

**THE**

# SEMAPHORE

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCHESTER & GENESEE VALLEY RAILROAD MUSEUM

VOL. 66 NO. 2 AND 3  
FEB.-MAR. 2023

**NEXT MEETING:**

**March 16**

**Rudy Garbely  
presents "From Concept to  
Bookshelf: The History of  
the Delaware & Hudson"**



The Conrail local train serving the former Lehigh Valley Lima Branch is stopped at Rochester Jct. on February 14, 1919. The second car has derailed, so the crew has their work cut out for them. The former main line is at left, and the yard tracks at right are lost in the snow. Fire destroyed the station in 1973, the main line fell silent on April 1, 1976, and the Lima Branch was abandoned in March 1981. PHOTO BY MIKE STELPFLUG

# Here Comes Spring

## ***INSIDE***

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| 2023 Schedule . . . . .      | 2 |
| Annual Rules Class . . . . . | 3 |
| Library Update . . . . .     | 5 |
| Fairport Caboose . . . . .   | 6 |
| Train Shows . . . . .        | 7 |

Here we are getting ready for another exciting operating season at the museum! Looking back to last year, we had a pretty good season, despite overall 2022 attendance being down slightly from the year before. So many factors affect attendance, from competing events to the weather to poor marketing. Seeing a trend in flattening attendance over the last few years, we've made the decision to change our schedule somewhat, moving to three Saturdays a month in an effort to attract more visitors and spread operating costs over a great portion of the month. We have also engaged a new marketing firm to help us with promotion throughout the summer where we tend to need it most.

Museum volunteers have been working behind the scenes on many projects to advance our museum's mission, from infrastructure to restoration to development.

In the coming weeks, we'll be moving our New York Central caboose for repainting and our Baltimore & Ohio "wagontop" caboose for basic roof repairs and new window seals. Other projects in the shop are making significant strides forward, like the reassembly of Rochester Gas & Electric No. 8. Rand Warner and his team are working on the reconstruction of the rear vestibule on Rochester Subway Car 60. We also have a number of other smaller projects making progress as well.

Would you like to get involved? Please consider contributing a few hours or a few dollars to your favorite cause. It sounds trite, but every contribution matters.

Where do we go next? Please contact me with your ideas for the future by email at [ovondrak@yahoo.com](mailto:ovondrak@yahoo.com) or call me at (585) 820-2341.

—Otto M. Vondrak, Museum President



[www.rgvrrm.org](http://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



The official publication of  
the Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum

Volume 66, No. 2 and 3

**EDITOR**

Otto M. Vondrak

**PRINTING AND MAILING**

Dave Peet

©2023 Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum. The Semaphore is published monthly by the Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum. Electronic distribution by e-mail is free. First-Class mailing is available for \$20.00 a year. Non-member mailed subscriptions are \$25.00 and run from January 1 to Dec. 31. Member meetings are held the third Thursday of each month, and the Board of Trustees meets the first Thursday of each month. Any items related to the activities of the Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum, and regional railroad history and current events are gladly accepted for publication.

## **2023 R&GV OPERATING SCHEDULE**

Visit [RochesterTrainRides.com](http://RochesterTrainRides.com) for tickets and details

- April 8 - Easter Bunny Train Rides
- May 13 - Mothers Day Train Rides
- May 20 - Rails & Ales
- May 21 - Members Day Spring Picnic
  
- June 3 – Trains & Trolleys at Twilight
- June 10 - Train Rides to the Horse Farm
- June 15 - June Meeting at Industry
- June 17 - Fathers Day Train Rides
- June 24 - Train Rides
  
- July 1 – Trains & Trolleys at Twilight
- July 8 - Train Rides
- July 15 - Princess & Superhero Train Rides
- July 20 - July Meeting at Industry
- July 22 - Train Rides
  
- August 5 – Trains & Trolleys at Twilight
- August 12 - Train Rides
- August 17 - August Meeting at Industry
- August 19 - Classic Car Show and Train Rides
- August 26 - Train Rides
  
- September 9-10 - Steam Train Rides
- September 16-17 - Steam Train Rides
- September 23 - Rails & Ales
- September 24 - Members Day Fall Picnic
  
