



In a scene that could have been played out on our ex-NYC Empire State Express coaches countless times, happy holiday travelers offer greetings from their comfortable coach seat. Our recently refurbished coach windows will certainly make our excursion passengers happy in the coming year!

## Happy Holidays and Best Wishes

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As we wrap up 2008 and look forward to 2009, we can congratulate ourselves on another successful museum season and much valuable progress in our museum operations. New equipment has come to life, track capacity has been expanded, frequency of operation increased, and more members trained as a result. New opportunities lie ahead as we prepare our ex-New York Central stainless steel coaches for excursion service once more. Perhaps by the time you read this, Santa will have left two new centercab switchers under our tree at Industry? [*Santa came early.*—Ed.]

While its apparent that times are getting tough and folks are watching their spending now more than ever, it's not unrealistic to predict an upswing in attendance at our

museums. As people look for activities with more value closer to home, it's no surprise that ridership is increasing at heritage railways and tourist museums around the country. With the added attraction of longer trolley runs at NYMT and potential increased diesel operations at Industry, we could find ourselves in a very good position for the 2009 season.

This holiday season, take a moment to enjoy the spirit and camaraderie of your fellow Rochester Chapter members at our annual Year-End Holiday Party (see page 2). Then, get ready for 2009, when we'll surely have even more goals to work towards and enjoy our role as one of the most active preservation groups in the state.

—Otto M. Vondrak, Editor



[www.rochnrhs.org](http://www.rochnrhs.org)

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# TRAIN BULLETIN

SHORT NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS REGARDING  
THE ROCHESTER CHAPTER NRHS



Several Chapter members who are also RIT Model Railroad Club alum put their skills to work to create an H0 scale diorama of O. Winston Link's "Hot Shot at Jaeger" for the George Eastman House exhibit "Trains." Milk cans and a mail bag borrowed from the baggage car complete the scene. Dave Scheiderich and John Sommer pose with the completed installation. Thanks also to Chapter members Chris Hauf, Joe Nugent, and Otto Vondrak. The exhibit at the Eastman House runs through January 29, 2009. PHOTO BY OTTO M. VONDRAK

#### UPCOMING CHAPTER PROGRAMS

We have many interesting and varied programs scheduled throughout the year as part of our monthly membership meetings. If you are interested in giving a presentation on any railroad subject at an upcoming chapter meeting, please contact Harold at [haroldrussell@juno.com](mailto:haroldrussell@juno.com).

**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! Please bring  
your edited slide show (in a carousel, no loose slides  
please) or digital show (on CD-ROM or flash drive)  
ready to present.

#### END OF THE YEAR PARTY!

It's that time of year again! Please join us for our  
annual End-of-Year Party, to be held on Saturday,  
January 17, 2009 at 2:00PM at the Rochester &  
Genesee Valley Railroad Museum. The museum is  
located at Industry Depot, right off Rush-Scottsville  
Road. Pizza will be served, and train rides will be  
offered. Enjoy the warmth of the station agent's  
wood stove and celebrate the holidays with your fel-  
low Chapter members! Please bring a dish or  
dessert to pass. Admission is \$5.

#### JOIN ROCHESTER CHAPTER NRHS

**Annual Dues: \$54.00**

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

#### PLAN AHEAD: Next Meeting:

**January 15**

**7:00 PM at 40&8 Club**



## ROCHESTER & GENESEE VALLEY RAILROAD MUSEUM

VISIT OUR WEB SITE: [WWW.RGVRRM.ORG](http://WWW.RGVRRM.ORG)

### MUSEUM MANAGERS

**Dave Luca**

(585) 288-0318 [daveluca@frontiernet.net](mailto:daveluca@frontiernet.net)

with assistance from  
**Jeremy Tuke and Rand Warner**

### MOTIVE POWER DEPT.

The new batteries for LV 211 were installed by a crew consisting of Jim Johnson, Dave Luca, Joe Nugent, Rand Warner and Ron Amberger on a windy cold Saturday afternoon. Later Jim Johnson applied his electrical skills to wiring the batteries.

