Hartnett and Rand Warner for donation of tools, materials, and heavy equipment.

RITMRC TRAIN SHOW: Third Annual "Tiger Tracks" Train Show is Dec. 6-7 at RIT. Full details at www.ritmrc.org.

NYCSHS CONVENTION: The New York Central System Historical Society will hold its annual convention in Geneva, New York this April 16-19, 2009. For all details, please visit www.nycshs.org.

Visit the Chapter on-line:
www.rochnrhs.org