



**COUNTRY COUSINS:** Livonia, Avon & Lakeville #425 poses alongside RG&E 1941. Our 45-ton switcher was originally purchased by the LA&L in 1964 and their first locomotive. It was sold to RG&E in 1965. The 425 was LA&L's first Alco road switcher purchase, the first of what would be many filling out the fleet of this successful regional railroad. On this day, 425 and 428 were teamed up to haul our Oct. 27 Rare Mileage Excursion from Lakeville to Henrietta and return. This was one of the photo stops orchestrated at Industry by our volunteers. PHOTO BY CHRIS HAUF

## Back on the High Iron

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After being idle for nearly eight years, it was very exciting to see our excursion coaches take to the "high iron" once again! Many volunteers contributed countless hours to make our coaches ready for "prime time!" On October 27, your museum hosted its first public excursion outside of the railroad since 2004.

Our special Rare-Mileage Excursion covered the length of the Livonia, Avon & Lakeville Railroad from Lakeville to Henrietta and return. The trip ran very smoothly, thanks to great planning and cooperation between the railroad and our volunteers. Thanks to excursion co-chairs Dave Shields and Otto Vondrak for coordinating the details and marketing that make this trip a success (See photos on pages 4-5). We are exploring the possibility of more trips in the future. Stay tuned!

Another bit of exciting news is the newly announced timeline for design and construction of our new inspection pit inside the Restoration Building (See Page 3). Building this pit will allow us to better maintain our railroad equipment and keep it in top running condition. This pit will also benefit the New York Museum of Transportation, and we are enjoying their cooperation and assistance on this project.

Many other projects will continue to move forward this winter, including work on the Lehigh Valley caboose, RG&E #8, LV 211, Industry Depot and more. If you want to get involved at any level, please contact me and I will point you towards the right person. Contact me at (716) 474-2833 or [mdow@rochester.rr.com](mailto:mdow@rochester.rr.com). Many hands make light work!

—Mike Dow, Museum President



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

#### MUSEUM OFFICERS

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# TRAIN BULLETIN

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM R&GVRRM

#### **R&GVRRM MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

**OCTOBER 18, 2012**

The October Museum Membership Meeting was called to order at the 40&8 Club, 933 University Avenue, Rochester, at 7:35 p.m. Museum vice president Joe Nugent presided over the meeting in the absence of president Mike Dow. There were 31 members in attendance.

**Correspondence Report:** Is anyone available to give a talk about the history of the old New York Central "Hojack" line to the Hilton Historical Society, at their request? In other news, the Hojack Swing Bridge at the mouth of the Genesee River in Charlotte is about to be dismantled. Long time member Ted Jackson passed away in September. He was in the process of completing a manuscript about the Erie Railroad's Rochester Division. The manuscript is now in our possession and is in production to be published at a later date.

**Historian's Report:** Don Schilling described a 1958 newspaper article that discusses the antique locomotive headlight that is adorned with a portrait of Oliver Allen, one of the founding fathers of the Rochester & State Line Railroad, which eventually became the Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh Railroad (the BR&P was acquired by the B&O in 1932). This headlight was in the collection of the former Rochester Chapter NRHS for many years before it was loaned out for exhibit. Current whereabouts unknown. [EDIT: The headlight is currently in possession of the Rochester Historical Society.]

**Membership Report:** Membership Chair Sam Rosenberg reports that renewals are going out. Four new candidates for membership were presented: John Rafter of Hamburg, New York; Jack and Sue Barker of Bloomfield, New York; Gary Stevens of Brockport, New York; and Jon Saulsgiver of Webster, New York. A motion was made by Joe Nugent to accept the candidates as new members. The motion was seconded by Dave Scheiderich. The motion passed unanimously.

