

*Empire State Express*



**January 2020**

PUBLICATION OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER CHAPTER NRHS, INC.

Editor: John C. Dahl Email: [newsletter@nfcnrhs.com](mailto:newsletter@nfcnrhs.com)

The meeting of the Chapter will be held on Friday, January 10, 2020 at 7:00 PM at the Degraff Community Center, 139 Division St., North Tonawanda, NY.

## **RAILCAMP 2019**



Chapter member Mark Lewandowski Jr. (far left) attended Rail Camp 2019 as one of the staff volunteers and some of the events were held on the Strasburg Railroad in Pennsylvania. Steamer 89, hosts the group for a shot not unlike those of the steam age when shop forces would gather for a portrait on a locomotive. In addition, the group visited Washington DC, did some spike driving, toured through the Amtrak dispatching operations in Delaware and the shop operations at Bear, DE, location for the car and locomotive works for Amtrak. Railcamp is an annual event sponsored by NRHS National. Its purpose is to encourage and educate the next generation in the technology and history of railroading. Photo by Greg Gerstung.



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I feel like I am standing on the platform looking down the tracks at 2019 going away. It went by like an Acela Express, the roar and the dust cloud are yet to subside. When I look around, I see 2020 is bearing down on us just the same. So, where are we?

On Saturday December 7th we opened the station for Winterwalk. We had asked for the pony ride and they set up out front by the sidewalk. There were so many people through the building that we could not count. We had costumed characters from the neighborhood dressed as The Grinch, Frosty the

Snowman, Rudolph, an Elf, and a special appearance by Santa. Inside the Polar Express movie was showing, Lionel trains were running in the warmed up center section, and a Christmas tree, hot chocolate, cookies and popcorn were on hand.

Thanks to everyone who participated including Dennis Hurley, Steve and Karen Frey, Bob Andrycha, Becky and Greg, and especially to Bruce Becker as the man in the red suit.

Neal reports that renewals are coming in and donations are with them. Please be as generous as you can. We earn money to pay for the basics with our fundraising activities. Before we can buy anything to do preservation and restoration with, we have to pay the insurance, electric, water and gas bills. Please send in your renewal if you haven't already. Or, you can do it online! Your National membership is renewed separately, as before.

We have had a great year, two projects are finished as you read this; the heating for the center section and the electrical upgrade are completed. The two projects came in within budget, however the electrical work took longer than anticipated. Thanks to Greg and Becky Gerstung for being on site so that the contractors could work. Steve and Dennis continue to make interior windows for EL-2. Five are complete so far. Greg has completed a weather cap for the inside of the north end door of the station. No more snow blowing in there. There are also some ongoing projects of other kinds, the digitalization of the films from the Archives continues as John Dahl has time to work on them. Greg Gerstung has been scanning some of the slides of former member Norm Wahl. The color had shifted badly, but can be corrected in the digital form so that we can show them to you at a meeting. This is something to look forward to.

This year we produced our first calendar with half of the photos in color. The Calendar Committee has outdone themselves! There exists the possibility that we may sell out, so if you didn't get one already, act soon.

In the event that we have to cancel the meeting due to the weather, the first place to look is Channel 2 on your TV. We will ask the other stations to carry it, but we are registered with Channel two. We will also ask the usual radio stations as well; they being Odies 104 FM and WGR 550AM and WYRK 106.5FM. We usually try to make the decision soon enough to make the 5 pm broadcasts.

Let's all have a great new year! Until then, I'll see you at the meeting.

*Jim Ball*

## “SCENE” AT THE STATION

photo by Jim Ball

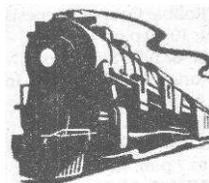
The North Tonawanda downtown merchants once again sponsored an early “Winter Walk” and our station participated in the pre-Christmas holiday festivities on December 7, 2019. On hand besides the hoards of youngsters and their parents eager to have some hot chocolate, cookies, and to see “the trains” on our recently reconstructed Lionel layout, were the always popular pony rides held in our parking lot. Jolly ol’ Santa Claus also was on hand for the day’s events. Here, Santa has transferred from his preferred accommodation of railroad caboose to a pony ride, just to have a bit of fun. Santa’s reindeer were preparing for Christmas and Santa’s sleigh, well that was in the North Pole shop being tuned up for its duties on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of December. Notwithstanding, plenty of grinchies, elves and other holiday characters were on hand to cheer on the red-suited gentleman.



