

THE

SEMAPHORE

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCHESTER & GENESEE VALLEY RAILROAD MUSEUM

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MAR.-APR. 2024

NEXT MEETING:

May 16
Duncan Richards
presents "50 Years
of Ferroquinology"



Our excursion train makes its way past the Railfan Overlook during Easter Bunny Train Rides on March 30. PHOTO BY OTTO M. VONDRAK

Spring Ahead

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We had a wonderful opening to our 2024 season with our sold out Easter Bunny Train Rides on March 30. We hosted more than 600 ticketed visitors throughout the day, and we had plenty of volunteers to help make sure everyone had a great time. Hopefully we can continue this momentum into the rest of the season when we reopen on May 11 with Mother's Day Train Rides.

Some members have asked why we couldn't keep the old once-a-month schedule, or even reduce the number of days we are open to the public. Others mentioned the stress on volunteers, whether working at an event or trying to make progress on a project behind the scenes. When we launched the "Most Saturdays Schedule" last year, we learned how to continue progress on most projects while working around additional days of public operation.

So while we didn't see a significant increase in attendance last year, we did identify areas we could target and grow with new event ideas and promotion. Are you ready for Donut Day (June 8)? Trains, Trucks & Tractors (July 20)? Boxcars, Bands & Barbecue (August 24)? These are just some of the new themed events we are trying out in an effort to bring new visitors to our museum and really use our property and exhibits to its full potential.

I'm so excited to announce our museum is the recipient of a \$283,000 grant to repair and resurface our entire main line track from end to end! This is a major achievement for our organization (see page 7).

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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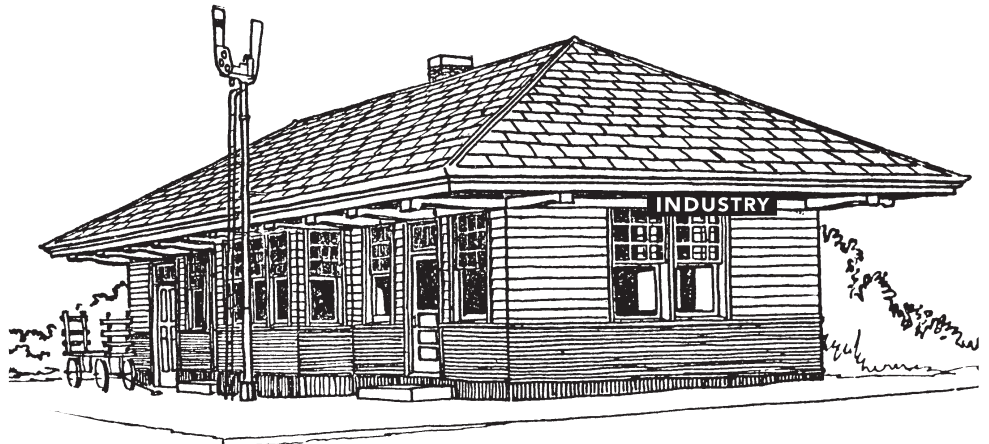
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Dave Peet

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Builder's photo of Pennsylvania Railroad Alco RS-2 8445, one of five similar units built with a high short hood to accommodate both dynamic brakes and a steam generator for passenger service. Built in 1953, it was renumbered 5569 after the 1968 Penn Central merger. It was traded to Lehigh Valley in 1970 where it became 211. It was rebuilt by Conrail in 1979 and became 9900. Retired in 1981, it was acquired by several museum members and donated in 1986. It was restored to LV colors in 1990 and remains an important part of our museum's operating fleet. —ALCO HISTORIC PHOTOS



2024 Museum Schedule

May 4 - Conrail Historical Soc. Charter
May 11 - Mothers Day Train Rides
May 18 - Rails & Ales

Aug. 17 - Princess Tea Party Train Rides
Aug. 24 - Boxcars, Bands & Barbecue

June 1 - Trains & Trolleys at Twilight 1
June 8 - Donut Day Train Rides
June 15 - Fathers Day Train Rides
June 22 - Princess & Superheroes