**Preservation Report:** Thanks to a donation from new member Jon Saulsgiver of Webster, we hired a contractor to apply a professional-grade shrink wrap to the roof of the Lackawanna M.U. to help stabilize it while we assess repairs to the collapsed

roof. Also, our G.E. 110-ton diesel switcher RG&E #8 is currently in the Restoration Building. Volunteer Mike Walsh is working on cleaning the frame and installing the new air tanks so that work can continue on rebuilding the braking system. More donations have been sent in for the Lehigh Valley caboose. Work will continue through the winter on making repairs to the interior as well as the body in preparation for applying primer to the exterior in the spring.

**Operations Report:** Three more busy weekends to go! Fall Foliage trains have been popular. Hands-on Operations Training planned for October 25. Our volunteers worked very hard to prepare the excursion coaches in time for a special private memorial trip hosted by the Livonia, Avon & Lakeville Railroad at the end of September. The cars performed flawlessly and the railroad was very pleased. We are looking forward to using them again soon on our upcoming Rare-Mileage Excursion this October 27.

**Museum Library Report:** Charlie Robinson has volunteered ad hoc to be the Librarian in the absence of Bob Fleck who is on extended vacation in California. The Library (located upstairs at the 40&8 Club, 933 University Avenue, Rochester) will be open November 5 at 6:30 p.m.

Otto Vondrak made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Don Wawrzyniak. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m. Respectfully Submitted,

—Otto M. Vondrak, *Trustee and Acting Secretary*

#### **DEFOREST "DEE" MOWERS (1935-2012)**

Long time museum volunteer "Dee" Mowers passed away on November 3, he was 77. Dee was a Spencerport native, and a McCurdy's retiree. He is survived by his loving wife of 56 years, Beverly Mowers. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made in Dee's name to The Palliative Care Program at Strong Hospital in Rochester, New York; or The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research ([www.michaeljfox.org](http://www.michaeljfox.org)). Our condolences go out to the Mowers family.

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

#### **JOIN THE MUSEUM TODAY**

**Annual Dues: \$25.00**

Rochester & Genesee Valley RR Museum  
P.O. Box 23326  
Rochester, NY 14692-3326

#### **PLAN AHEAD: Next Meeting:**

**Dec. 20**

**at 40&8 Club, Rochester NY**





## ROCHESTER & GENESEE VALLEY RAILROAD MUSEUM

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

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#### MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

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### MOTIVE POWER DEPT.

**LV 211:** Sidelined mid-season due to questionable issues surrounding the water pump. We will drain the water and prep this engine for winter storage. We will investigate the water pump issue this winter. We're looking forward to restoring this engine to service next season.

**RGV 1654:** Available through the winter as needed. This locomotive may need new batteries to operate reliably next season.

**RGE 1941:** Available through the winter as needed.

**RGE 8:** We have placed this engine back in the building for winter work. Mike Walsh is putting together a punch list of tasks to complete and it will be worked on through the winter. The second air tank was hung earlier this month.

**USA 1843:** The last time our Fairbanks-Morse locomotive was fired up was in January to help move our excursion coaches to the new siding. She remains stored servicable.

Other locomotives will be put on battery chargers and mothballed for the winter. It was nice to add the 1941 back to the roster of active locomotives, since it was able to fill in a few times late in the operating season. We are always looking for new volunteers who are interested in learning more and helping to keep our diesels running. My contact info is listed above.

—Joe Nugent, Motive Power Supt.



**TOP:** Work began on November 11 to repair a slump in the tracks near Reid's Crossing. Mike Dow is at the controls of the backhoe, while Dave Scheiderich acts as spotter. Constant attention to track ensures a smooth ride for our visitors. **ABOVE:** We brought our last trainload of visitors back to Midway on Sunday, November 4, closing out another safe and successful joint operating season with the New York Museum of Transportation! Thanks to all the volunteers who helped this season. We're already working on great ideas for 2013 joint events... PHOTOS BY OTTO VONDRAK

### INDUSTRY DEPOT CLEAN UP

Otto Vondrak has been spearheading a general clean-up of the Waiting Room and Agent's Office at Industry Depot. Part of this project will also include making needed repairs to the floor prior to refinishing. These areas are important as they make the "first impression" to our visitors. Work will continue through the winter.

