



A burbling Erie Baldwin is ready to haul Stillwell commuter coaches on a Rochester Chapter fan trip over the Rochester and Buffalo Divisions in June 1956. The "Wings of Prosperity" atop the Times Square Building can be seen at extreme left, and the Troup-Howell Bridge carries the Inner Loop across the scene. See page 5 for an account of the Erie's conversion from broad to standard gauge. PHOTO BY HAROLD CAULKINS, ROCHESTER CHAPTER NRHS ARCHIVE

A Job Well Done

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The weather's getting a little colder, it's probably past dark when you're heading home from work, and the leaves are almost off the trees. As we get ready for winter, we can record another successful museum season in the books.

Due to increased visitor counts thanks to regular trolley operation, the Operating Department decided to add additional diesel-powered trains to the schedule. This in turn created more opportunities for our volunteer train crews, and opened the door for more brakeman, conductor, and engineer trainees to come aboard. Thanks to our the continued efforts of our training program, we operated throughout the season without incident.

Back at our Restoration Building, volunteers were busy getting our excursion coaches ready for the mainline once more.

Windows were rebuilt and replaced with new glass, damaged seats were reupholstered and recovered, and new electric baseboard heating will be introduced. A group effort, the results will pay off tenfold when we resume our popular excursions.

Let's not forget the countless other volunteers who made phone calls, arranged meetings with government officials, found new homes for old equipment, and worked behind the scenes throughout the year.

While we may think about hibernating for the winter, work will continue at the museum through the snowy months as we prepare for next year. Come on out and lend a hand! You can always warm up by the stove in the agent's office! Thank you for your continued support as we build up to meet our museum's goals.

—Otto M. Vondrak, Editor



www.rochnrhs.org

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The official publication of
the Rochester Chapter,
National Railway Historical Society

Volume 52, No. 2

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©2009 Rochester Chapter, NRHS. The Semaphore is published monthly by the Rochester (New York) Chapter, National Railway Historical Society. It is mailed free to all Chapter members. Non-member subscriptions are \$12.00 and run from January 1 to December 31. Chapter meetings are held the third Thursday of each month, and the Board of Directors meets the first Thursday of each month. Any items related to the activities of the Rochester Chapter the Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum, and regional railroad history are gladly accepted.

TRAIN BULLETIN

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM ROCHESTER CHAPTER NRHS



AND THE FAIRMONT CUP GOES TO... HAROLD RUSSELL! Our annual recognition for an outstanding volunteer was awarded at our October membership meeting. John Stewart (left) presents the 2009 Fairmont Cup award to Harold Russell (right), who seems puzzled over the whole matter. No confusion here, Harold, you deserve it! Congratulations and thanks for your hard work! **PHOTOS BY DAVID SCHEIDERICH**

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 Russell at haroldrussell@juno.com.

November 19, 2009: "Modern Day Trains in the United Kingdom" by Sam Rosenberg and Don Shilling.

December 17, 2009: "The Silver Lake Railroad" by Dan Miller.

January 21, 2010: "Movies from the 1950s" by Ted Jackson.

CHAPTER LIBRARY REPORT

Starting Sept 17, the library will be back with normal operating hours which are opening at 6:30 pm on chapter meeting nights and again during intermission. The Chapter Library is now located at the 40 & 8 Club on University Avenue in Rochester.

Contact Bob Fleck, Library Chairman at: Rcfleck@rochester.rr.com.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

We voted in a new member at the October Chapter meeting. Meet **Matthew Luca** of Duluth, Georgia. His special talents include landscaping.

—Sam Rosenberg, *Membership Chair*

CHAPTER SPONSORED AMTRAK TOURS

Join our Chapter tour guides Jim and Dianne East for another exciting year of chartered rail tours. Don't wait, make your reservation now! For price details and detailed information, please contact Jim East at (585) 377-5389 or by email at raileast@aol.com.

Pre-Christmas Escorted New York City Trips
Friday, Dec. 11-Monday, Dec. 14

PLEASE NOTE: Only the December 3-5 trip has been cancelled. Take Amtrak to New York City, enjoy shopping and dining before you take your orchestra-level seats for the Christmas Show at Radio City Music Hall.

