

THE SEMAPHORE

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCHESTER & GENESEE VALLEY RAILROAD MUSEUM

VOL. 66 NO. 12
DECEMBER 2023

NEXT MEETING:

December 21
Member Greg Lund
presents
"Montana Railroading"



Sold out Santa Train Rides to the North Pole kicked off on December 8, and closed out our regular season. See page 4 for details. PHOTO BY OTTO M. VONDRAK

Season's Greetings

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In the coming weeks we will gather in our homes to celebrate the holidays with friends and family. The end of the year is also a time for reflection. Wrapping up another successful year at the museum, I am once again in awe of how much our volunteers have accomplished working together to meet our shared goals. We also saw some significant additions to our museum collection, including the arrival of Despatch Shops 0-4-0T No. 5, as well as caboose 2603, snow plow 4410, work flat 4400, and Alco S-2 72 from our neighbors Livonia, Avon & Lakeville Railroad. We also saw a significant departure with the sale of our New York Central *Empire State Express* cars to Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society, where they will continue their career hauling passengers behind steam, just like they did 80 years ago.

I am overjoyed to see so much progress on the restoration and maintenance of our collection, and seeing our volunteers busy on so many projects. While we have made tremendous progress on that front, museum attendance overall remains flat, with total admissions for 2023 just a hundred more than last year. We have some considerable work ahead of us if we want to encourage more visitors and bring in more revenue in the coming years. Of course, we are not the only museum to face these challenges, as many organizations continue to struggle in a post-pandemic economy. Fortunately, we have the resources to grow and continue our forward progress for years to come.

Where do we go next? Your ideas for our museum's future are always welcome. Please email me at ovondrak@yahoo.com or call me at (585) 820-2341.

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UPCOMING MONTHLY PROGRAMS

Monthly meetings return to the 40&8 Club, 933 University Ave., Rochester, N.Y. Doors open at 7:00pm, and the meeting begins at 7:30. Cash bar available. Evening programs begin after a brief business meeting. All meetings are FREE to attend and open to the public. Bring a friend!

On **December 21, 2023**, member Greg Lund will present his program "Montana Railroads" combining several trips to Big Sky Country. On **January 18, 2024**, Mark Klingel returns to present "The Railroads That Built the Finger Lakes," including LA&L, Bath & Hammondsport, Ontario Midland, Finger Lakes, Rochester & Southern, and Ithaca Central.

Please contact me by phone or email with your ideas for future programs.

—Dave Drury,
Program Committee Chair



ABOVE: Livonia, Avon & Lakeville Alco S-2 72 and RS-1 20 power a work train consisting of a flatcar, Work Flat 4400, and Caboose 2603 northbound out of Lakeville Yard on April 15, 1996. Except for the flatcar, all of these items are now in the collection of the Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum, delivered November 5, 2023. —PHOTO BY DUNCAN RICHARDS

SANTA TRAINS TO THE NORTH POLE DEC. 8-9, 15-16

Your museum wrapped up the operating season with four evenings of Santa Train Rides to the North Pole, starting on December 8. Trains departed at 3:00, 4:30, 6:00, and 7:30pm for a magical trip to the North Pole to meet Santa and Mrs. Claus! Our Midway Station (former Rochester, Lockport & Buffalo Railway trolley waiting room) was fully decorated for the season, providing a convincing backdrop for family photos. All trains were sold out well in advance, filling three cabooses to capacity on each run. Thanks to New York Museum of Transportation for arranging use of the 200 feet of track north of the property line so our train could properly platform at North Pole station. This fun event concludes our regular operating season! Thanks to all the volunteers who contributed their time. We reopen to the public on March 30, 2024, for Easter Bunny Train Rides. —O.M.V.

MECHANICAL DEPT. UPDATE

RG&E 41: In service. Chris Hauf ordered new reproduction RG&E logos for the sides of the cab to replace the weather damaged ones. They will be applied when the weather warms up in the spring.

LA&L 20: Winterized and out of service for the season. Moved into the Shop for minor repairs and maintenance this winter. Sam Rosenberg is getting a quotation for a replacement fuel pump.

LA&L 72: Sam Rosenberg is getting a quotation for a new set of batteries. The locomotive's horn and builder's plates have been removed for safe keeping.

R&GV 54: In service. Adjustments will be made to the thrust bearings on the No. 3 axle after Santa Trains wrap up later this month.

RG&E 8: Bob Ziegler will have the No. 1 engine cylinder heads cleaned up by December 22. Sam Rosenberg and his team replaced the broken traction motor suspension bolts on the No. 2 and No. 3 axles. Chuck Whalen has been working on cleaning up and painting the traction motor blowers for both trucks.

