

THE SEMAPHORE

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCHESTER & GENESEE VALLEY RAILROAD MUSEUM

NEXT MEETING:
February 18
 Scott Lothes presents
 the photography of
 Donald W. Furler

VOL. 64 NO. 2
 FEBRUARY 2021



Conductor Charles Bell and brakeman David Gwilt help guide their train down the Hill Block to Industry Yard during some switching moves on January 9, 2021. In just a few short weeks, we'll be preparing for our first public event on April 3. Will you be ready? PHOTO BY OTTO M. VONDRAK

Make No Little Plans

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"Make no little plans, they have no magic to stir mens' blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work..." the quote came from Daniel Burnham, prominent architect and city planner speaking in 1910 on the topic of Chicago's rapid expansion and great plans for the future. As we approach our 50th anniversary of purchasing Industry Depot and establishing the museum, we have also been considering big plans for the future. While improvements to the museum grounds and restoring our collection of historic trains is important, we also don't want to forget the social aspect of our organization. We're looking forward to resuming in-person meetings, trips, and excursions as soon as it is safe to do so.

While we don't know exactly how the 2021 season will play out, we've put together a full schedule of events hoping

we can carry out as many of them as we can, in a safe and responsible manner (See **page 2**). In a worst case scenario, we will cancel events as required. Of course, we will enforce and modify our museum health and safety plan as conditions warrant. Never forget: **When in doubt, the safe course must be taken.**

Last year, your museum met and overcame some of the largest challenges ever presented to us. I'm confident we'll continue to thrive in the coming year, but it may take some extra effort on our part. As always, your contributions in any amount and in any capacity are appreciated.

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

—Otto M. Vondrak, Museum President



www.rgvrrm.org

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2021 R&GV Museum Schedule

Subject to change or cancellation as conditions require.

March 13 – Virtual Safety and Rules Class

March 20 – Yard Switching and General Museum Clean Up

March 27 – Yard Switching and General Museum Clean Up

April 3 – Easter Bunny Train Rides

May 22-23 – Train Rides

June 13 – Trains and Trolleys at Twilight I

June 20-21 – Princess & Superhero Train Rides

July 11 – Trains and Trolleys at Twilight II

July 17-18 – Black Diamond Train Rides

July 17 - Night Photo Session with LV 211, LV boxcar, and LV Caboose

August 15 – Trains and Trolleys at Twilight III

August 21-22 – Classic Cars and Train Rides

August 21 – Night Photo Session with RG&E 1941 and PRR Hopper

September 18-19 – Salute to Veterans Train Rides

October 9-10 – Pumpkin Patch Train Rides

October 15 – 50th Anniversary Depot Dedication,

Museum Banquet, Night Photos

October 16-17 – Pumpkin Patch Train Rides

October 23-24 – Pumpkin Patch Train Rides

October 30-31 – Pumpkin Patch Train Rides

December 4 - 80th Anniversary of *Empire State Express* (TBA)

December 10-11 – Santa Trains to the North Pole

December 17-18 – Santa Trains to the North Pole



It's amazing what you find hidden behind boxes at the museum... this was part of a corporate display from General Railway Signal, and will be incorporated into our signals exhibit. GRS was headquartered in Rochester and manufactured signal systems for railroad and transit agencies around the world. Jackson Glozer and Charles Rothbart helped clean the signs on January 16.

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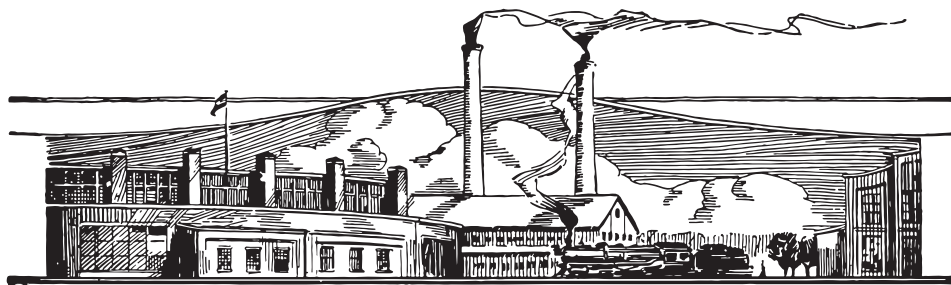
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Sam Rosenberg

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PROGRAM CHAIRMAN VACANT



SHOP — NOTES



ABOVE: Cleanup and dismantling of the interior continued on our Erie Stillwell coach on January 16. Once all the interior panels have been removed we will be able to assess the condition of the frame and the roof. A grant has been applied for to cover the cost of remediation.

