

THE

SEMAPHORE

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCHESTER & GENESEE VALLEY RAILROAD MUSEUM

VOL. 68 NO. 2
FEBRUARY 2025

NEXT MEETING:

March 20

**Otto Vondrak presents
"50 Years of Designing
Railfan & Railroad"**



Joe Nugent watches as the first wisps of smoke emerge from the stack of the No. 1 engine on Rochester Gas & Electric 8 during its first test-fire on March 1, after months of significant mechanical and electric work to bring this locomotive back to life (See page 4). SAM ROSENBERG PHOTO

A Pivotal Year

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From the moment I started actively volunteering at RGV in late 2018, I have been astounded by the effort required for the restoration, operation, and maintenance needed to keep our “little” museum running. The growth over the past seven years has been tremendous! From the completion of restoration projects such as BRP 280 and LV 95100, to the rise in public engagement—even during the pandemic—and the ongoing improvement of our grounds, every aspect of the museum has seen progress. As we move into 2025, it is important to maintain this momentum, and we will need your support! Your museum is exploring various opportunities to secure funding to strengthen our position as the largest operating railroad museum in New York State, but an increase in funding alone will not lead to the long-term success of the muse-

um. To ensure that our museum continues to promote and preserve the history of the railroads in our region, we will continue to rely on our strong volunteer base. I have had the privilege of meeting the majority of our volunteers over the past seven years, and I am impressed by the dedication that each of you brings to your craft at the museum. As a member of the board, I can say that we are extremely grateful for the work that all of the volunteers have done in the past, and we look forward to seeing the incredible work that you will accomplish in 2025!

Where do we go from here? Your ideas for our museum’s future are always welcome. You can always reach out to any of the Officers and Trustees listed on **page 2**, or any of the museum department managers listed on **page 3**. ☺

—Jackson Glozer, Vice President



www.rgvrrm.org

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2025 Museum Schedule

Sign up: rgvrrm.org/volunteer

April 11 – LA&L 60th Anniversary Media Day (No Public)

April 12 – LA&L 60th Anniversary Trains

April 19 – Easter Bunny Train Rides

May 10 – Mother’s Day Train Rides

May 17 – Princess & Superheroes Trains

May 24 – Rails & Ales

June 14 – Donut Day Train Rides

June 21 – Ice Cream Trains

June 28 – Wine & Chocolate Train Rides

July 5 – Trains & Trolleys at Twilight: 1

July 12 – Donut Day Train Rides

July 19 – Ice Cream Trains

July 26 – Trucks & Tractors Train Rides

Aug. 2 – Trains & Trolleys at Twilight: 2

Aug. 9 – Donut Day Train Rides

Aug. 16 – Ice Cream Trains

Aug. 23 – Railfan Day Train Rides

Sept. 13 – Princess Tea Party Train Rides

Sept. 20 – Oktoberfest Rails & Ales

Sept. 27 – Rush Fall Festival (joint NYMT)

Oct. 11-12 – Pumpkin Patch Train Rides

Oct. 18-19 – Pumpkin Patch Train Rides

Oct. 25-26 – Pumpkin Patch Train Rides

Nov. 28-29 – Santa Train Rides

Dec. 5-6 – Santa Train Rides

Dec. 12-13 – Santa Train Rides

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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. Programs begin after a brief business meeting. All meetings are FREE to attend and open to the public. Bring a friend!

On **March 20**, member Otto Vondrak will be presenting “Railfan by Design: 50 Years of *Railfan & Railroad Magazine*.” Otto is also Managing Editor of R&R, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2024.

On **April 17**, publisher and historian Rudy Garbely will be presenting “The Lehigh Valley Railroad.”

On **May 15**, member Duncan Richards will be our presenter, with subject to be announced later.

For the summer months, meetings move to Industry Depot on **June 19, July 17, and August 21**.



