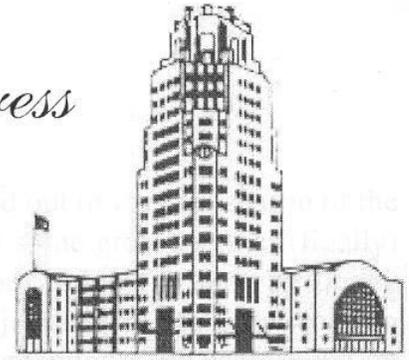


Empire State Express



April 2019

PUBLICATION OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER CHAPTER NRHS, INC.

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

The meeting of the Chapter will be held at 8:00 pm on Friday, April 12, 2019 at 8:00PM in the Degraff Community Center, 139 Division St., North Tonawanda, NY.

Diesel-Electric Locomotives: How They Work, Use Energy, and Can Become More Efficient and Environmentally Sustainable



Walter Simpson, one of our members, has written a groundbreaking book entitled “Diesel-Electric Locomotives: How They Work, Use Energy, and Can Become More Efficient and Environmentally Sustainable,” which has just been published by Simmons Boardman Books. Walter’s PowerPoint presentation will follow the book’s topics and also explain the adventure and intrigue of writing the book since some of the information he sought is regarded as confidential by locomotive builders, GE and Progress Rail (EMD). He will bring copies of his book for discounted sale at his author’s cost. Additional information can be found at www.diesel-electric-locomotives.com

Please join us for an informative (and educational) look at diesel locomotives. Photo by Walter Simpson.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



On Saturday March 23rd we had fifty three people come to Ilio Di Paolo's Restaurant to enjoy the fellowship of other railfans, a great meal and a wonderful program. The occasion was the 79th annual Chapter Banquet. This festive occasion saw John Freyseng receive his 25 year pin, presented by yours truly. There were four other pins to be awarded, Steve Majocha, Fred Kerr and Susan and Thomas O'Donnell who will have their pins mailed to them. Congratulations to all! Thanks to Nancy Andrycha as Chairperson for this outstanding event. She has done a great job with the banquet in recent years and this year she surpassed all her previous efforts. Helping her out were Becky Gerstung, Bob Andrycha, Cathy and Dennis Hurley, Karen Frey, and M. J. Lewandowski. The raffles generated over \$700 for the treasury. Thank you to all who donated items and to all who participated

The Program by Chapter Member Duncan Richards, was amazing. Duncan's photographic skills and his sense of humor made for a most enjoyable presentation.

With the coming of more moderate weather we can begin to work at the station again on Saturdays. I've started making coffee at 10 am on Saturdays again. We have a lot going on and soon June will be here and the Museum will be open every Saturday afternoon from 1 pm until 4 pm. We have some display work to do ahead of the opening and we are preparing for the New York Central Historical society to come and visit on the 31st of May. Besides that we are trying to get some work into the archives room expansion project. Once that is completed and we move the filing cabinets, map cases and shelves into it, we will get back probably 30 to 40 per cent of the middle room of the station.

The Museum being open requires people to be in the building. There are usually several people who are there working on projects, but we would like to have volunteers just to attend to the visitors. We would ask that you greet them, welcome them and provide some basic information and let them wander around and enjoy at the Museum. If they ask questions to which you don't have answers, others are there to help you out. Having docents is especially important if there are not a lot of us there or we are working in the north end or outside. Please let Becky know if you can help out. If you could give us just three Saturdays, one each in June, July and August, it would be a great help. Contact Becky at 434-5665 to get more information or to sign up.

Regarding the letter, seen elsewhere in this issue, about the meeting schedule, I can't lay it out on the table any better, so.....please read it and then let's have your carefully thought out opinion.

Until then, I'll see you at the meeting.

Jim Ball

Niagara Frontier Chapter

National Railway Historical Society

March 3, 2019

To the members

Issue:

The regular monthly meeting of Niagara Frontier Chapter NRHS, Inc. is on the second Friday of the Month, September through June, at 8 pm where ever we choose it to be, currently at the DeGraff Community Center.

1. IT'S WHAT WE HAVE ALWAYS DONE.
2. IF IT AIN'T BROKE, DON'T FIX IT.

Discussion:

Because the group as a whole averages in age, I'm guessing 65, more probably 70, and I know there are quite a number of octogenarians in the group, we have some issues. With this level of maturity, seniority and experience comes the baggage of the years. How many of us don't drive at night at more? How many don't drive at all anymore?