Sept. 7-8 - Steam Train Rides
Sept. 14-15 - Steam Train Rides
Sept. 20 - NMRA NER Covention Charter
Sept. 21 - Oktoberfest Rails & Ales
Sept. 28 - Rush Fall Festival

July 6 - Trains & Trolleys at Twilight 2
July 13 - Witches & Wizards Train Rides
July 20 - Trains, Trucks & Tractors
July 27 - Ice Cream Train Rides

Oct. 12-13 - Pumpkin Patch
Oct. 19-20 - Pumpkin Patch
Oct. 26-27 - Pumpkin Patch

Aug. 3 - Trains & Trolleys at Twilight 3
Aug. 10 - Pizza Day Train Rides

Dec. 7-8 - Santa Trains
Dec. 14-15 - Santa Trains

Volunteer sign up: rgvrrm.org/volunteer

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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 **April 18**, Larry Girard will present "Adirondack Railway and Tupper Lake Extension" covering the history of this popular tourist line and its recent northward expansion. On **May 16**, member Duncan Richards will present "50 Years of Ferroequinology" including wide coverage of his railroad photography over the years.

June 20, July 18, and August 15 meetings return to Industry Depot at 7:00pm where we will enjoy a ride on our museum railroad and tour our Restoration Shop for an update on the latest projects.



Rochester was in the path of totality to experience the solar eclipse on April 8. Museum president Otto Vondrak snapped this photo at Industry Depot just moments after the totality. Where were you for the eclipse? The next one visible in the United States will be in 2044.

Our **September 19** meeting returns to the 40&8 Club with member Greg Lund presenting "An Insider's View of Railroading." Graphic designer Steve Boerner returns on **October 17** with more "3D Modeling Adventures." **November 21** is Annual Elections and Member Slide Night. We close out the year on **December 19** with Peter Gores presenting "Films From the FRA."

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

—Dave Drury,
Program Committee Chair

ANNUAL RULES CLASS AND VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

I'd like to thank Dave Scheiderich for another successful Annual Rules Class hosted on March 9 at RIT. We broke a record for attendance, with more than 64 volunteers for the Part One Safety Rules portion. We also had a very high number attending Part Two Operating Rules and Part Three Air Brakes & Train Handling. I think this demonstrates a clear commitment to the kind of professional training that helps our volunteers continue the safe operation of our museum. Thanks also to Justin Carmona and Jeremy Tuke for assisting with test scoring and other administrative tasks.

A Volunteer Orientation and Training was held at the museum on March 23. Otto Vondrak led training for Museum Guides and Car Hosts, while Greg Lund led training for Brakemen and Conductors. Several volunteers got the chance to practice radio calls

and car counts, and Engineer trainees got a chance at the throttle as we made several runs up and down the museum railroad.

If you missed Orientation there's still opportunities to get training in any position (including working inside the Depot either doing Tickets or Gift Shop). For train crew, please email boblenon@gmail.com, for all other positions, please email ovondrak@yahoo.com.

—O.M.V.

EASTER BUNNY TRAIN RIDES MARCH 30

More than 600 happy visitors attended our first sold-out capacity event of the season on March 30. The petting zoo at Industry Depot was provided by our friends at Niagara Downunder, while the Easter Bunny entertained folks in the Upper Yard. Monica Lloyd and Tony Mittiga handed out juice, cookies, coloring books, and crayons to the kids. Thanks to conductor Jeremy Tuke, engineer Greg Lund, and all the volunteers who helped on the trains, in the depot, and in the Upper Yard! —O.M.V.