UPCOMING •VIRTUAL• MONTHLY PROGRAMS

Until further notice, meetings will be held virtually via Zoom. Look for an invite in your email as we approach the meeting date. Meetings open at 7:00pm, with business meeting starting at 7:30.

Our next meeting will be Thursday, **February 18**. Following a brief business meeting, **Scott Lothes**, President and Executive Director of the **Center for Railroad Photography & Art**, will present a selection of images from the **Donald W. Furler** collection, including back & white steam scenes of Erie, Lehigh Valley, Lehigh & Hudson River, Lehigh & New England, and other regional favorites.

On **March 18**, **Joel Richter**, president of the **Friends of the Railroad** will present about his group's preservation activities and plans for the future. The group was founded in 2008 dedicated to the preservation of Victor's local railroad history, people, and equipment.

We are currently seeking programs for

future meetings, of just about any relevant railroad-related topic. Please contact Otto Vondrak at ovondrak@yahoo.com to reserve your presentation slot. Thanks also to member David Drury for helping secure program presenters.

WEST SHORE BREWING DEBUTS "HAMMERHEAD" IPA AT RGVRM ON FEBRUARY 13

Our friends from **West Shore Brewing** in Clarence have brewed up a special treat for us! **Hammerhead IPA** is a New England Style India Pale Ale honoring our own Lehigh Valley high-hood Alco RS-3 211, affectionately known as the "Hammerhead" by railfans. This beer, as well as several others brewed by West Shore, are available in four-packs for pre-order and pick-up at a special pop-up sale at the museum on Saturday, February 13, from 11:00am to 4:00pm. Sorry, no shipping available. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the museum. Visit the museum web site at rgvrrm.org for details. —O.M.V.

KEEP THE DOOR CLOSED, PLEASE

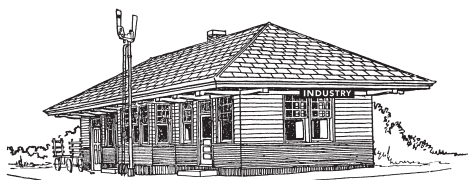
Please keep the bathroom door in the depot closed at all times. A small electric heater maintains minimum temperature, and will run continuously if the door is left open. Your cooperation is appreciated.

ROCHESTER SUBWAY CAR 60 UPDATE

Focus has shifted to steel fabrication to rebuild the "B" end of the car, which was removed shortly after arrival in 1998 due to the extreme deterioration from being exposed while in storage in Albany. Fortunately, patterns can be made from the existing "A" end of the car, sans operator controls. Rand Warner, Dave Luca, and Peter Gores are working up drawings for materials and labor estimates so a fundraising plan can be put in place for 2021.

ERIE CABOOSE REPAIRS

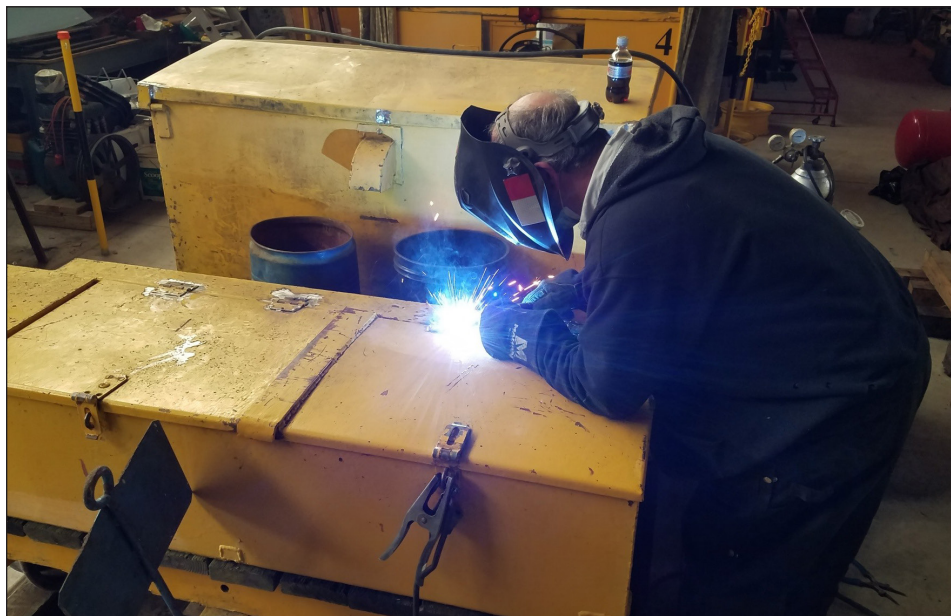
At the beginning of February, Justin Carmona completed some finish work on window stringers and cut out the last of the