It has been suggested that we change the time and or the day of the week of the meeting. I am not opposed to that. Let's examine the plusses and minuses of doing that.

First, if we change the meeting time by an hour, to 7 PM, it squeezes those who are still working. If you are done working at 5 PM, commute home for thirty minutes, change clothes maybe, have some dinner, and then commute another thirty minutes to the meeting, the 8 PM start time works well. For the many, many years, the bulk of the membership was of working age. This made sense, and numbers 1 & 2 above, would apply.

Fact: the great majority of us are now seniors, those of working age are the minority. We need the younger members, and we need more of them, they are our future and we all know that. But, the reality is younger members are not joining any organizations, and ours is not unique in that respect. So, we're back to the issue of this discussion.

And, one more thing to consider, if we meet on Saturday afternoon, as has been suggested, we would need to have someone operate the museum during June and September.

We will not change anything until there is a clear mandate from the membership. This is your Chapter, please offer up your carefully considered opinions either verbally or in writing. We have a good thing going here. Let's see if we can make this work for as many of us as possible. Email me at jabball@gmail.com

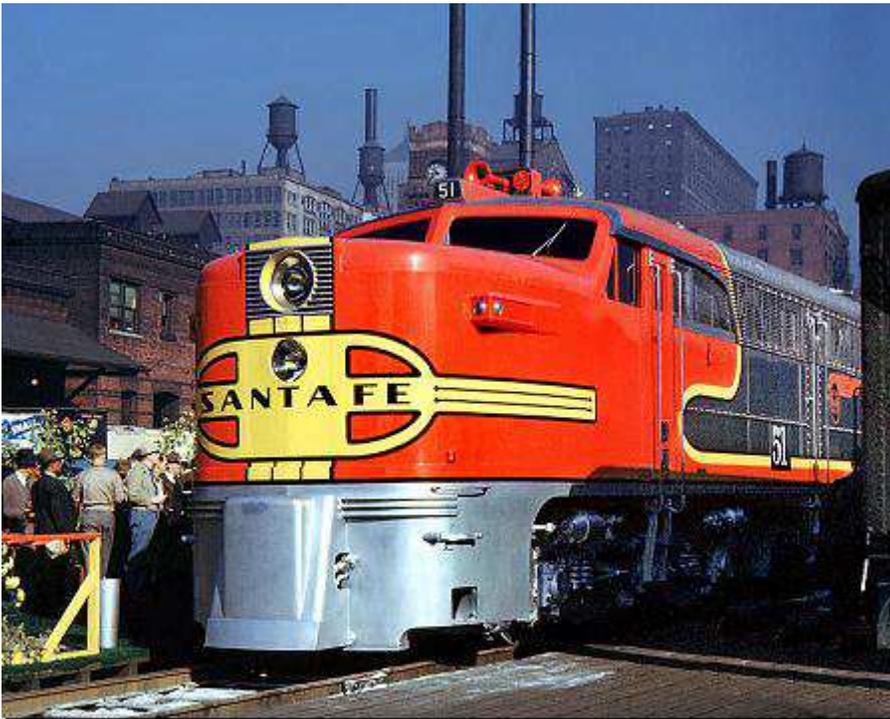
Jim Ball

STREAMLINERS OF THE PITTSBURGH & LAKE ERIE (There weren 't any)

By: Tony Schill

Most of us who have been around long enough to recall the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad remember it for exactly what it was—a heavy-haul, down-and-dirty railroad in the industrial heart of America. Once known as the “Little Giant”, the P&LE was renowned for the high level of its coal, ore and steel traffic, and for its profitability. It certainly was not as well known for its passenger business, but in fact the railroad once ran a very respectable number of first-class intercity trains. Indeed, for a bit over a decade it even operated a small fleet of what many believe to be the most elegant passenger diesels ever built. Those locomotives were, of course, the PA's built by the American Locomotive Company in Schenectady, New York. But the only actual streamliners on the P&LE were B&O trains using trackage rights through Pittsburgh.

As the end of the war approached, both EMD and Alco began to devote considerable resources to the development and subsequent construction of passenger road diesels of new design. A high level of demand was seen for such locomotives, as the elevated traffic levels of the war years had induced many railroads to believe that the passenger business could remain successful in peacetime, provided there was a greater use of “modern” locomotives and cars. Very quickly the orders for new locomotives and streamlined cars began pouring in.



