

NEXT MEETING:
May 18
 Enjoy rides on
 your museum railroad!



R&GV 54 leads three cabooses into Industry Yard. You'll notice the consist of the train has been reversed from its normal orientation, with the locomotive on the south end and the Penn Central caboose on the north end. The Operations Dept. is considering this arrangement for 2017 ops. OTTO VONDRAK PHOTO

Spring Showers

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Our 2017 operating season has already begun, with the introduction of our very successful Easter Bunny Train Rides on April 15. This month we will host our first ever “Rails and Ales” event on **May 20**, where we will be partnering with local craft breweries for a unique beer tasting event geared towards adults. Rochester Subway Heritage weekend will be **June 17-18**, featuring the display of a restored 1956 GM transit but provided by Regional Transit Service.

Once again, we will put our best foot forward as we showcase Rochester’s rich railroading heritage. With three cabooses now in service and a special open-air rider flatcar on the way, we have our capacity issues well in hand. Now it’s up to all of us to come together once again to help work towards another successful season!

Your museum always welcomes new volunteers to help. Our Tuesday and

Saturday work sessions are in full swing. We will need kind folks to be train crews, tour guides, and cashiers. Friendly and fun training is available for all of these jobs that will contribute to our 2017 operations. Please contact me and I’ll get you in touch with the right person.

It’s hard work being unique. As the only operating railroad museum in New York State, it takes a lot of volunteer effort to not only maintain our equipment and displays, but to open and operate for the public. Please look over our schedule on page 2 and consider coming out to help for the day. Every contribution counts!

What do you want to see at your museum in years to come? What ideas could we develop better? How can we grow? I want to hear from you... Please contact me at (716) 474-2833 or mdow@rochester.rr.com.

—Mike Dow, Museum President



www.rgvrrm.org

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2017 SCHEDULE

Please note some dates and activities are subject to change. Please visit our www.rgvrrm.org and www.RochesterTrainRides.com for details.

May 6 – Buffalo Day Trip

May 14 – Sunday Hands-On Training Day

May 20 – Rails and Ales Special Event Day

June 10 – Saturday Hands-On Training Day

June 17-18 – Rochester Subway Heritage Weekend

July 15-16 – Craft Show and Train Rides

August 19-20 – Viscose 6 Steam Engine Train Rides

August 26-27 – Viscose 6 Steam Engine Train Rides

September 16-17 – Diesel Days Train Rides

October 14-15 – Pumpkin Patch Trains

October 21-22 – Pumpkin Patch Trains

October 28-29 – Pumpkin Patch Trains

December 8 – Holiday Open House

December 9 – Santa Trains

December 16 – Santa Trains

Get involved! Get on board!

<https://tinyurl.com/2017-RGV-Train-Crew-Schedule>

<https://tinyurl.com/2017-RGV-Ground-Crew-Schedule>

Get tickets at schedules at RochesterTrainRides.com



William "Bill" Blaesi (1938-2017)

Long-time member Bill Blaesi passed away on May 9 following a long battle with illness. Though he was not able to be as active as he would have liked in his later years, you could often find Bill in the depot on Saturday mornings offering some fresh coffee. Not only was he a frequent volunteer at the museum, Bill served with the St. Paul and Ridge-Culver fire departments for more than 50 years. Memorials may be directed to Ridge-Culver Fire Association, 2960 Culver Road, Rochester, NY 14622.

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MONTHLY PROGRAM

Meetings return to Industry Depot starting May 18. Starting a half-hour earlier at 7:00 p.m., following a brief business meeting we will enjoy rides on our museum railroad and a tour of current projects in the Restoration Shop. Warm-weather meetings continue at the depot on **June 15, July 20, and August 17.** These events are FREE to attend, so bring a friend!

I am pleased to announce that **Devan Lawton** will be our presenter for the **November** meeting. I am looking for programs for our **September, October,** and **December** meetings. If you have a program to present, please contact me. Thank you!

—Adam Lloyd, Program Chair

TREASURER POSITION OPEN

Treasurer **Dave Coon** has asked to step down from his position, and the board thanks him for his service. Your Board of Trustees is seeking candidates to appoint to this position immediately. Responsibilities include paying bills and invoices, reporting income, filing tax statements, keeping accounts balanced and current, and making monthly reports to the trustees and mem-



A mudslide was discovered on April 8 alongside the new Track 6 extension. Repairs were made on April 10, thanks to six truckloads of rip-rap coordinated by volunteer Scott Gleason.

bership. Please contact president Mike Dow or Mark Wilczek with your questions and candidate nominations.