November is the time of year for winterizing the locomotive fleet. Anti-freeze is checked for proper concentration, batteries are topped off and put on chargers to prevent freeze up and to enable critical engines to be started when needed.

Chris Hauf has been experimenting with whistles made from plastic pipe. These are intended for everyday use to prevent future thefts of air horns from locomotives.

Our two new GE centercab locomotives donated by Rochester Gas & Electric remain in safe storage on the Kodak Park Railroad until we finalize plans for safe movement and storage at our museum.

The Motive Power Department has a planning meeting on the first Saturday of each month at noon in the depot. Bring your own bag or see Jim Johnson to order a take-out lunch. Finally, belated thanks to Joe Nugent for accepting the position of Motive Power Superintendent.

—Ron Amberger

### OPERATIONS DEPT.

The Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum will be holding its annual operating rules and air brake/train handling classes on Sunday, February 8, 2009 and Saturday, March 7, 2009 in room A-400 of the RIT Wallace Library (Building 5). The Operating Rules class will be held from 9:00AM to 11:30AM, and the air brake/train handling class will be held from 12:00PM to 2:00PM. One additional class is planned for sometime in May.

The best option for parking is in U Lot, located on the south side of the campus near the Library. For your reference, detailed RIT campus maps are available at <http://facilities.rit.edu/campus/maps/>

All volunteers who plan to participate in train operations at the museum must pass the operating rules class. Engineers, Fireman, and Conductors must also pass the air brake/train handling class. Please bring a pen, paper, and your current rule-book or a three ring binder with rings no smaller than 1" to hold the rule books and bulletins that you will receive. If you have the current rule book, please bring your copy, but rule books will be available if you don't. Class sizes will be limited, so if you plan to attend, please RSVP to Mike Dow at [opsdept@rochester.rr.com](mailto:opsdept@rochester.rr.com) or (716) 474-2833 as soon as possible.

—Mike Roque

### TRACK DEPT.

Luther Brefo is spearheading the extension of our new siding on the west side of the LA&L, assisted by Dave Luca, Jeremy Tuke and sons, Rand Warner, Mike Roque, Steve Huse, Chris Hauf, and others. Work will continue weather permitting.

### DRAINAGE PROJECT

Dave Luca has spearheaded installation of two new French drain areas, reworked old ditches, and cleanout of catchbasins and culverts. Assisted by Chad Timothy, Scott Gleason, Dan Waterstraat and others. Proper drainage is important to maintaining the integrity of our museum facility.

### TROLLEY EXTENSION

Dave Shields recently arranged a meeting with National Grid representatives to come to Industry to review means for increasing clearance of the 69kV transmission line that spans our mainline near Switch 6. We are looking forward to resolution of this long-standing challenge to extending trolley operations. Following this meeting, a second meeting of NYMT and Rochester Chapter members took place where they walked the route south from the joint property line (at the newly christened "Midway" station). This was a productive

meeting, resulting in a joint understanding and agreement on the details of future overhead construction.

—Rand Warner

### HEAVY EQUIPMENT

Dan Waterstraat and Scott Gleason have enlarged our north ramp down to the new Northwest Quadrant area west of the LA&L, using our Trojan loader and Cat D-7 ex-Army bulldozer. Chad Timothy arranged donations and delivery of a dozen loads of fill by ten-wheel dump truck for the ramp project. Scott, Dan & Co. have also begun widening our driveway access road along the east side of the Restoration Building. Our fleet of earth movers and capable operators made it all possible!

—Rand Warner

### "TRAINS" AT EASTMAN HOUSE

Of particular interest to our members is the exhibit "Steam and Steel: The Photography of O. Winston Link" now at the George Eastman House through January 29. This exhibition includes many of the best-known photographs by master O. Winston Link, including his famous series of dramatic night photographs of America's last steam locomotives in the late 1950s. "Steam and Steel" is a collaborative effort between George Eastman House and the O. Winston Link Museum located in Roanoke, Virginia, which opened in 2004. Many members of the Rochester Chapter were instrumental in their support of this exhibition. For more information, contact the Eastman House at (585) 271-3361.

