



Santa and Mrs. Claus wave farewell as our special train departs the North Pole to return to Rochester. Our sold-out Santa Trains operate on December 1, 8, and 15 to close out our regular museum operating season. PHOTO BY OTTO M. VONDRAK

Happy Holidays

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As we wrap up another great season at the museum, I'd like to first take the time to thank past president Mike Dow for his service leading this organization. As a past board member and past president myself, I can tell you the job of leading an organization as complex as ours is not an easy one. While we have much to look forward to in the coming year, we will also face many new challenges as our museum continues to grow and evolve.

This January we will welcome a new slate of officers to the board. Some of the names you may recognize moving into new roles, some are long-time members re-joining the board. My term as interim president will come to an end, but I will be returning to the board as a trustee.

Sometimes it's hard to see from the inside, but your museum is a very unique organization. Besides being home to one

of the largest collections in New York State, the fact that we operate trains on a regular basis sets us apart. Not every organization is fortunate enough to have its own demonstration railroad to operate on. Our goal, as always, is to provide the best possible experience for our visitors, and to do it safely. You can be a part of that, whether you join our train crews, help out with the track gang, assist with repairs in the shop, welcome visitors to our museum, or simply lend your membership support. We are always looking for new volunteers to join us, and we're always looking for ideas on how we can do better.

Great opportunity awaits us in 2019, and I look forward to you all joining me in contributing to our museum's success.

—John Stewart,
Interim Museum President



www.rgvrrm.org

MUSEUM OFFICERS

Acting Interim President
John Stewart

Vice President
VACANT

Interim Treasurer
Dave Peet

Recording Secretary
Otto M. Vondrak

Corresponding Secretary
Joel R. Shaw

Trustees
Rob Burz
David Kaiser
Joe Nugent
David Scheiderich
David Shields



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TOP: Our first Santa Trains to the North Pole operated on December 1. The first train departs at 4:00pm, the early dusk departure is perfect for our youngest visitors. **ABOVE:** Mrs. Claud, Zoe the Elf, Santa Claus, and volunteer Dimitri Avery greeted excited visitors at the North Pole.

ELECTION RESULTS

Presented are the official results of the election held November 15, 2018:

President - Otto Vondrak
Vice President - Peter Gores
Treasurer - Dave Peet
Recording Secretary - VACANT
Corresponding Secretary - VACANT
Trustee - John Stewart
Trustee - Dave Scheiderich

Congratulations to our new and returning officers! The remaining vacant seats will be filled by board appointment.

—Joe Nugent, Acting Elections Committee Chairman

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PROGRAM CHAIRMAN
VACANT

MONTHLY PROGRAM

For the fall and winter months, monthly meetings return to the 40&8 Club, 933 University Ave., doors open at 7:00 p.m. Browse our museum bookstore prior to the meeting. We are now seeking programs for 2019, with preference to topics of local interest. A new Program Chair will be nominated to serve for the coming year, watch this space for announcement.

On **December 20**, photographer **Mike Stellpflug** will present a slide show of his photographs along the former Lehigh Valley Lima Branch during the days of Conrail operation. Many rare views will be shared. Members are encouraged to bring Lehigh Valley memorabilia to display at the meeting.

SANTA TRAINS TO THE NORTH POLE

Train rides to visit Santa and Mrs. Claus at the "North Pole" return on **December 1, 8, and 15**. Visitors will arrive at the depot to enjoy complimentary hot cocoa and cookies while waiting to board their train.



Volunteer Rachel Maas assembled and decorated our Christmas tree for display inside the south waiting room at Industry Depot, while Charlie Marks hung festive holiday lights on the exterior of the depot. Every bit helps us get ready to welcome visitors for the holiday season!

Upon arrival at the North Pole, visitors will disembark for a special visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus! Every child will get to meet Santa and receive a candy cane from one of Santa's elves. As evening turns to dark, the soft lighting of kerosene lamps inside the cabooses adds to the festive atmosphere. Trains depart every hour from 4:00pm to 7:00pm. **This event has SOLD OUT!** But we will still need your help to make this event a success. Volunteer positions available on and off the trains. Please contact Otto Vondrak directly if you can help on any of the dates. Thanks to New York Museum of Transportation for allowing use of the track north of the property line to allow our trains to access the "North Pole."

—Otto Vondrak, Events Supt.

ANNUAL HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7

Our Annual Holiday Open House will be held on Friday, December 7, at Industry Depot, from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Bring a snack or dish to pass. This event is FREE and open to the public! Bring your friends and family and enjoy some holiday cheer.