**REMEMBERING MARTY PHELPS
(1941-2017)**

Marty Phelps passed away after a brief battle with cancer on April 25. Many knew Marty as the driving force and founder of the Medina Railroad Museum, and a co-founder of the Genesee Society of Model Engineers model railroad club in Oakfield. A veteran of the U.S. Army, Marty served as a firefighter in Batavia for more than 50 years, and toured the country as “Fireman Marty” lecturing school children on the dangers of fire and burn prevention. Not only was Marty dedicated to growing the MRM, he was also a strong supporter of our organization as well. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be sent to the Medina Railroad Museum, or Genesee Cancer Assistance of Batavia.

**APRIL SHOWERS BRING
EMERGENCY WASHOUT REPAIRS**

Western New York has enjoyed a particularly wet spring, with a series of heavy rains that soaked the Rochester area at the beginning of April. On Saturday, April 8, volunteers discovered a mudslide that blocked the driveway to the Upper Yard and had the potential to threaten the track structure on the new Track 6 extension behind the shop. The track and the equipment

on it were in no danger, however.

Volunteers cleared the driveway, and an assessment was made of the slide area. The next day, train crews made numerous switch moves that would allow us to pull some of the cars away from the affected area so that repairs could be made. Five dump trucks of rip-rap were delivered by Hanson Aggregates and put into place on the affected slope by **Scott Gleason**. The repair was effective, but additional drainage projects will need to be completed to prevent incidents like this in the future.

**OPEN-AIR RIDER FLATCAR
PROGRESS**

Plywood has been installed on the roof of the open-air car, thanks to volunteers **Wayne McIntyre** and **Ron Conrad**. The plywood will provide a sturdy base for the corrugated steel roofing material. Look for the flatcar to debut at our July event!

**PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD RPO
PAINTING AND PRIMING**

Volunteer **David Kehrer** has stepped up to lead a new project at the museum to clean, prime, and paint our former Pennsylvania Railroad railway post office car No. 6150. **Otto Vondrak** began priming the west side of the car at the end of last year, but ran out of warm days to complete the project. David stepped in to complete that side as the RPO had been temporarily moved alongside our “pumpkin patch”



Easter Bunny TRAIN RIDES



We hosted our first ever Easter Bunny Train Rides on Saturday, April 15. Thanks to all the volunteers who made it happen! Our Easter Bunny was provided by Mascots United, while Spirit Wind Farm assembled a petting zoo featuring adorable baby animals.

area. Since the Easter egg hunt would take place here, the coat of primer helped present a cleaner appearance for our visitors.

David will continue his project to clean and prime the car to get it ready for a coat of fresh paint later this season. If you would like to pitch in, please contact David at dkehrer1@gmail.com. The RPO is also home to a new signal technology exhibit currently under construction by Mike Dow, scheduled to open in part this June.

FIRST EASTER BUNNY TRAINS A HUGE SUCCESS

To kick off the 2017 operating season, your museum hosted its first ever Easter Bunny Train Rides on Saturday, April 15. Nearly 600 visitors enjoyed train rides, an Easter egg hunt, juice and cookies, the petting zoo, and of course a visit with the Easter Bunny himself! Food service was provided by our friends from **Z Best Foodz**, the petting zoo by **Spirit Wind Farm**, and our Easter Bunny was provided by **Mascots Unlimited**. All three cabooses were enlisted to handle the capacity crowds, pulled by R&GV 54. While it took a little



extra effort on our part to get the museum ready earlier in the season, it paid off with a nearly sold-out event that will be repeating and improving upon for next year. Thank you to all the volunteers who contributed to our success!

—*Otto M. Vondrak*
Event Coordinator

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS: YOU CAN HELP

As we embark on an expanded and exciting 2017 operating season, once again we turn to our volunteers for help. There are many ways you can contribute.

Train Crew: Car Hosts, Brakemen, Conductors, and Engineers are all needed for our special events each month. Training is available for any position, please contact

Mark Wilczek or Jim Otto for details.