JOIN ROCHESTER CHAPTER NRHS
Annual Dues: \$57.00
Rochester Chapter NRHS
P.O. Box 23326
Rochester, NY 14692-3326

PLAN AHEAD: Next Meeting:
December 17
7:00 PM at 40 & 8 Club



ROCHESTER & GENESEE VALLEY RAILROAD MUSEUM

VISIT OUR WEB SITE: WWW.RGVRRM.ORG

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MOTIVE POWER DEPT.

RG&E 8: Work continues to remove years of built-up grease, grime and coal dust. Special attention is being paid to the trucks. Clean trucks will allow for clean installation of the new traction motor brushes. Work also continues on the bat-

tery box. Chris Hauf is in the process of painting components that must be reinstalled before the new batteries can be set in place. The batteries will be installed once the box is cleaned and painted. Jim Johnson has been working on getting the battery cables ready as well.

RG&E 1941: Joe Nugent is in the process of fabricating parts for the exhaust bowls. Once complete, the bowls can be welded into place. Chris Hauf is also in the process of painting the exhaust stacks. They will be painted with a high temperature silver paint in order to match their original appearance.

LV 211: The new air filters have arrived and have been installed. The outdoor temperature has been too cold to start this locomotive, so it was decided to winterize it for the season. A protective tarp was applied over the radiator section.

EK 9: Chris Hauf has been chipping away at various projects to improve the overall

condition of this locomotive. He is currently working on repairing the cab roof vent. Jim Johnson has also been working on this locomotive's main generator.

USA 1843: A protective tarp was applied over the radiator section to shield the locomotive from winter weather.

Don't forget that we hold our motive power meetings on the first Saturday of every month, 12:00 noon at Industry Depot. Many hands make light work. We hope to see you there!

— Joe Nugent, Motive Power Supt.

REMINDER

Keep the depot doors closed during the winter months to cut down on drafts and make our heating more effective for those working inside.

Gale E. Smith (1933-2009)

It is with great sadness that we report longtime Rochester Chapter member Gale Smith passed away on October 7. A retired chemist with Eastman Kodak in Rochester, Gale was an Ohio native who attended Bowling Green State University and after a stint in the Army he completed advanced studies at Michigan State University. Upon graduation he accepted a position with Kodak and made Rochester his home.

It was his interest in the preservation of history that brought Gale to our group. He was a fixture at both ends of our railroad for many years, volunteering countless hours at the New York Museum of Transportation and our own Rochester Chapter NRHS. The restoration of the Pine Falls was one of Gale's projects, where he helped install new lighting fixtures in the lounge. He also

helped with our events and excursions. Our dedicated editor of The Semaphore for more than thirteen years, Gale took a well-deserved retirement in 2008. His contributions to NYMT included detailed cataloging of blueprints and papers salvaged from the old Rochester Central Station. He also enjoyed volunteering his time with NYMT's extensive model railroad.

Not one to sit idle, Gale was involved with many groups including Rochester Hookbill, Rochester Genealogy Society, Rochester Theater Organ Society, and the Genesee & Ontario Model Engineers. A member of Rochester Chapter since 1990, Gale always had a warm smile for everyone he met, and his presence will be sorely missed. However, his many contributions will not be soon forgotten. — O.M.V.



JOHN REDDEN



CHRIS HAUF



MUSEUM NEWS CONTINUED

SAFETY FIRST

- Lifting something overhead?
Do you have your hard hat on?
- Using a power tool? Do you
have your safety glasses on?

JOINT NYMT-NRHS PICNIC OCTOBER 17

Members of NYMT and Rochester Chapter NRHS gathered for a joint catered picnic on October 17. Colby's Pig Roast provided the feast. Rainy weather kept everyone inside, which gave everyone a chance to enjoy the great atmosphere at NYMT. The former "Spaghetti Warehouse" Northern Texas Traction Company trolley car body served as a "first class" dining area, as did the the comfy confines of the Gallery. After dining on some delicious barbecue, attendees boarded the NYMT's former Philadelphia & Western trolley for a ride down to Midway. Diesels were waiting at Midway to bring folks down to Industry. Everyone had a very enjoyable time, and we look forward to next year's party! PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER PLAYFORD



OCTOBER CHAPTER MEETING: Noted trolley historian and longtime Rochester Chapter member Charles Robinson gave an interesting and informative presentation on the Worcester-Springfield (Mass.) trolley line at our October membership meeting. For a complete list of upcoming presentations, please visit our Chapter website at www.rochnrhs.org/events. PHOTO BY DAVID SCHEIDERICH