FIRST PRODUCTION PA, CHICAGO, 1946

In 1945 EMD introduced the E7, a streamlined, two 1000 hp engines, six-axle passenger unit that was offered both as a cab unit (i.e. an “A” unit), and a cab-less booster (a “B unit”). The carbody design was generally based on the EMD passenger units of the 1930's, but with the refinement of the “bulldog nose” introduced on the freight FT model in 1939. Meanwhile, in Schenectady, Alco developed a totally new design, called the PA. This design had characteristics generally similar to those of the E7, but of course it had completely different engines, electrical gear, trucks, etc.

The finished PA was a wonder to behold. Its rakish design had an appearance forever unique to Alco, with a long, sleek carbody and a cab from which the crew viewed the track ahead over a vast expanse of

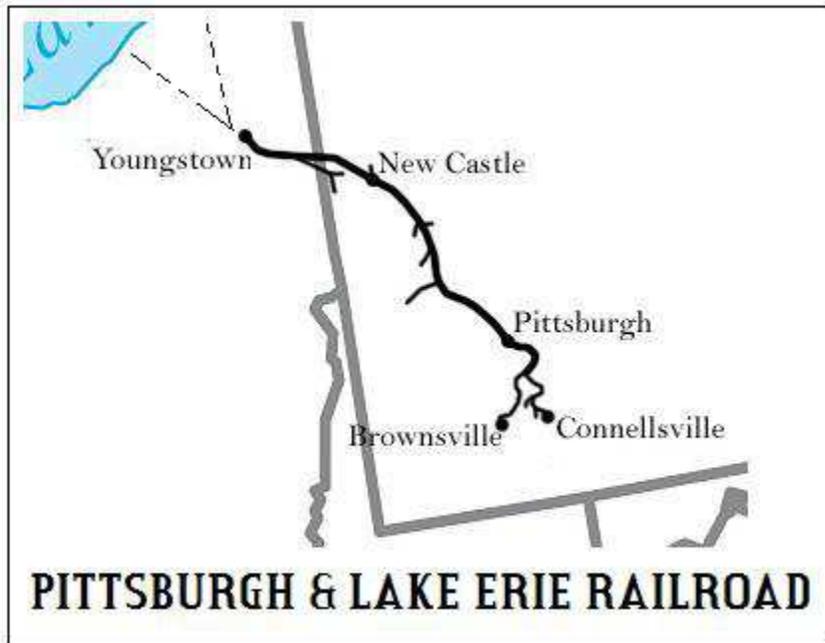
nearly flat sheet metal, at the leading end of which was a headlight surrounded by an automotive-type grille—a striking change from prior designs of any builder. Railroads purchasing the PA (ideally with a snazzy paint scheme) were able to present the public with a locomotive that truly captured the postwar spirit of

adventure and optimism. Alco's first PA went on tour in early 1946, and the first production PA's (for the Santa Fe) were released by the factory in Schenectady in September of that year.

Soon the orders for the PA started rolling into Alco's sales offices. And, for a time, all was well in Schenectady-but we'll get into that a bit later. For now, let's talk about the P&LE.

P&LE's PASSENGER BUSINESS

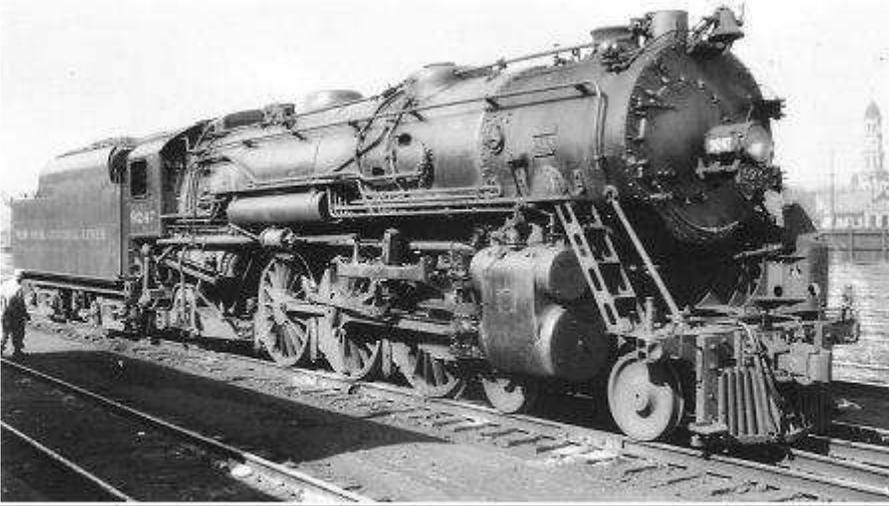
The P&LE was an affiliate of and was financially controlled by the New York Central, but unlike other affiliates such as the B&A and Big Four, it was not operated by the NYC. Instead it had its own President and head office staff in Pittsburgh, and its locomotives, both steam and diesel, carried the name New York Central Lines (or System), and were sub-lettered P&LE. However, all the important decisions as to motive power were made in New York, not Pittsburgh. As of 1948 the P&LE still operated a substantial number of main line passenger trains. The railroad's multiple-track main line extended from Pittsburgh to Youngstown,