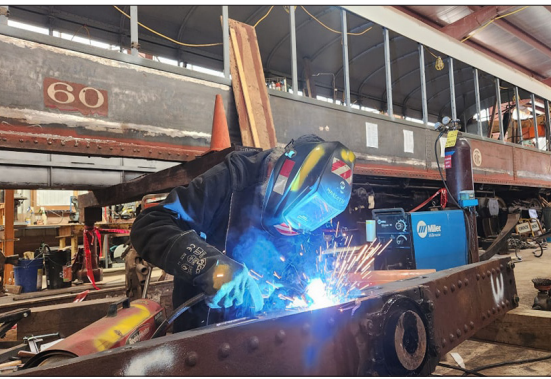
USA 1843: Out of service due to a bad brush holder in the aux. generator. A repair will be attempted this winter. Sam Rosenberg sent a brush holder and brush sample to Helwig Carbon for quotation.

EK 6: Charlie Marks reinstalled several plywood window blanks that had fallen out. Rob Burz is looking into large tarps that can be used to better protect the interior of the cab from the weather.

DSI 5: Relocated to Track 9 South behind the Shop. An evaluation is required to develop a budget and plan for cosmetic restoration.

PC 18526 Caboose: Repairs to both handbrake mechanisms are scheduled for this winter.

B&O C2493 Caboose: The wooden sub-floor inside the caboose has been removed. The bolts that were securing the boards will



ABOVE: Using the old rear bolster as a pattern, Bill Marcotte fabricated a new bolster over the last several weeks for Rochester Subway Car 60.

RIGHT: The newly fabricated bolster reinstalled on top of the rear truck. While the truck was out from under the body, volunteers too the opportunity to clean four decades of dirt, dust, grease, and grime from the frame and housings. Once the area where the bolster attaches to the sill is repaired, the truck will be rolled back under the body.

be cut off this week. A new sub-floor will be installed in 2024 after the steel framework is repaired and painted.

RTC Car 60: Bill Marcotte finished fabrication work on the rear bolster beam of the car. The beam will be painted and reinstalled. Charlie Marks started repairing the end windows for both ends of the car. There are a total of nine windows required; one is intact, two can be repaired, and the remaining are in pieces or missing altogether. Six new windows will be fabricated as replacements.

NYC Caboose 19877: In service. Need bathroom window installed, most likely in the spring when it is warm enough for caulking and sealing.

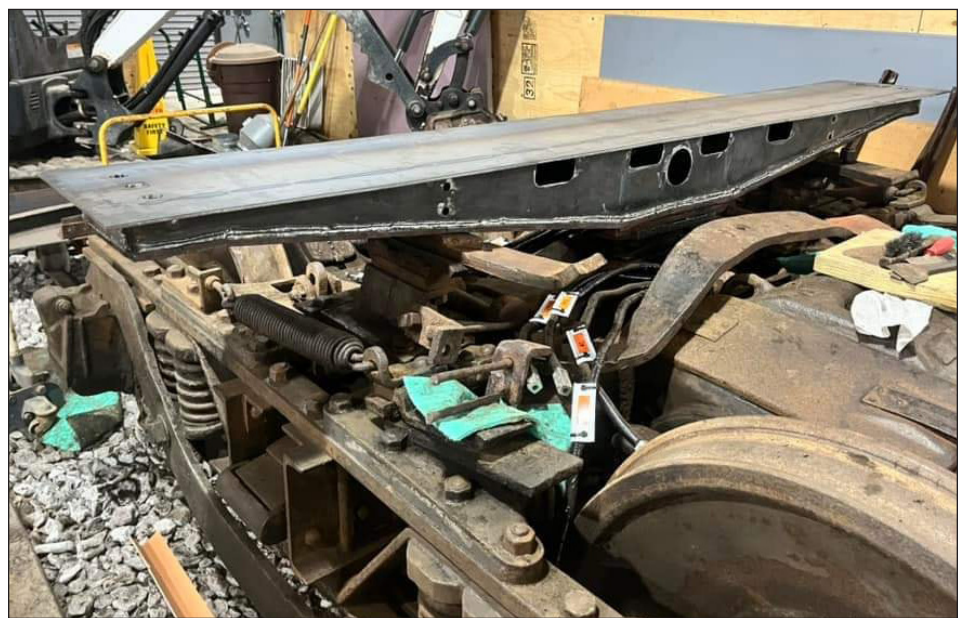
Erie 2103 Stillwell Coach: A sample set of steps need to be delivered to PKG Equipment. Fabrication and delivery of new steps is expected for 2Q 2024.

We are always seeking new volunteers interested in learning more about maintaining and repairing our historic fleet of vintage trains. Please contact me for details.

—Joe Nugent, Mechanical Dept. Supt.

ELECTION RESULTS

Because of mailing delays with the November issue of The Semaphore, ballots were not counted at the November 16 meeting. Any ballot postmarked November 20 was collected from our mailbox, and will be counted with the others at the **December 21** member meeting.



