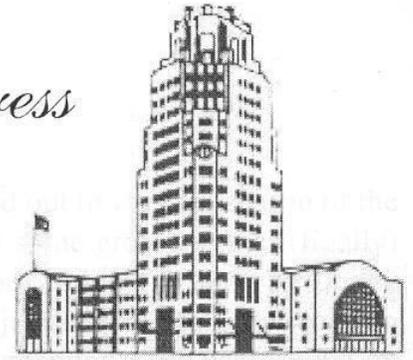


Empire State Express



APRIL 2022

PUBLICATION OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER CHAPTER NRHS, INC.

Editor: John C. Dahl Email nfcnrhs@gmail.com

The meeting of the Chapter is scheduled for Friday, April 8, 2022 at 7:00 PM at the Town of Wheatfield Community / Senior Center, 2790 Church Road, North Tonawanda NY. Follow Rt 62 north to Ward Rd, turn left onto Ward Road and turn right onto Church Road.

STRASBURG: THE ROAD TO PARADISE

During July 2021, Chapter member, Stephen Trinder visited Strasburg for the first time. Among the highlights of that weekend were several including taking two Amtrak trains to get there, visiting the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania and most notably taking the throttle of none other than Norfolk & Western J-Class #611. In addition to being his first trip there, this was also his first time running a full-size steam locomotive, making for a very memorable trip. At the April meeting, he will share highlights of this expedition to the "Road to Paradise."



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



According to the calendar it is spring. The aftermath of winter, when we look forward to sunny, longer, warmer days and leaving the coats and mukluks behind. I've had some health challenges recently, but I'm working through them and hope to be back on the "extra board" soon.

Many thanks to those who stepped up to fill in for me at the meeting. I also want to thank all of you who sent me well wishes, I appreciate those.

Thanks to the Banquet Committee for putting on an excellent event. I was not able to be there, but Nancy & Bob Andrycha, Becky Gerstung, Greg Gerstung, and Bruce Becker combined to handle the proceedings in fine form. We had 44 attendees and Aaron Heverin produced a great program with John Prophet's movies. Fortunately for me, this program is saved as a digital presentation, and I will get to see it. I heard from several sources that it was spectacular.

In February we did the WNYRHS train show at the Fairgrounds. We did very well, the treasury benefitted to the tune of just over \$900. Thanks to Becky, Greg, Bruce, Steve and Karen Frey, Bob and Nancy Andrycha, and others who loaded and unloaded the stuff and allowed us to use their vehicles. We got our face out in front of the public and we made some money doing it.

The single most asked question recently has been, "Will there be a Train Show at Central Terminal this year? Sadly, no. All events at the Paderewski Drive facility will be outdoors for 2022. However, when the building is ready, so are we!

With that, I hope to see you at the meeting.

Jim Ball



Our 82nd Annual banquet of course had a cake! *Greg Gerstung, photo, March 19, 2022.*

Photo on cover page: In "Paradise" for the "in-cab experience," of driving N&W 611, the photo of our presenter and Chapter member, Stephen Trinder, was taken Friday July 9th, 2021 by the Strasburg's company photographer Christopher Pollock.