Ground Crew: Museum Guides, Gatekeepers, and Cashiers are all needed for our special events each month. Museum Guides make themselves available to answer questions from our visitors and provide assistance as needed. Gatekeepers meet each train arrival, take tickets, and direct visitors where to board and assist with disembarking. Cashiers sell tickets and souvenirs inside Industry Depot, and welcome visitors to our museum. Training is available in all positions, please contact Otto Vondrak for details.

Behind the Scenes: If you can't help out during one of our operating days, there are still many ways you can help. Simple tasks like mowing the lawn, clearing paths of debris, sweeping out the cabooses, or helping

empty the trash all help our museum operation. If you're not sure where to get started, please contact museum manager Mark Wilczek. Contact information for all department managers can be found on page 3.

**R&GVRRM MEMBERS
SHUFFLE OFF TO BUFFALO**

On Saturday, May 6, 30 members (and several guests) boarded a deluxe motor coach for a special tour to explore two important pieces of Buffalo's transportation history. Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority broke ground for New York State's first light rail transit line in 1979, and the Metro Rail first opened to the public in 1984. NFTA Metro Rail General Manager **Michael Esford** met us at the Ohio Street entrance to the system's main-

tenance and shop facility located in the old Lackawanna trainshed. Built in 1917 by the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western, the waterfront station was no longer used after 1962. The headhouse was demolished in 1982, but the trainshed was retained and houses NFTA's fleet of light rail vehicles. The cars are currently being rebuilt by a contractor in the old Foster-Wheeler plant in Dansville, N.Y. Our tour included some "rare mileage" riding a non-revenue train the 800 feet from one end of the trainshed to the other. We also got a behind-the-scenes look at the electrical substation and the unused upper-level passenger platforms.

Our group moved to the nearby Erie Canal Harbor Station for an end-to-end ride on the 6.5 mile long Metro Rail. The surface route along Main Street is a "fare free"

zone. Proof of payment is otherwise required to ride the subway portion to South Campus. Our members were impressed at the speed our train reached between stations in the underground segment. Earlier this year, Gov. Cuomo announced he would be seeking funding for a long-awaited extension to North Campus, as well as proposals to convert a portion of the old Lackawanna trainshed into a gateway station for the growing Cobblestone District just south of Canalside.

After our train ride, we enjoyed lunch at 716 Food & Sport, a new restaurant that has opened in the last couple of years as part of the revitalized Canalside downtown area just steps from the Metro Rail.

We then boarded our bus for a trip through Buffalo's east side neighborhoods to visit Buffalo Central Terminal. Built by the New York Central Railroad in just 24 months after years of negotiations with city leadership, the modern Art Deco facility was intended to become a new "union station" for the city's railroads. Opened in 1929 just a month before the stock market crash that led to the Great Depression, Buffalo Central Terminal never fully lived up to expectations. Amtrak's last train departed in 1979, and Conrail moved its dispatching offices out soon after. The last private owner purchased the building from the city in order to salvage anything of value in 1991. What was left was a shell open to the elements and inviting vandals.

The non-profit Central Terminal Restoration Corp. took custody of the building in 1997 in an effort to stabilize the property and find a responsible partner for redevelop-



ABOVE: New volunteers Wayne McIntyre and Ron Conrad applied plywood sheathing to the roof of the open-air flatcar on May 6. **RIGHT:** and **BELOW** David Kehrer volunteered to complete the primer coat on the west side of the Pennsylvania Railroad railway post office car during the second week of April. The car will be cleaned and primed this spring in a project headed up by Kehrer. This project is looking for volunteers if you're willing to help! The RPO car also houses a signal technology display slated to open in June.