### HOLLY JOLLY TROLLEY RIDES

The New York Museum of Transportation will be offering "Holly Jolly Trolley Rides" weekends in December. Trolleys run Saturdays from 10:30-4:00 and on Sundays from 11:00-4:00. Electric service now extends a full mile to the new Midway station, located near Scanlon's Curve. Board at Remelt's Evergreen Acres (\$2.00 for trolley ride only), or from the boarding area at New York Museum of Transportation (\$5.00 includes museum admission). Tell your friends to come out!



# Shaughnessy's "The Call of Trains" is an instant classic

Review by Harold Russell

It was the display of O. Winston Link's memorable photographs at the George Eastman House that got me thinking about distinctive railroad photographers. You probably did not know that one of the best, Jim Shaughnessy, lives near us in Troy, New York, just outside of Albany. I have collaborated with him many times when presenting scale drawings of prototype structures. His photographs always helped carry the drawings admirably. In person, he is an amicable, unassuming fellow.

Jim's father James A. Shaughnessy and uncle Cornelius were major influences in developing in him an interest in trains and mechanical things. Many Sunday drives included visits to railroad facilities in the Albany-Troy area and east to Vermont. It was uncle Cornelius, a former valve-setter at the Delaware & Hudson's Colonie Shops who gave Jim an early education on mechanical aspects of the steam locomotive. These early experiences earned the D&H a place in his heart forever.

Jim's first photographs were taken in 1945-46 at the Troy Union Station that was a short distance from his home. He used a Kodak 35mm camera. Shortly after these first snapshots, Jim (with the assistance of his father) set up a darkroom in the basement. The rest is history.

Two persons influenced Jim's photographic style. Rev. Raymond Halpin, a teacher and yearbook organizer, introduced him to the work of Yosuf Karsh who was well known for the use of strong light and sharp contrast in his portrait photography. Sandy Worten, a famous Canadian photographer, first met Jim in 1948 and introduced him to the geography of Quebec's Eastern Townships region and shared with him the concept that photographs should communicate a "sense of place."

When Jim purchased his first car, his world changed. The period between 1953 and the early 1960's saw him travel through much of the U.S. and eastern Canada where he documented steam's final years. No longer limited to the northeast, Jim traveled to the Union Pacific, CB&Q, Norfolk & Western, Nickel Plate Road and the B&O to take his photographs. Other roads among his subjects are the NYO&W, Central Vermont, Boston & Maine, and the New York Central.



**BABY, IT'S COLD OUTSIDE!** Troy, New York, is in the grips of a snowstorm in March, 1955, but operations at Troy Union Station do not come to a halt. Crossing guard John Moriarity endures a heavy snowfall in the middle of Broadway, at the south end of the Union Station complex. The NYC Alco switcher is placing baggage cars to be unloaded at the express facility. Because of the frequent movements, guards rather than gates were used to protect the crossings. Troy Union Station was closed in 1958. PHOTO BY JIM SHAUGHNESSY, USED WITH PERMISSION

Professionally, Jim is a licensed engineer. He has taught in the area's colleges and also worked for Civil engineering firms. Jim is noted for his two previous books *The Rutland Road* and *Delaware & Hudson*. His latest book is *The Call of Trains*, edited by noted photographer Jeff Brouws. This is not just a book of exceptional photographs. It is also his life's story. The book unfolds into a rich remarkable insight into his life and the external influences that shaped his outlook on life and his life-long love of photography. The book is divided into five sections: the first is the staged image; the second is his night photography; the third can be called "participatory image/viewer involvement" or "you are there;" the fourth element, human interest and lastly the sense of place or the sense of time.

