

THE

SEMAPHORE

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCHESTER & GENESEE VALLEY RAILROAD MUSEUM

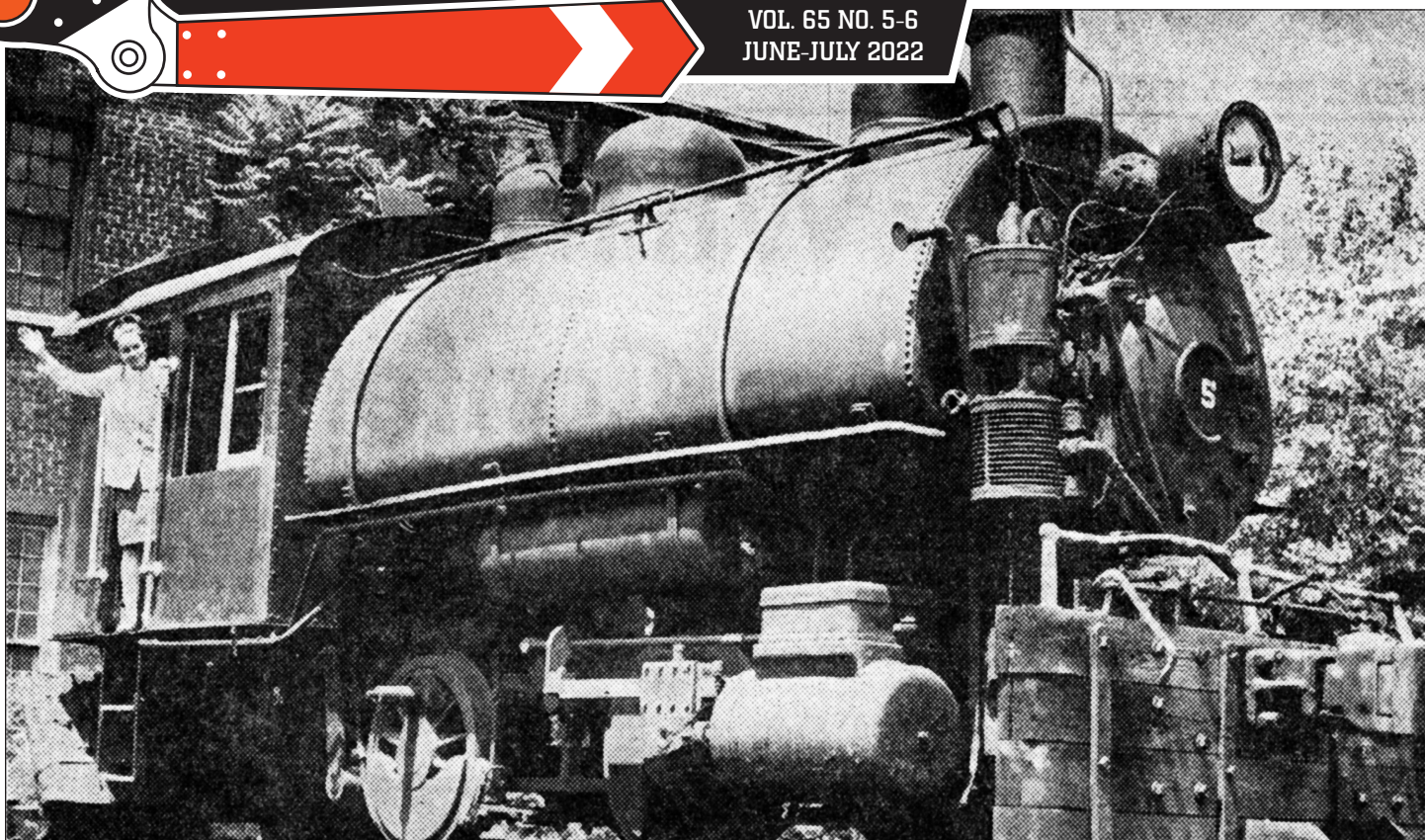
VOL. 65 NO. 5-6
JUNE-JULY 2022

NEXT MEETING:

July 21

ALL ABOARD!

