

# **THE SEMAPHORE**

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The Newsletter of  
**ROCHESTER CHAPTER - NATIONAL RAILWAY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
Vol. XXXI No. 7

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March 1990

## **PROGRAM NOTES**

*By: Ron Amberger*

The program for the March 15th meeting at the 40&8 Club, 933 University Ave., will be presented by our guest speaker Bill Voglesong who will be showing his movie of the Rochester Subway. This is a special occasion because the Chapter has never viewed this film. This will give us a rare glimpse into this very interesting aspect of Rochester's transportation history.

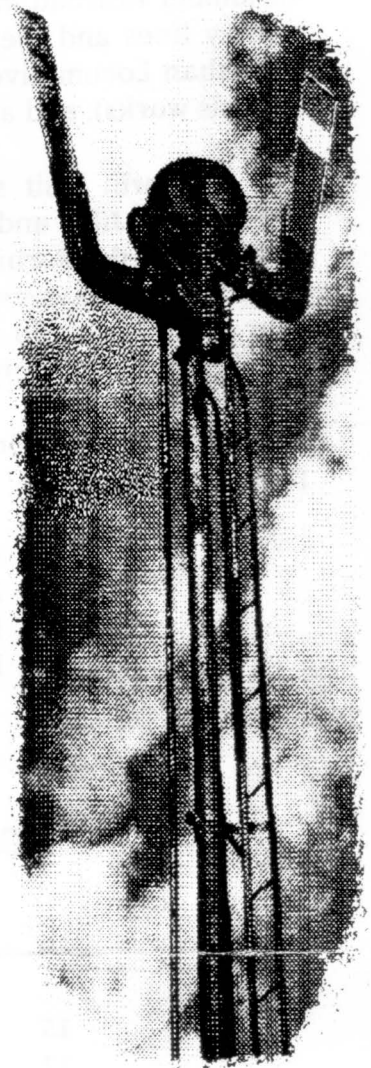
## **TRIP TRAINING SESSIONS**

For the people who are interested in working on the Chapter's train trips, certification sessions will be held at the Oatka Depot on Saturday, March 17 or 24. These are identical sessions and you need to attend only one starting at 10:00 a.m. You must attend a session in order to be a car host. If you cannot attend one of these scheduled sessions, call Bob Miner at 671-3589 and a special session will be set up.

## **CHINA TOUR 1990 BEING PLANNED**

*By Ron Amberger*

We now have detailed information on the 1990 China rail tour. The departure day will be June 8 for a three week tour of Chinese railways, cities and famous tourist sites. The tour group will be fully escorted by the author who is the veteran of several rail tours in China. The group will travel extensively by train while in China. On most trains first class accommodations in coaches and sleeping cars will be provided. These are what are called "soft-seat cars". The group will seek steam locomotives in all parts of the country and also enjoy well over a thousand miles of rail travel. This year the tour will feature a visit to a two-foot gage line in southwest China that is home to several Baldwin 0-10-0 tender engines built in 1926. We will also see all the remaining classes of main-line steam (two classes of 4-6-2's, 2-10-2's, several classes and sub-classes of 2-8-2's) and several classes of industrial steam engines (0-8-0, 2-8-2, 2-6-2, 0-6-0T, and 2-8-0). There are at least three classes of US-built steam engines still in service there. Of course, we will see a lot of diesel power as well as electrified lines. There will also be a visit to a narrow gage local railroad



or lumber railroad in the northeast. Not to be overlooked, there will be visits to some trolley lines and the only interurban system in China. We are planning to visit the Tangshan Locomotive Works - the last steam locomotive factory (this is the last year for this works), and at least one steam locomotive heavy repair facility.

The tour will visit some famous cities including Hong Kong, Kunming, Beijing, Shengyang, Jilin and Shanghai. Among other tourist sites, the group will visit the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, and the Ming Tombs. Accommodations are fine and the food is always excellent and plentiful. There will be three meals a day and the tour price of \$3,290 includes everything - all air and surface tickets, all meals and hotel rooms - you only need to bring money to buy souvenirs and snacks.