- October 14-15 - Pumpkin Patch Train Rides
- October 21-22 - Pumpkin Patch Train Rides
- October 28-29 - Pumpkin Patch Train Rides
  
- December 8-9 – Santa Train Rides
- December 15-16 – Santa Train Rides

**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

**EVENTS SUPT.**

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

**MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN**

**Sam Rosenberg**  
ALC0251@frontiernet.net

**PROGRAM COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN  
TRIPS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN**

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

**UPCOMING  
MONTHLY PROGRAMS**

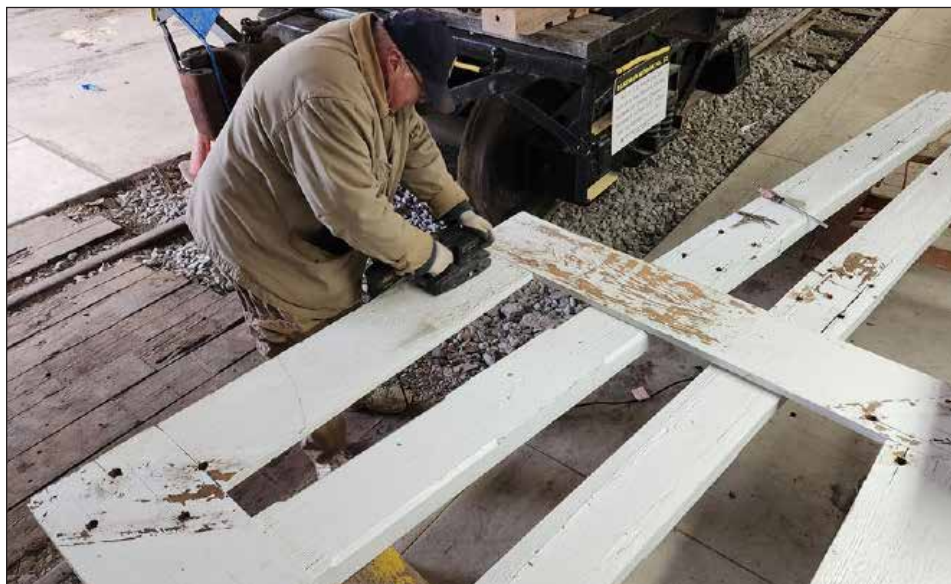
Monthly meetings resume at the 40&8 Club, located at 933 University Ave., across from Gleason Works in Rochester. Doors open at 7:00pm, with the business meeting starting at 7:30pm, followed by an entertainment program. Cash bar available.

On **March 16**, we welcome publisher Rudy Garbely, who will present “From Concept to Bookshelf: The History of the Delaware & Hudson from Research to Publication.” Rudy will discuss his latest sold-out book project, “Delaware & Hudson, The Final Years: 1968-1991.”

On **April 20**, member Mark Charles will present “Lehigh Valley Steam in Ithaca” recalling the LV steam era around the Finger Lakes in numerous photographs.

May 20 will be “Final Days of the Montana Rail Link” by Joe Cermak, Jackson Glozer, and Charles Rothbart. If you have ideas for future programs, please contact me by phone or email.

—Dave Drury,  
Program Committee Chair



Ernie Cole is working on refurbishing our vintage New York Central diamond-shaped railroad crossing sign in the Restoration Shop on February 28. This sign once protected a crossing at the corner of White Street and Cliff Street near High Falls. Volunteer Chris Hauf performed the first restoration on this sign twenty years ago. We plan to install it at the Track 6 crossing!

**MARCH 4  
ANNUAL RULES CLASS**

Our Annual Rules Class will take place **Saturday, March 4, 2023**, at the 40&8 Club, 933 University Ave. The class begins at 8:00 a.m., and if you expect to take all three parts, plan on staying until at least 3:00 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** – 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 (brakeman (car host), conductor, engineer, and on-track equipment operators).

**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.

Bring your Rulebook and Timetable to refer to class. If you don't have them, they can will be issued to you upon request. You'll also need a three ring binder and a pen to complete the tests. Please respond to David Scheiderich at **boblenon@gmail.com** by March 1.

—David Scheiderich, Operations Supt.