### INSPECTION PIT

A committee consisting of Joe Nugent, Rob Burz, and Bob Achilles have been meeting on a regular basis to plan and oversee the construction of our new inspection pit inside the Restoration Building. A rough schedule has been worked out to keep the process moving forward. (Continued on Page 6)





## RARE-MILEAGE EXCURSION SAT. OCT. 27, 2012

ABOVE: The LA&L picked up our coaches from Lakeville in the morning and is seen here passing the Hill Block on its way to Lakeville. RG&E 1941 (the first locomotive purchased by the LA&) was posed for photos later in the day. PHOTO BY DAVE SCHEIDERICH RIGHT: Our excursion train rolls north over Pole Bridge Road in Avon. PHOTO BY MIKE STELPFLUG BELOW LEFT: The first photo stop was north of Paper Mill Road in Avon. The train is backing up to pick up the folks who decided to brave the rain and take advantage of the photo stop. BELOW RIGHT: Mike Byrne volunteered as a car host, checking tickets and assisting passengers as needed. PHOTOS BY OTTO VONDRAK







**ABOVE:** At Mortimer Jct. in Henrietta, our train rounds the curve on the connection Conrail built in 1979 tying together the former Erie and Lehigh Valley branches. Buildings in the background are new apartments for RIT students. PHOTO BY RAY HOWARD

**ABOVE LEFT:** Soaking wet from the rain and still smiling, Dave Shields was trip co-chair and lead Car Host for the excursion. PHOTO BY CHRIS PLAYFORD **ABOVE RIGHT:** Our excursion train performs a photo run-by at the old Avon train station. PHOTO BY DAVE SCHEIDERICH

**BELOW:** Samples of the tickets and route guide designed and printed by Otto Vondrak. The Erie Lackawanna cancellation stamp came from the collection of Dave Scheiderich.





(Continued from Page 3) The proposed schedule calls for design and construction drawings to be completed by the end of the year, with review and approval taking place during the first weeks of 2013. The New York Museum of Transportation has also pledged their support and assistance to this project, as the pit will also benefit the trolley operation as well.

Throughout the winter and early spring, the Restoration Building will need to be cleared out while the project is sent out for bid. We expect to award the construction contract by the end of April 2013, with excavation taking place shortly after. If all goes according to plan, we should have the pit completed by the end of August.

We'll need your help and support in many ways during the coming months! Clean up has already begun in the Restoration Shop as we prepare to clear out the building. We will be seeking additional funds to complete construction on this very important project that will help ensure the mechanical dependability of our fleet for years to come.

—Joe Nugent

#### TRACK WORK AT REID'S

Our track gang put in 23 ties over the course of the summer allow us to pull the track straight and level it with the tamper in the area around Reid's Crossing. Minor repairs are needed to help ensure a smooth ride for our visitors. The work has involved shifting the tracks and shoring them up to repair a slump that has developed in the area.

—Mike Dow

#### UPCOMING MUSEUM PROGRAMS

We have resumed monthly meetings at the 40 & 8 VFW Club, located at 933 University Ave., Rochester. Everyone is welcome to attend! The museum store opens at 7:00pm, with the general business meeting starting at 7:30. Programs usually start around 8:15 following the business meeting. Bring a friend! Please visit our web site for more information at [www.rgvrrm.org](http://www.rgvrrm.org).