For more information, a detailed prospectus or a look at a vide of the 1988 tour, please contact:

Ron Amberger  
209 Pearl Street  
Rochester, NY 14607  
Phone: 244-6438

## **ROCHESTER CHAPTER - NRHS CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **MARCH**

- 15 - Chapter Meeting - 40&8 Club
- 17 - Training session Oatka Depot 10:00 a.m.
- 24 - Training session Oatka Depot 10:00 a.m.
- 25 - Chapter Banquet - Burgundy Basin Inn
- 31 - New York City Train Trip (Amtrak)

### **APRIL**

- 5 - Trustees Meeting - 40&8 Club
- 19 - Chapter Meeting - 40&8 Club
- 21 - In Car Training - Sodus, NY

### **MAY**

- 3 - Trustees meeting - 40&8 Club
- 12 - Webster Girl Scouts Charter - Omid
- 15 - Operation Lifesaver Begins - Greater Rochester
- 17 - Chapter Meeting - 40&8 Club - Elections

## **PUBLICITY - OUTREACH**

*By Mike Byrne*

As we prepare to enter our 1990 Museum and train excursion season we must also look to other avenues available for the Chapter to reach the community.

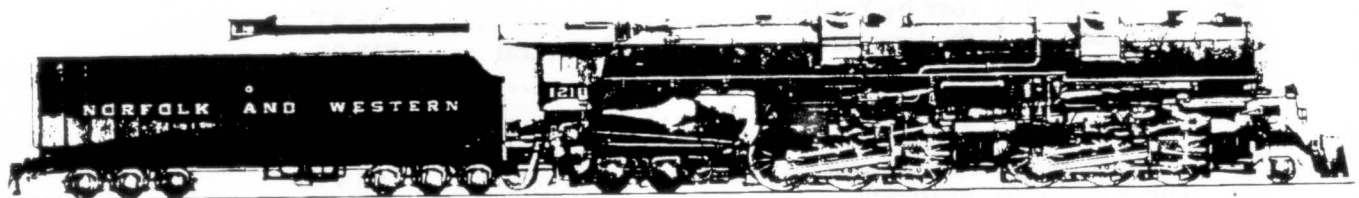
Rand Warner, Dick Wersinger, and myself have been actively working with CONRAIL and the local School Districts to bring a rail safety program to the Monroe County Area this May.

Conrail has agreed to supply a 45 ft. van and crew to take to schools from May 15 through May 31. This van and crew will take Junior and Senior High School students through a 20 minute educational tour. The tour begins with a small visual presentation dealing with Grade Crossing and trespassing related accidents. The next stop in the tour is at a computer where the student is asked questions regarding railroad safety and a thumbs up is given for correct answers. The final stop is at an engine simulator where 2 students are picked to operate a locomotive as it runs down the track until a vehicle pulls in front. The student must blow the horn and place the train into emergency as they attempt to avoid a tragedy. Hopefully, an important lesson will be learned during these tours.

We have also made arrangements for WHEC Channel 10 to broadcast a 15 minute safety video and a panel discussion scheduled to be aired on May 13 (Sunday) at 11:00 a.m. The show is called "Newsmaker" and Warren Doremus is the host.

We can use volunteers to assist during the weekdays during these school visits. Conrail will supply the people to run the show, but any help we can provide is appreciated.

This is a win-win situation for Conrail, the community, and the NRHS. As an organization chartered by the state education department, we need to become involved in the community. If you have any projects you would like to see happen, or if you want to help with the "Operation Lifesaver" program, please give Mike Byrne (225-5659) or Rand Warner (248-8889) a call.



## 1990 ELECTIONS FOR BOARD OF TRUSTEES, ROCHESTER CHAPTER, NRHS

The Annual Elections for members of the BOARD OF TRUSTEES will take place at the regular Chapter meeting on May 17, 1990.

The Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum is growing, soon to be operating rides with the New York Museum of Transportation. The Trips Committee has expanded into Fall Foliage trips and Passenger Car Charters. We, the members of Rochester Chapter, have a growing, dynamic organization. We are looking for people to lead the Rochester Chapter as it grows in size and scope of activities. We are looking for candidates for the following OFFICES:

- |                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. President           | 5. Corresponding Secretary |
| 2. Vice President      | 6. National Director       |
| 3. Recording Secretary | 7. Trustees (2 positions)  |
| 4. Treasurer           |                            |

If you would like to run for an office, please contact either Charlie Harshbarger or Bob Cowan, at home in the evening, at the Chapter Meetings, or at the Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum on most Saturdays.

### ROCHESTER & GENESEE VALLEY RAILROAD MUSEUM STORE

*-Operation Supt. Tom Bauman - 458-4289*

The Chapter Store will be operating at our Museum and on various Chapter train trips throughout the year. If you would be interested in participating, please call me.