In addition to the Winter Walk festivities, new board member Ben Hilts arranged for some neat old fashioned outdoor decorations to liven up our caboose and equipment line-up along Oliver Street this year.

The 2019 event was a huge success with many members of the public viewing our station and its historical displays for the first time. Outreach to the public is key to developing new members of our Chapter and getting folks in general interested in what we already know, that western New York’s place in railroad history was important and deserves to be preserved, studied and told, and most of all, enjoyed.

**Thank you, everyone.**



**“SCENE” AT THE STATION - continued**



*Jim Ball, photo*



In the news...again. The former Delaware, Lackawanna & Western train shed in Buffalo may yet have a chance at re-use. A developer has been engaged and plans for re-development of the space to include a mixture of public and private spaces is progressing. Although we don't look for anything to be departing from Track 1, stay tuned. *Photo: Historic American Engineering Record, Library of Congress.*

## The Twentieth Century Limited

By Thomas J. Murray

UP from the city by the misty main,  
Where ships are crowding from exotic shores,  
We mark the passage of a famous train  
That through the sylvan Hudson Valley roars.

Bound from the great unsalted seas afar  
She swings from seaboard terminal and screams  
For dropping semaphore and colored star,  
That on night's velvet curtain brightly gleams.

We mark her mid-state on a fair terrain,  
Holding to schedule that must never fail,  
Past leaning orchards and wide fields of grain,  
Her signals swooning down the Mohawk vale.

She crosses bridges where the leisured flows  
Of dim canals seem but to mock her haste,  
This swirl to westward, where the burning rose  
Of lingering sunsets can be faintly traced.

Her dash through lonely hamlets ever brings  
Unending wonder to the watchful eyes,  
As from the night's far rim she swiftly swings,  
And fades out where her haunting whistle dies.

So does she win to lakeside, that bright door,  
To lands of promise and adventure new;  
A link whose service men will underscore,-  
The Twentieth Century Limited goes through.

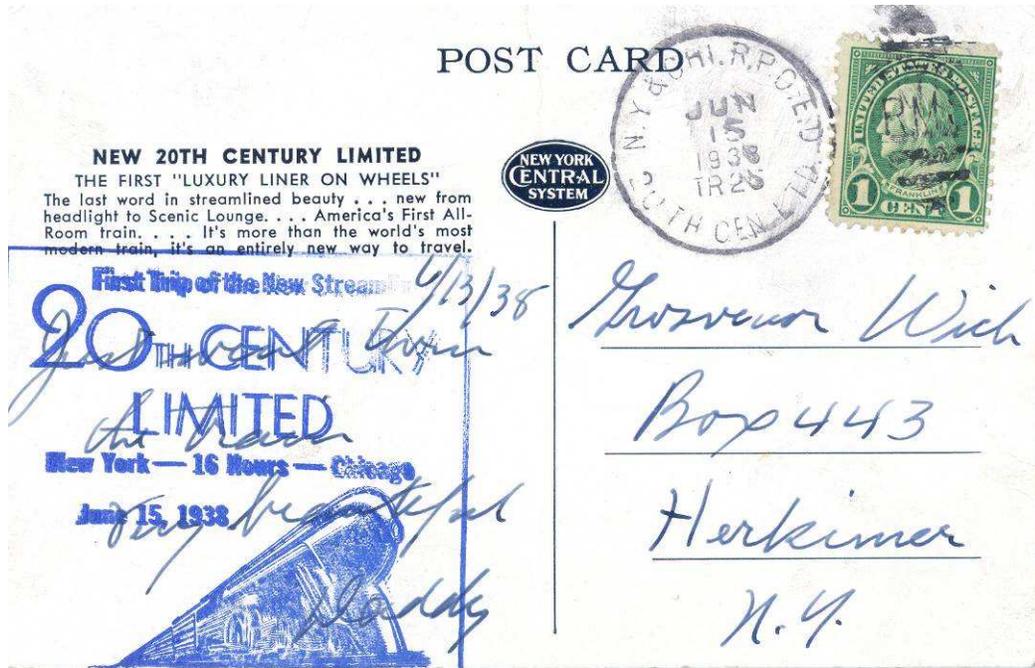
*New York Central Lines Magazine*  
*January 1923 Vol III No. 10*