Museum members gathered with friends and family to help Rand Warner celebrate his 90th birthday on February 8! Rand joined our organization in December 1961, and has been instrumental in its growth and development ever since.

If you have ideas for railroad-related programs for future monthly meetings, please contact me by phone or email.

—Dave Drury,
Program Committee Chair

**MARCH 15, 2025
ANNUAL RULES CLASS**

Our Annual Rules Class will take place **Saturday, March 15, 2025**, at the Rochester Institute of Technology campus. 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. Please respond to David Scheiderich at **boblenon@gmail.com** by March 10.

—David Scheiderich, Operations Supt.

**WINTER WEATHER:
KEEP THE DOOR CLOSED, PLEASE**

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

**LIVONIA, AVON & LAKEVILLE
60th ANNIVERSARY - APRIL 11-12**

Our season starts a week earlier as we will help Livonia, Avon & Lakeville kick off their 60th Anniversary with a special night photo session at LA&L Lakeville Shops on April 11 (limited to 30 participants, tickets required). On April 12, we will be operating special train rides at the museum, using our vintage LA&L equipment. The railroad will be providing a special exhibit of their own equipment parked alongside Industry Depot. For tickets and details, please visit www.RochesterTrainRides.com.

**EASTER BUNNY TRAIN RIDES
APRIL 19**

Easter Bunny Train Rides return on April 19! Enjoy fun train rides, friendly petting zoo, an egg hunt, complimentary juice and cookies for the kids, and a visit with the Easter Bunny himself! For tickets, please visit RochesterTrainRides.com.

LEHIGH VALLEY 211

Work continues on Lehigh Valley RS3m 211 through the winter months. The batteries on both sides of the locomotive have been removed, and the area was cleaned. Next up is to repair some rusted metal, and wire wheel the area in preparation for primer and paint. We have also been checking the condition of the brake components, including replacing the small air tank that is part of the sanding system.

Volunteers removed the conductors side louvers to expose the radiators. We plan to extract the radiators in the coming weeks for rebuild or replacement. The bottom 4” of the battery box was removed in preparation for new material, and structural improvements.

We aim to complete the stabilization work and start the locomotive in the spring. The last time LV 211 operated at the museum was at our June 2018 member meeting, double-headed with LA&L 20.

FIRST TEST RUN FOR RG&E 8

Rochester Gas & Electric GE 110-tonner No. 8 has been subject of a multi-year rebuilding and restoration since we acquired the diesel switcher in 2009. Significant work has taken place over the last year to repair and restore the No. 1 engine and get it running on all cylinders again. On March 1, RG&E 8 was pulled out of the shop to test fire the engine for the first time. After the engine successfully turned over, the No. 2 engine was also started. After sufficient air pressure was built up for the brakes, RG&E 8 made its first moves under its own power for the first time in more than 15 years! Following these tests, additional adjustments will be made in anticipation of future test runs. Thanks to Sam Rosenberg, Joe Nugent, Mary Strodl, Chuck Whalen, Rick Siebert, Bill Marcotte, Mike Guglielmo, Jim Johnson, and many others for their contributions to get us to this milestone.

BUFFALO, ROCHESTER & PITTSBURGH CABOOSE 280

BR&P 280 spent the last couple of months in the shop getting repairs to the windows on the east side of the car. Snow buildup caused the bottoms of the windows to completely rot out, requiring replacement. A couple of interior boards also needed replacement. With the windows repaired, the caboose can return outside. Later in the summer, the grab irons on top of the cupola



ABOVE: We enjoyed a visit from Livonia, Avon & Lakeville president Bob Babcock on January 7, who met with our new museum president Mark Bowen (LEFT) and vice president Jackson Glozer (RIGHT) to discuss plans for the railroad’s 60th anniversary later this year. Our partnership with LA&L goes all the way back to 1965, and we look forward to celebrating with them on April 11 and 12!