BR&P CABOOSE 280

Interior finishing continues, with the application of dark green paint on the walls and cabinets of our Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh caboose. Windows are being test fit and installed. Work will continue through the winter months to prepare com-

ponents for installation in the spring. Materials are on hand to install a new membrane roof once the weather warms up again. Thanks to **John Redden, Jeremy Tuke,** and **Charlie Marks** for continued efforts.

—Charlie Marks, Project Mgr.

ROCHESTER SUBWAY CAR 60 BODY PANELS COMPLETE

Volunteers from **Sheet Metal Workers Union Local 46** have wrapped up the repairs to the side body panels, supervised by Rand Warner and Peter Gores. Thanks to the donation of volunteer labor, the cost to complete this phase of restoration came in well under budget. The project managers will putting together an action plan for 2019 to continue forward progress and set fundraising goals.

SOUTH WAITING ROOM FLOOR REPAIRS

Thanks to volunteer **Dave Luca** who replaced the worn tread plate in the west doorway to the south waiting room (our main entrance), and also replaced rotted floor boards in the southwest corner of the waiting room during the month of November.

LV CABOOSE 95100

Thanks to the volunteer efforts of **Sam Rosenberg, Charles Bell, Joe Steimer,** and **Chuck Whalen**, the southeast interior wall has been re-assembled inside our



LEHIGH VALLEY

Volunteers Sam Rosenberg and Charles Bell trim boards for installation inside the Lehigh Valley caboose (LEFT), while Joe Steimer (BELOW LEFT) uses a wire wheel to clean old paint and rust off of interior grab irons on November 17. New volunteers John and Peter Tomanovich (BELOW) get down and dirty cleaning years of accumulated gunk from the undercarriage on November 11. This is the glamorous side of railway preservation that no one tells you about!



Lehigh Valley caboose. Joe Steimer has been stripping and needle-scaling the metal walls of the cupola cabinets to prepare them for primer. Chuck Whalen has been needle-scaling areas of the vestibule ends that were not sandblasted, and sanding the wood surfaces of the bunks. New volunteers **Steve** and **Peter Tomanovich** have begun unenviable task of removing the near 80 years of gunk from the undercarriage. Since the caboose interior can be heated, work will continue through the winter.

—Sam Rosenberg, Project Mgr.

NEW TICKET VALIDATOR

For years when we gave depot tours an old ticket validator sat on the agent's desk. These devices were used to imprint the location and date of sale on each ticket

sold, which then “validated” the ticket so it could be used for train travel (otherwise, it could be assume the ticket stock was simply stolen without proper fare being paid). Our validator was missing the ink ribbon and the imprint die, and had many other broken parts.

I always said to other volunteers that it would be nice to have a working validator. About two years ago, member Pete Gores offered a complete validator that only lacked a ribbon and imprint die. I learned of a fellow that could rebuild it, Ray Weart. I worked with Otto Vondrak to design a new customized dater die.

The validator that was in the depot was a Hill's Centennial, and at some point had been broken in half and welded back together. We traded it in as a parts donor for

credit, and in return we received a rebuilt Cosmo No. 2. Several museum members made donations to offset the cost of the rebuilding project.

The newly rebuilt ticket validator was placed in service this past June. Our museum visitors now receive souvenir tickets with a proper validation stamp, further adding to the authentic experience.

—Lynn Heintz

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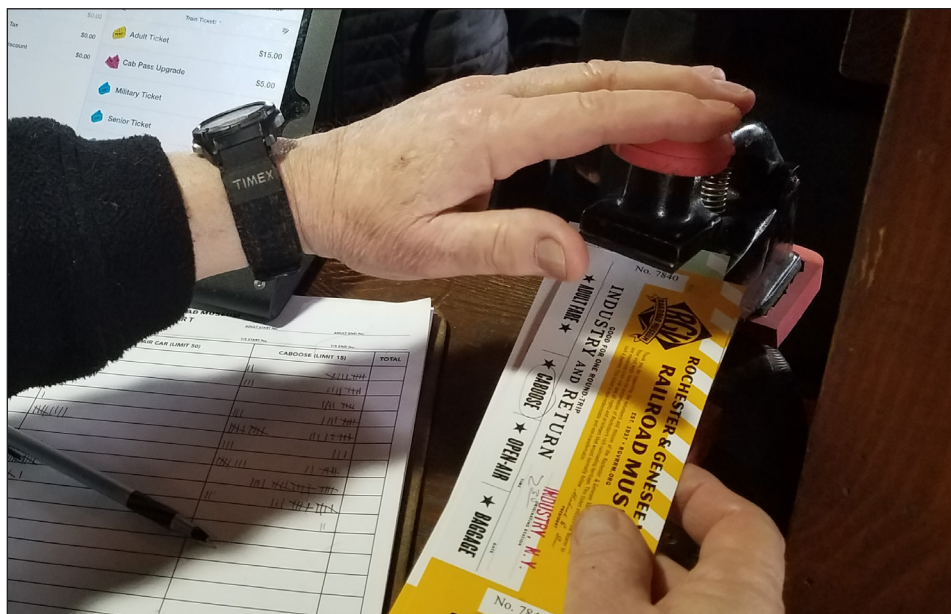
**BEST WISHES FOR A HAPPY AND
 HEALTHY HOLIDAY SEASON**