**Nov. 15:** "Frostbite Ferroequinology: The Sequel" with Duncan Richards.

**Dec. 20:** "Lehigh Valley Memories" with Douglas Parmelee.

—Harold Russell, Program Chair



In a brief ceremony held during our Rare Mileage Excursion on October 27, museum vice president Joe Nugent (left) awards volunteer Ron Amberger the prestigious Fairmont Cup trophy. Also in attendance were past museum manager Rand Warner (rear, left), past museum president Jeremy Tuke (center) and trustee member Otto Vondrak (rear, right). PHOTO BY DAVE SCHEIDERICH

## RON AMBERGER AWARDED THE PRESTIGIOUS FAIRMONT CUP

The Board of Trustees votes to award the 2012 Fairmont Cup to museum member Ron Amberger, for his years of service to our organization in many areas throughout his career. Born in Brooklyn, New York, Ron's family moved to the New Jersey suburb of Dumont, located along New York Central's busy West Shore. It was here that Ron was first exposed to main line steam, in the cabs of many NYC Mohawks, Mikados, and Pacifics. Living within striking distance of New York City, Ron and his friends would explore every far corner of the Subway, and many fan trips on the Long Island Rail Road, too.

Ron's interest in photography began in high school and was carried over to his college years. By the time Ron was accepted to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, passenger services were consolidated and diverted to Albany Union Station. "Study, girls and lack of money took its toll on railfan activities during my college years, so not much recorded then," Ron recollected, "Though I did go back and forth a lot from Albany to Grand Central riding the Empire State Express... You could buy a beer in the observation lounge and essentially ride first class in the lounge for the entire trip!"

Ron first joined our organization (then the Rochester Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society) in 1973, after visiting our booth at the Monroe County Fair. "Previously I had been member of NRHS chapters in Baltimore, Cincinnati

and Pittsburgh," Ron said, "At the time that I joined, the Rochester Chapter was meeting downtown at the Rochester Museum and Science Center." Eager to help out, Ron joined the publications committee and helped edit the first edition of our book *The Water Level Route*. This was followed closely by *Canal Boats, Interurbans & Trolleys: The Story of the Rochester Subway*, co-authored with Dick Barrett and Greg Marling. For many years, Ron helped edit our calendar project, along with Dan Cosgrove.

With the organization's focus moving away from publications for a while, Ron changed hats and was Program Chair for many years. "In those days, we presented 16mm movies that were borrowed from the NRHS national film library and movies from our own collection. There were slide shows, too, and we also had a big TV set and VCR to show train videos which were just coming on the market."

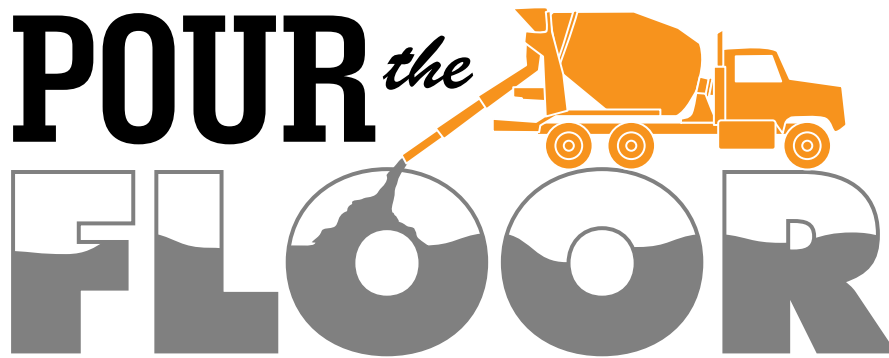
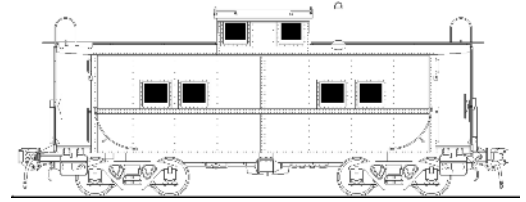
Ron has served on the board in a number of capacities; president, vice president, recording secretary, corresponding secretary, and board trustee member "so many times I lost count," he said.