just 65 miles, over which the running time was about 80 to 90 minutes. This was a true water level route, running along the Monongahela, Ohio, Beaver and Mahoning rivers for the entire distance. In 1948 there were (on most days) 14 scheduled departures from Pittsburgh, of which three were commuter trains; these ran only 31 miles to College, Pa. The remaining eleven trains went all the way to Youngstown; of these three continued to Buffalo on the New York Central via Ashtabula, and five were turned over to the Erie for onward running to Cleveland. Most of the trains to Cleveland and Buffalo provided a dining or buffet car. Overnight travelers on the P&LE could book space in Pullman cars running through from Pittsburgh to Chicago, Detroit, Buffalo, Toronto, Albany, Boston, and Massena, NY. The P&LE passenger car fleet consisted entirely of heavyweight cars (at least until its sole remaining Pittsburgh commuter train was re-equipped with second-hand lightweight cars in the 1970's). However, P&LE consists on trains running north of Youngstown after 1950 nearly always included a few lightweight streamlined cars, courtesy of the other railroads involved in joint train operation between Pittsburgh and Cleveland (Erie), and Pittsburgh and Buffalo (NYC), as well as the Pullman Company. As with the cars, road power ran through to Cleveland and Buffalo, so in Pittsburgh it was common to see Erie and NYC locomotives, including Erie PA's and the Central's famous J-class Hudsons. But make no mistake —P&LE passenger trains could never be considered "streamliners".

PASSENGER POWER

For decades, the 4-6-2 Pacific was the passenger locomotive of choice for the P&LE. A single heavy Pacific was more than adequate for the road's moderate-length trains on the nearly flat main line. The road's finest passenger engines were considered to be the ten 4-6-2's of the K-5B class, built by Alco in 1927. However, in 1931 "New York" decided to send those engines to the Big Four; in return the P&LE received an equal number of K-6A Pacific's from the Boston & Albany. These engines, built in 1925 had been displaced by the new Hudson 4-6-4 locomotives. The K-6A's and some older Pacific types held down all P&LE main line passenger train assignments from 1931 until the arrival of the first PA engines in 1949.



P&LE K-6A 4-6-2, Alco, 1925

Although the New York Central's experience with diesel switchers dated back to the mid-1920's, steam reigned supreme on the NYC main line until the arrival of four freight FT diesels from EMD in 1944. The road's extremely favorable experience with those units and with the F2, F3 and E7 locomotives delivered in 1945-46 soon convinced management to dieselize all non-electric operations as quickly as possible. Before long, NYC steam was being displaced at a rapid rate by shiny new road diesels from EMD, Alco, Baldwin and Fairbanks-Morse. In 1948 the P&LE's passenger business was still strong, and it too

needed new locomotives to replace steam engines worn out from war service. The P&LE had something else to consider as well, which was that the City of Pittsburgh was then embarking on a major effort to shed its well-deserved reputation as the "Smoky City". All of the railroads serving Pittsburgh found themselves under serious pressure from corporate executives and elected officials to reduce (or more preferably eliminate) the use of steam locomotives.

So it came to be that in 1947-48 the New York Central placed a series of small orders with Alco for a total of eight PA-1 A (cab) units and four PB-1 B-units. The NYC assigned the first four of the PA's and all of the PB's to its own mainline trains; the other four PA's (4204-07, built in 1949) were sent directly to the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie. Two PA-2's (4213-14) joined the P&LE fleet in 1952. The P&LE units were delivered in the famous and rather elegant "lightning stripe" paint scheme then standard for NYC passenger diesels, but carried "New York Central System" on their sides, not "New York Central". And, they were also sub-lettered for the P&LE.