MOTHER'S DAY TRAIN RIDES MAY 11

Enjoy a fun day out with mom on May 11 from 10:00am to 2:00pm! All moms enjoy complimentary coffee or tea and pastry (while supplies last). During your visit, enjoy train rides that tour our bucolic museum grounds as you visit New York's largest collection of historic trains. Take a



ABOVE: Four 20-foot containers were landed in the Construction Yard on February 20. This is part of our effort to consolidate our long-term storage and eliminate the trailers.



RIGHT: We broke a record for attendance at Annual Rules Class on March 9, with more than 64 volunteers taking part. Thanks to Dave Scheiderich for teaching class, and to Justin Carmona and Jeremy Tuke for helping with test scoring.

BELOW RIGHT: Seven inches of snow didn't keep our volunteers away from Orientation and Training on March 23! Greg Lund reviewed procedure for brakemen and conductors, while Otto Vondrak trained car hosts and museum guides.

BOTTOM LEFT: Work continued on replacing the rear curved roof on Rochester Subway Car 60 on April 6. Once the roof is finished, work can begin on reconstructing the rear vestibule.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Charlie Marks, Bernie Beikirch, and others helped complete the new entrance into the Signals Exhibit on April 13. A second entrance will be built at the other end of the car, and a new Sign Garden established between the two of them.



peek behind the scenes in our Restoration Shop, and connect with Rochester's rich railroad heritage. Tickets on sale now at www.RochesterTrainRides.com.

**RAILS & ALES
MAY 18**

Enjoy complimentary tastings from more than a dozen local craft breweries on May 18 from 12:00-3:00pm. Train rides depart every 30 minutes so you can ride between the two tasting stations as often as you like! Discover great craft beverages in all styles, from mild to wild. Ticket purchase includes museum admission and free souvenir tasting glass. Refreshments available for purchase. Free soft drinks for Designated Drivers. Tickets on sale now at www.RochesterTrainRides.com.



**MECHANICAL DEPT.
APRIL UPDATE**

RG&E 41: Sam Rosenberg discovered an issue with the voltage regulator and will be swapping it out with another unit. Mark Bowen is working on upgrading the locomotive's headlight resistors so that the bulbs don't burn out as quickly. The next 92-day inspection will be performed by April 26.



LA&L 20: Mark Bowen, Mary Strodl, and others are cleaning and painting the walkways, as well as the floor inside the short hood. Completion by April 20 as weather permits. The locomotive will be in service by May 11.

LA&L 72: New batteries have been ordered and are set to arrive by the end of April. Barrels for cooling water have been

purchased and have been filled with clean, mineral-free water. The goal is to have the locomotive in service by May 11.

R&GV 54: The locomotive received a 92-day inspection on March 16. Justin Carmona and Dave Kehrer changed the oil in the No. 2 air compressor. New belts were also ordered and will be installed at a later date. Jeremy Tuke repaired a sander hose that was loose and dragging on the ground. Dick Holbert and Sam Rosenberg replaced the radio, which had issues with intermittent static.

RG&E 8: Mike Guglielmo and Jim Johnson are cleaning up the traction motors. This includes removing each brush holder for cleaning and inspection. New brushes will be installed when the locomotive is closer to completion. Sam Rosenberg

is replacing the fluids on the No. 2 engine, which will include a flush of the cooling system, completion by May 4.

USA 1843: Brush holders for the locomotive's auxiliary generator are on order and should arrive by the end of April. Repairs are expected to be completed by the end of June 2024.

LBR 23 Flat: Dave Peet is leading an effort to paint the steel body of the car, as well as the underside of the roof. Paint work is expected to be completed by the end of May, depending on the weather.

PC 18526 Caboose: The south-end hand brake mechanism has been cleaned, lubed, and reassembled by Joel Poplawski. The mechanism still has some issues and is being investigated. The north-end hand brake mechanism will also be inspected and re-

paired as needed. Completion by April 26.

B&O C2493 Caboose: Bill Marcotte and his team have been working on making repairs to the steel structure of the car. Bernie Beikirch and Charlie Marks are making plans for the new subfloor. Completion by September 1.