RIGHT: Interior finishing projects continue on our Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh caboose 280. Brackets have been mounted for the safe storage of our B&O-era marker lamps when they are not in use.

BELOW: Dave Luca removed and replaced rotted floodboards from the southwest corner of the south waiting room.

BELOW RIGHT: Rand Warner is the project manager supervising the reconstruction of Rochester Subway Car 60, responsible for making the connection with the sheet metal worker's union apprentice program.

BOTTOM: Our new ticket validator in action. The validator stamp has a custom die that has the name of our museum, the date, and the station. At the very bottom is an example of an Erie Railroad validator stamp.





ABOVE: Ontario Midland Alco RS36 408 switches out tank cars for Northern BioDiesel in Ontario, N.Y., on September 22, 2015. PHOTO BY DAVE SEITZER

Local rail companies score millions in state money

BY STEVE BUCHIERE
Finger Lakes Times
November 23, 2018

Two regional short-line railroad companies are sharing pretty big slices of \$27.1 million in state rail infrastructure improvement funds, which were announced this week by Gov. Andrew Cuomo. Geneva-based **Finger Lakes Railway** is getting \$2.8 million, while Sodus-based **Ontario Midland** is receiving \$2.9 million.

Mike Smith, president of Finger Lakes Railway (FGLK), said the money will be used to make rail yard improvements at its Waterloo/Geneva operation, as well as yards in Auburn and Solvay. Smith said the funds, which must include a local match, will help handle the growing number of cars at each of its three locations “Our problem is our footprints (at each location) are long and narrow,” he said. “We are limited by the amount of track we have.”

At the Waterloo-Geneva yard, that is the

case as well, said Smith, who explained that the railroad will be adding 2,000 feet of track. A 1,600-foot section will be for storing freight cars. The 400-foot track will be used for making repairs to cars.

Smith said FGLK has seen its business rise significantly over the years. In 1995, the railway’s first year, it had 5,500 carloads; in 2018, that number is 18,000. Among the growing segments of FGLK is the movement of grain, said Smith, pointing to the national grain broker Lansing Trade Group, which has silos on Route 14 in Geneva that store corn, wheat and soybeans. Those products eventually make their way by rail to the Port of New York for overseas distribution, he said.

Smith said Finger Lakes Railway hopes to have the work completed at the three yards over the course of the next two years.

In Wayne County, Ontario Midland (OMID) Vice President and General Manager Sandy Saracen said the money will be used to make track repairs on the north-

south line that runs from Newark to the hamlet of Wallington in Sodus.

“I was shocked and very happy,” said Saracen, who said OMID will be replacing 12.5 miles of track with the money, which also requires a local match. “We’ve got a customer coming online that’s going to mean more cars,” she said, noting the company has an east-west line that runs from Wolcott to Webster.

In 2011, OMID was awarded about \$1.66 million through the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council to rehabilitate the line from Sodus to Rose, restoring rail service in the eastern portion of the county. Saracen said it’s possible the track improvements for OMID could begin in 2019, but it’s more likely to be in 2020. The company, which is marking its 40th year in 2019, is owned by its customers, which include Williamson’s Motts, owned by Cadbury Schweppes, Fleischmann’s Vinegar in Rose and Thatcher Chemical in Williamson, among others.



LAST CAR, LAST TRIP: Perry Kingston and Richard DeJongh, in front from left, and Charles Banks and Richard Sibley, who is president of the Rochester Railway Historical Society, wave from the rear of Erie Railroad Train as it left Rochester yesterday. Passenger service on the Rochester branch will end Tuesday.

LAST ERIE TRIP DRAWS SCORE

Democrat & Chronicle
September 28, 1941

They went down to Avon as paying passengers and came back as "deadheads."