Erie's Rochester Division Originally Six-Foot Gauge

BY RICHARD PALMER

The New York, Lake Erie & Western was one of the last major railroads in the east to be converted from six foot to the standard four feet, eight and one half inches of today. What became the Rochester Division was originally a combination of the Rochester & Genesee Valley and the Buffalo, Corning & New York, which had been built to six foot gauge to conform with the Erie in the 1850s. As the decades past it became evident that it was necessary to conform to the standard system. But it wasn't until the 1880s that the Erie was financially capable of such a mammoth project. In the interim, many miles of third rail were laid as a temporary measure. This was the case of the Rochester Division. Fortunately, detailed accounts of this conversion from wide to standard gauge are preserved in the local newspapers. Following is an article that appeared the *Rochester Union and Advertiser* on Saturday, July 30, 1881.

Last of the Broad Gauge The New York, Lake Erie & Western Railroad Conforms to the Standard

The broad gauge of the New York, Lake Erie & Western Railroad is no more. In the bright light of this beautiful summer morning with each moving rail a change was wrought and in a few short hours the diligent hands of experienced workmen had transformed the Erie road from a broad gauge route to one of standard gauge. It was a matter of expediency, nothing more. A few years ago this fact was fully appreciated by the directors and managers of the road, and a third rail — allowing means of passage for both broad and standard cars — was placed on the main line. To-day an important step has been taken by the company. The road between this city and Corning has been narrowed from a width of six feet between the rails, to one of 4 feet, 8 1/2 inches, the standard gauge.

How It Was Done

As the Erie was the last railroad to submit to the "battle of the gauges," some little interest may be excited as to the manner in which the change was made. For several months past extensive preparations leading to a rapid narrowing of the road have been going on. All along the line between Corning and Rochester, a distance of 94 miles, the measurements for the new gauge have been made. In fact the line had already once been laid before work was commenced this morning. The east rail was the one to be moved, and just 15 1/2 inches from the inside of this rail spikes had been set, throughout the entire distance, at intervals of time throughout the past two months. Mr.



A 1908 postcard view of the junction and yard at Avon, New York. View is looking north, with the electrified branch to Mount Morris at left. COLLECTION OF THE AUTHOR

Canfield of Buffalo, Road-master, and Thomas Conners, Supervisor of Tracks, had thoughtfully and carefully made preliminary arrangements and G. E. Butterfield, stationmaster in this city, had changed the switches in and about the yard, thus completing the preparations for successful and speedy changing of the gauge. Last night the rolling stock of the road was all transferred to Corning.

The Last Train

Running on the broad gauge, drawn by engine number 11, B. Rogers, engineer, and A.S. Alexander, conductor, arrived in this city at thirty minutes past eleven and almost immediately returned to Corning. Between two and four o'clock this morning about 500 experienced workmen, employees of the Rochester, Buffalo, Susquehanna and Western Divisions, were distributed in gangs of six or eight each at equal intervals along the line of the road between this city and Corning. Strict orders were given to begin the work promptly at four o'clock and at that hour, all being in readiness, almost simultaneously each separate force of workmen began their allotted task. It was an interesting sight to one walking along the line of the railroad to see these men busy as beavers tearing up and rapidly replacing the rails. In each division the work was so arranged that it was carried on in the most systematic manner possible.

Perfect System

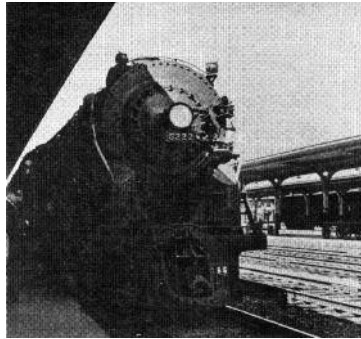
First came the men who skillfully and quickly withdrew the spikes, then followed swiftly those who moved the rail from its old position to the one destined for it alongside of the spikes already set, and last of all in quick succession came those who drive the spikes

about the rail in its new place. The work progressed far more rapidly than one would readily believe, the rate of taking up and relaying the rails being about one mile in four hours as performed by each gang. By eight o'clock the whole distance of ninety-four miles had been transformed from a broad gauge to the standard measurement and the last victory of the standard width: 4 feet 8 1/2 inches, in the battle of the gauges in this country has been won. The first arrival this morning over the newly laid track was the "wild cat" train from Avon, drawn by engine 60, Frank Marsh engineer, and A.S. Alexander conductor. This train left Avon at 8:15 and reached this city at 11:45, being detained about an hour and a half at the Henrietta section; the only place along the route where the men laying the track had not done all that was expected of them. At a quarter before twelve o'clock the train from Corning, drawn by engine 35, in charge of Augustus Johnson engineer, and G.H. Brown conductor, reached its destination, thus proving the complete transformation of the road.