RTC Car 60: Metal repairs are underway on the front vestibule of the car. Dale Hartnett has been working on cleaning up the front truck in preparation for paint.

NYC Caboose: The brake piston travel was found to be excessive during an inspection in March. Pete Gores, Sam Rosenberg, and Mary Strodl adjusted the brake rigging to reduce brake piston travel. Lettering to be completed by end of June 2024.

Erie 2103 Stillwell Coach: Charles Rothbart is working with Bill Marcotte to formulate a plan for the steel work on the vestibules. A set of steps will be delivered to PKG Equipment in April so that fabrication can begin. Completion by November 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.

NOTICE: July 4 Trustees Meeting has been rescheduled to July 11.



LEFT: We had sunny, but chilly weather for our sold-out Easter Bunny Train Rides on March 30! Visitors loved the expanded egg hunt area in the Upper Yard!

BOTTOM: New volunteer car host Jim Gaylord gives the thumbs up to his conductor before departing Industry during our Easter Bunny Train Rides on March 30.



LEFT: To get us ready for our spring work window, exhibits in the Upper Yard got moved around and projects were pulled from the shop on April 6. Assisting with switch moves were Charles Rothbart (LEFT), Mary Strodl, and Emilia Connelly, with conductor Otto Vondrak and engineer Jackson Glozer.



A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING, AND EVERYTHING IN ITS PLACE



WE ARE ALL VOLUNTEERS and giving the precious gift of time to the museum, however as your Safety Manager I want to explain how the actions you take may affect the safety of your fellow volunteers and/or visitors.

The Restoration Shop is a busy place, often with several projects going on at the same time. Sometimes that means pulling compressed air lines and electric extension cords across our walkways and work spaces, or stringing work lights.

The photo at top left shows a tangle of electric cords and work lights that was blocking the walkway to the chemical storage cabinet and the fire extinguisher on the pillar, creating a potential trip hazard. Wherever these items came from, they do not belong stored in the walkway. In addition, it is against the law to block the walkway to a fire extinguisher. When you are done with something it is your responsibility to put it back in appropriate storage, even if you're coming back "tomorrow" or "soon" to finish your project. The floor and walkway is not the appropriate location. Walkways must be kept clear, and fire extinguishers cannot be blocked!

The photo at top right shows a five-gallon container of journal oil inside one of our cabooses, next to a doorway and a seating area. If this car is used to transport visitors (or open for exhibit), we are potentially exposing them to the hazards of the oil. Think how quickly a child might possibly get the lid off, and stick their fingers inside. Or, for that matter, an unsupervised adult wishing to cause mischief could cause a lot of damage. This is not the correct storage location. If you need to keep a supply of oil with you to keep journals lubricated throughout an operating day, keep the container in one of the closets out of public view. If the oil is not being used that day, bring it back to one of the two small white storage containers to the east of the Restoration Shop for storage. Never leave chemicals where our visitors can be exposed to them.

As volunteers we use a lot of equipment and chemicals, but when we are done for the day we need to put them away in the correct location. You can help by reminding your fellow volunteers! I thank all of you for your efforts in this regard. As always, work safe!

—Ernie Cole, Safety Manager

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS UPDATE

Last year our depot lawn was damaged by herbicide that washed down off our track area after a heavy rainstorm. Because our lawn is such a high-traffic area, there is no time to seed the area and give the grass enough time to re-establish itself. The decision was made to replace the affected area with sod from Batavia Turf, which was installed by Brandi Marino, Charlie Marks, Bernie Beikirch, Scott Gleason, and others during the week of April 16. The rest of the lawn has been over-seeded and fertilized to help encourage growth.

Volunteers have been hard at work completing some enhancements and upgrades to the Railfan Overlook area that was expanded last year. One of our goals is to add

a second staircase to the Signals Exhibit housed inside the mail car to ease traffic flow. We're also working on establishing another "Sign Garden" alongside the mail car between the two staircase platforms. One of the doorways will be interpreted with a mailbag hook, and your museum is investigating constructing a mailbag crane to place alongside the car (at one time, mailbags were hooked at speed by passing trains). Other signage will be brought out of storage and "planted" in the "garden."