Many projects at the museum have benefitted from Ron's help over the years. One of the first projects he worked on was painting the exterior of Industry Depot. Later, Ron worked on the exterior and interior finishing of our Lackawanna m.u. car. He also helped with re-siding our BR&P caboose when it was rebuilt the first time

**You can help! Visit [www.rgvrrm.org/support](http://www.rgvrrm.org/support)**

# Help us complete our LV caboose!

**You can help us return a historic Lehigh Valley Railroad caboose to the rails!** We are trying to raise \$2500 to help pay for continued restoration of the body as well as preparation for painting and finishing. As of July 15 we have raised \$500. **Your donation in any amount will help!**



**Pour The Floor! Our fundraising goal is \$75,000.00.** These funds will allow us to complete the entire flat floor and completely install our inspection pit with all of its necessary components including stairs, railings, power and lighting. A complete shop floor will help expand and enhance our restoration and maintenance abilities.

in the 1980s. A fixture in the Motive Power Dept., he has also worked on evaluating our two steam locomotives for a possible return to service. Ron also contributed many hours to the restoration and rebuilding of RG&E 1941.

"I enjoy operating locomotives," Ron said, "especially some of the more challenging switching puzzles we have created at the museum!" Ron has also volunteered as a brakeman, and a conductor in recent years.

As a professional mechanical engineer, Ron has worked on a variety of assignments, including jet engines, gas turbines steam, turbines, massive industrial compressors, boilers, power generators and automatic controls. You can add "professor" that list, teaching mechanical engineering at Rochester Institute of

Technology for 35 years. As an avid fan of steam locomotive technology, Ron has been a consulting engineer on many projects. Ron consulted on critical boiler calculations for the Tang Shan Locomotive Works in China when three Mikado-type locomotives were manufactured for American tourist operations in 1989. In fact, Ron went to China to "test drive" the locomotive that was supposed to become Susquehanna 141 (a typhoon sunk the ship it was traveling on, and it never made it to America). As one of the last bastions for main line steam, Ron has made many trips to China over the years.

Ron and his wife Jing will be relocating to sunny San Diego, California, later this year. Ron is looking forward to the trip, but "I will miss all of my friends here and the R&GVRRM as well." —O.M.V.



## **YAHOO! GROUPS** Are you or a friend missing messages?

In an effort to streamline our communications, we are moving our old email distribution lists to new Yahoo! Groups! Joining the new groups is easy, plus it gives you more control over how you communicate with others. **There are new email lists for Members, Volunteers, and Operations! Need to get signed up? Not sure where you belong?** Contact "listmaster" Otto Vondrak by email at [ovondrak@yahoo.com](mailto:ovondrak@yahoo.com).

**MATERIALS SUBMISSIONS:** We welcome your contributions to The Semaphore! Any materials related to the activities of 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.



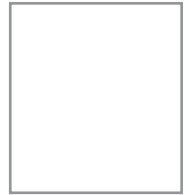


**THE SEMAPHORE**

ROCHESTER & GENESEE VALLEY RAILROAD MUSEUM

P.O. BOX 23326

ROCHESTER, NY 14692-3326



This Month's Meeting:

**November 15**

7:00 PM at 40&8 Club

933 University Ave, Rochester NY

Next Month's Meeting:

**December 20**

7:00 PM at 40&8 Club

933 University Ave, Rochester NY



— find us on Facebook: [facebook.com/rgvrrm](https://facebook.com/rgvrrm) —



**GOING, GOING...** Contractors have begun the process to dismantle the former New York Central (Rome, Watertown & Ogdensburg Ry., also known as the "Hojack") swing bridge that spans the mouth of the Genesee River at Charlotte, New York. The bridge has been idle since 1996, when coal shipments to RG&E's BeeBee Station ended, which was the last traffic to use the route. Seen here on November 6, workers have begun taking apart the control house. Parts from the bridge have been set aside to be preserved at New York Museum of Transportation. PHOTO BY OTTO VONDRAK