SCENE ON THE LINE



It is a snowy winter's day, March 12, 2022 on the Niagara branch in Tonawanda, NY as double headed Amtrak train #64 head races south towards Buffalo. The "bascule" style lift bridge over the Erie Barge Canal was constructed just over 100 years ago as a key part of the massive track relocation that New York Central built to comply with New York State's enlarged Erie barge canal plans at the end of World War I. The massive bridge was lifted only twice in testing in its very early years and the lifting apparatus was removed many decades ago. Plans for the enlarged canal quickly fizzled out when the State actually calculated the cost for all the bridge changeouts and other enlargements that would be needed across the State. By then it was too late for the NYCRR to have installed a less expensive bridge. The switch in the foreground leads to the former New York Central Canandaigua branch (also called the Batavia branch), originally the Canandaigua & Niagara Falls RR, the so called "Peanut Line" which New York Central acquired well before the Civil War. This track was later shared with the Lehigh Valley RR from Tonawanda Jct., about 2 miles to the east of this spot where LV's Depew & Tonawanda took off for Williamsville and Depew. Today the track is little more than an industrial spur and the line ends at the former Exolon plant, now owned by Washington Mills near the City of Tonawanda corporate boundary. Only a weed over grown right of way extends east from there to what was Tonawanda Jct. and the LVRR line is no more. On the left and across the canal in North Tonawanda, is the former Remington Rand complex, once home to a factory for manufacturing typewriters and now converted to swank loft style canal-front condos for well to do tenants. Left of the locomotive, obscured somewhat by brush and situated in front of the "Rem-Rand" complex is a former powerhouse for the Buffalo & Niagara Falls Electric Railway, a trolley line that once extended between its namesake endpoints. Through service ended by the mid 1920s. The building today houses an upscale restaurant, the Remington Tavern. There is a lot of history at this location!
Photo by Larry Gustina.

SCENE ON THE LINE – cont’d



Wayneport, NY by the early 1950s is sadly seeing the ‘waning days’ of steam at the refueling depot located along the New York Central’s mainline. The iconic water tanks and coaling tower structures have all long disappeared from the “scene” we see here. The diesel invader is taking hold of nearly all the railroad’s deluxe passenger services and freight trains too are rapidly seeing the change from steam to diesel. A mail and express train under the command of Hudson 5421 is thankfully preserved by an anonymous photographer in Kodachrome. *Hemenway Collection.*



Strasburg’s regular 7:00 PM train with N&W 4-8-0 #475 is passing under a rainbow at the Red Caboose Motel located not too far from the railroad’s East Strasburg, PA depot. July 9, 2021. The beautiful farmland countryside near Strasburg is well known and heavily visited by tourists, yet it retains a bucolic feeling and often features photo moments like this of pure joy where trains and Nature connect. Stephen Trinder photo

SCENE ON THE LINE – cont'd



On Saturday July 10, 2021 visiting Norfolk & Western 4-8-4 #611 rests by the Strasburg's shops for the "whistle blow" event. Stephen Trinder photo.



N&W 475 is posed near the water tank at Strasburg. July 10, 2021. Stephen Trinder photo.

THE RAILROADER AND THE MEETING – by Lenny Mann

Part 1 The Railroader

I don't think I shall ever find
The doctor who understands the railroader's mind

A creature who stands for hours and hours
Scanning the horizons for faraway powers

GP'7's and FA2's
Are carefully recorded whether they were in red, white's, or blue's

Through dense fog and piercing rain
His lust for the train makes him remain

Till late at night at half-past eleven
He sees the train that was due at seven

Undaunted and loyal with a wistful smile
He sighs, "It must have been stopped for a while."

Part 2 The Meeting

At the next meeting his story is told
Along with slides and pictures to be sold

There is "ooing and aahing" and he is slapped on the back
As the slides are accompanied by a railroad eight-track

Yes, 3000 slides, but it's not long, so they say
When accompanied by the tape "Things Casey Jones might Say"

Next is the auction – the best part of the night!
As creatures go about buying everything in sight.

Two lanterns, a timetable, and one rusty key
And a plaque engraved "God drives an SP".

Part 3 Back to that Same Railroader

Some people say the creature is crazy
That too many trains make your mind hazy

They say he's neglectful, this is untrue
You'd leave your family if a PA was coming through

Because he misses things like graduation or the birth of his sons
People say he is the terrible one