New books available at the February meeting:

Northeast RR Scene - EL RR .....	\$6.50
Erie Lackawanna East .....	\$9.95
East Broad Top .....	\$9.95
B&O Heritage .....	\$7.95
Route of the Erie Limited .....	\$9.95
Riding that New River Train .....	\$18.95
New York Central Illustrated History .....	\$12.95
Pennsylvania Illustrated History .....	\$12.95
Union Pacific Illustrated History .....	\$12.95
Across New York by Trolley .....	\$5.95
Cabooses of the New Haven and New York Central ....	\$14.95
F-Units .....	\$11.95
1948 Railroad Atlas .....	\$6.95
1989 Railroad Atlas .....	\$14.95
Vanishing Vistas - Norfolk & Western .....	\$9.95

Other new items available:

1990 AMTRAK Calendars .....	\$5.00
19" x 23" pictures of Empire State Express .....	\$15.00

**NOTE:** A 20% discount on all books for members of the Rochester Chapter.

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## ROCHESTER & GENESEE VALLEY MUSEUM WORK PROGRESS REPORT

-Chmn. Rand Warner - 248-8889

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### General

- Winter made its presence felt again in February, hence, several Museum projects slowed or were put on hold until the weather improves. It was a good time for Rand to head south for a few weeks of relaxation. Word has it that it also was a good time for Bill Reid to remarry. Congratulations Bill.

At the Museum, Charlie continues to organize the Tool Car. Under Mike Dow's direction the signal equipment was relocated from the baggage car to the milk car. John Redden, Norm Shaddick, and company have been keeping EK#6, Jackson Tamper, Chevy Hi Rail, etc. operational and in use.

Finally, Bob Miner has been out at Sodus several Saturday's tending to the NYC Coach. This was not meant to be a complete detailed report, but just an overview. So thanks go out to all that have participated but were not acknowledged above. (Dave Luca)

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### NEWS FROM THE TOOL CAR

-by Charlie Harshbarger - 266-8339

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### Priorities

- Continue normal organizing.
- Removal of all signal and interlocking equipment.
- Install more cabinets and shelving.

### Plans for March/April

- Inventory materials and prepare for return of Seabees.

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## TRACK & RIGHT OF WAY

-Supt. Bill Reid - 589-4880

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### Priorities

- Continue track construction northward.
- Continue grading, ballasting, and culvert work ahead of track and determine adequate supply of additional clean ballast.
- Determine options for realignment of south end of NYMT track.

### Plans for March/April

- Continue rough grading and track construction, weather permitting.
  - Complete arrangements for contract to haul in clean ballast.
  - Complete arrangements for delivery of relay ties.
  - Continue sales of landscape ties, and sorting and marketing approach for new season.
  - Rebuild/build culvert headwalls on remaining culverts with ties and galvanized angle iron posts.
  - Mark and flag any manholes not yet identified.
  - Work on problem manhole with Ted Strang of NYMT.
- \*\*\*\*\*

## FREIGHT EQUIPMENT

-Supt. John Myers - 334-3948

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### Priorities

- Complete refurbishment of cabooses - to haul passengers.



- Make plans to put flat car and hopper car into work train service for track construction.
- Prioritize needs for any other type of freight cars required.

### Plans for March/April

- Consolidate all freight car spare parts in NYC Caboose.
- Straighten up steps and railings on Pennsy Hopper and reweld broken coupler pockets.
- Continue to refurb north end platform of NYC Caboose, weather permitting.
- Acquire additional replacement parts for NYC Caboose.

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## **SIGNALS & COMMUNICATIONS**

- Supt. Neil Bellenger - 359-9985

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### Priorities

- Determine rational phased approach for installations.
- Inventory all available equipment.
- Identify and procure shortfall items.

### Plans for March/April

- Continue consolidating, sorting and identifying all signal and communications hardware.
- Integrate, phase and prioritize submitted signal plans for orderly integration with track expansion, Niobe tower parts, signal tower bldg., etc.
- Inventory all telegraph, telephone and radio communication equipment.

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## **MOTIVE POWER**

-Supt. John Redden - 594-2227

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### Priorities

- Maintain current locomotive fleet in good repair.
- Investigate additional diesel motive power.
- Acquire steam locomotive for display or operation.

### Plans for March/April

- Complete consolidation and inventory of spare parts.
- Continue investigating lease and purchase options for steam and diesel locomotives.

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## **M.O.W. EQUIPMENT**

- Supt. Norm Shaddick - 865-2773

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An attempt is going to be made to rehabilitate our Kalamazoo track car this year. If anyone has access to a shop manual for a Wisconsin model 27VE4, air cooled 4 cylinder engine, please contact Bob Mader or myself. Any volunteers for this project will be most welcomed.