RIGHT: New volunteer Karsen Nunn helped re-install the handbrake inside the cab of Rochester Subway Car 60 on January 11. The chain has been reconnected, and the brake functions again as intended. KARSEN NUNN PHOTO



LEFT: Otto Vondrak helped Rand Warner with a test-fit of the motorman’s mirror on January 28. This mirror helped the motorman see passenger boarding and disembarking from the car.

will be reinstalled, along with the rooftop walkways. New windowsills will also be installed to help rain and snow drain away from the windows to prevent rot.

TRAIN SHOW MANAGER WANTED

Your museum missed an opportunity to promote its activities and recruit new vol-

unteers because we were unable to find anyone to staff a table at the recent RIT Tiger Tracks Train Show in December. In fact, we’ve missed opportunities to exhibit at local shows in Syracuse and Buffalo for the last couple of years. Train shows are not only a great way to meet the public, but an excellent opportunity to get the word out



ABOVE: Mike Guglielmo was busy upgrading the exterior security lights on the Restoration Shop on January 18.

LEFT: Mary Strodl and Chuck Whalen continued work on reassembling the No. 1 diesel on Rochester Gas & Electric 8.



BELOW LEFT: Ernie Cole and Charlie Marks have one of our baggage carts stripped down to the frame for repairs and refurbishing. Charlie's son Jesse rebuilt the cart more than 20 years ago for a Boy Scout community service project!

BOTTOM LEFT: "Point to where it hurts." On February 4, several volunteers helped perform an assessment on the extent of damage to the cab and body, and the best course for repairs. Built in 1953 as Pennsylvania Railroad 8445, it was traded to Lehigh Valley in 1970. Rebuilt by Conrail in 1979, it was retired again in 1981. Purchased by several museum volunteers, it was leased to Rochester & Southern in 1986 before it was donated to the museum and restored to LV colors.



about our museum. In the past, we set up a booth where we hand out copies of our schedule, information about volunteering, and other information about our fleet of historic equipment. We usually have a slide show or videos of our museum playing on a monitor as well. It's actually a lot of fun, plus you get to attend the show for free. We shouldn't let this opportunity pass us by in 2025. If you're interested in helping schedule these appearances and finding volunteers to attend, please contact any one of our board trustees or officers.

EDITOR RETIRES

After 17 years at the helm of THE SEMAPHORE, editor Otto Vondrak is retiring after the March issue goes to press next month, due to increasing work commitments. If anyone is interested in helping take on this vital communications role, please contact any board member (See page 3). ☺

BATAVIA— CANANDAIGUA SERVICE

COMMENCING OCTOBER 1, 1928

Service between BATAVIA and CANANDAIGUA
will be operated as follows until further notice:

	68		61
	EX. SUN.		EX. SUN.
	P. M.		A. M.
Lv. BATAVIA . . .	5.45	Lv. CANANDAIGUA . . .	6.15
STAFFORD . . .	5.55	WHEELER'S . . .	6.27
LE ROY . . .	6.05	HOLCOMB . . .	6.34
CALEDONIA . . .	6.17	IONIA . . .	6.41
MAXWELLS . . .	6.24	WEST BLOOMFIELD . . .	6.48
P. R. R. JUNCT. . .	6.29	HONEOYE FALLS . . .	6.56
GOLAH . . .	6.35	WEST RUSH . . .	7.06
WEST RUSH . . .	6.38	GOLAH . . .	7.09
HONEOYE FALLS . . .	6.50	P. R. R. JUNCT. . .	7.11
WEST BLOOMFIELD . . .	6.57	MAXWELLS . . .	7.14
IONIA . . .	7.04	CALEDONIA . . .	7.24
HOLCOMB . . .	7.14	LE ROY . . .	7.44
WHEELER'S . . .	7.20	STAFFORD . . .	7.55
Ar. CANANDAIGUA . . .	7.35	Ar. BATAVIA . . .	8.10
	P. M.		A. M.