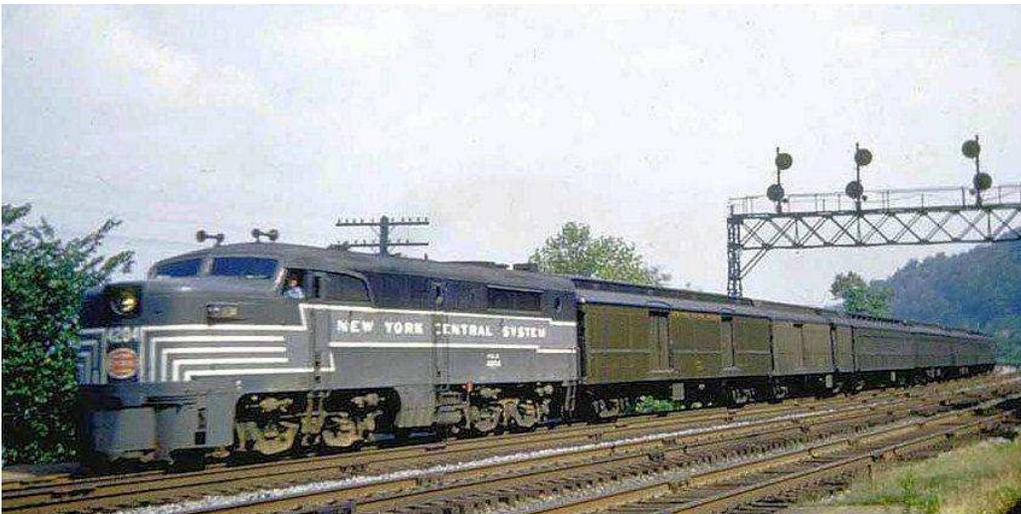


PA-1 4206 AT PITTSBURGH, 1949

It might be noted that the Central bought only a relative handful of PA's, as compared to a huge number

of E7 's and E8 's. Perhaps NYC management thought it prudent to at least sample Alco 's passenger units, given that the builder was a long-time supplier to the railroad as well as a significant on-line shipper. The P&LE PA 's were quickly assigned to main line service with the intent of replacing as many steam locomotives as possible. However, just four (later six) locomotives could not cover all passenger schedules, so steam remained in use for a few years more. Full dieselization was achieved in 1953, at which time the road engine fleet (freight and passenger) consisted of about 35 GP-7 's (five with steam generators for passenger service), five RS-3 's, and the six PA 's. P&LE postwar ridership followed the national pattern, meaning that it steadily declined starting about 1947-48. The number of passenger trains operated became fewer, and the amenities such as dining service and sleeping cars gradually disappeared. By 1960, just three daily trains each way ran between Pittsburgh and Youngstown, and of those only two continued beyond that Ohio city. Only one Pullman line survived as late as 1962, and that was between Pittsburgh and Toronto. The last P&LE/Erie train between Pittsburgh and Cleveland (the Steel King) came off in late 1963, leaving just one Pittsburgh-Youngstown round trip and two commuter trips from Pittsburgh to College, PA. Ultimately just one commuter round trip was left; it lasted until 1985. The PA 's were not around long enough to see the end of through service, as they were all removed from service in December, 1960, and scrapped not long thereafter. What passenger business that remained was then entrusted to GP-7 's equipped with steam generators. The PA-2 's had lasted only eight years , and the PA-1 's just eleven! Some 169 PA-1 cab units were built for some 17 railroads, a fairly respectable total. Unfortunately for Alco, EMD sold a hugely greater 428 E7 cab units. The PA-1 was succeeded by the PA-2 in 1949. But only 81 cab units of the new model were sold by the time all PA production ended in 1953. EMD, on the other hand, followed the E7 with 450 E8 A-units (1949-54), and 100 E9 A-units (1954-1964).

In the final analysis, it is obvious that EMD outsold Alco in the passenger diesel market by about four to one. Gloomy statistics, perhaps, but ones that do not change what many fans still believe — which is that the Alco PA was the best looking diesel ever designed. The P&LE was not included in Conrail, and by 1992 the collapse of the steel industry had pushed the road to the edge of the cliff. In that year CSX which used the P&LE through Pittsburgh as its own mainline bought the entire railroad. Today the Connellsville branch is a bike path, but the rest of the P&LE survives —albeit with a lot fewer trains than there were 30 years ago.