*The Call of Trains* contains 223 pages of pleasure consisting of 142 photographs, mostly one per page but sometimes stretching across two pages. All photo reproduction is excellent. I suggest you

add it to your library. Autographed copies are available. The cost is \$65 + \$5 shipping and handling + \$5.20 sales tax. You can send your order and autograph request to Jim Shaughnessy, 116 Moneta Overlook, Troy, NY 12182. The book is also available through popular on-line channels or your favorite bookseller. ■

*The preceding material has been abstracted and in places quoted with permission from The Rutland Railroad Historical Society's newsletter the Rutland Newsliner. Visit the society's website at [www.rememberingtherutland.com](http://www.rememberingtherutland.com).*



# The Chapter gets an interlocking machine

By Neil Bellenger and John Redden

In the summer of 1988, the Rochester Chapter became aware of a Conrail interlocking tower that had recently been retired, and was scheduled to be demolished. It was located at NE Junction, in Niobe, New York. "Where's Niobe?" was a common question around the museum at that time. Niobe is a small hamlet in Chautauqua County, in the extreme southwestern corner of the state. The tower building was located at Erie milepost S47, exactly 47 miles west of Salamanca. The interlocking equipment consisted of mechanical "Armstrong" levers and rods, as well as related electrical gear. We believed it to be one of a very few towers of this type, that was still in existence in New York State. We quickly organized a trip to save what we could, from the tower, prior to its planned demolition.

After making the appropriate contacts with Conrail officials, we were able to obtain permission to retrieve the interlocking machinery from the tower. Within a short time, we organized a remarkably well-equipped work party for the long road trip to Niobe. Our intrepid group was able to muster, among other tools and supplies, a cutting torch and tanks (courtesy of Neil Bellenger), a heavy duty flatbed truck (thanks to Charlie Harshbarger), and a pop-up travel trailer belonging to Rand and Marge Warner. We also had a set of scaffolding from the Chapter, some brand-new chain falls that were borrowed from a local industry, a gas-powered carbide chop saw from the NYMT, several pickup trucks, a portable electric generator, and a wide selection of hand tools and other equipment.

Our first trip was set up for the weekend of October 28-30, 1988. We arrived on that Friday to find a tower that was fully intact, but electrically and mechanically disconnected from the tracks and signals. The weather was a disappointment on both Friday and Saturday, with unseasonably cold temperatures along with precipitation. Sunday was the best day, greeting us with



**TOP:** Niobe Tower at the end of October 1988 was still largely intact and awaiting salvage by volunteers from Rochester Chapter NRHS. Careful coordination with Conrail officials and several Chapter members made the salvage operation possible. **ABOVE:** Vandals set fire to the tower on November 1, completely destroying the wooden structure. This made continued salvage operations difficult, but our volunteers pressed on despite our shock and disbelief. **PHOTOS BY JOHN REDDEN**



bright sunshine to wrap up our work.

Upon arrival, Neil Bellenger made a thorough inspection of the lights, receptacles and wiring in the tower. After determining that everything was completely disconnected from commercial power, he rigged a line from our gasoline powered generator and we were able to use the tower's own lighting system. This proved to be a significant benefit, as it allowed us to work well into the evening. Later, Neil was able to remove some of the relays and relay cabinets that were located on the first floor of the tower.

In order to make the best use of the rented flatbed truck, we planned to retrieve as many of the longer and heavier pieces, as possible, on that first weekend. Therefore, much of the effort was directed at cutting apart the actuating rods and their related hardware, that ran from the tower to the switches and locks. Neil made good use of his torch, separating the rod carriers and compensators from their concrete foundations, as well as the deflecting bars at the base of the tower.

Meanwhile, back inside the second floor of the tower, a large gang started the disassembly of the levers and locking bars. We erected the Chapter's scaffolding and made use of some borrowed chain falls, in order to lower some of the heavier pieces from the second floor down onto ground level. During that first weekend, we got most of the levers, and all of the locking bars removed, as well as all of the rods and associated hardware. We left many of the lever-frame castings, as well as the relays and cabinets for a later trip.

That weekend, several of us stayed at the venerable Corryan Hotel in Corry, Pennsylvania. This also added to our adventure, as the Hotel was an antique in its own right, with steam-heated rooms and a beautiful lobby and dining room decorated with varnished hardwoods throughout.

