

NEXT MEETING:
June 18
VIRTUAL MEETING
Check your email
for an invitation



GETTING BACK ON TRACK! The Tuesday Night Track Gang has been tackling the rebuilding of Switch 3 in Industry Yard. Completion of this project will give us a robust and reliable connection to the outside world once again. See page 6 for details. PHOTO BY OTTO M. VONDRAK

Staging a Comeback

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I'm not sure our museum organization has ever faced a challenge like the one we have all been living through the last four months or so. While your museum board has taken every possible precaution, we will face many obstacles once we are given the green light to reopen by the state. While we may have the opportunity to open the museum to the public, there may not be a way to offer train rides while enforcing social distancing requirements. That means we need to get creative and look at new ways to bring visitors to the museum this summer (see page 3). We hope that the infection rate continues to trend downward so that we might salvage a regular fall and winter schedule of train rides. The truth of the matter is, we just don't know what the future holds right now.

Regardless of the situation, there's still plenty to look forward to. Significant

progress is taking place on the Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh caboose 280 restoration, with an eye toward its public debut on **July 25!** Work continues on the restoration of Lehigh Valley caboose 95100, with the goal of applying exterior finish at the end of summer, and perhaps getting a new set of steps fabricated as well. A group of volunteers have stepped forward to help our Erie Railroad Stillwell coach get new weather-tight windows. Most importantly, we're looking forward to having one of the depot bathrooms fully functional by mid-July.

We want to keep you all connected during this difficult time. Your ideas for future programs are welcome. Please email me at ovondrak@yahoo.com or call me at (585) 820-2341.

—Otto M. Vondrak,
Museum President



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BR&P 280

BR&P 280 UPDATE: Heat shields and coal bin fabricated by Bill Marcotte and painted by Jeremy Tuke have been installed inside BR&P caboose 280 (see page 5). The coal bin will be painted. The stove was donated by member Sam Ferrara, and a chimney pipe will be installed later this year. Part of our restoration project was to backdate the car as much as possible to the 1930s and restore as many of the original details as practically possible. The restored car will make its public debut on July 25 as your museum will be hosting a special Open House event at Industry Depot. Details to come!

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UPCOMING MONTHLY PROGRAMS

Due to restrictions on large gatherings, New York State's recent stay-at-home order, and the temporary closure of the 40&8 Club, our monthly meetings will move to virtual space. An email invitation will be sent to all members to join a special meeting on-line for **June 18!** Programs and presenters will be announced via email. Ideas for future programs would be welcome.

Your museum is seeking a new chairman for the Programs Committee. This person would coordinate with program presenters, and make sure audio-visual equipment is available and functioning for each meeting. If you are interested in volunteering, or would like to learn more, please contact Otto Vondrak at ovondrak@yahoo.com.

FIRST STEPS TOWARDS REOPENING FOR THE PUBLIC

Since the first restrictions regarding large gatherings were issued in March,



Chris Costello will be the presenter at our June 18 Virtual Meeting, talking about his plans to restore Erie Business Car 1 and a former Erie Railroad troop sleeper. An email invitation will be sent to all members to join our Zoom meeting, and the event will also live stream to our Facebook page.

PHOTO COURTESY ERIE BUSINESS CAR SOCIETY

your museum Board of Trustees took all precautions by limiting access to the museum grounds as well as curtailing any unnecessary spending. As local restrictions are relaxed, we are considering the possibility of reopening the museum to the public once again. Your museum Board of Trustees is working in cooperation with department superintendents to develop a plan to host a limited access public open house event without train rides on **July 25**. Rest assured, the health and safety of our volunteers and visitors remains a priority, and any possible public event would include new policies and protocols for interacting with the public. This is still in the planning stages and more details will be available in the next issue of THE SEMAPHORE.

ANNUAL RULES CLASS JUNE 20 AND 21

As you may be aware, we face unique challenges in 2020 as we prepare to reopen the museum and resume as much normal activity as we can. This means we need to re-certify our train crew volunteers. We will offer these classes on **Saturday, June 20, and Sunday, June 21**, via "virtual classrooms" online. To help control the size of the classes, we'll be asking volunteers to register ahead of time for one day or the other. Check your email for "SignUp Genius" links. We can send electronic copies of all essential documents to anyone who requires updated versions.

