

**NEXT MEETING:**  
**December 18**  
*Leanin Tree Greeting Cards*

**HOLIDAY PARTY:**  
**December 19**  
*(date change!)*



# ELECTION 2025: RESULTS ARE IN

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## Leadership changes

RGVRRM is an all-volunteer organization, and we thank all of the volunteers who have served at the museum in any capacity. Here are the changes that have occurred in the last month or are scheduled to occur at the end of the year.

- November 20, 2025 – previously appointed to the position by the Board in October, Charles Rothbart was elected as President by the RGVRRM membership
- November 20, 2025 – previously appointed to the position by the Board in October, Emilia Connelly was elected as Recording Secretary by the RGVRRM membership
- November 20, 2025 – David Buckner was elected to serve as a Trustee starting in 2026.
- November 20, 2025 – Michael Guglielmo was elected to serve as a Trustee starting in 2026.
- January 1, 2026 – David Peet and David Shields complete their terms as Trustees. Thank you, Dave and Dave!



# A Note From the New President

## Museum Officers

### President

Charles Rothbart  
(203) 984-0106  
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### Vice President

Jackson Glozer

### Treasurer

Charlie Marks

### Recording Secretary

Emilia Connelly

### Corresponding Secretary

Dave Drury

### Trustees

Rob Burz  
Dana Fuellhart  
Adam Lloyd  
Bill Marcotte  
Joe Nugent  
David Shields  
David Peet



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Madi Murphy  
Jackson Glozer

### PRINTING AND MAILING

Jackson Glozer, Charles Rothbart,  
Madi Murphy

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Hello all. I would like to start by thanking everyone who participated in our election this year. You made your voices heard, and it was heartening to see a strong turnout. I am grateful for your support, and I am confident that our museum is in good hands and has a bright future.

Looking back, this was a challenging year, with changes in leadership, unplanned closure over the summer, and of course all of the complications that come with being an operating railroad museum. I would like to express my immense gratitude to all of you, and for everything that our volunteers and members do to keep our museum running come rain, shine, or flood.

Together, we persevered, and our perseverance paid off. We are set to close out a strong financial year, and turn a profit for the first time in several years. This is a reflection of the popularity of our events, and of the hard work of every single one of you. This money will help restore our depleted funds, and will help stabilize museum operations for the years to come.

Looking forward, I'd like to outline a few of my goals for the museum:

First, we will continue to modernize. Our electronic membership system is already underway, as well as our new mailing lists. In the works are campus-wide Wi-Fi, better security, improvements to our website, and much more. These efforts will help to improve our operations and to establish a solid foundation for our continued growth.

Second, we will work to create not just a culture of transparency, but a culture of involvement. The Museum belongs to all of you; it is your work which keeps it going every day. Making space for more people to have a say in the direction and operation of the museum is not just right, it is critical to our future. We will continue to re-form our missing committees, to create opportunities for volunteer leadership, and to make sure that every voice is heard.

Third, we will continue our work to become a more financially sustainable organization. Last year's budget was the first balanced budget passed in over 5 years. Building on this, we are working to review our finances and engage outside resources to ensure we are following best practices. We have also formed an Audit Committee to provide internal and, eventually, external oversight. We must continue to plan thoroughly, spend wisely, and be responsible stewards of the museum's future.

Fourth, we must work to develop our vision, both for our site and our collection. Our new Fundraising Committee has shown that there is money out there for those with a plan and enough determination. It is imperative that we continue to develop the processes and planning that will support our operation, sustain preservation, and enable our growth. All of our members are vital to this process, and your knowledge and ideas will chart a course towards a museum in which everyone has a part.

Finally, we must strengthen relationships with our neighbors, our community, and our fellow museums. These should not just be seen as assets in our success, but as partners in building a better shared future. We must reach out, make sure our door is open, and extend an olive branch. We must work to support each other. There is a wealth of railroad history in New York State, and together we can ensure that its preservation has a bright future.

Again, thank you to everyone for their part in making this year a success. We have done much, and we still have much to do. I look forward to working side by side with all of you next year. Our future is bright, and I can't wait to get there.

Sincerely,

Charles Rothbart  
President, RGVRM

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# Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Origins

The tracks passing the Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum’s Industry Depot are currently owned by the Livonia, Avon and Lakeville Railroad. Depending on your age you might, however, associate the tracks with a few other roads – Conrail, Erie-Lackawanna, or for many the Erie, which built the station which now serves as the Museum’s home.

You may be surprised to learn that there indeed was a Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad (RGVRR) and it built the line you see passing the depot today. Its origin paints an interesting picture of mid-nineteenth century Rochester.