As we departed Niobe on Sunday October 30, we had reason to be proud. All of the heavy rods, compensators, deflecting bars, and related hardware, had been removed to our flatbed. In addition, most of the levers, and all of the interlocking bars from inside the tower were removed and safely on their way to Industry. We had achieved many of our goals on our first, of several planned trips to the tower.

However, disaster was about to strike. On November 1, the project took a most unexpected turn. That morning, we



**"X" MARKS THE SPOT.** Neil Bellenger and Jeff Bochman work at NE Tower in late October 1988. The prominent yellow "X" indicates that Conrail has marked the tower for demolition. The Rochester Chapter has arrived just in time. PHOTO BY JOHN REDDEN

received a phone call from Conrail with very bad news. It seems that someone had set fire to "our" tower on Halloween night, and the building was now a total loss. We didn't fully grasp the severity of the damage until we went back to Niobe in November. The entire second story was gone! Virtually all combustible material from the tower was now in ashes. The structural support for the interlocking machine had originally been a very substantial wooden beam arrangement. It was now, simply gone. The remaining electrical relays and cabinetry were now damaged beyond salvage. At first, this seemed like an irrecoverable disaster.

However, as we assessed the situation, we found that much of the equipment that we had originally sought for the Chapter was still there, although it was in less-than-pristine condition. The foundation castings and remaining levers were all made of iron or steel, and had survived the fire, albeit in scorched (and possibly slightly warped) form. This, and following road trips consisted of a recovery-from-the-ashes operation.

We found that the iron framework for the levers was no longer properly supported from ground level, due to the fire. All that was supporting the hundreds of pounds of iron on the second floor was an inch or two of the ends of the castings that had come to rest on the concrete floor after their wooden support collapsed in the fire. After surveying this precarious situation, we managed to build a framework out of

4x4 wooden beams and rope, in order to properly support the frame. We then removed the remaining levers, and very carefully disassembled the lever frames and related interlocking frames, and lowered them piece-by-piece to ground level. This made for some heavy loads for our pickups and utility trailer, but we did manage to retrieve all of the remaining hardware in two post-fire trips to Niobe.

After we had come to grips with the depth of the fire damage, we had reason to feel a certain level of despair for the missed opportunities of the equipment that had been lost in the fire. However, the Niobe tower story had one more twist for us, that ultimately led to happy ending. Unknown to the Rochester Chapter, another group had also received permission from another Conrail official, to retrieve equipment from the tower, several weeks prior to our trip. **Rich Brodecki** and **Ron Stafford** had access to a boom truck, and retrieved the Union Switch & Signal CTC machine. They had plans to donate it to another nearby museum. However, upon hearing of the Rochester Chapter's work in removing the Saxby & Farmer mechanical interlocking machine, they very generously came forward and donated the CTC machine to our Museum! This affords us a (nearly) complete set of control equipment from the tower, as it existed after 1945. Many thanks to Rich and Ron for this donation.

We have a fairly long list of people who helped out on this project. We have some

# Pittsford Pickle Car Follow-Up



By Harold Russell

I was able to locate the great grandson of L.C. Forman, tracking him down with the help of the Pittsford town assessor. I met with him, and he filled me in on the operations. The car shown in the October 2008 issue of *The Semaphore* (LCFX 2) was the second such car constructed for L.C. Forman & Sons. It replaced the first car, which was LCFX 1, shown above. The billboard affixed to the car reads "PICKLES-VINEGAR" on one end and "MUSTARD-SAUERKRAUT" on the other.

"L.C. FORMAN & SONS, Inc. - PITTSFORD, N.Y." The cars did indeed carry pickles! These cars were used to bulk ship them in a brine solution to private label packaging companies in the mid west. At the Forman plant in Pittsford, the pickles were transported from the factory in wheel barrows to the roof hatches of the car. The left side of the photo shows what appears to be an elevated platform to assist in the loading. Once arriving at the destination packing company, the pickles were removed by using long handled nets. An interesting operation, to say the least!