**EASTER BUNNY TRAIN RIDES  
APRIL 8**

The Easter Bunny rides the rails! As the last of winter snows begin to melt, spring is just around the corner! Celebrate the fresh air and warmer weather with a fun family trip to the Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum. Join us for the Easter Bunny's annual visit to our museum and ride our special Easter Bunny Train Rides on Saturday, April 8, from 10:00am to 3:00pm. Tickets on sale on our website at [www.RochesterTrainRides.com](http://www.RochesterTrainRides.com).

**MOTHERS DAY TRAIN RIDES  
MAY 13**

Enjoy a fun day out with mom aboard our fun vintage train rides. Trains rides depart every 30 minutes from 10:00am to 2:00pm. Tickets on sale on our website at [www.RochesterTrainRides.com](http://www.RochesterTrainRides.com).

**RAILS & ALES TRAIN RIDES  
MAY 20**

Enjoy complimentary tastings from more than a dozen local craft breweries on Saturday, May 20, from 12:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Ride the train to visit all of the tasting stations! Train rides depart every 30 minutes so you can ride between the two tasting stations as often as you like. Ticket purchase includes museum admission and free souvenir tasting glass. Refreshments available for purchase. Free soft drinks for Designated Drivers. Tickets on sale on our website at [www.RochesterTrainRides.com](http://www.RochesterTrainRides.com).



**ABOVE:** Charlie Marks, Jeremy Tuke, and Mark Bowen completed construction of the new ladder access for the Electrical Shop storage area. When not in use, the ladder is stored upright against the office.



**ABOVE RIGHT:** In order to repair the No. 1 air compressor from RGV 54, first we had to get the main flywheel off its shaft! Chuck Whalen, Bill Marcotte, Joe Nugent, and Scott Gleason accomplished this task on February 21.

**RIGHT:** Sam Rosenberg has been leading the reassembly of the air brake pipes under the cab of Rochester Gas & Electric No. 8, with help from Rob Burz and Chuck Whalen. The 110-ton diesel switcher was built by General Electric in 1967, and donated to us by RG&E in 2007.



**MECHANICAL DEPT.  
UPDATE**

I'm happy to announce the following leadership additions to the Mechanical Department: Sam Rosenberg, Assistant Mechanical Supt.; and Justin Carmona, Mechanical Compliance Officer.

Sam's role is to assist with the management of day to day mechanical work taking place on the locomotives and rolling stock. He's able to be the "boots on the ground" guy when I am unable to be around at the museum on Tuesdays and Saturday mornings.

Justin's role is to manage the paperwork associated with equipment inspections and NYS DOT compliance. This would include air brake inspections, mechanical work documentation, record keeping, etc. For exam-

ple, Justin is currently working on putting together a single car air brake tester with associated manual and checklist.

Please join me in congratulating volunteers Sam Rosenberg and Justin Carmona in their new roles and keeping our fleet of historic trains "on the right track." Keep in mind we are always looking for volunteers to take on additional roles and tasks.

**RG&E 41:** The reverser in this locomotive suffered a shunt failure in January. Two shunts were borrowed from RG&E 1950 until replacements could be obtained from J.C. McHugh. The borrowed shunts from RG&E 1950 have been installed into RG&E 41. As a result, this locomotive is now operable.

**LA&L 20:** Stored indoors for the winter.

**R&GV 54:** Bill Marcotte has finished

repairing the split intercooler pipe on the No. 1 air compressor. The air compressor is ready for reassembly and installation back into the locomotive. We are also gearing up to complete a 92-day inspection on this locomotive before the Easter event in April.

**RG&E 8:** Sam Rosenberg and Chuck Whalen are working with Rob Burz to install air lines and valves for the air brake system. Chuck Whalen continues to clean the underside of the locomotive in preparation for paint. Sam Rosenberg is also gathering tools and materials to replace the traction motor suspension bolts on two combo units.

**USA 1843:** Sam Rosenberg is working on building a new reverse current rectifier for this locomotive. Electrical and mechanical repairs will continue into the spring.

**BNY 12:** The locomotive is awaiting pick-up from Scott Symans, scheduled for mid-March.

**DSI 5:** The locomotive will be moved to the museum by mid-March.

**RTC Car 60:** Rand Warner is leading an effort to replace and rebuild the rear vesti-

bule of the car. His team is also working on restoring the car's air compressor.