In a letter to the Rochester Daily American dated June 11, 1853, three outgoing directors of the R & GVRR (Isaac Hills, L.A. Ward, and F. Clarke) provided an update on the status of the developing road. They listed the three main reasons for its construction:

1. To secure to this city (Rochester) the trade of the Genesee Valley.
2. To open a direct communication with the Coal region, Pittsburg(h), and the South West.
3. To obtain a southern route to New York.

The southern route to New York was desired to have another shipping option in addition to the recently completed route of the New York Central through the city. New York City was not the only destination factoring into the decision – a company had recently been organized to build a road from Pittsburgh to Ceres on the New York/ Pennsylvania border offering access to coal. The directors saw the opportunity in connecting to it, but at this point there were no plans to connect from that location to the southern terminus of the RGVRR.

This changed in June of 1853 at a meeting in Oramel, New York attended by R & GVRR directors. At that meeting a company was organized to construct a line from the fledgling Pittsburgh road to the R & GVRR. According to the directors’ letter, “Much spirit was manifested by the inhabitants along the route and the prospect seems fair that the results will be accomplished.”

The route of the R&GVRR was now set from Rochester to Pennsylvania. This required another decision – whether the line was to be narrow (4’ 8 ½”) or broad gauge. Since the third goal stated by the directors was to obtain a southern route to New York, that meant constructing a broad-gauge road as that was the standard for the roads to which it would connect. The

## Program Update

Our monthly meetings for the cold season are located at the 40&8 Club, 933 University Ave., Rochester, NY (across from Gleason Works). Doors open at 7:00pm, and the meeting begins at 7:30. Cash bar available. The evening program begins after a brief business meeting.

**Last Meeting of the Year:**

December 18: Christmas Cards from the Collection of Peter Gores

Please note that most meetings are streamed on Zoom. Make certain your email is in the members list to receive links for each month’s meeting.

—Dave Drury, Program Committee Chairman

directors justified this decision in their letter:

*"The width of the track also engaged the serious consideration of the board. Soon after the organization of the company, the directors, for the purpose of conforming to the Pittsburgh road, adopted the narrow track. Subsequently that company reconsidered their decision and adopted the wide gauge. As this removed the main objection to the broad gauge, our board via unanimous vote adopted it. Your hon. body will readily understand the strong interest our citizens have in making the road to correspond with the southern, rather than central roads, when it is remembered that it furnishes a very direct and eligible road to the city of New York - giving our citizens a choice of routes: one by the central road, with a narrow gauge - the other, by the Genesee valley, Cohocton valley, Canandaigua and Niagara Falls, and Erie roads, with a broad gauge, and thus creating the competition for freight and passengers so important to the business interests of our city."*

With these decisions in place, contracts were set for the road's construction and plans for its financing were made. The cost and financing for the Rochester section were detailed as follows:

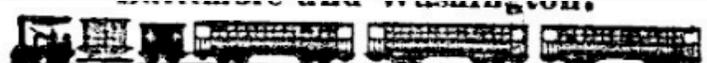
Cost of road From Rochester to Portage, 50 miles, at \$20,000.	\$1,000,000
Add 8 miles, Siding &c.	\$60,000
Station Houses and Depots, Rolling Stock or Equipment, Machine Shops, &c	\$200,000
	\$1,260,000
To be paid as follows:	
By issue of Stock	\$575,000
Mortgages, Bonds	\$485,000
Leaving the sum of \$200,000 to be provided for by the company	

The Directors concluded their letter by summarizing the road's status:

- The location of the road - the grade, curves, manner of construction, &c., contemplate a first class, single-track, broad-gauge road.
- The entire line from Rochester to Mt. Morris is under contract, and on most of the section the work is in progress.
- Under all the contracts but one, the works to be finished by the 15th October - and we see no reason why the road may not be running order in the early part of winter.

The work was completed with minimal delays, and the road to Avon (which includes the track passing our depot) was completed by 1854. The line continues as an active railroad that will continue for the foreseeable future.

—Dave Drury



**ROCHESTER & GENESEE VALLEY RAIL-ROAD.**

**1855 Summer Arrangement. 1855**

Six Foot Gauge and Wide Cars.

Fare from Rochester to New York—1st class ..... \$6.50  
 " " " " 2d " ..... 5.00  
 " " to Philadelphia, 1st " ..... 8.00

Which is cheaper than by any other route to the above named places, all the way by Railroad.