ABOVE: Despatch Shops 0-4-0T No. 5 was moved to its new storage location behind the Restoration Shop on Track 9 on November 18. The locomotive will be evaluated for cosmetic restoration over the next few months.

PAINT WE MUST



RIGHT: Jim Gaylord and Bernie Beikirch applied two fresh coats of yellow paint to the tool car trailer in November. The trailer was in for minor repairs to the underbody.

BELOW RIGHT: Chuck Whalen applies a primer coat to blower motors he cleaned up for eventual reinstallation inside Rochester Gas & Electric GE 110-ton switcher No. 8.





MUSEUM SAFETY: YOUR ACTIONS AFFECT OTHERS

Are you concerned with safety now, or only after an accident occurs? How you perform your work at the Museum has an effect on everyone else, too. Improper action can not only cause an injury to you, but also to others — without even trying. Here are some hypothetical examples that could possibly be found in a busy working environment like our Restoration Shop, where there can be several independent projects taking place at the same time, yet still affecting one another.

Let's say you are using one of the museum's approved scaffolding units, each with a capacity of 1,000 lbs. — when it is being used properly. Usually there is no problem when they are being used on our flat concrete floors, but what about spanning the tracks inside the shop? Scaffolding needs proper and level support in order to function properly. One wrong move, and the scaffolding could come tumbling down, causing injury not only to someone on it, but also to anyone unlucky enough to be around the area. Some 3/8" plywood could be used to span the tracks and provide support, but it probably doesn't have the same 1,000 lbs. load rating as our concrete floor. A better idea would be to use 2x12s or some other support with a heavier load rating.

Holiday Party

TOP LEFT: Our annual Holiday Party was held at Industry Dept on December 1, which included plenty of food brought by members to enjoy.

MIDDLE LEFT: Sam Rosenberg was engineer so we could offer train rides during the party.

LEFT and BELOW: Members, friends, and family enjoyed the holiday decorations in the waiting room, and cocktail service by David Scheiderich.





Santa Trains to the North Pole

ABOVE: A happy family returns from the North Pole and poses for a photo at Industry.

RIGHT: The North Pole Express departs from "Track 1" at Industry. The train consisted of three cabooses, including Erie C254, New York Central 19877, and Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh 280.

BELOW RIGHT: Passengers are packed into the New York Central caboose for the long trip to the North Pole.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Families are excited to meet Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus at the North Pole! Our old Rochester, Lockport & Buffalo waiting shelter was magically transformed by our elves.

In this same instance, working in close quarters around the Electric Shop could mean that either exit could be blocked while work is taking place. Sure, a scaffold could be brought over to work on a car in that area, but what if it blocks the exit? Yes, the scaffold is on wheels, but in an emergency, how could an occupied and tied down scaffold be moved without causing more potential injury? Both exits from the Electric Shop must be kept clear of materials within 30". If a scaffold or ladder has to be temporarily set up that will block the exits, then it would be good to ensure the Electric Shop is not occupied while the work takes place. When we are done with the scaffolds, move them out of the aisle to a location where they are not interfering with a walkway. No job is done if it is not cleaned up and the tools used are put away.

Another important safety consideration is the location of fire extinguishers. By law, access to a fire extinguisher cannot be blocked for any reason. Please be considerate when moving materials or tools that you don't accidentally block a fire extinguisher. They are located throughout the Restoration Shop, Industry Depot, and in-



side every occupied structure, locomotive, and caboose (and the rider flatcar). If you see one blocked, it is your responsibility to clear the item away to help us all keep safe.

In summary, if you are using a scaffolding in an aisleway, it must be moved out of the way before you leave for the day. Be aware of any fire exits around you and keep them clear. Also be familiar with the locations of fire extinguishers, and help keep the area around them clear as well. Your actions affect everyone around you.

As volunteers, we all need to be looking out for each other, and helping everyone feel safe and comfortable as we go about our work. Should you have any questions or suggestions regarding museum safety, please contact me (see page 3). ☺