**EK 52 Tank:** John Redden continues to lead the restoration work on the car. The pipe that goes between the air valve pipe bracket and the emergency reservoir will need to be replaced.

**Erie 2103 Stillwell Coach:** A grant application was submitted to the Emery Rail Heritage Trust in February to cover the cost of vestibule step fabrication. We are awaiting the announcement of grant awards.

—Joe Nugent,  
Mechanical Dept. Supt.

**LIBRARY/ARCHIVES UPDATE**

Long-time museum member and past board member John Stewart has volunteered to chair the new Archives Commit-

tee, which will manage the collection that was previously grouped under the Library Committee. The Library grew naturally out of the museum's collection of archival material and donated items that we once made available to our members in a "lending library" environment, first in Webster, and later at the 40&8 Club. When we lost our space at the 40&8 in 2015, the collection was placed into storage. Over the last several years, certain materials found new homes, such as hundreds of hobby magazines and duplicate copies of "coffee table" books. In recent years, we have seen two rent increases on the climate-controlled storage space that houses the collection, which includes maps, drawings, blueprints, slides, negatives, films, photo prints, timetables, and other miscellaneous railroad paper, in addition to the records of the museum including THE SEMAPHORE, treasurer reports, and meeting minutes.

Your board of trustees determined that the remaining items in the collection should be preserved as they hold significant historic value. Just last year, your museum began a project to digitize the John Woodbury Collection which consists of 3,000 medium format black and white negatives, using a grant award to pay for it. The board has made digitizing large portions of our photo collection a priority as the best way to not only preserve the images, but share them with researchers and the general public.

The other determination the board made was that we would not be housing the collection on the museum campus, which would involve the construction of a new storage and reading facility, plus the manpower to manage the collection and make it available for research. It is also very unlikely we would find another organization to take on the entire collection as a whole.



**TOP LEFT:** Charlie Marks has been helping John Redden with some repairs to Kodak Tank Car 52, including cutting new wooden wedges to support the tank.

**MIDDLE LEFT:** Mark Bowen and Ernie Cole finish up the last of three new rolling dividers, which will be used to help keep the public contained when the shop is open for tours.

**LEFT:** Some of the yellow paint lifted from the wall when the wooden trim was installed and stained, so Charlie Marks is applying a coat of primer before repainting the wall with a fresh coat of yellow.



**ABOVE:** Ex-Conrail caboose 21290 was last seen on “live” rail on February 8 at Goodman Street Yard, awaiting delivery to Fairport.

**RIGHT:** The caboose was safely re-assembled at Fairport Junction on February 24. The caboose will be restored to its original Conrail colors.



**RIGHT:** Your museum is seeking estimates from local builders to construct a replica of the New York Central section house at Churchville. The structure would be located near Switch 6, and would help consolidate all of our track tools to one centralized location. Once we have estimates in hand, we will seek grant opportunities to pay for construction. —ICC VALUATION PHOTO

Working from the direction of the board, the Archive Committee has begun the process of identifying the materials we currently have in storage. We have already contacted several area organizations to accept donations of relevant material. For example, the Lehigh Valley Historical Society in Shortsville has agreed to accept relevant LV material, and the East Rochester Public Library has agreed to accept certain railroad books to add to their local history collection. New York Museum of Transportation has agreed to take any relevant material regarding electric railways to add to their archive. These are just some examples.

The process is a long one, but in the end the museum will be left with a smaller, more manageable collection that will cost less to store and will be more accessible to our members and the general public. Your feedback is important as we move forward with this process. Interested members should contact John Stewart by email at [johnstewart3@gmail.com](mailto:johnstewart3@gmail.com).

**UPPER YARD EXHIBIT AREA**

In February, Niagara Mohawk trimmed trees that prosed a danger to their high-voltage line that runs through our property, including the large, mostly dead tree in the Railfan Overlook area. We are sad to lose the shade provided by this tree, and will be



working through the spring to clean up the area where it once stood.

We will also be extending the fenced-in area south to encompass the RPO/Signals Exhibit on Track 6. This will include building a new gate across the access road. Lumber has been purchased for this expansion, and the fence will be installed as soon as the snow melts (and hopefully before our Easter event). Completion of this project will help ensure visitors stay within the area designated for the public, while opening up some new space for exhibits. We are contemplating the installation of “Sign Garden II” along the RPO/Signals car.