**Enjoy a ride on our
Museum Railroad!**



Secretary Fran Bovenzi has last look at DSI No. 5 before its move from Rochester Iron & Metal on June 17, 1965. DEMOCRAT & CHRONICLE PHOTO

LEGEND OF THE FIVE-SPOT

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If you've lived in Rochester for some amount of time, maybe you've heard about a steam engine that someone keeps in a shed in their front yard... Maybe you even remember seeing it on display outside of the scrap yard off on St. Paul Boulevard near High Falls... Maybe you were one of the lucky school children who visited years ago, but your fuzzy memory betrays you... Well, the legends are true! We're excited to announce Despatch Shops 0-4-0 tank engine No. 5 is coming home to our museum this summer.

Built in 1924 by Vulcan for use at Despatch Shops in East Rochester and retired in 1954, it was sold to Rochester Iron & Metal in 1955. John Virgilio wanted

the engine for his private museum, and purchased it in 1965. Many got to enjoy and learn from it over the years before John became too old to host tours, and the engine remained locked away on his property in Henrietta. After his passing in 2021, his family reached out to us as possible caretakers of the engine and other historic artifacts. We struck a deal in 2022, and we look forward to being the new home for Despatch Shops No. 5! You can read the full story starting on **page 7**.

Your ideas and input for our museum's future are always welcome. Please email me at ovondrak@yahoo.com or call me at (585) 820-2341.

—Otto M. Vondrak, Museum President



www.rgvrrm.org

R&GV Railroad Museum
P.O. Box 23326
Rochester, NY 14692-3326

President

Otto M. Vondrak
(585) 820-2341
ovondrak@yahoo.com

Vice President

Peter Gores

Treasurer

Dave Peet

Recording Secretary

David Kehrer

Corresponding Secretary

Jeremy Tuke

Trustees

David Kaiser
Dana Fuellhart
Bill Marcotte
Charlie Marks
David Monte Verde
Joe Nugent
David Shields



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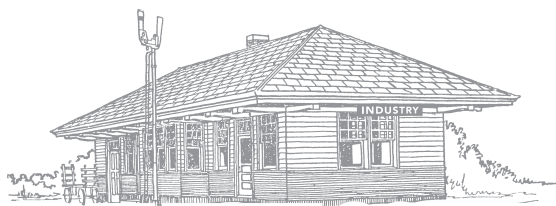
EDITOR

Otto M. Vondrak

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Dave Peet

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2022 EVENT SCHEDULE

Schedule subject to change without notice.
Reservations required, please visit our web site for details.

Trains & Trolleys at Twilight
June 11 • July 9 • August 13

Princess & Superhero Train Rides
July 16-17

Railroad Yard Sale and Train Rides
August 20-21



Wine & Chocolate Train Rides
August 27-28



Classic Cars and Train Rides
September 17-18

Oktoberfest Rails & Ales
September 24

Pumpkin Patch Train Rides
October 15-16, 22-23, 29-30

Santa Trains to the North Pole
December 9-10, 16-17

RESERVE YOUR TICKETS TODAY

RochesterTrainRides.com

Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum
282 RUSH SCOTTSVILLE ROAD, RUSH, N.Y., 14543
EASY TO FIND FROM EXIT 11 OFF I-390

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MUSEUM CONTACT INFO

MUSEUM PRESIDENT

Otto Vondrak

(585) 820-2341 ovondrak@yahoo.com

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS SUPT.

Charlie Marks

(585) 637-4271 cmarks@frontiernet.net

MECHANICAL SUPT.

Joe Nugent

(585) 944-1047 joe.r.nugent@gmail.com

INTERIM OPERATIONS SUPT.

David Scheiderich

(585) 301-1019 boblenon@gmail.com

TRACK AND RIGHT-OF-WAY SUPT.

David Kehrer

(585) 576-3843 dkehrer1@gmail.com

CONSTRUCTION SUPT.

Jeremy Tuke

(585) 350-9524 jktuke@gmail.com

INTERIM PUBLIC RELATIONS SUPT.

Otto Vondrak

(585) 820-2341 ovondrak@yahoo.com

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

Sam Rosenberg

ALC0251@frontiernet.net

PROGRAM CHAIRMAN

Dave Drury

(585) 943-1520 ddrury2@rochester.rr.com

UPCOMING MONTHLY PROGRAMS

Summer meetings return to Industry Depot on **June 16, July 21, and August 18**. Following a brief meeting at the depot at 7:00pm, we'll take a ride on our museum railroad and update you on various projects. Don't get left at the station!

Meetings will resume at the 40&8 Club on **September 15**. If you have ideas for future monthly meeting programs, please contact me. Any railroad-related program will be considered. Thanks for your help!

