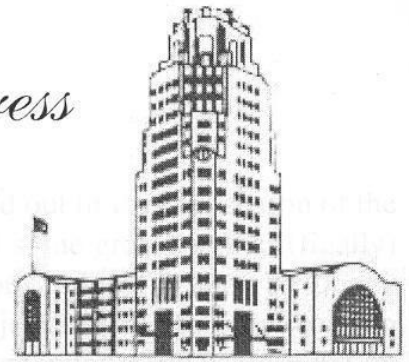


Empire State Express



MAY 2023

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, May 12, 2023 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.



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.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



This first quarter of 2023 has been a wild ride. We had our usual activities, the regular monthly meetings, a Board Meeting, our Annual Banquet and the arrival of our new acquisition, the 25-ton GE locomotive from the now demolished Great Northern grain elevator in Buffalo. Oh, and there is a trainload of work going on at the Museum funded by the NY State DRI grant. The loading dock is done. The parking lot is paved, and the fence is up. The windows will be replaced with new energy efficient modern ones. The windows that were made for our interlocking tower EL-2 are finished and moved over there. They still need to be installed, but we'll get to that. The exterior "down lighting" is installed in the soffits of the station. The transom windows over the big sliding doors on

the west side (facing Oliver St.) are all redone, all five of them.

The downside of all this work is that Museum Operations are hampered. We have no parking until the parking lot is finished. As I write this, it was just paved. It will be at least a week before we can drive on it. We are continuously moving things around inside and cleaning up after the workers. We don't know at this juncture how we will handle visitors coming, but we will figure it out. The Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum group visited on the 29th. Thirty-one eager visitors came pouring off the bus Saturday the 29th. They looked at everything, took loads of pictures and asked many questions. It was a great visit. We were a little messed up, but they knew coming in what was going on. Some of them will be on hand next week to help with the track work.

We will do what we need to do, and it will only get better as we go on! We anticipate the DRI work to be complete by mid-August. Maybe there will be a return to some kind of "normalcy" after that.

In order that all of you might inspect what has been done at your museum, we are planning a picnic there on September 9. More information on that coming.

Closer to the present, we will be holding our Annual Chicken Barbeque fund raiser on May 13th. Chiavetta's will again do the cooking. Tasty, Tasty, you know that you want some!

There other item of note coming up will be the unveiling of the "Spy Marker" at the Amtrak Station in Niagara Falls on May the 20th. The Ceremony begins at noon and you are all invited.

In other news, we are advised that Canal Fest is on again. The parade, if there is one, will be Tuesday evening.

We have received a Restoration Challenge Grant. The Grantor will match dollar for dollar all donations to the Restoration fund, up to a total of \$50,000. Term of the Grant is April 15th to April 15th, one year. We have already had a \$500 donation at the last meeting! We are off to a great start. You can make a donation at any time.

During the month of May we celebrate Mother's Day, Memorial Day and National Train Day. The original date for Train Day was the 10th to coincide with the anniversary of the golden spike and later the run by famous locomotive 999. This year will be the 130th anniversary of that historic day, May the 10th, 1893. On that day locomotive 999 pulled the Empire State Express into the history books.

With that, I hope everyone is well and I hope to see you at the meeting.

Jim Ball

SCENE ON THE LINE



Fred Jones, photo.

Middletown & Hummelstown, a shortline and tourist train which operates a former Reading branch between the two namesake cities in south-central Pennsylvania near Harrisburg, recently hosted a railfan excursion featuring vintage Alco S2 #151. On April 16, 2023, the special is crossing Race Street, Middletown, and will pick up its orders from the railroader on the ground.



Fred Jones, photo

Early morning fog in downtown Middletown, PA envelops the photo freight, which was complete with a center cupola caboose outfitted with marker lamps. The breakfasters at Kuppy's Diner on Brown Street's trackage were treated to the sights and sounds of railroading this early spring, Sunday morning, April 16, 2023.

SCENE AT THE STATION

Photos by Al LeTeste



The new paved parking lot is one of several NY State DRI grant funded projects for the outside of the building. Also in progress are window replacements, restoration of roof soffits and security lighting, and a new historically empathetic property fence which will greatly improve the appearance of our historic depot and the rail equipment display. The new parking lot will allow a safe and accessible surface for all our visitors and members.

Above: April 25, 2023, the first layer of the new lot has been completed.



Left: At the same time, work is ongoing on the station's east side to the siding trackwork funded through our members donations. The siding had deteriorated to nearly "no ties". April 29, 2023.