By the end of March, we will rearrange some of the freight cars and locomotives on exhibit in the Upper Yard, while other pieces will be going into the Restoration Shop.

**CONRAIL CABOOSE DONATED TO FAIRPORT**

Last year officials from CSX announced that a caboose had been donated to the village of Fairport, to be placed on display alongside their new train-watching pavilion on Liftbridge Lane called “Fairport Junction.” Caboose 21290 was built in 1978 for Conrail by Fruit Growers Express in Alexandria, Va., one of 113 cars in the N-21 class. These were the only cabooses purchased new by Conrail, and were some of the last active remaining on the roster. Caboose 21290 was most recently used on local trains based out of Rochester that had long shove moves, such as the run up to Charlotte to serve International Paper (otherwise known as the “box shop”). While the interior was not meant to be occupied, the

platforms gave the conductor a safe place to stand during long shove moves.

On February 9, the caboose was spotted on the RIP (repair-in-place) Track alongside the closed Atlantic Avenue Diesel Shop at Goodman Street Yard. The body was lifted off the trucks by a crane from C.P. Ward, and the trucks were placed on a flatbed for delivery to Fairport. On February 24, C.P. Ward returned to load up the body on a flatbed trailer for the move to Fairport. By early afternoon, the body and trucks were once again reunited. According to reports from the village, the caboose will be restored in full Conrail paint and markings.

This is the second caboose selected for preservation by CSX in recent years, following closely on Chessie System caboose 904136 donated to Churchville last year and placed on display at the West Shore Trailhead on Route 33. Part of Class C-27A, it was also built by FGE in 1980.

Our museum was fortunate to receive the donation of an N-11e caboose (built in 1969 at Despatch Shops in East Rochester) from Conrail in 1996, that we since restored as Penn Central 18526 in 2002. This caboose remains an active part of our operating museum fleet to this day, having just wrapped up a repair and refurbishing project led by volunteer Charlie Marks. 🐇

## TRAIN SHOW CHAIRMAN WANTED

Appearances at local train shows are just one way we promote our museum activities, solicit donations, and attract new members. We are seeking a Train Show Chairman to help coordinate our appearances at these events. The Chairman would be responsible for identifying local shows, making reservations for table space, submitting required payments, coordinating volunteer staffing and arranging for museum materials to be transported and set up at the show. The position of Chairman is a manager role for you to coordinate and delegate responsibilities. If you are interested in helping your museum grow, please contact Otto Vondrak at [ovondrak@yahoo.com](mailto:ovondrak@yahoo.com).

—Otto Vondrak, Museum President

## BUFFALO DAY TRIP APRIL 29

- Williamsville Depot Museum
- Orchard Park Depot Museum
- WNYRHS Discovery Center
- Niagara Frontier RR Museum

Includes bus transportation departing Industry Depot, admission, and box lunch.

Reserve tickets at [rgvrrm.org/buffalodaytrip](http://rgvrrm.org/buffalodaytrip)

ABOVE RIGHT: Dave Peet and John Stewart greeting visitors at the train show at the Henrietta Dome on February 19.

RIGHT: Dave Kehrer and Tony Mittiga helped man the museum's table on February 18. We handed out hundreds of fliers advertising our upcoming Easter Bunny Train Rides.





**THE SEMAPHORE**  
ROCHESTER & GENESEE VALLEY RAILROAD MUSEUM  
P.O. BOX 23326  
ROCHESTER, NY 14692-3326



**NEXT MEETING:**  
**Mar. 16, 2023**  
933 UNIVERSITY AVE., ROCHESTER, N.Y.

---

**PLAN AHEAD:**  
**April 20, 2023**  
933 UNIVERSITY AVE., ROCHESTER, N.Y.

---

---

---

Find us on Facebook! [facebook.com/rgvrrm](https://www.facebook.com/rgvrrm)



Erie gas-electric 4070 awaits its next assignment at the passenger terminal on Exchange Street, circa 1940. The “Wings of Progress” atop the Times Square building can be seen behind the car. Erie passenger service out of Rochester ended in September 1941. NIAGARA FRONTIER CHAPTER NRHS COLLECTION