Volunteers will only have to attend one of the days and only the parts they want be certified in. After the conclusion of each part, exams will be sent out electronically, and can be completed at your own pace outside of the virtual sessions. Scores will be tallied and recorded by Frank Gough.

PART ONE: SAFETY RULES

– Strongly suggested for ALL VOLUNTEERS, regardless if you are in train service or not. Covers basic rules, safety, radio rules, and customer service.

PART TWO: OPERATING – The second part of the class is devoted to rules of train operation. This second part is required for anyone interested in volunteering for train service (brakeman, conductor, or engineer).

PART THREE: AIR BRAKES

– The third part of the class is devoted to air brakes and train handling. This third part is required for anyone interested in volunteering as a conductor or engineer.

Here's how the virtual schedule will break down on both days:

Part 1: 9:00am to 12:00pm

Lunch Break: 12:00pm to 1:00pm

Parts 2 and 3: 1:00pm to 4:00pm

Thanks to everyone who has shown interest in volunteering this year, and I thank you for your patience as we work to deliver this vital safety training to you under extraordinary circumstances. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.—Frank Gough, Ops. Supt.

ERIE 2328

RIGHT: Clean-out and organization of the contents inside the Erie Railroad Stillwell coach took place at the beginning of June. This is the first step towards evaluating the overall condition of the car for restoration.

BELOW: Erie Lackawanna and Conrail heavily modified the window openings over the years, damaging and removing vital pieces of trim that keep the window sashes in place.

BELOW RIGHT: Charles Rothbart inspects a window frame to determine what pieces are missing and will need to be replaced.



ERIE STILLWELL COACH PROJECT UPDATE

Since our 1926 Erie Railroad Stillwell-designed commuter coach was acquired by our museum in the mid-1980s, the goal has been to restore it as an example of one of the first all-steel passenger car designs in America. Significant restoration steps were taken in 1997 when the steel below the windows was replaced by museum volunteers. With renewed support from the Stillwell family, the roof was professionally stripped and repainted in 2018. Recent RIT graduate Charles Rothbart has stepped forward to help coordinate efforts to replace the windows, and also perform a complete assessment on the overall condition of the car that we can use to formulate a restoration plan going forward.

Towards the end of May, significant progress was made in cleaning out and organizing the remaining materials stored inside the coach. The majority of replacement window sashes constructed by the late Bernie Cubitt in the 1990s have since rotted and will need to be replaced. Upon further examination, it was discovered that the majority of window openings had been severely modified either by Erie or Conrail during the coach's life as a "camp car" assigned to work trains. Many openings had window guides torched off, and many pieces of trim that hold the windows in place are missing or damaged. These items will have to be addressed before replacement windows are fabricated.

The first job will be to install temporary plywood "plugs" in the openings where

replacement windows have completely failed. This will help keep weather out of the car as other repair work continues inside. It is our goal to secure estimates for the fabrication of window frame trim parts and replacement window sashes and glazing before the end of summer, and perhaps even begin preparing a few window openings for new windows before the end of the year. If you are interested in contributing to this project, please contact Charles Rothbart via email at chrothbart@gmail.com.

LEHIGH VALLEY CABOOSE 95100 RESTORATION UPDATE

Work is once again picking up. Chuck Whalen has been cleaning and polishing portions of the end vestibules and railings with a wire wheel and a needle scaler. Bill

RIGHT: Joe Steimer uses a wire wheel to remove old paint and rust from the end railings of Lehigh Valley caboose 95100. This will prepare the surfaces for primer and finish coat.

MIDDLE RIGHT: Project leader Sam Rosenberg uses a grinding wheel to grind down the tops of screws used to plug small holes in the steel body of the LV caboose.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Bill Marcotte ground off two support brackets that were welded to the boiler of Brooklyn Navy Yard 0-4-0 12 on May 23. The brackets were installed in the 1940s to support an air reservoir for the brake system. They were removed in an effort to cosmetically restore the engine to its as-built 1918 appearance. Joel Shaw is the project manager.