**RAIL SCENE (FROM FLORIDA)
THE “TROPICANA TRAIN”
Photos by Larry Gustina.**



Heading north over a causeway at Bradenton, Florida is what now passes for the ‘Tropicana Train’, once an important hotshot carrying orange juice from Florida to the Northeast. Seen on April 26, 2023, there were twenty-seven cars in the consist, but only fourteen of those were the once admired and pristine Tropicana refrigerator cars. Typical of almost all rail equipment today, graffiti mars the lower surfaces and railroads have given up trying to clean it off. The train now also carries additional freight cars on the rear.



The former Atlantic Coast Line station in Bradenton has been restored and repurposed as an eye doctor office. ACL was later absorbed into Seaboard Coast Line, and is now a part of CSX. But you can’t step off a streamliner here anymore and enjoy the Florida sunshine like in the golden years of rail. The remains of the passenger station track, and platform area can also be seen. April 26, 2023.

**RAIL SCENE (FROM FLORIDA) -
Photos by Larry Gustina.**

continued



The “Tropicana Train” refer car storage yard and facility behind it where Tropicana orange juice gets produced in Bradenton, FL. April 27, 2023

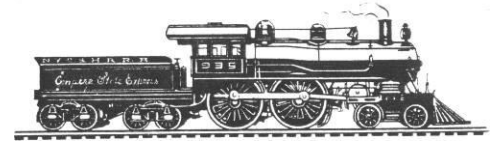


Former rail beds in Florida, as elsewhere, have often been converted into hiking / biking trails. “Legacy Parkway” occupies a former Seaboard Air Line right of way from Sarasota south to Venice. An old crossing flasher adds a bit of history to the scene. April 27, 2023.

CHAPTER MEMORIES

Story collected by Geoff Gerstung

The Railroad Enthusiast – July-August 1940



A regular meeting was held on May 3 [1940] in the Lehigh Valley Terminal. The speaker was Mr. C. M. Lewis, the new Buffalo Division Passenger Agent of the Erie Railroad, who described the Erie's main line passenger service and commuter service out of Jersey City. Mr. Lewis was formerly located in that city.

Detroit Trip



Running 228 miles through Canada at an average speed of 65.4 mph despite two stops, 74 rail-fans representing the Buffalo and Central New York Divisions of the Enthusiasts and the Rochester Chapter of the NRHS journeyed to Detroit over the Michigan central RR on Sunday, May 19. Two special cars, one an observation, were used on the rear of train 35.

Upon arrival in Detroit, the group was met by members of the Detroit Railroad Club who acted as guides throughout the afternoon. The first thing to be seen was the departure of the Chicago-bound streamlined *Mercury*. After dinner in the terminal restaurant, the fans began a railroad inspection tour. First the Wabash enginehouse was visited, where two of the Atlantic type engines used on the famous *Detroit Arrow* were seen and an instruction car examined. The Pere Marquette enginehouse was next, and here were seen the little, highly polished Pacifics and the large modern Berkshires which distinguish that road. The Union Station coach yards are located here, and a few of the many cars seen were P, M. imperial salon coaches, Wabash chair cars, C&O lounge cars, and a new streamlined PRR dining car. Later the Chicago-bound *Detroit Arrow* was seen passing through the yards.

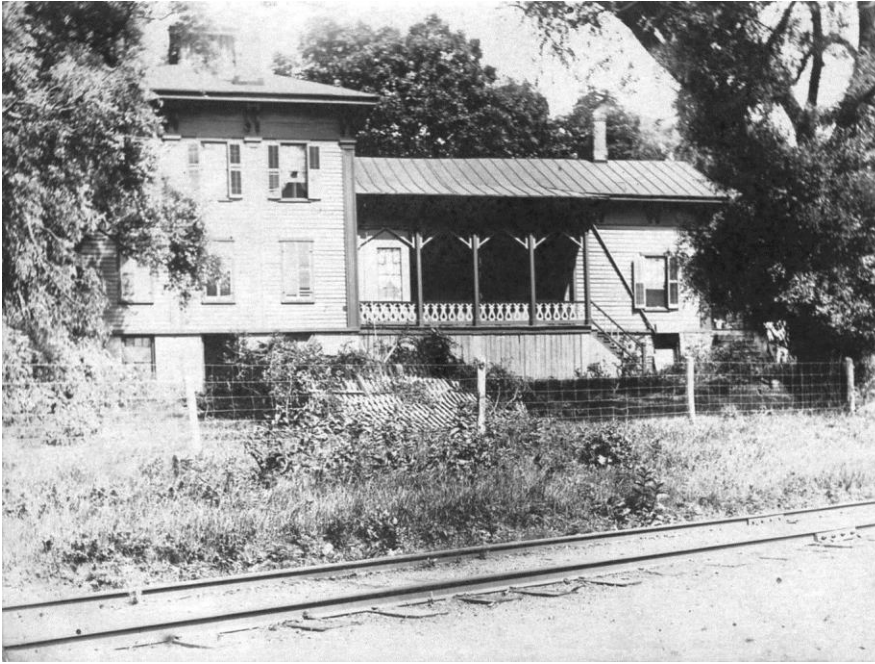
Early in the evening the group left Detroit on the first section of train 8, *The Wolverine*. During the stop at Windsor for a change to the road engine, the fans watched the two little electrics on second 8 start 13 cars from a standstill on the steep grade out of the Detroit River Tunnels. A rapid return to Buffalo was made in the light of a full moon, with second 8's headlight visible down the straight iron as it followed about four miles behind.