—Ernie Cole, Safety Manager



*Happy New Year
from*

ROCHESTER & GENESEE VALLEY
RAILROAD MUSEUM

Peace on Earth



Baltimore & Ohio “Wagontop” Caboose C2493

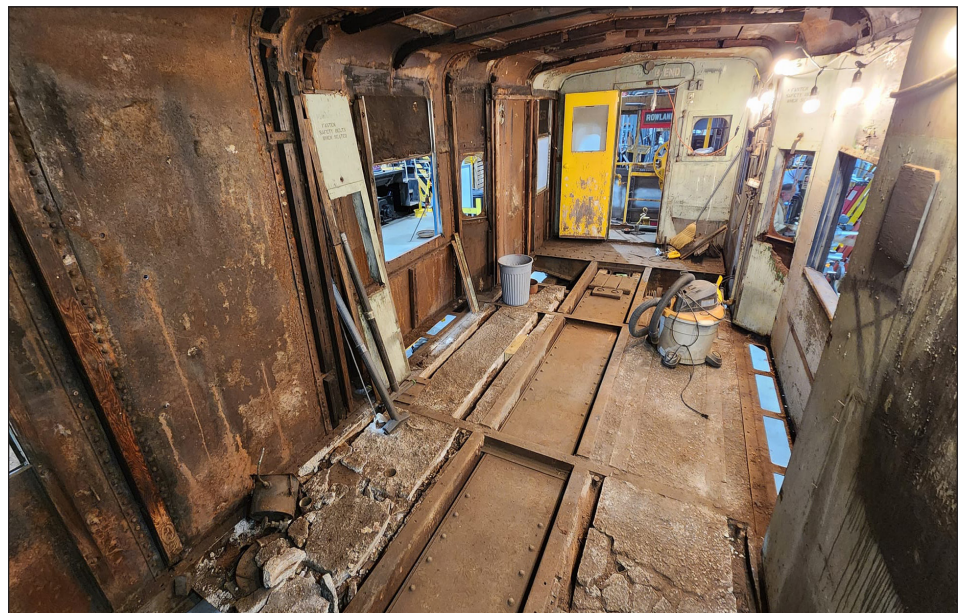
Built in Baltimore & Ohio Railroad’s shops in Keyser, W.Va., the C2493 is an example of one of the famous “wagontop” style bay window cabooses. They were given this name due to the unique rounded construction where the side sheets met the roof, resembling a Conestoga wagon. The car was built in 1942 as part of Class I-12.

In the 1930s the railroad experimented with new car designs built in-house in an effort to save money and keep their own workers employed through the Great Depression. One of the more interesting designs, and one that became a signature for the B&O, was the “wagontop” design, so-called for the steel ribs that represented horse-drawn covered wagons.

In 1935 and 1936 built seven cabooses to test the design, classified as I-5. In 1941 B&O applied the improved wagontop design to a fleet of new all-steel cabooses classified as I-12. In total, 125 cars were built in two batches at the car shops at Keyser Shops. The first 100 numbered C2400-C2499 were built in 1941-1942, and the last 25 numbered C2800-C2824 in 1945. Our caboose is from the first production run.

Caboose C2493 continued to serve its new owner Chessie System after 1972, and CSX Transportation after 1980. In 1985, it was sold to the Rochester & Southern Railroad where it was used in local service around Rochester, primarily as a “shoving platform.” The interior was vandalized in later years. It was then sold to a private individual before it was purchased by museum members Gene and John Redden, and partially repainted into blue and yellow and lettered on one side. The caboose was donated to our museum at the end of 2021 and is currently being evaluated for restoration.

Placed in the Restoration Shop in 2023, one of the goals was to get the caboose



TOP: Baltimore & Ohio C2493 was stored on Track 6 in 2018. It was previously painted by Gene and John Redden in the 1990s. **ABOVE:** The car was moved into the Shop, and the inside of the caboose has been gutted down to the frame to check on the condition of the walls and frame.

cleaned up for evaluation. Justin Carmona led the initial effort to remove the remaining interior fixtures and old, damaged windows. In recent months, new member Gerry Jewels has taken an interest in the car, and has assisted in its evaluation. The decision was made to completely remove the rotten and failing sub-floor and replace it with new material. With the sub-floor removed, it was discovered that the metal panels at the ends of the car are cracked and failing, which will also need replacement. A fundraising campaign was started earlier this year to pay for sandblasting and priming the exterior in anticipation of making repairs to the body and applying a new paint job.

The museum is setting aside funds to make the critical metal repairs to the frame and to replace the sub-floor in 2024. That will give us a good foundation for any further work that takes place. Fundraising is ongoing for the sandblasting and priming of the exterior. The remaining interior fixtures (seat boxes and benches) will be evaluated for restoration as well. With less than a dozen surviving examples of this class, and this car’s close ties to Rochester, we look forward to restoring this caboose so that it can be enjoyed as part of our museum collection for years to come. Your contributions of funds and volunteer labor will help speed our progress! —O.M.V.



THE SEMAPHORE
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NEXT MEETING:

Dec. 21, 2023

933 UNIVERSITY AVE., ROCHESTER, N.Y.

PLAN AHEAD:

Jan. 18, 2024

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Find us on Facebook! facebook.com/rgvrrm



Car Host Mike Byrne prepares to help Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus board the North Pole Express from "Track 1" at Industry on December 9. Your museum operated four days of special Santa Trains on December 8, 9, 15, and 16, to sold out crowds. See page 3 and 6. OTTO M. VONDRAK PHOTO