Marcotte helped fabricate some patches at the end of the car, and Sam Rosenberg has been filling in small screw holes. Joe Steimer is also assisting with cleanup tasks. Our goal is to complete exterior repairs by the end of this summer so that we can prepare the caboose for its exterior finish coat.

The museum has secured a quote from a local fabricator to make the four sets of steps missing from our caboose. Based on drawings provided by the museum, the contractor will cut, weld, prime, and paint the steps for \$3,400. While we have some funds and donation commitments to cover a portion of the cost, we still need to raise \$1,500 to pay for the order. Watch for our fundraising announcement!

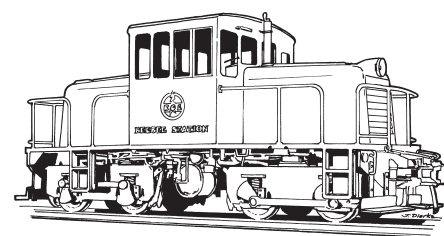
—Sam Rosenberg, Project Mgr.

BR&P CABOOSE 280 UPDATE AND PUBLIC DEBUT

This multi-year project is rapidly reaching its conclusion as many final details are completed. New drip-guards were fabricated by Bill Marcotte, and painted and installed over the windows by Jeremy Tuke. Heat shield components fabricated by Bill Marcotte were also painted and installed around the caboose stove (donated by Sam Ferrara) by Jeremy Tuke. Conductor's brake valve components are being fabricated and installed by Rob Burz, while Joe Nugent will be cleaning and inspecting the main brake cylinder and angle cocks.

Our plans are to relocate BR&P 280 from its home on Track 7 inside the shop over to active rail on Track 9 on or about June 27. This will allow the caboose to be positioned over the inspection pit so we can take care of a few last-minute items under the car, and prepare for the public debut as part of our museum's planned Open House





On June 6, Rochester Gas & Electric 1941 was woken up to help perform some switching tasks in the Upper Yard. First order of business was pulling former Livonia, Avon & Lakeville 20 out of the shop (LEFT) and repositioned on Track 7 (BELOW). After RG&E 8 was placed back in the shop, Joe Steimer, Jerry Tusch, and Sam Rosenberg took RG&E 1941 out for some training runs (BOTTOM). Built in 1941 by General Electric, the 45-ton diesel switcher is the oldest operating locomotive in our museum fleet.

event on July 25! More details to come. Thank you to everyone who has contributed their time and efforts as we cross the finish line with this very significant restoration project! —Jeremy Tuke

INDUSTRY SWITCH LEAD

The Tuesday Night Track Gang That Sometimes Meets on Saturdays has been tackling the rebuilding of the connection between the LA&L and our Industry Yard, including Switch 3 (You may recall Switch 2 was removed from Industry Yard along with display tracks 1 and 2 in 2008). As part of this project, the movable-point derail in the Hill Block will be permanently removed, with the point rail re-purposed for the rebuilding of Switch 3. The switch stand for Switch 3 will be relocated from the east side to the west side of the tracks, and all new ties and ballast will be installed as well. Once complete, this will help improve the reliability and durability of our connection to the outside world!

—David Kehrer, Track & ROW Supt.

FAIRPORT JUNCTION TRAIN VIEWING PLATFORM

Nearly complete, the new Fairport Junction Train Viewing Platform is located on Liftbridge Lane, between Fairport B-Side and Mulconry's. The viewing platform was rebuilt from the Rotary Club's "Albert H. Knapp" pavilion already on site.

The Fairport Perinton Partnership for a Better Community initiated the Fairport Junction Train Viewing Platform project in 2006. They held focus groups with railfans, researched other such platforms