Trains will leave Rochester for New York and Philadelphia and intermediate stations, from the Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Depot, on Exchange street, daily (Sundays excepted,) as follows:

Rochester and New York Day Express ..... 8 A M  
 " " Night " ..... 5 P M  
 Freight and Accommodation ..... 10:45 A M

All trains leave on New York time, which is 18 minutes faster than Rochester time.

By this Road there is now opened a direct route to Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, via Elmira & Williamsport, Catawissa and Reading Railroads, which is 100 miles shorter than by the way of New York.

The directness of this route, with the superior comfort afforded by the wide Cars, renders it by far the most desirable one between Rochester and the above named places.

The Rochester and Genesee Valley Railroad connects at Avon with trains on the Buffalo, Corning & New York Railroad, direct to Caledonia, Le Roy, Stafford and Batavia.

Tickets can be obtained in Rochester at "The United States Express Co's Office," No. 8 Exchange Place, in rear of the Arcade, and at the Company's Depot, on Exchange street.

J. A. REDFIELD, Sup't.  
 Rochester, May 25th, 1855.

# Santa Trains

This weekend is the final weekend for our popular Santa Train Rides! The first two weekends have been a great success, with many happy families traveling to the North Pole to see Santa. Our volunteers have spent countless hours setting up for and operating these trains. Specifically, I would like to thank Michael Gugliemo, Adam Lloyd, and Scott Gleason for restoring power to the Midway Depot so the North Pole could be lit up. I would also like to thank Otto Vondrak for managing the event and controlling the chaos, and Brandi Marino for operating the ticket window and gift shop. Thank you to everyone else who came out to lend a hand; the hard work does not go unnoticed!

—*Jackson Glozer*



## Gallery: Winter Railfanning

In Western New York, we are blessed with the possibility of fantastic snowfall for five months of the year. While others complain that their driveways are covered and stay indoors on the weekends, many railfans take this season as an opportunity to capture stunning photographs of railroads operating in our harsh winters. Whether during a snowstorm, a fresh-powder morning, or a frigid, clear day, winter offers infinite possibilities!

—*Jackson Glozer*



*Ontario Central — Shortsville, NY, 12/26/02 — Duncan Richards*



*CSX – Corfu, NY, 2/5/22 – Duncan Richards*



*Buffalo & Pittsburgh – Ashford Junction, NY – Greg Lund*



*NYSW – Tully, NY, 1/15/23 – Jackson Glozer*



*Rochester & Southern – Mt Morris, NY, 12/18/20 – Jackson Glozer*

# Suggestions and Opinions

One amazing thing about this Museum is that it has a lot of smart people with a lot of great ideas. If you have a suggestion or opinion that you would like to share with the membership, submit it for consideration by emailing [semaphore.committee@rgvrrm.org](mailto:semaphore.committee@rgvrrm.org). Be sure to specify if you would like your suggestion to be credited to you or anonymous. If the suggestion or opinion is one that comes up a lot, or one that seems interesting or useful, we'll publish it.

Here are some examples of suggestions that we might receive, and an explanation of whether this would be published or not.

“The Museum bylaws should be revamped to specify who can vote and who can't.” → This has been suggested by multiple people and we would definitely include this.

“The Museum bylaws should specify that only adults can vote.” → I personally don't agree with this, but we would include it because it is an important thing to consider.

“The Museum should have a table at local train shows.” → Great idea, we'll include it!

“Thanks to Brandi for running the store, she does a great job!” → Sure! We encourage notes of appreciation or encouragement.

“The Museum should have a bathroom in the restoration shop.” → We might include this one with an editor's note that this would be very expensive due to the lack of a sewer system.

“The Museum should give free admission to anyone who likes trains.” → This is not reasonable and we would not include this suggestion.

“The Museum should hold a sack-race competition each summer.” → We might not include this one because it is not relevant to the Museum's mission.

“The Museum should acquire an alien spaceship for its collection.” → If it makes me laugh, I'll probably include it.

“Jackson Glozer needs a haircut.” → This could be interpreted as mean and a personal jab to both Jackson and the person who cuts his hair, and we would not include this. We hope this gives folks a way to voice their thoughts and feel more empowered as members of the museum. What do you think?

—Madi Murphy, Semaphore Editing Team

## Upcoming Events

**Santa Trains: SOLD OUT!**

December 13-14

**RIT's Tiger Tracks  
Train Show and Sale**

December 13-14

10am-4pm

**Holiday Party: December 19**

Potluck, 6:00pm

At the Depot

This holiday season, please consider donating to the Museum! Your donations keep the lights on and keep the trains running!



[www.RGVRRM.org/donate](http://www.RGVRRM.org/donate)

