

Empire State Express



DECEMBER 2025

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, December 12, 2025 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.

BUILDINGS, BOATS & RAILROADS A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF BUFFALO



Please join member Mark “MJ” Lewandowski as he presents a program of 35mm photo slides of the City of Buffalo ranging from the 1950s through the 1990s. **Buildings, Boats, Railroads, and other Transportation Images** will draw from MJ's personal collection of many now vintage photos. Join us at the December 12 meeting and view the many nostalgic scenes of the city we all call our hometown! *Above: November 29, 1986 at the Main Street Auditorium Station on the Metro Rail. MJ Lewandowski collection.*

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



I turned the calendar page over and realized that I'm staring at the last month of 2025. As President, I'm accustomed to looking a month, two months or even three months ahead. The seeming abrupt end to 2025 caught me a little by surprise. That might be because so much has been going on. On the Candidate List printed this month you will see a couple of new names and a couple of familiar names in new positions. Yes, after 22 years, I am going to get out of the right-hand seat and let someone else hold the throttle. More on this later. Thanks to the Nominating Committee, Bob Scheib, Tony Schill and Dan Sikorski as Chairman. The election will be held at the December Meeting.

Lots of good things went on 2025. We are making steady progress on our projects. We finally got all the track off Tonawanda Island. In April we put a new roof on the station. We finished the rehab of the lady's room. The crew removed the failed prime mover from the Tonawanda Island locomotive. We found a new home for our Plymouth locomotive. We found and acquired the parts for the G.E locomotive, and a grant to pay for them. Thanks to the City of North Tonawanda DPW for their assistance in moving the full lengths of rail over to the museum property. The crew separated all the hardware and stored it away.

By now you should have seen a dues renewal notice. Yes, it's that time again. Please be prompt with that and if you are mailing it, send it to the P.O. box (P.O. box 1043, N. Tonawanda, N. Y. 14120). As always, we need your donations to continue our work. Please be as generous as you can.

We need meeting programs for 2026. The original presentations that are the highlight of our monthly meetings are only possible because of you. While commercially made DVDs are nice, you can see them anywhere, anytime. The programs seen at our meeting are usually original and unique and can't be seen anywhere else. I know that the presenters put a lot of effort into their programs for our enjoyment. If you can do a program, please offer it up.

We need Docents for the coming year. This August we were inundated with visitors. It was great, but what that did was overload our staff. We need three to five people on the property to handle that many people. This is due to how the place is laid out. The two sections of the exhibit space are divided by a small area, often called the stone room (because it houses the John Roebling suspension bridge cornerstone). A person in one section doesn't know what is going on in the other. And then there is outside to deal with. Please consider volunteering, we will train you.

So, with the thought of a snow cancellation in the back of our minds, here's the drill. Should we need to cancel the meeting because of the weather, look to Channel 2 on your TV, on your radio WGR 550 AM, Oldies 104.1FM, and WYRK 106.5 FM. We try to make the decision early enough to get the notice on the 5 pm broadcasts. We will continue this every month until it's not relevant anymore. Speaking of the white stuff, we have contracted with a service to plow the station parking lot should it be needed. The Museum will be open the first Saturday of the month during the winter months all the way until May.

So with that, Happy Holidays, or as we say in our family, Merry Christmas and Best Wishes for a wonderful 2026.

Jim Ball



Niagara Frontier Chapter

National Railway Historical Society

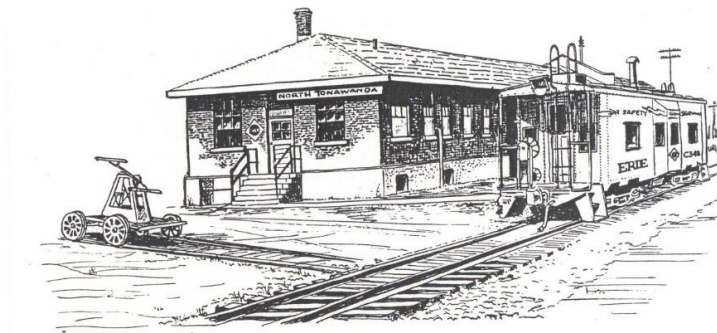
Railroad Museum of the Niagara Frontier

Candidates for Election to the Board of Directors for 2026

| Name | Office |
|------------------|--|
| Benton Hiltz | President |
| Steven Frey | Vice President |
| Aaron Heverin | Second Vice President |
| Scott Bertini | Treasurer |
| Karen Frey | Recording Secretary |
| Nancy Andrycha | Corresponding Secretary |
| Neil Keirn | Membership Secretary |
| Vacant | Comptroller |
| John C. Dahl | Chapter Director, Editor, Empire State Express |
| Mark Lewandowski | Interorganizational Coordinator |
| Greg Gerstung | Chapter Director, Historian |
| Robert Andrycha | Chapter Director, Museum |
| Randy Bugucki | Chapter Director, Equipment Restoration |
| James Ball | Chapter Director, Librarian |

Candidate for NRHS National Advisory Council Representative for 2026: Becky Gerstung

The election of NRHS National representative and Chapter officers will be held at the December 2025 meeting.



SOME RAIL WINTER SCENES IN WESTERN NEW YORK

Winter is never far away in WNY as we all know with another December upon us. But it provides a different and often special backdrop for the drama on the tracks we call *“Railroading”*. All photos pages 4, 5 and 6 are courtesy railfan photographer Robert Sikorski.



CSX L032 at
Ensminger Rd,
Tonawanda
11/11/25



NS 28B at “GB”
(Blasdell) w/
N&W 8103,
11/11/25

WINTER – continued



The Falls
Road 2/17/25.

Albion, MP
31.4



The Falls
Road
2/17/25.

Fancher, MP
26.0

WINTER – continued



*“Crashing
thru the
Snow”*

The Falls
Road 2/17/25.

Middleport,
MP 45.8



Amtrak
Station,
2/17/25.

Depew, about
MP 431.6

SCENE ON THE LINE – All photos by Larry Gustina



Larry writes: “At Mystic, Connecticut, September 25, 2025 at 10:41 am – a Boston bound Acela sweeps through the curved station platform at 50 mph, I’m guessing.”



With a dramatic late November sky overhead, “lake effect” is forecast and it’s the day after Thanksgiving as a spotless Amtrak P42, # 112 in Phase VII paint, crosses Exchange Street in downtown Buffalo. In just a minute or so the westbound train will be at its scheduled station stop. *November 28, 2025.*

CHAPTER CALENDAR

DEC 12 **Regular meeting, Town of Wheatfield Senior Center, 7 PM. Program by MJ Lewandowski, "Buildings, Boats & Railroads – A Buffalo Story". (Please note the originally planned Part 2 of The History of RR Sound Recordings has been rescheduled for early 2026.)**

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 us know by sending it to nfcnrhs@gmail.com THANK YOU

The Empire State Express is mailed free to all members of the Niagara Frontier Chapter NRHS, Inc. Anyone who is not a Chapter / NRHS member may receive *The Empire State Express* by US mail or Email. Please contact the Chapter at PO Box 1043, North Tonawanda, NY 14120 for current membership and subscription rate details. Web site www.nfcnrhs.org

RAILROAD MUSEUM ADDRESS: 111 OLIVER ST. NORTH TONAWANDA, NY



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED DATED MATERIAL – PLEASE EXPEDITE

The Empire State Express
NIAGARA FRONTIER CHAPTER NRHS, INC.
POST OFFICE BOX 1043
NORTH TONAWANDA, NY 14120