## The Chapter gets an interlocking machine—continued

notes from 1988 on which to base this article, as well as some help from a few of the individuals who were involved. However, it's rather likely that we've missed a few folks who helped on the project. Please let us know if you were left out, and we will properly recognize you in a future issue of *The Semaphore*. We offer our belated thanks to the following people who were involved with retrieving the interlocking machinery at Niobe: **Tom Bauman, Neil Bellenger, Keith Blackall, Jeff Bochman, Rich Brodecki, Bob Cowan, Brian Fitzgerald, Charlie Harshbarger, Steve Huse, Bob Redden, the late Gene Redden, John Redden, Ron Stafford, Ted Strang, Pete Swanson, Rand and Marge Warner.**

Finally, "Thank you" to Rand Warner, Bob Redden, Steve Huse, and Ron Stafford for their help in preparing this article, with their recollections. ■



**SURGICAL SALVAGE AT NE TOWER:** Neil Bellenger uses his torch to remove the horizontal deflecting bars from the front of the tower. Rochester Chapter had a force of about a dozen people working on the disassembly of the tower on this day in 1988. PHOTO BY JOHN REDDEN

**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](mailto:ovondrak@yahoo.com) or call (585) 820-2341.

Chapter Meeting:  
**December 18**

7:00 PM at The 40&8 Club  
933 University Ave., Rochester

Next Chapter Meeting:  
**January 15**

7:00 PM at The 40&8 Club  
933 University Ave., Rochester

**UPDATE: January Trustee's Meeting**  
postponed to January 9. Happy New Year!

# Off the Train Wire

—Compiled by Rand Warner

**EXCURSION COACHES:** Work continues on our ex-NYC coaches. Bob Miner and Jim Johnson are reworking batteries and battery cables. Dale Hartnett is removing the Metro-North blue paint from around the windows- what a difference! Dave Peet, Bill Blaesi, Don Wawrzyniak, Lynn Heintz and Bob Achilles are all working on window replacement. Dave Luca & Co. are working on rehab of interior paneling.

**NYC CABOOSE:** Charlie Marks has our wooden caboose closed in, re-roofed, and applied a fresh coat of paint to the cupola. Work will continue, weather permitting.

**LV 211:** Jim Johnson is reworking battery cables and connections. New batteries have been installed by Dave Luca, Rand Warner, Jim Johnson, Ron Amberger, Joe Nugent and others. LV 211 will no be

ready to come to life without a jump start whenever we need to this coming spring!

**MOTOR VEHICLES:** Chad Timothy and Rand Warner have changed spark plugs in the Ford Ranger pick-up and it is now running again in support of the Track Dept. crew. Chad and Rand, assisted by Jeremy and Matt Tuke, are also working on the International 4x4 1-ton dump truck with snow plow. It's running, but the carb needs work so that it doesn't overflow.

**INTERLOCKING MACHINE:** Mike Dow continues work on restoring the Saxby & Farmer interlocking machine salvaged from Niobe Tower by Rochester Chapter in 1988 (see page 5). Assisted by Dave Scheiderich and Joe Nugent, the lever machine has been assembled in our ex-PRR Railway Post Office car. The RPO may be moved down to Track 5 and opened as a new display car in 2009.

**ELECTRICAL:** Jim Johnson has installed new outside lighting at the south end of the Restoration Building. This will be a marked improvement when working through the short winter days!

**BURRO CRANE:** A large crew is attacking the remaining work to get our Burro Crane into active service. Norm Shaddick is lubing all fittings, joints and bearings. Bob Mader and Rand Warner are working on controls. John Redden has completed work on the pass-through air line. Jim Johnson, Lynn Heintz and others are assisting. The unit has been started up and the diesel runs well. Transmission gears will be greased and the gear cover replaced. Then forward and reverse motion will be tested, leading up to stringing cables and movement outside to re-install the boom.

**NEW ARRIVALS:** Two centercab diesels donated by Rochester Gas & Electric were delivered to Industry on December 4. Stored temporarily at Kodak Park, the units were moved via Rochester & Southern to the Livonia, Avon & Lakeville at Genesee Junction. The two units were spotted on our new West Siding. More details to follow in the January issue of *The Semaphore*.

Visit the Chapter on-line:  
**[www.rochnrhs.org](http://www.rochnrhs.org)**