f Stops on signal to receive or discharge passengers

NEW YORK CENTRAL

THE DE VINNE-HALLEBECK CO., INC., PRINTED

HISTORY OF THE "PEANUT LINE"

The Canandaigua & Niagara Falls Railroad was chartered in 1850 to connect its namesake cities, and its officers met in Lima in 1851 to outline the responsibilities of the new corporation. Members of the board included Samuel Rand of Mendon, Francis Paul of Canandaigua, George Wright of East Bloomfield, Ira Godfrey of Lima, and Benjamin Pringle of Batavia. Originally built to six-foot gauge to be compatible with the Erie Railroad, construction was completed from Canandaigua to Batavia by 1853. The first train to North Tonawanda on July 28, 1853, and the line was completed to Niagara Falls on April 1, 1854. While the new railroad was busy with freight and passenger traffic, it was unable to pay its bondholders, and was sold at foreclosure on the steps of the Ontario County courthouse on May 15, 1857. By 1858, the line was under control of the growing New York Central.

The first order of business was to convert the railroad to standard gauge (4'8.5"). The line from Canandaigua to Batavia became the Batavia Branch, while the west end became the Tonawanda Branch. Of course, the locals referred to them as the "East Peanut" and the "West Peanut." But where did the "Peanut Line" nickname come from? Back in the 1850s, a construction gang on the main line stopped work and went on strike. A few days later, the construction gangs on the branches joined the strike. Railroad executives were preoccupied dealing with the first strike when news of the second strike on the branch lines came in. That's when NYC vice president Dean Richmond remarked, "Oh, that's just a peanut of a line, anyway." According to a newspaper story reprinted in 1906, that's when the nickname stuck.

Passenger service on the Batavia Branch ended on April 25, 1931, with the remaining service on the west end discontinued in 1933. NYC ended service on 25 miles of track between Holcomb and Caledonia in 1939, and they were removed soon after. In 1956, the portion from North Tonawanda to Transit Road was abandoned. On the east end, the section from Canandaigua to Holcomb was abandoned in 1972. The tracks from Transit to Akron Junction were abandoned in 1979. A short portion in Batavia is operated by Depew, Lancaster & Western. While the tracks are gone in many places, some portions survive as hiking trails in Canandaigua and Clarence. —O.M.V.



ABOVE: The "Peanut" crossed the Erie Railroad at Golah, the NYC station can be seen at right.

J.E. BAILEY, PHOTOGRAPHER, ERIE RAILROAD, COLLECTION OF JIM HUTZLER

TOP: 1928 BROADSIDE TIMETABLE, RGVRRM COLLECTION

RIGHT: 1914 POCKET TIMETABLE, OTTO M. VONDRAK COLLECTION

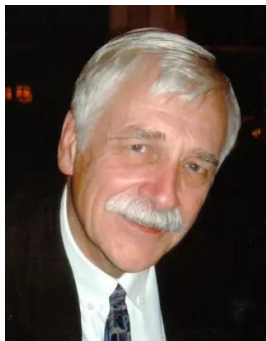
BATAVIA AND CANANDAIGUA BRANCH
NEW YORK CENTRAL LINES
Schedule of March 22, 1914

EAST BOUND

Leave	60	62	63
	Except Sunday	Except Sunday	Except Sunday
Buffalo	AM	AM	PM
Batavia	5 35	9 30	5 10
Stafford	7 00	11 10	6 20
Leroy	7 14	11 20	6 30
Caledonia	67 20	11 32	6 38
Maxwells	7 39	11 45	6 51
P. R. R. Jct.	67 47	11 55	6 58
Golah	67 50	11 55	6 58
West Rush	7 52	11 57	7 04
Honeoye Falls	7 54	11 59	7 06
W. Bloomfield	8 07	12 12	7 21
Ionias	7 52	11 57	7 04
Holcomb	8 13	12 18	7 24
Wheeler's	8 30	12 23	7 30
Ar. Canandaigua	8 36	12 28	7 36
Ar. Rochester (Auburn Rd.)	8 50	12 50	7 55
Ar. Geneva	11 05	2 15	8 55
Ar. Auburn	10 50	4 30	8 54
Ar. Syracuse (Auburn Rd.)	11 53	6 25	9 50
Ar. Utica	1 10	6 30	10 50
Ar. Albany	3 53	8 15	12 30
Ar. New York	4 44	12 19	2 55
	8 00	5 05	7 20
	PM	AM	AM