Although this train was an hour and forty minutes late running time had been made, the delay being occasioned by waiting at various stations for orders, the passengers on this train report a gala day all along the line. At each station crowds were assembled to welcome the train and great enthusiasm prevailed. Hats were thrown in the air, handkerchiefs were waved and cheers burst from the lips of many. The change is completed and general satisfaction prevails and great credit is due to both managers and men for the highly creditable manner in which this work has been accomplished. ■

THE SEMAPHORE

National Railway Historical Society



FROM THE ARCHIVES

NOVEMBER 1973
Vol. XV, No. 3

Compiled By:
OTTO M. VONDRAK

Thirty-six years ago this month, the Rochester Chapter NRHS met at the Rochester Museum and Science Center. The program was a joint presentation by Pete Gores, Gerry Hott, Devan Lawton, and Hank Pape consisting of slides and movies of various railfan adventures involving speeders (of the Fairmont variety).

The Batavia Holiday Inn was host to our Interchapter Banquet, held in cooperation with the Buffalo Chapter. The guest of honor was none other than Carl B. Sterzing, Jr., President and Chief Executive Officer of the Delaware & Hudson Railway. More than 150 people were in attendance, each getting a copy of a record album of D&H steam in action, plus copies of the special timetable prepared for the Albany-Montreal trip, as well as a snazzy D&H ballpoint pen. Anyone still have theirs?

In other news, Amtrak placed an order totalling \$64 million for new passenger cars with Budd, with delivery to begin in 1975. With the energy crisis looming, in addition, a \$24 million order was placed with General Electric for 11 6,000hp electric locomotives (what would become the E-60's). EMD got a piece of the action too, with a contract to build 70 SDP40F diesels. Both units were plagued by derailments and were largely withdrawn from service by the 1980s (the E-60s would later be rebuilt and placed on restricted service on certain heavy long-distance trains).

Gerry Hott continues his narration from last month, describing an adventure by speeder into the Adirondack north country over the recently abandoned Penn Central line to Lake Placid. The story picks up at Tupper Lake. The trip was not unimpeded, as the adventurers had to clear "paved over" crossings, large trees, and other obstacles. When

the obstacles were cleared, the operator of the Fairmont cracked the throttle wide open, making it back to Beaver River well before dinner time. Checking an old timetable, the passengers discovered that they had made the trip from Tupper Lake back to Beaver River in about the same time as called for in the schedule!

The annual stockholders meeting of the Livonia, Avon & Lakeville Railroad was held on November 5. Freight business was up 28% while passenger business fell 6%. While the LA&L was in the black, it was only paying interest on its debt to the Erie Lackawanna owed for the right-of-way. A large amount of money had been spent on track maintenance and on steam locomotive #38. The steamer was due for a mandated hydrostatic test if it were to continue hauling passengers for the 1974 season. LA&L Treasurer Chester Haak had complimentary words for Rochester Chapter's operation of the gift shop inside Livonia Depot. Henry Pape, Rochester Chapter's National Director was elected to the railroad's board of directors at the close of the annual meeting.

Work continued on Oatka (Industry) Depot, with an October 21 work party completing another eight feet of rebuilt roof overhang. Completing the roof before winter and shoring up the new main beam in the basement were priorities. The next project was to complete installation of a furnace to make the depot a more inviting gathering place for winter work parties.