We're working towards completing the both sets of stairs before we re-open on May 11, with work inside the Signals Exhibit car ongoing to open up new space. Work on "Sign Garden II" will be ongoing through the season as new exhibits are prepared for installation.

Charlie Marks and Bernie Beikirch have taken the lead on upgrading our fences in the Railfan Overlook to be compliant with fire code, with help from Rick Auburn, Bill Marcotte, John Talty, and others.

TIE BLITZ '24

To get our museum railroad to a good state of repair for the upcoming season, we have hired Symans Enterprises of Dunkirk to help replace ties along Track 9 in the Upper Yard, and replacing timbers in Switch 7 and Switch 8. We will also work to eliminate an elevation issue between Switch 7 and Switch 6, and correct some elevation issues north of Switch 6 in the main line. Supported by our volunteers, this contracted work is scheduled to take place on Saturday, April 27, and Sunday, April 28. ☺



WELCOME HOME! Thank to our friends at Livonia, Avon & Lakeville Railroad, Conrail N-21 caboose 21273 was safely moved from the West Siding over to Industry Yard on April 21. The car was built in 1978 by Fruit Growers Express in Alexandria, Va., and wrapped up its career working the Buffalo Terminal for CSX, sidelined by a broken truck spring a couple years ago. This caboose is privately owned by member Adam Lloyd who has meticulously restored the interior to its original configuration. You'll be able to tour it when we reopen on May 11 for Mother's Day Train Rides!

Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum Awarded \$283,000 Grant to Rebuild and Upgrade Track

The Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum is pleased to announce it is the recipient of a \$283,000 grant to help repair and upgrade its demonstration railroad located in suburban Rush, N.Y., as part of a \$111.1 million state-wide investment in rail infrastructure. As New York State's only operating railroad museum, this grant will help rehabilitate the tracks and underlying structure to help support a growing schedule of public excursion on the museum property. This grant constitutes the largest single award in the museum's 53-year history.

The Passenger and Freight Rail Assistance Program (PFRAP) is administered by the New York State Department of Transportation and supports investments that enhance the safe movement of trains, improve service reliability, and supports economic development, especially upstate. Winning projects were selected through a competitive solicitation process and rated based on established criteria that include a benefit cost analysis, adherence to regional economic development plans, safety enhancements, compatibility with other private and public investments, and actions that enhance resilience and reduce climate risk. The funding, the largest amount ever awarded as part of PFRAP, will support 38 projects in every region of the state and will include track



Contractors hard at work inserting ties into the museum railroad in 2022 as part of a joint track improvement project with New York Museum of Transportation.

and bridge rehabilitation, capacity expansion, procurement of cleaner rail equipment, and the modernization and expansion of rail infrastructure in freight yards and at seaport facilities.

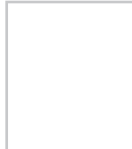
The grant will be applied towards installing new ties and ballast along the length of the entire museum railroad, as well as resurfacing and alignment. Engineering and design work will take place

throughout the year, with an eye towards completing the project in 2025. The majority of the work will be completed by contractors, supported by our volunteers. We thank NYSDOT for their ongoing support as we work to upgrade our museum railroad and continue our growth as the largest operating railroad museum in New York State.

—Otto M. Vondrak, RGV sPresident



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May 16, 2024
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PLAN AHEAD:
June 20, 2024
 282 RUSH SCOTTSVILLE RD., RUSH, N.Y.

Find us on Facebook! facebook.com/rgvrrm



VOLUNTEERS MAKE IT HAPPEN! Our March 30 Easter Bunny Train Rides was a sold out success, thanks to the hard work of many volunteers working on the trains, in the depot, and around our museum grounds. We couldn't do it without you! See page 3 for details.