June Meeting

At the regular meeting on June 7 held in the Lehigh Valley Terminal, the speaker was Mr. Carl S. Hulbert of the Locomotive Performance Department of the New York Central System. Mr. Hulbert gave an extremely interesting talk, illustrated with slides and blackboard drawings, on "locomotive performance". Among the many subjects described were locomotive testing and efficiency, valve pilot and speedometer recording tapes, and water scooping.

SOME LEHIGH VALLEY MEMORIES

By Richard Palmer



These are pictures of the George I. Post home at North Fair Haven NY that also served at one time as the Southern Central / Lehigh Valley station and train crew quarters. The house was built in 1863. The railroad was built starting in 1865. Post was a prominent attorney, politician, prison reformer and director of numerous railroads. Post drove the last spike when the Southern Central Railroad was completed on November 27, 1872. In 1884, this railroad was absorbed into the Lehigh Valley RR. Mr. Post was also involved in the Lake Ontario Shore Railroad, which was absorbed by the Rome, Watertown & Ogdensburg. (Later acquired thru lease by the New York Central.)



The house was later the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Eldredge. Their three sons, Allen, Frederick and Edward, were born there. Eldredge had an ice business there. Other occupants were Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Snyder. Many social gatherings were held there in the early 20th century. The lower part of the building included the railroad ticket office and waiting room. It was demolished in 1942.

Pictures courtesy Susan Parsons, Sterling Town Historian

Editor's note: Lehigh Valley's branch north out of Auburn NY to North Fair Haven ended at the massive coal dock on Lake Ontario. From the late 1860's through the early years of the 20th Century, hopper cars of 'King Coal', anthracite, arrived at the pier for transloading to lake boats. By the time of the late 1930s during the Great Depression, coal traffic on the branch was already in decline and the dock was razed before 1940. The site is today Fair Haven Beach State Park.

ON THE TRACK AHEAD

Details of June's program are to be announced. The Chapter needs meeting programs for the upcoming Fall and Winter meeting schedule. A one-hour or so program is about the right length for a meeting night. Let Jim Ball know, and he'll work out a month assignment agreeable to you. Thank You in advance.

CHICKEN BBQ FUNDRAISER

Make sure you mark your calendar for our annual Chiavetta Chicken BBQ, Saturday, May 13th. Dinners are \$14, drive in, take out. This event helps sustain our railroad history museum project. As has been noted many times, even though we have been fortunate to receive the recent, very substantial NY State grant, that money can ONLY be used for specific projects already agreed to and approved by the State on the exterior of the facility. We have a lot more in routine operating utilities and ongoing restoration needs that are not funded except through your help. The entire museum is 100% volunteer. Please come to the station, drive in and take out a delicious BBQ dinner (or two or more!) and help the Chapter make this a sell-out event! Thank You in advance.

MARKERS



*The story on page 7 regarding the Buffalo Division of the Railroad Enthusiasts 1940 trip to Detroit is fascinating in many aspects. Pere Marquette # 1225, seen above, one of the Berkshire class 2-8-4 locomotives, was still in the future by **another year and a few months** at the time the Enthusiasts travelled to the Motor City in May 1940. I was very fortunate to see this restored-to-operating-condition locomotive in Owosso, Michigan on July 25, 2009, during the Steam Heritage Institute Festival which brought together a host of operating locomotives. Alas, 1225 developed a case of "the flue" which caused her boiler to be down for repairs and which sidelined the great Berk for most of the event. Even so, she was "very cool" even as a static display. JCD.*

CHAPTER CALENDAR

- MAY 12** Regular meeting. Program: "Up & Down in Switzerland" - Rail travel adventures with Tony Schill.
- MAY 13** Chiavetta Chicken BBQ at the Station. Drive in, Take Out only, please. Dinners \$14, Ready at 11:00 AM to about 2:30 PM or sold out.
- JUN 9** Regular meeting. Program: To Be Announced
- JUN-JUL-
AUG-SEPT** Station Open most Saturdays, 11 AM to 4 PM, volunteer docents needed!

The Niagara Frontier Chapter NRHS, Inc. is a 501 (c) (3) publicly supported organization. Contributions may be deductible for income tax purposes in accordance with the Internal Revenue Service.

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