RIGHT: Bill Marcotte re-welds the hinges to the toolbox doors on TC-4's trailer, which is used by our Track Dept. The motor car and trailer are inside the shop getting some much-needed winter maintenance.

BELOW: Scott Gleason and Tim Gifford are working on repairing the center pivot for our Army crane. Seized bearings and rusted gears are being inspected.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Jesse Beeley and Don Warwyniak used the log splitter to cut down logs into firewood to burn in the depot stove on January 23.



floorboards that need to come out for the new edge of the replacement flooring. The sub-floor needs some more finish work for it to be done, following that a vapor barrier needs to be applied on top of the sub-floor before the floorboards can go in. Window sashes are being repaired and replaced as need be, and will be glazed with safety glass, replacing the aged polycarbonate plastic.

Our sandblasting contractor **Blastec** has submitted an estimate in the amount of \$3,750 to blast, prime, and paint the steel roof of the caboose. We have applied for a National Railway Historical Society Heritage Grant, co-sponsored by Rochester Chapter NRHS, to pay for this portion of the project, which we have scheduled for the spring. —Justin Carmona, Project Mgr.

ERIE STILLWELL COACH UPDATE

The obsolete oil stove was removed from the coach at the end of January, along with the last of the interior panels. A grant application was submitted to the John H. Emery Rail Heritage Trust to fund remediation efforts in the ceiling/roof, as well as the concrete floor. These steps are important toward ensuring the long-term survival of this important restoration project.

From a fleet which once numbered in the hundreds, our coach 2328 is just one of less than 20 surviving Stillwell-designed cars. The goal is to have the coach restored and fully operational in time for its 100th birthday in 2026. Portions of the restoration are being funded by generous donations from the Stillwell Family.

RESTORATION UPDATE LEHIGH VALLEY CABOOSE 95100

The exterior door at the south end of the car has been hung by Sam Rosenberg, with some fine tuning to be completed. Chuck Whalen has been fitting the sliding windows in the cupola, and cutting new pieces of trim to support them. Bill Marcotte welded the exterior steel blank for the window directly behind the oil stove, as was found on our car in the 1970s. Work continues on fitting the end doors, and preparing to re-install the interior closet doors.

—Sam Rosenberg, Project Mgr.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

On February 6, several volunteers helped clear out the north end of the Restoration Shop floor. Since nature abhors a vacuum,



ABOVE: Chuck Whalen carefully cut new pieces of window trim to hold the sliding windows in place up in the cupola of Lehigh Valley 95100 on January 30.

LEFT: Sam Rosenberg hung the exterior door on the south end of the caboose, checking for a snug fit and making adjustments where needed.

we quickly filled it up again. This time, we moved out the woodworking tools located in the first two bays on the west side of the shop as the first steps toward preparing for concrete. The tools remain accessible for use in their temporary location, using extension cords. We have secured a date with our mason to have concrete poured by the end of March, so we must act quickly to get the site leveled and stone laid. We will also be pouring concrete between the rails on Track 9 north of the inspection pit, which will make crossing over much easier.

After getting estimates from a few local craftsmen, your museum has accepted a bid from **John H. Bailey Custom Furniture** in Lima to repair and restore the waiting room bench donated to us by the Avon Historical Society several years ago. New

legs and carved armrests will be fabricated to replace the missing ones, and the entire piece will be refinished before it is returned to us. When complete, it will be the centerpiece of our waiting room (which is getting its floors refinished this spring). Your museum is seeking donations to help offset a portion of the cost in the amount of \$3,500. Donations in any amount can be made online at rgvrrm.org/donate.