—Dave Drury,
Program Committee

STEAM TRAIN RIDES RESCHEDULED FOR NEXT YEAR

Unfortunately, the steam train rides with Viscose 6 we had scheduled for the last two weekends of August have been canceled. Owner Scott Symans was unable to get his locomotive recertified in time for us to properly prepare for the event, so the decision was made to reschedule the special event for next year. —O.M.V.



APRIL SHOWERS BRING MAY FLOWERS: On May 20: Jackson Glozer and his mom Jeannie planted flowers around our sign on Route 251, and in the buckets at the entrance to Industry depot to help beautify our grounds and get us ready for summer. JEREMY TUKE PHOTO

RAILS & ALES and WINE & CIDER MAY 21 and 22

Our annual Rails & Ales event returned on May 21 to sold-out crowds. More than 300 visitors attended the event with more than a dozen local craft breweries and distilleries in attendance. Our Wine & Cider trains on May 22 did not do as well, with several vendors canceling at the last minute, and fewer than 200 visitors in attendance. While we have great relationships with our local breweries, the wine industry seems impenetrable, and therefore we will be discontinuing our Wine & Cider event. However, look for Oktoberfest Rails & Ales to return on September 24! Tickets are on sale now at RochesterTrainRides.com. —O.M.V.

R&LHS TOUR - JUNE 2

On June 2, more than 70 members of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society toured our museum as part of their annual meeting activities held in Rochester. Included was a behind the scenes tour of our shops and yards, and many photo stops. Organized by Paul Barnes, convention activities also included rides on the Arcade & Attica, Finger Lakes Railway (and tour of the CNY Chapter NRHS museum at Martisco), a tour of American Motive Power in Dansville, and programs presented by museum members Otto Vondrak about the history of railroads in Rochester and David Monte Verde about Genesee Valley Transportation.

FATHERS DAY TRAIN RIDES JUNE 18 and 19

Attendance was light for our Fathers Day Train Rides, but it didn't dampen the spirits of our two live bands. Visitors enjoyed a high-energy performance by rock band The John Payton Project on Saturday, while on Sunday Bill Schmitt and the Bluesmasters provided the entertainment. Feedback from visitors was overall positive, but sales were way down from normal with only 96 tickets sold on Saturday and 166 on Sunday. Stiff competition with other summertime festivals and activities most likely played a part in this, and hopefully we can adjust our marketing program to raise future sales.

TRAINS & TROLLEYS AT TWILIGHT JULY 9 AND AUGUST 13

Your museum will host a special joint event with the New York Museum of Transportation on July 9 and August 13, from 4:00pm to 8:00pm. Visitors will board our diesel train at Industry for an enjoyable ride to Midway. There, they will transfer to the NYMT trolley for a ride up to the "Trolley Park" set up on the front lawn on their museum grounds. The Rochester Metropolitan Jazz Quintet will perform a free concert, and visitors will enjoy complimentary ice cream provided by Nine-Cone-Cone. Trains depart every half hour. Tickets are \$25 per person, reserve your tickets online at RochesterTrainRides.com.



ABOVE: Our May 21 Rails & Ales event was sold out to capacity, with 300 in attendance.

RIGHT: Some of the breweries were located inside the Restoration Shop, along with free popcorn provided by the museum.

BELOW RIGHT: Many visitors enjoyed our expanded Railfan Overlook area in the Upper Yard, along with a few other breweries.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Unfortunately, we'll be retiring our Vintage Rails Wine & Cider Tasting due to low sales and poor industry support. We'll find another event to take its place next year!

PRINCESS & SUPERHERO TRAIN RIDES JULY 16 and 17

Our popular summertime event returns on July 16 and 17! Children come dressed as their favorite princess or superhero and enjoy fun vintage train rides. Kids will enjoy our bounce house and other activities as you tour our museum grounds. You never know what costumed characters may join us! Costumed performers provided by Enchanted Princess Parties of Rochester. Trains depart every half hour from 10:00am to 3:00pm. Tickets are \$15 for Adults, \$10 for Youth and Seniors. Reserve your tickets online at www.RochesterTrainRides.com.

RAILROAD YARD SALE AND TRAIN RIDES AUGUST 20 and 21

Who doesn't love a great yard sale? Your museum will be putting excess items for sale during this public event, everything from switch stands to tools to carts and everything in between! Your admission ticket is good for \$10 off any item the museum is selling. We'll also invite a few select vendors selling railroad antiques, lanterns, and collectibles (ticket discount does not apply). Trains rides depart every half hour from 10:00am to 2:00pm. Tickets are \$15 for Adults, \$10 for Youth and Seniors. Reserve your tickets online at RochesterTrainRides.com.