b Stops at North Street to discharge passengers.
f Indicates stop on signal

IN MEMORIAM



David D. Kaiser (1944-2025)

It is with a heavy heart that we share the news of the untimely passing of museum Trustee David Kaiser on February 6 following a brief battle with illness. A Rochester native growing up in the Browncroft neighborhood, he attended Rochester Institute

of Technology and earned his B.S. in Social Work in 1974, and later earned his postgraduate law degree from Syracuse University in 1979. He spent his entire career representing elderly and adult clients in need of protective services as a lawyer for Family Service of Rochester and later, Catholic Family Services.

Since their first visit more than a decade ago, David and his partner Dana Fuelhart have been an active part of our museum ever since. First as an active volunteer, David later joined the board as a Trustee in 2017, grounding our professional base and lending his expertise in some of the complex matters that arise from time to time in the world of historic railway preservation.

He was an active supporter of our many museum projects, especially Rochester Subway Car 60, of which he had fond memories of riding in as a child. It should be no surprise that he had an incredible memory, and loved sharing facts about Rochester's history, as well as trains, cars, and science. David was also an active volunteer with the Antique Wireless Museum in Bloomfield, which fed into his lifelong passion for vintage radios and other electronics.

His compassion, thoughtfulness, and his friendship won't soon be forgotten. —O.M.V.

Mark Wilczek (1966-2025)

I'm sad to report on the passing of past museum Trustee and Museum Manager Mark Wilczek on February 7, due to complications following a long battle with myotonic dystrophy. Mark was a lifelong resident of the greater Rochester area, and he never dreamed of living anywhere else.

He was a skilled contractor and tradesman in the greater Rochester area for many years, operating his business First Class Carpentry by word of mouth. Any project Mark worked on had to be well-planned and perfectly executed. If his name went on it, you knew it was going to be of the finest quality.

Many of you probably remember Mark joining the museum around 2011, and immediately jumping in with both feet, contributing to projects all around the museum, most notably helping put a new roof on Midway station, building the storage display cabinets in the waiting room at Industry Depot, and installing the rebar and supervising the concrete work for the inspection pit in the Restoration Shop. He later joined our Operating Dept. and became one of our most skilled conductors and locomotive engineers. He was very active in the organization until his illness forced him to withdraw a few years ago.

Mark also loved sailing on Canandaigua Lake and Lake Ontario, especially in races and regattas. He loved sharing his knowledge, his jokes, and his friendship with others. I know I learned so much from him, and his presence around the museum is sorely missed. —O.M.V.



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THE SEMAPHORE
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NEXT MEETING:

Feb. 20, 2025

933 UNIVERSITY AVE., ROCHESTER, N.Y.

PLAN AHEAD:

Mar. 20, 2025

933 UNIVERSITY AVE., ROCHESTER, N.Y.

Find us on Facebook! facebook.com/rgvrrm



When Russell Station in Charlotte was decommissioned by Rochester Gas & Electric in 2007, General Electric 110-ton 8 and 45-ton 1950 were donated to the museum for preservation. They arrived on their own wheels in 2008, and even operated to the Upper Yard under their own power. Since then, RG&E 8 has been subject to a multi-year rebuild and restoration that achieved a significant milestone on March 1 (See page 4). JOE NUGENT PHOTO