### Priorities

- Maintain operational that equipment needed to support current construction efforts.
- Prepare equipment for passenger hauling on speeders for 1990 or 1991 season.
- Identify high priority M.O.W. equipment needed in future.

### Plans for March/April

- Install new doors, fenders and rocker pane kits on Chevy Hi Rail as weather permits.

- Acquire parts to build a long wheel base section car with removable seats - for passenger hauling season on NRHS trackage.
- Resolve hard starting/running problem with Fairmont speeder.

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## **PASSENGER EQUIPMENT**

*-Supt. Robert Miner - 671-3589*

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### **Priorities**

- Prepare for the brake Clean Oil Test & Stencil due on the NYC Coach.
- Install diaphragms between NYC coaches.
- Install PA System in NYC coaches.
- Improve method of charging batteries on NYC coaches.

### **Progress for February**

- I attended a convention and signed up the Chapter for membership to the Railroad Passenger Car Alliance. This is a group representing private car owners and excursion operators. New requirements to run private cars on Class 1 railroads were discussed. CSX and Conrail have already stated that the cars must be Amtrak certified to be used on excursions. Norfolk Southern has **not** yet required the Amtrak standard. They **would** like a standard that is more reasonable. All are worried that the FRA may adopt the Amtrak standard. This would cost private car owners, like the Rochester Chapter, to spend big bucks to comply with the **standard**.

### **Plans for March/April**

- Work on the priority items.
- Get **the** evaporator fan motor back and install.

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## **CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT**

*- Supt. Steve Huse - 381-1012*

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### **Priorities**

- Maintain operational all equipment required to support current track construction program.
- Resolve repairs of all remaining equipment.
- Sell surplus equipment to acquire needed equipment.

### **Progress for February**

- Repaired/reinstalled voltage regulator on grader and checked starter switch on grader. (Dick Holbert)
- Cleaned and sorted items in field next to red barn.
- Put oil on tracks on Clamshell crane. (Joe Scanlon)
- Removed bad tire from dump truck. Tire fixed at Genesee Valley Tire and put back on dump truck.
- Installed solar powered battery charger on Euclid loader.

### **Plans for March/April**

- Remove and repair starter on backhoe.
- Fix lift lever on Euclid loader. Water in hyd. line.
- Find a door for the drivers side of a 1961-1972 International IH1800 loadstar dump truck.
- Continue to work on electrical problem and fix the brakes on road grader.
- Resolve the issue of putting good parts on the Ford 1969 boom truck or acquiring another truck.

- Fix 2 bad tires on the Gradall.
- Put up fence between construction equipment site and our next door neighbor.

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## TRIP COMMITTEE

-Chmn. Bob Miner - 671-3589

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### Priorities

- Negotiate and sign agreement with The Ontario Midland RR to run excursions and charters.
- Negotiate and sign agreement with Empire State Railcar for use of three passenger cars.
- Acquire permission for parking in Webster.

### Progress for February

- Mike Byrnes article in the Sunday travel section did the trick. Jim Easts trip to NYC is sold out.
- Mike Byrne has firmed up the plans for his bus trip to Steamtown in Scranton, PA via Oswego. Better get your money in early before the public hears about it.

### Plans for March

- Prepare for the March trip planning/training sessions.
- Clear up priority items.

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## THE MAIL CAR

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Dear Readers -

Regrettably, several members did not receive their Semaphore in February. My computer broke down at a critical time and our backup person had just been deprived of his facilities to print mailing labels.

Thanks to Mike Byrne's backup floppy discs and Rand Warner's computer, we got most of the 300 issues out on time. However, those of you with recent address changes were slighted.

To avoid these difficulties in the future, we would appreciate your help in an emergency. If you have a computer with mailing label capability and would like to be enlisted as a potential backup person, please let me know. Identify the type of computer, its capacity, its compatibility with other computers, and how much notice you need to make it available. Include whether or not you have a mailing list program. My computer is a Mac+ with a 30Mb hard drive. The hard drive requires a Mac with an SCSI (scuzzie) port.

Please send your info to me: Dan Cosgrove, 48 Hillside Drive, Spencerport, NY 14559.

Hopefully, we will not have to call on you, but it would be nice to have a list of potential backups. Imagine what would happen if we had to send out over 2,000 trip brochures with no available computers!

Thank you for your consideration.