We are also working on a number of improvements in and around the depot, including repairing the broken concrete in the platform area, sprucing up the agent's office and the north waiting room (gift shop), and improving the exhibits in the south waiting room. If you'd like to get involved in this process, please contact Charlie Marks.

MARCH 13 VIRTUAL ANNUAL RULES CLASS

Our 2021 Annual Rules Class will take place **Saturday, March 13, 2021**, taught virtually via Zoom. The class begins at

2021 R&GV Priority Projects

The following priority projects have been approved by the Board of Trustees, effective December 3, 2020. Until completed, these projects will be prioritized for funds and resources as required. To contribute, please contact the project manager.

- 1. Complete Repairs to RG&E 8**
TARGET: DECEMBER 2022
—Joe Nugent, Mgr.
- 2. Complete Caboose LV 95100**
TARGET: SEPTEMBER 2021
—Sam Rosenberg, Mgr.
- 3. Complete Caboose Erie C254**
TARGET: JUNE 2021
—Justin Carmona, Mgr.
- 5. Shop West Side Concrete Floor**
TARGET: AUGUST 2021
—Charlie Marks, Mgr.
- 5. Upper Yard Drainage and Slope**
TARGET: SEPTEMBER 2021
—Scott Gleason, Mgr.
- 6. Depot Repairs/Improvements**
TARGET: OCTOBER 2021
—Charlie Marks, Mgr.

8:00 a.m., and if you expect to take all three parts, plan on staying until at least 4:00 p.m. to complete your tests. **Safety Rules are for ALL museum volunteers**, while Operating and Air Brakes are required for all train crew volunteers. The class is split into three parts:

PART ONE: SAFETY — Strongly suggested for ALL VOLUNTEERS, regardless if you are in train service or not. Covers basic safety rules, 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 (car host, brakeman, conductor, or engineer).

PART THREE: AIR BRAKES — The third part of the class is devoted to air brakes and train handling. This part is required for anyone interested in volunteering as a conductor or engineer.

Have your Rulebook and Timetable so



ABOVE: The waiting room bench was temporarily relocated to the Restoration Shop while the depot floors were repaired and refinished. On February 6, the bench was moved closer to the north end doors so it can be delivered to the shop that will be performing the restoration late this month. **RIGHT:** Volunteers helped clear out the woodworking tools from the west side of the shop, to prepare the area for our new concrete floor to be poured by the end of March.



you can refer to it during class. If you don't have one, these books will be issued to you either as PDF files or hard copy upon request. You must RSVP to Frank Gough at fmgough34@gmail.com by March 10.

—Frank Gough, Operations Supt.

SAND TOWER COMMITTEE

Your museum acquired the sand tower from B&O Lincoln Park Shops in the 1970s. A sand tower is used to store dried sand which is used by locomotives for traction on slippery rails. The parts of our tower have been stored on a trailer in the Construction Yard for many years. The time has come for us to determine if our museum has a use for a sand tower and where to place it; or determine if there is another organization who could put it to better use. This committee has been tasked with coming up with a report before the end of 2021. If you're interested in joining the committee, please contact Charlie Marks.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Membership cards have been mailed to everyone who renewed by January. We are presently at 66% renewal rate, and climbing. We encourage you to send in your renewal for 2021 as soon as possible.

Please join me in welcoming these new members to the museum!

Rachel Somerville Family, Rochester

Jon Saulsgiver Family, Webster

Gregory Lund, Clarence, NY

Mike Ruane, Westwood, NY

—Sam Rosenberg, Membership Chair

CHARLIE ROBINSON (1932-2020)

Long-time museum member and volunteer Charlie Robinson passed away on December 21 from complications related to COVID-19 infection. Besides being an active volunteer for many years at both RGV and New York Museum of Transportation, and being instrumental in the establishment of regular trolley operations in 2006, he was also a historian and author of many articles and books on traction history. Our next edition will feature a more extensive tribute. —O.M.V.