P&LE 4204 LEADS A WESTBOUND TRAIN FROM PITTSBURGH TO YOUNGSTOWN

Editors note: additional photos of P&LE's smart looking PA's will appear in a future Empire State Express. Space limitations in this issue precluded using them at this time. Incidentally, the Edwardian elegance of the downtown Pittsburgh station of P&LE has been a fine restaurant for many years and is a great place to watch for river traffic as well as CSX freight trains roaring past on the former P&LE mainline.

79th ANNUAL BANQUET celebrated March 23, 2019

Photos by Greg Gerstung

The Chapter recently celebrated its 79th Annual Banquet at Ilio DiPaolo's restaurant in Blasdell, NY, with 53 members and guests gathered to partake in the festivities.



John Freyseng (right) received his NRHS 25 Year Member pin and certificate from President Ball.



Bob and Nancy Andrycha (left) and the entire banquet committee once again put together an outstanding event.

The program by Duncan Richards told the story of last of big steam locomotives in China and was enjoyed by all. Duncan is a highly skilled photographer and a delightful speaker. His work could easily appear in the likes of National Geographic, Smithsonian and other such high quality journals.

Again, a hearty thanks to all involved in operating the banquet, to all who supported it with donations for the silent auction and raffles, and for all our members and guests who supported it with their attendance.

MYSTERY PHOTO



Can you identify this location? The tower designation is slightly obscured, but we know it is on the Pennsylvania Railroad. Maybe, it is on the railroad's Northern Division, based on the style of the building. The date of the photo is also unknown, but it appears to be late winter or perhaps early spring. The well kept appearance of the tower itself suggests a more prosperous era on the Pennsy so we're calling this shot circa 1950. Help us identify this most interesting tower and location. Send your comments to the editor at newsletter@nfcnrhs.com. Photo: Jon Rothenmeyer, collection.

POST OFFICE TO ISSUE SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE RR STAMP

The U.S. Postal Service has announced that Transcontinental Railroad stamps will be issued May 10, 2019 in connection with the 150th anniversary of the Golden Spike being driven. The set of three stamps, issued in a pane of 18, will be issued at Promontory Summit, Utah. The Transcontinental Railroad's last spike was driven on that date and location in 1869, 150 years earlier. Two different stamps feature the Jupiter and the #119 locomotives that powered the trains carrying the officers and guests of two train companies to the Golden Spike Ceremony held when the two rail lines were joined. The two locomotive stamps appear to be commemorative size, bracketing a third, smaller stamp depicting the Golden Spike itself.— *from March 2019 Cinders, NRHS Philadelphia Chapter*

ON THE TRACK AHEAD

May 10, 1869 was a pivotal day in United States and world history, for on that day, 150 years ago, the completion of the first transcontinental railroad in North America occurred. The joining of East and West....Union Pacific and Central Pacific at a windswept place called Promontory Summit in what would become the State of Utah signaled completion of what had once been thought impossible, and was the beginning of a new era where railroads would be the path to not only California but the entire western territory of the country. Join us for a special video presentation courtesy of Bob Scheib commemorating this historic event at our May meeting night which is most auspiciously also on the said 150th anniversary date.

CHAPTER CALENDAR

- APR 12 Chapter member Walter Simpson will discuss his new book about Diesels, books available for purchase and autograph signing, Degraff Community Center, 8 PM
- MAY 10 Regular meeting, at Degraff Community Center, 8 PM. "Golden Spike Special" commemorating the 150th anniversary since the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad. Special video presentation courtesy of Bob Scheib.
- MAY 18 Chiavetta Chicken BBQ at the station, 111 Oliver St. North Tonawanda. Dinners ready 11:30 AM, Tickets \$11. Drive In, Take Out. Please help support this vital Chapter fundraiser. Thank You!
- JUN 14 The short-lived, fascinating story of the Buffalo & Susquehanna RR will be explored in this special presentation by Pete Gores at our annual Buffalo Central Terminal meeting, 8 PM

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.

*** **IMPORTANT REMINDERS** *** If you receive hardcopy of the ESX and your mailing address changes, please send to the attention of Neal Kerin so that your Empire State Express can be addressed properly. Likewise, if your email address changes for any reason, please let Tony Schill know by sending it to the newsletter@nfcnrhs.com THANK YOU

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