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Special thanks to Tom and Lois Mundrick. They have faithfully folded, stapled and labelled the Semaphore for ages. This is a thankless, tedious, boring job that Tom and Lois perform every month. Lois keeps us straight and we just couldn't do without them. Thanks you two!!!

Sincerely,

Dan Cosgrove  
Corresponding Secretary

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## HISTORIAN NOTES

-by Keith Blackall

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This month we are concluding the article on the Erie Railroad written by Chapter Member Ted Jackson. Next month Bruce Beardsley writes of Railroading in the Norwich, NY area.



**ERIE RAILROAD**  
**Rochester Division, 1938-1942**

**(CONCLUSION)**

*By Ted Jackson*

**Miscellania**

This section will include a bunch of odds and ends which may be of interest.

According to my Mother, around World War I, both a Corning train and a Lehigh Valley train for Hemlock left Rochester at 5 p.m. The two depots were right across the river from each other and after the Erie crossed the river, the tracks were parallel until Mortimer and this afforded the passengers in both trains a bit of a race.

The Erie depot in Rochester was a red brick building constructed in the late 1880's. The first floor contained the ticket office, baggage room and waiting room, including a news and snack stand. This part wasn't much larger than the Lehigh Valley depot but the Erie building also had a second floor and a large tower. The Division offices were on a news and snack stand. This part wasn't much larger than the Lehigh Valley depot but the Erie building also had a second floor and a large tower. The Division offices were on the second floor. The tower originally contained a clock but that was gone by my time. The depot was served by two stub tracks covered by a train shed. The train shed came down around 1939 or 1940. When passenger service was discontinued out of Rochester in 1941, the depot came down shortly afterward. There was a bit of graffiti on the Court Street side - mild by present day standards. This consisted mostly of names scratched or chalked into the bricks. Just to the left of the main door, a message had been scratched which said, "SOPHIA WAIT OR WRITE". I often wondered as I entered the depot, how many years that had been there and if Sophia ever got her message.

My Mother was brought up in Conesus and when she was of high school age, she went to school in Wayland, rather than Livonia which was closer. This was because in the days before and during World War I, the train service was such that the students could take the early train (462) from Conesus to Wayland and an afternoon train (469) back to Conesus. Running time was about 25 minutes each way. Wouldn't you love that kind of "school bus" service? (You didn't want to have to stay after school though - the next train, 471, wouldn't get you back into Conesus until about 7 p.m.)

At one time there were several salt mines in operation in Livingston County. One of the largest was between Livonia and South Livonia on the Corning Branch a few hundred feet south of VanZandt Road. Although it has been closed for a long time, the last I knew it was still owned by International Salt and the local thinking was that they might reopen it if the Retsof mine was ever worked out. When I rode through there on the passenger trains, you could still see remains of some of the railroad embankments and trestles.

Although some retrenchment was going on during the period 1938-1941, you would never have known it from the equipment. It was cleaned and well maintained. No grass between the rails except parts of the Lakeville branch. Most of the stations still had agents and were neat and tidy. The steam locomotives always looked like they had been freshly painted and polished within an inch of their lives. Extra freights carried white flags. (On the other hand, while the Stillwell coach on Trains 467-468 was clean, Sampson and Charles Atlas together couldn't have opened the windows.) Air conditioned cars were still fairly new on the main line so we never got any of those.

Each day, the Corning branch way freight would have a meet with either 467 or 468 depending on which direction it was going. On the southbound days, this meet would sometimes be at Conesus at which point parts of both crews would get together a minute or so in the depot waiting room. The reason was that the conductor of the passenger train and both the conductor and engineer of the way freight were all brothers by the name of Moran. Their father had also been a long-time employee of the Rochester Division.

The depot which the Chapter now owns, was originally listed in the timetables as Scottsville, then Pixley, later followed by O-at-ka and finally Industry. By the 1930's, it was the only regular stop for the Corning trains between Avon and Rochester. West Henrietta was a flag stop. The original station name for Mortimer was Red Creek.

Most railroads had distinctive whistles for their steam locomotives but none, to my mind, were more distinctive than the Erie. Their whistles really sounded eerie. There were some aberrations; K-1 2546 sounded like something out of a Hitchcock movie. It was unfortunate that no Erie steam locomotives have survived, if one for that reason. (Actually, one K-1 did get sent to South Korea in the mid-1950's. Wonder whatever happened to it?) The only Erie motive power I know of that is still in existence is gas-electric 5012 which is in the Ohio Railroad Museum in Worthington, Ohio - a suburb of Columbus. As of August 1989, 5012 was in pretty tough shape and according to one of the people at the facility, he doubted if it would ever run again; among its problems is a frozen engine. I guess the Erie's main legacy will be its Stillwell coaches, one of which sits outside of our depot.