Thus did 20 men yesterday experience the "feel" of riding the Erie rails for the last time.

This farewell to the Erie, which will discontinue its Rochester-Avon run Tuesday afternoon, was made by members of the Rochester [Chapter of the National] Railway Historical Society and the Rochester Model Train Club. They are men who have been interested in trains since they received toy sets for Christmas presents when they were boys.

Several, carrying cameras with which to record the trip, climbed aboard the Saturday special at 12:25 p.m. (EST) and arrived

in Avon at 1:05. They had a 35-minute stopover in the Livingston County village to inspect the Erie Railroad property. Then they "deadheaded" back to Rochester.

It was a nostalgic experience for the men, most of whom have watched the rise and decline of the 87-year-old run for years. Among them was an Episcopal rector from Sodus, the Rev. John Williamson, a model train operator.

The Erie will run its last passenger train out of Court Street Station at 6:15 p.m. Tuesday and the station will be closed. Bus service will be substituted between Rochester and Avon.



ERIE TO QUIT SERVICE TODAY

Democrat & Chronicle
September 30, 1941

Eighty-seven years of Erie Railroad passenger service for Rochester will come to an end at 6:15 p.m. today when the last train leaves the Court Street Station for Avon.

But increased freight business in and out of Rochester means a virtual rejuvenation of the line, which once had frequent passenger service to points south of the city in the Genesee Valley.

All the Rochester personnel of the passenger department is being absorbed by the freight agency because of heavy shipping, James H. Hagans, local representative of the Erie, pointed out.

The Erie received permission from the Public Service Commission to abandon its Avon-Rochester passenger service because of poor financial return. In turn, the PSC authorized the Valley Bus Lines to operate a bus line via West Henrietta Road into Avon. The line seeks to change its route to the East River Road, which parallels the Erie's tracks, along a great part of the way to Avon.

ERIE CLOSING HITS SCHOOL AT INDUSTRY

Democrat & Chronicle
October 9, 1941

Suspension of Erie Railroad passenger service in the Genesee Valley has left the State Agricultural and Industrial School "high and dry," the Board of Visitors learned from Superintendent Clinton W. Areson yesterday.

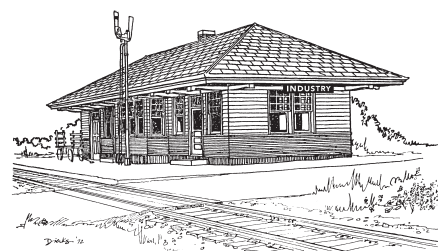
Thus fathers and mothers who come to visit their sons are forced to find private transportation to come to the school, he pointed out.

Nearest bus service is 1½ miles to the east and 2 miles to the west, he said. The Erie had a station at Industry and its service is not supplanted by the Valley Bus Line which operates between Avon and Rochester on the West Henrietta Road, east of Industry.

Areson admitted that the staff of the school infrequently used the Erie passenger service but claimed that travel to the school was fairly heavy because of parents who visit their sons on visiting days, the first Saturday of each month and the other weekends.

It was his suggestion that the Valley Bus Line operate two trips daily into Industry as a sort of spur line off West Henrietta Road, using Route 251, the Rush-Scottsville Road.

The Board of Visitors then named a committee composed of Thomas F. Triss, Eugene Raines, and Secretary Norman A. O'Brien to ascertain whether the Public Service Commission would give its approval to the establishment of this spur and whether the Valley Bus Line would undertake this service.



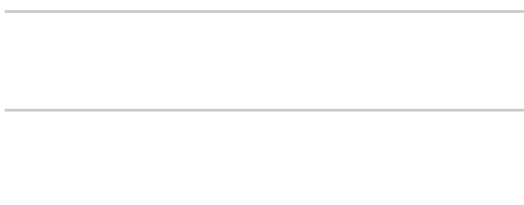


THE **SEMAPHORE**

ROCHESTER & GENESEE VALLEY RAILROAD MUSEUM

P.O. BOX 23326

ROCHESTER, NY 14692-3326



Find us on Facebook! facebook.com/rgvrrm



Catching the last rays of sunlight, Erie Lackawanna GP7 1222 leads a short local freight consisting of a single trailer-on-flatcar (TOFC) past Industry Depot in June 1973. The Rochester Chapter had purchased the depot from EL just two years previous. The local freight was scheduled to depart Exchange Street Yard in Rochester in the evenings, meaning the best chance to see it in daylight was during the longer days of summer. PHOTO BY RICHARD PEARSON