**** Thanks to Jim McClennin for sending in old copies of The Semaphore so that we may share them with you in the coming months. ****

Visit us online: www.rochnrhs.org

A Fun-Filled Chapter Sponsored Trip to New Hampshire

You've seen them advertised for years, but did you ever wonder who attends our Chapter-sponsored Trips with Jim East? The answer involves many of your friends and fellow Rochester Chapter members! Another successful fall tour of New England concluded on October 18. Their bus tour of New Hampshire included rides on the Mount Washington Cog Railway, the Conway Scenic Railroad in North Conway, and the Hobo Railroad at Lake Winnepesaukee. Some folks elected to take a short side trip to see restoration progress on the "Flying Yankee Budd" streamliner. A motorcoach took them from New Hampshire to Albany-Rensselaer where they boarded Amtrak Empire Service Train 283, which Dave Scheiderich happened to be riding home to Rochester. Bob Achilles and his wife were among the happy travellers (top right photo), along with Don Shilling, Don Wawrzyniak (bottom right) and many others. Another successful Chapter-sponsored trip put together by our own Jim East! Proceeds from the trip help benefit the Chapter treasury, so if you've never been on one of his trips before, consider booking next season. ■



Editor's Corner

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Last month, Dave Scheiderich travelled "downstate" to visit and do a little railfanning. We ended up on the Naugatuck Railroad, where I also volunteer occasionally. It was a rainy Sunday, so we decided we would take a ride on the regular 2:00 train.

A gentleman visiting from Louisiana with his family was very interested in the mechanical details of the diesels and how trains worked. The conductor did not have all the answers, so Dave and I stepped up and helped answer his questions ("Can't I ride a tourist train just once without being a car host?" I jokingly asked myself). It was fun talking to someone who was so interested in how the railroad worked. He asked if he could tour

Thomaston Shop and Yard, which is normally closed to the public. Since we had the time, we agreed to escort his wife and son through the facility. They were enthusiastic and asked a lot of questions, and we were glad to show them around.

When it was time to go, he pressed two crisp hundred dollar bills into my hand as a donation to the railroad. He wasn't doing it to show off (who was he showing off to? Dave and I were the only ones there). He was genuinely thankful and supportive of our volunteer efforts... All because we gave him some of our time and helped answer his questions.

—Otto M. Vondrak,
Editor, *The Semaphore*



Norfolk Southern ran their classy business train over the Delaware & Hudson and Pan Am Railways the week of October 8, seen here near Cooperstown Jct., N.Y.

PHOTO BY OTTO M. VONDRACK

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.

THE SEMAPHORE

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Chapter Meeting: **November 19**

7:30 PM at The 40&8 Club
933 University Ave., Rochester

Next Chapter Meeting: **December 17**

7:30 PM at The 40&8 Club
933 University Ave., Rochester

Off the Train Wire

—Compiled by Rand Warner

WEST SIDING CONSTRUCTION: Dale Hartnett, assisted by Jeremy Tuke, Rand Warner and others, has provided offset and grade stakes for the next 300 feet of siding construction. Scott Gleason, Chad Timothy, and Dan Waterstraat have excavated and graded the land in preparation for new track construction using out Cat D-7 and D-8 dozers, a borrowed John Deere bulldozer, and Huber-Warco grader, Trojan loader, and Bucyrus-Erie crawler backhoe. Soon we will be ready for stone, ties, and rail.

PLYMOUTH LIVES: After hiatus of about a year, it was great to see Joe Nugent and Chad Timothy get the Plymouth BL fired up and running around on the tracks north of the Restoration Building. The BL was the subject of a multi-year restoration by our dedicated volunteers.

TRACK DEPT.: Dave Luca and Rand Warner installed three gauge rods at Switch 6 to reinforce the area between the points and frog until we acquire replacement switch timbers.

HEAVY EQUIPMENT: Machines large and small got some much-needed attention this month. Dan Waterstraat helped reactivate our Cat D-7 to assist in the grading project. Chad Timothy fixed our Case 4x4 tractor

backhoe. Jeremy Tuke replaced the starter on the Army 4x4 pickup truck.

ELECTRICAL DEPT.: Jim Johnson & Co. are working on excursion trainset electric base-board heat wiring. Jim Johnson and Dick Holbert installed a permanent, dedicated heater in the NYMT substation. Jim is also working on plans for electric service and wiring for our new water treatment system.

• **VISIT WWW.ROCHNRHS.ORG** •



READY FOR TRACK: As seen from the area above Switch 6, land has been cleared and graded to allow for further construction to take place on our West Siding extension. The Livonia, Avon & Lakeville mainline is just out of view. PHOTO BY DAVID SCHEIDERICH