WINE & CHOCOLATE TRAIN RIDES AUGUST 27 and 28

Enjoy tours of our museum grounds and fun vintage train rides that depart every half-hour from 10:00am to 2:00pm. Visitors 21 and over enjoy a complimentary sample of wine, as well as a decadent locally produced artisan chocolate truffle (while supplies last). Tickets are \$15 for Adults, \$10 for Youth and Seniors. Reserve your tickets online at www.RochesterTrainRides.com.

NEW METALWORKING SHOP

Fulfilling one of our shared goals for many years, manager Bill Marcotte has completed the set-up of the new metalworking area on the west side of the Restoration Shop. The tools and working space are there for anyone to use, and if you require



training on their proper use, just ask. This includes welding tools, cutting torches, the drill press, metal brake, and anything else used to bond, bend, or cut metal. Thanks to the Construction Dept. for the heavy lifts, and also to Mike Guglielmo for help wiring up the new overhead lighting.

MECHANICAL DEPT. UPDATE

The Mechanical Dept. is awaiting the return of rebuilt air brake valves for RG&E 41, LV 211, and LA&L 20 from Multi Service in Pittsburgh, Pa. In the meantime, other items have been checked off the 92-day

inspection list by Joe Nugent, Sam Rosenberg, Kurtis Hooey, and Justin Carmona.

LA&L 20 was fired up for the first time this year on June 11, thanks to Sam Rosenberg and Kurtis Hooey. The same team also fired up our ex-Army Fairbanks-Morse diesel 1843 on July 5, and ran a few test runs to clear out the cobwebs.

A successful "hammer and hydro" test on RG&E 41's main air reservoir was conducted on June 25. This requires us to drop the air tank from under the locomotive, fill it with water to a certain pressure, and then hammer to test for any defects. The tested tank has since been reinstalled under the engine, awaiting a return to service.

On July 2, Peter Gores made adjustments to the air brake linkages under our Lehigh

Valley boxcar so the piston travel on the main air cylinder is now within standards.

Sam Rosenberg and Chuck Whalen continue work on RG&E 8. Bob Ziegler is making repairs to the No. 1 engine head. Joe Nugent is getting a quote for engine cowl door repair and refinishing. Meanwhile, the goal is to get RG&E 41 and LA&L 20 in service in time for July and August events so RGV 54 can be cycled back through the shop for its next 92-day inspection. We are always looking for volunteers to join us!

—Joe Nugent, Mechanical Supt.

ERIE STILLWELL COACH UPDATE

On June 20, Rob Piecuch from the Chemung Valley Railroad Historical Society donated four cut-glass arch windows salvaged from their own Erie Stillwell coach. We will be sure to put them to good use in our restoration when the time comes!

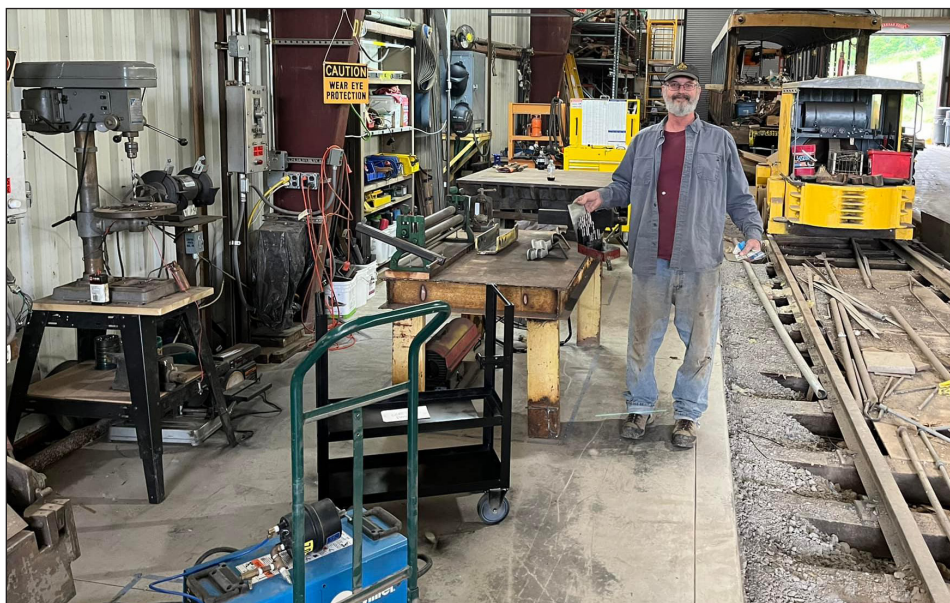
Charles Rothbart, Jackson Glozer, and Justin Carmona continue to make progress removing the last of the steel panels from the vestibules in order to make a thorough inspection of the frame members. Already, items for replacement and repair have been identified.