## Epilogue

The final demise of the Rochester Division was a slow lingering death. The Corning branch between Livonia and Wayland saw its last train in 1956. Actually, one of the last trains was a special that the Buffalo and Rochester chapters sponsored. I think it amounted to 16-18 cars hauled by two Baldwin road-switchers. However, by that time, the speed limit was down to 25 or 30 mph so I was denied one last wild dash through South Livonia.

With the formation of the Erie-Lackawanna in 1960, all of the Erie track between Wayland and Painted Post was redundant and was abandoned, bit by bit. An attempted abandonment of the Livonia-Avon segment in 1964 led to the formation of the Livonia, Avon and Lakeville although even that did not save the segment from Livonia to Conesus Lake Junction for long.

With the anticipated formation of Conrail, the Chessie System put in a bid for the part of the Erie-Lackawanna which included what was left of the Rochester Division. However, the Chessie and the E-L employees could not come to an agreement over work rules. Then the Attica branch bridge over the Genesee River burned and the fate of that branch was sealed. Conrail took over the Rochester-Avon segment and have since abandoned everything north of Mortimer.

R.I.P.

## References

- Carleton, P. The Erie-Lackawanna Story. Published by D. Carleton Rail Books, River Vale, New Jersey, 1974.  
Carleton, P. The Erie Railroad Story. Published by D. Carleton Railbooks, Dunnellon, Florida, 1988.  
Gordon, W.R. Erie Railroad-Rochester Division, Rochester, New York, 1965.

Pennypacker, B. Eastern Steam Pictorial - The Anthracite Roads, P&D Carleton, River Vale, New Jersey, 1966.

Rauber, W.J. D.&M. and the D.L.&W. - Putting Dansville on the Railroad Map, Dansville, New York, 1980.

Westing, F. and Staufer, A.F. Erie Power. Published by Alvin F. Staufer, Medina, Ohio, 1970.

Rauber's book is included because it has a rather complete history of the Dansville and Mt. Morris as well as a number of photographs.

Those interested in seeing what some of the Erie locomotives and equipment of the period looked like might want to consult some of the above references. Carleton's Erie Railroad Story is largely taken from his earlier Erie Lackawanna story with some additions. Pennypacker's has chapters on nine anthracite roads including the Erie. The Westing and Staufer book concentrates on motive power with specification data about each engine class. Among the steam engines which were the mainstays of the Rochester Division around 1940 were: K-1's 2521, 2532, 2544, 2546 and 2565; H21 and H21a's 1616, 1633, 1634, 1635, 1673, 2018 and 2075. I am not as familiar with the 2-8-2's as we never had them on the Corning branch but all the ones I saw were N-2's. You will find pictures of a few of these engines, or at least their comrades in these books.

All four of these books have a lot of excellent pictures of Erie motive power and trains. However, all of them concentrate on mainline operations, the New Jersey area and eastern Pennsylvania. The only place you will find many pictures of actual Rochester Division operations is in Bill Gordon's book. It is fitting that the inside of the front cover has a full page picture of K-1 2521, an engine which spent a good many years on the Corning branch. In particular, this book will have more pictures of the electric operations than any of the others. This book also includes excerpts from several different employee time tables. One of these dates back to 1914. At that time, the electric trains were all designated as first class and the steam power passenger trains were designated as second class, even the Corning trains. Among other things, it shows a steam powered passenger train leaving Rochester for Mt. Morris at 4:40 p.m., another passenger train for Lakeville at 4:50 p.m. and another passenger train for Corning at 5:00 p.m. Judging by the pictures, these were probably powered by either 4-4-0's or 4-6-0's, many of them Mother Hubbards. Now if we could just get ahold of a time machine ....

For a reprint of the complete article, please contact Dave Luca, 983 Winton Rd. N., Rochester, NY 14609, (716) 288-0318.



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## THE SEMAPHORE

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ROCHESTER CHAPTER

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### SEMAPHORE DEADLINE:

Deadline for the April issue is March 31. Please send your articles to Dave Luca at 983 Winton Rd., N., Rochester, NY 14609.

### CHAPTER MEETING:

March 15, 1990 - 8:00 p.m.  
40&8 Club  
933 University Avenue  
Rochester, NY.