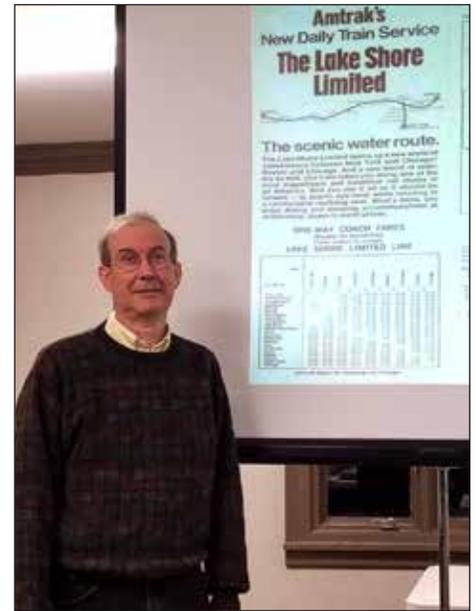
RIGHT: ON May 6, Buffalo NFTA Metro Rail general manager Michael Esford (in hi-viz vest) gave us a detailed behind-the-scenes tour of the repair shops and yards housed in the old Lackawanna trainshed. Built in 1917 as part of Lackawanna's passenger and freight terminal, the headhouse was demolished and the trainshed reconfigured for use by the light rail system in the 1980s. BELOW: Buffalo's light rail system currently terminates at University at Buffalo's South Campus. Our train lays over at the end of the line while the motorman changes ends and prepares for the return trip to Erie Canal Harbor Station. BELOW RIGHT: This is the original clock from Buffalo Central Terminal, which was returned to the city after it was discovered in an antique warehouse in Chicago. M&T Bank helped fund the majority of the acquisition in 2005. BELOW: Central Terminal Restoration Corp. president Mark Lewandowski gave our group a private tour of Buffalo Central Terminal, including the main concourse, restaurant, trolley lobby, and mezzanine level.



opment. The group has been successful in getting grants to help in their clean-up efforts. As a result, the main concourse has become a popular venue for a limited number of special events throughout the year. The Terminal was briefly considered as a possible location for Buffalo's new Amtrak station, though the selection committee chose a location near the existing Exchange Street station downtown. CRTC president **Mark Lewandowski** gave us a private tour, which included the "Trolley Lobby" that was designed for a streetcar connection to downtown that was never built thanks to a certain cab company that had ties to organized crime.

Thanks to Trips Chairman **Dave Shields** for organizing the event and to our friends at NFTA and CTRC for rolling out the red





ABOVE: Stores Manager Don Warwyzniak tends to the museum bookstore prior to April's monthly meeting at the 40&8 Club. According to the June 1998 edition of *The Semaphore*, Duncan Richards passed the torch to Don nearly 19 years ago this month! Don is always looking for assistance at the train show appearances our museum makes throughout the year. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Long-time member Bob Zimmermann presented a detailed look at Cleveland's railroad action from the 1970s and early 1980s, featuring Penn Central, Conrail, Norfolk & Western, and the Cleveland RTA PCC's and rapid transit trains.

carpet for our members and guests. Mark your calendars for a special overnight trip to Scranton, Pa., scheduled for July 29.

—Otto M. Vondrak

**RAILS AND ALES
MAY 20**

The craft brew movement is sweeping the nation. According to the New York State Brewers Association, new breweries grew from just 95 in 2011 to more than 240

in 2015! As part of this growth, the Rochester area is home to scores of new breweries with their delicious and unique craft beers. Your museum is hosting **Rails and Ales** on Saturday, May 20. Enjoy tastings from several local craft brewers including **810 Meadworks, Iron Tug Brewing, OSB Ciderworks, Swiftwater Brewing, Blue Toad Hard Cider, Triphammer Bierwerks, Rootstock Ciderworks, Rail Head Brewing,** and the **Upstate New**

York Homebrewers Association. Our media sponsor is **City Newspaper.**

Join us for this exciting new event! Refreshments available for purchase, with free soft drinks for designated drivers. Age 21 and over only. Tickets are \$20.00 for Tasting Tickets, \$15.00 for Designated Drivers. Advance tickets are available now at www.RochesterTrainRides.com.

WWW.RGVRRM.ORG

**Saturday
May 20
12:00-5:00**

**RAILS
and
ALES**



Enjoy fun train rides and sample from great local craft brewers! 21 and over only.

\$20.00 Tasting Ticket, \$15.00 Designated Driver

Get tickets at www.RochesterTrainRides.com



THE SEMAPHORE
ROCHESTER & GENESEE VALLEY RAILROAD MUSEUM
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HEY! Don't forget that our monthly meetings move to Industry Depot starting May 18! Tell your friends!

Find us on Facebook! [facebook.com/rgvrrm](https://www.facebook.com/rgvrrm)



SHUFFLE OFF TO BUFFALO: Museum members enjoyed a private tour of the NFTA Metro Rail shops and yards housed in the old Lacakwanna trainshed in downtown Buffalo on May 6. The upper level passenger platforms were last used in 1962, and the concrete viaducts that ramped up to them were demolished in the 1980s. The troughs were filled with ballast that raised the tracks up to platform level. OTTO VONDRAK PHOTO