THREE PHOTOS AT NIOBE: The Columbus & Erie (C&E) ran proximately parallel to the original Erie Railroad main line, and provided a second main track that was 13 miles in length, and bypassed the steeper grades of the original route via Brady Lake. At the east end, the bypass left the main line at the tiny hamlet of Niobe, N.Y., and reconnected at Columbus, Pa. on the west end. The C&E was completed and opened to traffic on December 2, 1908. A two-story interlocking was constructed at Niobe in 1909, equipped with a Saxby & Farmer 36-lever frame to control the switches and signals at the junction. CM Tower in Columbus, Pa., was closed in 1945, and its functions were added to NE Tower with the installation of a Union Switch & Signal control panel. The photo at left shows what NE (Niobe) Tower looked like in the 1960s. The middle left photo shows an Erie Railroad freight train passing by NE Tower. The bottom photo shows the local control panel for "CM" (Columbus Junction) added to NE Tower in 1945. Niobe Tower closed in 1988, and our museum volunteers salvaged the lever machine and the CM control panel. Both are restored and on display at RGVRM. COLLECTION COREY C. COPELAND



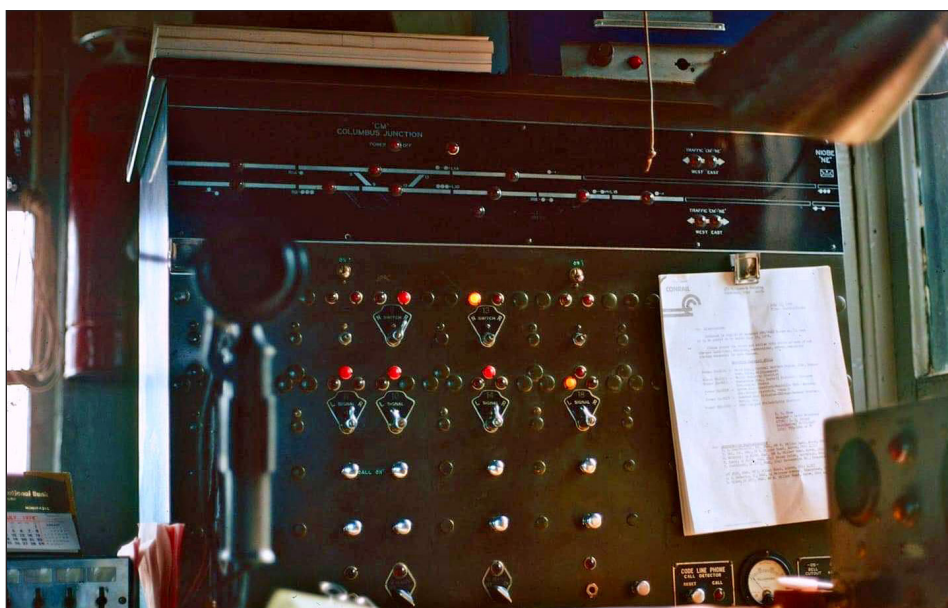
in communities across the country, interviewed people involved in those projects, developed the design concepts and a pitch piece, and then gained the endorsement of the Village of Fairport for the project. Several revisions of the plan were made in the intervening 12 years.

The Partnership solicited donations from the Fairport Perinton Merchants Association (\$30,000), Fairport Rotary (\$2,500), and secured a \$10,000 grant from CSX Transportation to help fund the \$150,000 project. Recognizing the potential positive economic impact of this tourism initiative, the Fairport Office of Community and Economic Development and Village of Fairport are funding the balance of the project.

The train viewing platform also features a live railroad radio scanner feed tuned in to the CSX main line frequency. Several Amtrak and CSX trains use the tracks through Fairport daily, and the platform should make for a nice location to enjoy all the action from a safe distance.

SAFETY FIRST

Coming out to the museum? Wear a face covering, keep reasonable distance whenever possible, wash your hands, and bring your own hand sanitizer if possible. If you're feeling sick, STAY HOME.



VISIT US ONLINE
FACEBOOK.COM/RGVRM
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THE **SEMAPHORE**

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PLAN AHEAD:
June 18, 2020

VIRTUAL MEETING

PLAN AHEAD:
July 16, 2020

TO BE ANNOUNCED

Find us on Facebook! facebook.com/rgvrrm



Lettered as Baltimore & Ohio C2631, this is how our Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh caboose 280 looked after it was moved to its display track at Industry in 1979. Since this time, our volunteers have transformed this car, backdating it to its 1930s appearance. After many years of hard work, BR&P 280 will make its public debut at a special open house event on July 25. See inside for details.