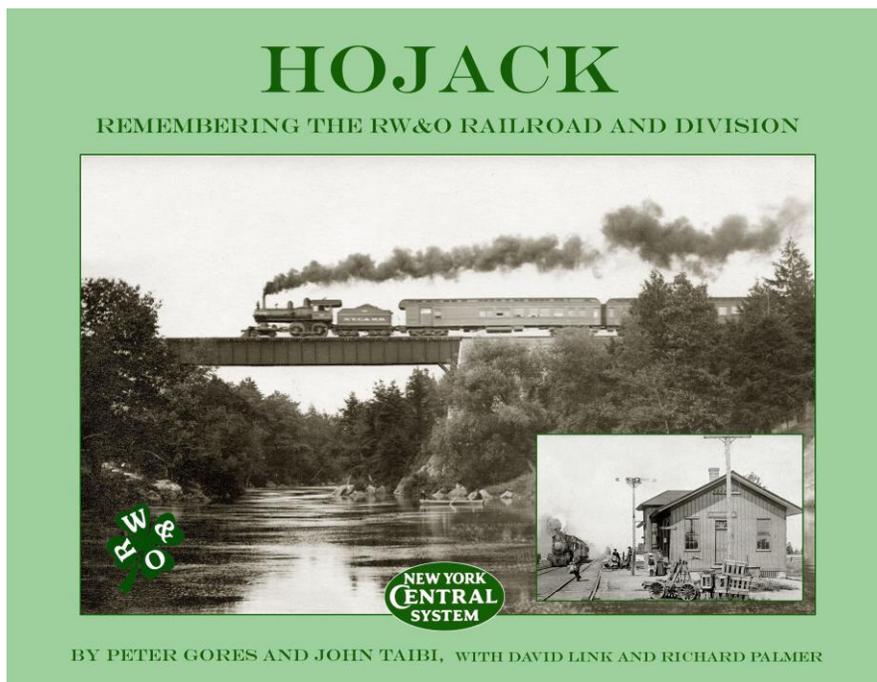
THE RAILROADER - continued

Yet when you see him back at the tracks
With dirty shirt and oily slacks

Camera in hand – railroad patch on his butt
He loudly proclaims “I AM NOT A NUT !!!”

- The above ditty was written more than 45 years ago by Lenny Mann, brother of long time Chapter member Marty Mann of Hamburg, NY. The reference to ‘red, white & blue’ denotes the Bicentennial era when many railroads had locomotive and caboose paint schemes in the colors of our American flag. And back then, GP7 and FA2 diesels were really special locomotives to see (as they would especially be, now). For diesel fans, they are just as cool and exotic as steam engines were two generations ago to railfans of that era. Thank you, Marty, for sharing this bit of fun reading with the Chapter. – JCD

THE RAILFAN’S BOOKSHELF An occasional column of book reviews



Just released a few weeks ago, this is the definitive history of the Upstate New York railroad and its predecessor lines, the Rome, Watertown & Ogdensburg, perhaps better known by its beloved nickname “HOJACK”. The late 19th Century was an incredibly busy time for the construction of railroads. The post Civil War era of “railroad fever” saw lines being proposed, chartered, and surveyed at a pace never before seen. Many lines were never built but the “Hojack” was built, albeit in many incremental steps. It grew into a comparatively large empire on its own before being picked up and absorbed by the New York Central and fading into a secondary route. This book features an outstanding narrative by well known rail historian John Taibi. Co-author Peter Gores is a member of our Chapter, a historian and a railroad man. The book is massive at some 768 pages and is packed with beautiful and often rare historical photos (some of which came from our own Chapter archives), period maps and sketches of the line’s features. Assistants David Link and Richard Palmer also provided much of the historical material, obviously collected over decades of meticulous research. I’ve only started reading but am so impressed by this book, I wanted to share my thoughts now. Get a copy for your library as this first printing may well sell out. This book will become a classic of the railroad historical record. -JCD

THE 82nd ANNUAL BANQUET



At the banquet as the raffle winners are being picked:

From left: MJ Lewandowski, Nancy Andrycha, Becky Gerstung, Bob Andrycha. Thank you to all who participated, and to all sponsors who donated some wonderful prizes. The Chapter thanks you!
Greg Gerstung photo, March 19, 2022.