TOP LEFT: On June 20, Rob Piecuch from the Chemung Valley Railroad Historical Society donated four cut glass arch windows salvaged from their Erie Stillwell coach that we will apply to our own restoration.

LEFT: More than 70 members of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society toured our museum on June 2 as part of their annual convention activities in Rochester. Their tour included photo stops and train rides.

BELOW LEFT: With the concrete cured, Bill Marcotte began the process of setting up our metalworking area on the west side of the Shop during the first week of June.

BOTTOM: On June 4, we used some of our heavy equipment, including our backhoe, dump trucks, Bobcats, and Tamper, to assist contractor Scott Symans as he raised a portion of NYMT track to correct a dip near MP 0.6.



REBUILDING TRACK 5

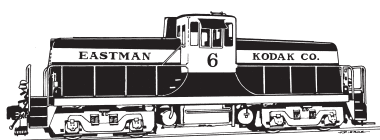
Working around public events and stifling heat waves, additional work was completed on Track 5 siding at Industry through the end of June and the beginning of July. Several volunteers worked to raise the “dip” near the dwarf signal so the old section of Track 5 was brought up to the new height of the rebuilt track. Some new ties were secured and spiked in place to complete this task.

The remainder of the ties on the east rail were spiked up, and stone was brought in and tamped. Thanks to Duncan Richards, Dale Hartnett, Jackson Glozer, Justin Carmona, Ian Flournoy, Kurtis Hooey, Otto Vondrak, Jeremy Tuke, Adam Lloyd, and many other volunteers who helped us complete this important rebuilding project. Once the final details are complete, look for the Lehigh Valley caboose, boxcar, and RS-3 211 to be placed on display through the summer! Don’t be afraid to pitch in, we’re always seeking new volunteers to join the Track Dockneys!

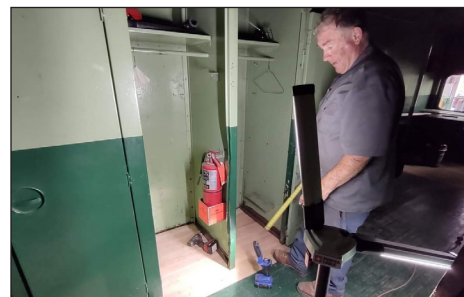
—David Kehrer,
Track & Right of Way Supt.

BELOW: The Construction Dept. spread road millings to create a new service road along Track 9 and Track 6 behind the Restoration Shop. One of the Army dump trucks and our Bobcat skid steer were put to work dumping and spreading the road millings on June 11.

BOTTOM: Jeremy Tuke uses our Littleford road roller to compact the millings once they are spread. Our Komatsu bulldozer was also put to work spreading millings on June 11.



RIGHT: On July 5, Charlie Marks and Charlie Ricker got new tongue and groove flooring installed under the closets inside the Penn Central caboose. CHARLIE RICKER PHOTO



BELOW RIGHT: On June 4, Jim Hayes, Duncan Richards, Pete Swanson, Dave Chapus (not pictured), and Otto Vondrak (not pictured) got most of the west rail on Track 5 spiked up.



BELOW: The John Payton Project rock band provided entertainment for the Saturday edition of our Fathers Day Train Rides on June 18.

BOTTOM: For the Sunday edition of our Fathers Day Train Rides on June 19, Bill Schmitt and the Bluesmasters provided the entertainment.



LEGEND OF THE FIVE-SPOT

If you grew up in Rochester, you probably heard about the man who saved a steam engine from a scrap yard and brought it to his home in Henrietta. Maybe you were one of the lucky few invited to visit it. Maybe you thought it was scrapped years ago. The legend of the “Five Spot” runs deep, but we’re excited to share that not only is it real, but it’s new home will be the Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum.