SAFETY FIRST

COVID-19 remains a risk. 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, or you are in a "high-risk" category, please STAY HOME.

VISIT US ANYTIME ONLINE
[FACEBOOK.COM/RGVRRM](https://www.facebook.com/rgvrrm)
[FLICKR.COM/RGVRRM](https://www.flickr.com/photos/rgvrrm/)

THE \$1300 GARAGE DOOR

Earlier this season we had an accident where the north garage door was struck by a piece of equipment because someone else had failed to open the door all the way up.

**PLEASE RAISE
DOORS TO
FULL HEIGHT
EVERY TIME**

(We can't afford costly and avoidable repairs like this.)



ROCHESTER & GENESEE VALLEY RAILROAD MUSEUM
A 501(c)3 non-profit educational organization. Write for free brochure or visit rgvrrm.org



*This was a costly
accident that could
have been avoided!*

Lehigh Valley Railroad

◆ The Route of The Black Diamond ◆

A THUMBNAIL HISTORY OF THE ROCHESTER BRANCH

The Lehigh Valley Railroad was a relative latecomer to Western New York, with their main line between Geneva and Buffalo opening in 1892. This new line bypassed major cities in an effort to build the shortest route possible, but political pressure and the opportunity for more traffic led to the opening of a branch to Rochester in 1891. Built under the auspices of the Rochester & Honeoye Valley Railway, the planned route was to connect Rochester with Hemlock Lake, crossing the main line at Rochester Jct. The terminal on Court Street that we know as home to Dinosaur BBQ was built in 1905, with construction delayed due to a dispute over property rights for the owners of the mill race that runs along South Ave.

The branch to Hemlock Lake opened in 1895, but was cut back from the shores of the lake in 1899 because Rochester was concerned about maintaining the body of water as a supply of clean drinking water for the city.

Gasoline-powered motor cars (resembling interurbans of the era) were first introduced to the branch in 1925, replacing conventional steam trains as a cost-cutting measure. Regular passenger service to Hemlock was discontinued on February 2, 1935, but back to Lima. Trains between Rochester Jct. and Lima were discontinued August 9, 1937. Mixed train service continued until November 26, 1938.

Passenger trains continued to run on the Rochester Branch between Rochester Jct. and the downtown terminal on Court Street until September 6, 1950. The crew on the last run from Rochester included engineer Clyde S. Redfield, conductor Robert L. Cotton, mail clerk Anthony Romano, and

baggageman Lawrence Christie. With the impending Troup-Howell Bridge project cutting off rail access to the terminal, the state offered to construct a new station south of Howell Street, but the railroad said the bus alone would suffice due to declining passenger counts. The interlocking tower at Rochester Jct. was closed and an application was made to close the agency at Livonia the same year. The city of Rochester purchased the LV station and property up to Howell Street in 1954, to be used for future "civic improvements." Replacement shuttle bus service to Rochester Jct. was provided by Valley Bus Lines until January 16, 1957. In 1968, the tracks were removed between Hemlock and Lima.

While passenger service had ended, freight traffic on the Rochester Branch remained strong. University of Rochester received coal for their power plant until 1979. In Henrietta, High Point Mills and Matthews & Fields Lumber were served by the railroad. Honeoye Falls was home to Beam Milling Co. and Caves Lumber Co. Swift Agricultural Chemical Co. and Joslyn Manufacturing were located at the end of the line in Lima.

A number of small customers were served directly out of Rochester Yard, including a piggyback TOFC (trailer on flatcar) ramp. With traffic dwindling, the majority of the yard facility was closed by 1970. A devastating fire broke out in the freight house on November 21, 1971. Service was cut back to the Erie Lackawanna interchange near UofR at River Jct. Lehigh Valley sold the former yard property to the city in 1972, which would transform it into the Genesee Gateway park and housing project.

Over Easter weekend in 1973, the station at Rochester Junction burned to the ground in a suspected arson case.

The branch passed to Conrail control on April 1, 1976. The 11.3-mile portion from River Jct. to Rochester Jct. was renamed the Rochester North Branch, with the 6-mile section to Lima becoming the Rochester South Branch. Crews went on duty at the old Erie yard on Exchange Street, connecting to the LV at River Jct. In 1978, the state offered \$700,000 to bring the tracks up to a state of good repair, but required the railroad to remain in operation for up to ten years, which Conrail could not commit to. Freight service to Lima continued until September 1981. Abandonment was set for the end of February 1982, but the hope of securing funding to repair the tracks to continue freight service only held off the inevitable for the required 120 days.