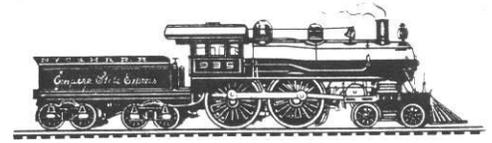


Bruce Becker, left acts as Master of Ceremonies at the banquet, introducing Aaron Heverin and the fantastic, digitized program featuring much of John Prophet's Pennsy films, along with a bit of film now in the Chapter archives, a color sequence of the Lehigh Valley's Black Diamond leaving Buffalo. Aaron had recorded John's own narration of the films decades ago. He combined John's digitized voice and sound recordings with

the now digitized film and it was as if John himself were with us that day in person describing what we saw. It was a truly extraordinary experience to hear John's voice again and see his classic railroad films. Thank you Aaron for this program. And, we know that John was looking down and smiling to see that his work is still admired and is still historically important today. *Greg Gerstung photo, March 19, 2022.*

CHAPTER MEMORIES

August 1939, Arcade & Attica charter
Story collected by Geoff Gerstung



The Railroad Enthusiast – September 1939 issue

In spite of a pouring rain early in the morning and several times during the day, the annual gondola car “Iron Horse Gallop” over the Arcade & Attica RR was operated on Sunday August 13th [1939], with a group of 79 making the trip.

After leaving Buffalo at 9:10 AM on Pennsylvania train 570, Arcade Junction was reached an hour later, and there the special A. & A. train was found waiting. It consisted of No.8, a 2-6-0 built by Brooks in 1897, the two open-platform combination cars, and two low-side gondola cars equipped with seats. General Manager R.I. Cartwright and Master Mechanic B.I. Cartwright and their families were on the train to welcome the fans. A stop was made in Arcade to visit the milk plant of The Borden Co., the largest shipper on the A & A. Here free cups of cold milk were given to everyone.

A long stop at Johnsonburg allowed time for a picnic lunch. Following this the train continued on its way to Attica. Here it was turned on the wye and backed up to the station for a layover of about a half hour. Then began the journey back to Arcade. During the trip in each direction stops were made at all stations and a few other points to change “student engine crews” so that everyone would have an opportunity to ride the cab and handle the scoop if they desired.

On the return trip through Arcade the train paused at the A. & A. enginehouse to permit the gang to inspect Nos. 6 and 7. Arcade Junction was reached shortly before 6 PM and here P.R.R. train 571 made a special stop while the group climbed aboard for the return to Buffalo.

As usual, railfans from far and near were on the trip, and it was by far the most pleasant and congenial group yet experienced on any Buffalo Division excursion. It was both successful and enjoyable although the crowd was smaller than expected because of the bad weather early in the day.

ON THE TRACK AHEAD

May’s meeting program will be a travelogue to Switzerland presented by Tony Schill who says: “It is a small country in the heart of Europe yes, but one packed with fantastic mountain and pristine lakes scenery interlaced with railroads that can take you just about anywhere, on time, in comfort.” As always Tony’s first-rate photography and knowledge of all things railroad will be the hallmark of the program. If you like rail travel, don’t miss this meeting.

CHICKEN BBQ FUNDRAISER

Make sure you mark your calendar for our annual Chiavetta Chicken BBQ, May 14th. Dinners are \$14, drive in, take out. Like everything else the price has gone up. But you still receive the most delicious chicken BBQ Western New York offers at a reasonable cost. And a special dessert is included too! This event helps sustain our railroad history museum project. Please come to the station on May 14, drive in and take out a BBQ dinner (or two or more!) and help the Chapter make this a sell-out event! Thank You in advance.

CHAPTER CALENDAR

- APR 8** Regular meeting. Program: Strasburg: The Road to Paradise by Stephen Trinder.
- MAY 13** Regular meeting. Program: Switzerland Rail travel adventures, by Tony Schill.
- MAY 14** Chiavetta Chicken BBQ at the Station. Drive in, Take Out only, please. Dinners \$14, Ready at 11:30 AM.
- JUN 10** Regular meeting. Program by Randy Bugucki, topic to be announced.

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