According to records, DSI 5 was purchased from Vulcan Iron Works in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., in 1924, for exclusive use at MDT’s Despatch Shops in East Rochester, N.Y. The 0-4-0 saddle tank switch engine, serial no. 3343, was shipped to DSI on March 31, 1924. There, it was immediately put to work on a construction project to expand the storage yards around the shops, hauling side-dump cars full of dirt and debris. We assume it spent the rest of its career as a shop switcher working around the shops in various roles.

Steam operation on New York Central’s lines east of Buffalo came to an end in 1954. When New York Central assumed control of the MDT shop in East Rochester in 1955, No. 5 was retired. The engine received a fresh paint job and was displayed outside the Despatch Shops offices before it was sold to Rochester Iron & Metal. It was placed on display outside the scrap yard’s offices off St. Paul Blvd., next to the NYC main line at High Falls.

It was around this time John Virgilio took an interest in the engine. Following the tradition of his father, John enjoyed a brief career on the New York Central as a fireman and brakeman from 1949 until 1954 when diesels replaced steam. His family had been collecting railroad artifacts at their farm in Henrietta for some time, with the hopes of someday opening a museum where children could learn about the “golden age” of railroading that was rapidly disappearing. He made inquiries with RI&M, but the engine was priced just beyond his reach at \$3,500.

In 1964, RI&M was closing down its scrap metal operation on St. Paul Blvd., and considered lowering their asking price for the engine to just \$1,250. Virgilio was



Despatch Shops 0-4-0 No. 5 on display at the Mortimer Railroad Historical Society, located on the property of the Virgilio family off Townline Road in Henrietta in 1966. This historic locomotive will be joining our collection and coming to our museum by the end of this summer.

working as a custodian for the Rush-Henrietta school district at the time, and launched an intense fundraising effort to cover the cost of purchasing the engine. After signing a promissory note to cover the balance, DSI 5 was moved to Henrietta on June 17, 1965, thanks to H.L. Baughmann Equipment for donating a trailer and Gottry Carting Co. for donating a crane for the lift.

John Virgilio formed the Mortimer Railroad Historical Society, named after the junction of the NYC, Erie, and Lehigh Valley located behind his home in Henrietta. He named his operation the Mortimer & Red Creek Railroad, and received a donation of rail from LV to build a few hundred feet of track on his property. One of the barns was filled with railroad tools, signals, signs, and memorabilia. Virgilio’s private museum opened on June 11, 1966.

Over the years, many school groups came to tour the museum. Virgilio also had a hand-pump car that he would give schoolchildren rides on the short track in his front yard. Tour buses also came calling over the years, but after complaints from his neighbors and worry about the security of the collection, public viewing came to an end.

A shed was erected around the steam engine in 1972 to protect it from the weather and possible vandalism.

Your museum began cultivating a relationship with the Virgilio family in 2017, when family friend Bill Meister arranged a private tour of the engine and collection. This relationship continued through the years, and when John passed away in 2021 at age 91, his son Barry reached out to us about finding a possible home for his father’s legacy. After touring the collection again, and having Barry and his mother Phyllis tour our museum and facilities, it was agreed that we would be the new home for DSI 5. After some negotiation, an agreement for purchase of the locomotive and certain artifacts was reached in May 2022.

Once the locomotive arrives on our property, the first order of business will be to address the possibility of asbestos remediation. Our long-term plans include cosmetic restoration and putting the engine on display so visitors can walk through the cab. For now, your support is appreciated as we bring home another important piece of Rochester’s rich railroading heritage.

—Otto M. Vondrak



THE **SEMAPHORE**

ROCHESTER & GENESEE VALLEY RAILROAD MUSEUM

P.O. BOX 23326

ROCHESTER, NY 14692-3326

NEXT MEETING:

July 21, 2022

282 RUSH-SCOTTSVILLE RD, RUSH, N.Y.

PLAN AHEAD:

Aug. 18, 2022

282 RUSH-SCOTTSVILLE RD, RUSH, N.Y.

Find us on Facebook! facebook.com/rgvrrm



Summer Meetings

A reminder that for the months of June, July, and August, our monthly museum meetings take place at Industry Depot. Meetings start at 7:00pm, and by 7:30pm we board the train for a ride on our museum railroad and a tour of our latest projects in the Restoration Shop. These meetings are free and open to the public, so join us on the third Thursday of the month and bring a friend! This photo is from our June meeting. DALE HARTNETT PHOTO