The abandonment was granted, but a remnant of the branch remained in service between Mortimer Jct. in Henrietta and Lehigh Station road to serve Matthews & Fields and High Point Mills. This track was purchased by Livonia, Avon & Lakeville in 1996, and remains in service to this day.

—OTTO M. VONDRAK

Table 22

Rochester Branch

Effective
Nov 1, 1922

652	650	648	646	128	644	Mis.	STATIONS	647	649	651	653	127	655
PM	PM	PM	AM	AM	AM			AM	AM	PM	PM	PM	PM
9:00	6:00	5:00	10:10	7:32	5:45	0.0	Lv. . Rochester ..	Ar 7 00	11 25	5 55	7 05	8 55	10 15
...	...	5 11	10:22	7 43	...	4.7	Lv. . Mortimer ..	Lv 6:50	11 13	...	...	...	...
9 17	...	5 16	10:28	7 50	...	7.3	Lv. . Henrietta ..	Lv 6 45	11 07	...	6 49	8 40	...
9 27	6 22	5 27	10 40	8 05	6 10	13.2	Ar. . Rochester .	Lv 6:33	10 53	5:33	6 40	8:30	*9 48
...	...	5 34	10 51	...	...	...	Lv Jct. (1-2)	Ar 10 31	...	5 20	...	...	...
...	...	5 47	11 02	...	...	16.0	Lv Honeoye Falls	Lv 10 21	...	5 10	...	...	...
...	...	5 59	11 15	...	...	19.0	Lv. . Lima	Lv 10 08	...	4 57	...	...	...
...	...	6 18	11 32	...	...	26.1	Lv. . Livonia ...	Lv 9 51	...	4 34	...	...	...
...	...	6 28	11 40	...	...	28.6	Ar. . Hemlock ..	Lv *9 45	...	4:28	...	...	...
PM	PM	PM	AM	AM	AM			AM	AM	PM	PM	PM	PM

MOTOR COACH SERVICE

BETWEEN

ROCHESTER and ROCHESTER JCT.

FOR

LEHIGH VALLEY RAILROAD
PASSENGERS

EFFECTIVE THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

Passengers making connections between ROCHESTER and ROCHESTER JUNCTION, to or from Lehigh Valley Railroad main line trains, will use MOTOR COACH SERVICE of the Valley Bus Lines instead of connecting train service as heretofore.

— DAILY BUS CONNECTIONS —

(Read Down) Lehigh Valley (Read Up)
Bus Connection For Train Court Street Station
No. 11 No. 10 No. 9 No. 4 (Eastern Standard Time) AM AM PM PM
7:04 10:07 5:50 8:20 Lv. Rochester Ar. 9:18 11:31 7:13 9:49
8:29 10:42 6:25 8:55 Ar. Rochester Jct. Lv. 8:43 10:56 6:38 9:14
AM AM PM PM Bus Connection from Train No. 11 No. 10 No. 9 No. 4

FOR COMPLETE DETAILS, CONSULT TICKET AGENTS

LEHIGH VALLEY RAILROAD

"The Route of the Black Diamond"



THE **SEMAPHORE**

ROCHESTER & GENESEE VALLEY RAILROAD MUSEUM

P.O. BOX 23326

ROCHESTER, NY 14692-3326



NEXT MEETING:

Feb. 18, 2021

VIRTUAL MEETING via ZOOM

PLAN AHEAD:

Mar. 18, 2021

VIRTUAL MEETING via ZOOM

Find us on Facebook! facebook.com/rgvrrm



Two Alco PA diesels lead Lehigh Valley Train 9, the westbound "Black Diamond," arriving at Rochester Jct., NY., in July 1950. This would be the last summer the interlocking tower would be manned, as passenger service on the branch to Rochester would be discontinued in September. The foundation of the tower remains at this site today, and the roadbed is now the Black Diamond Trail (see page 7). UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER, RGVRRM COLLECTION