# 1938 POSTCARD OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY LIMITED



NEW YORK—16 HOURS—CHICAGO, VIA THE WATER LEVEL ROUTE

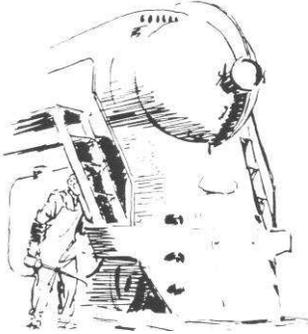


In 1938, New York Central re-equipped its flagship train. In the words of Alvin Stauffer in *Throughbreds*, "...34-year-old Henry Dreyfuss, considered by many to be the most brilliant – prolific – industrial designer – EVER." created the magnificent train. Streamlining was applied to not only the new consist but most significantly, to the Hudson type 4-6-4 locomotives which powered the train westward from Harmon, NY to Chicago. (From Grand Central to Harmon, the train was of necessity hauled by the Central's also famous electric locomotives.) Sixteen hours flat, New York to Chicago, in fair weather or foul, in spring, summer or autumn clear or rain, or sleet or blizzard snows in dreariest of winter, the *Century* got through! JCD

## ON THE TRACK AHEAD

For February's program, we have a 1930 classic movie film, "Danger Lights". Filmed on the Milwaukee Road, with great cinematography and a railroad story line, you won't want to miss this vintage film projected up on the big screen. Looking ahead to March, our member Walter Simpson returns with an in depth look at Turbine driven locomotives. The short lived experiment in motive power has its own fascinating story, and Walter recently published a book on just this subject.

## 80<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL BANQUET SATURDAY MARCH 21



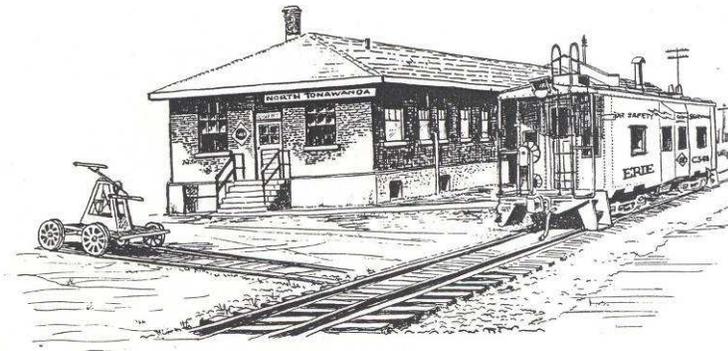
New York Central was famous for its great passenger trains and the dining car services on these trains was a large part of that persona. This will be our feature program at the 80<sup>th</sup> annual banquet, Join us Saturday, March 21, 2020 at Ilio di Paolo's restaurant on South Park Avenue, Blasdell. Dining room opens 11:30 AM, dinner served at 12:30 PM. Mr. Jerry Bertoldo will relate the story of New York Central's dining car services, focusing on Buffalo, which was a major commissary point for the Great Steel Fleet. The flyer with all details and reservation coupon is included again with this issue of ESX. Get your reservations in to the banquet committee ASAP. As always, the banquet will also feature a great silent auction, 50/50 split and a prize raffle.

## ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The board welcomes its newest member. Ben Hilts volunteered to serve on the board for 2020 and was duly elected at the December meeting along with the previously published slate of officers. Congratulations to all and thank you to all members for your support. The Chapter accomplished much in 2019. The challenge is to keep the momentum moving forward.

## LAST RUN

Sadly, word has been received that long time member Tom Sanko passed away on December 16. Tom joined the Chapter in 1991 and served on the board for many years, and was active with the station restoration in past years. The classic green window shades that grace the office portion of the station were just one of the things thanks to Tom's restoration efforts. The Chapter extends its sincere condolences to Tom's family.



## CHAPTER CALENDAR

- JAN 10 Regular meeting, at Degraff Community Center, 7 PM. RailCamp 2019 by MJ Lewandowski
- FEB 14 Regular meeting at Degraff Community Center, 7 PM “Danger Lights” – classic railroad action movie from 1930 filmed on The Milwaukee Road.
- MAR 13 Regular meeting at Degraff Community Center, 7 PM Turbine Locomotives by Walter Simpson.
- MAR 21 80<sup>th</sup> Annual banquet March 21, Ilio Di Paolo’s, doors open 11:30 AM, dinner served 12:30 PM. New York Central’s Dining Car Service by Mr. Jerry Bertoldo

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](mailto:newsletter@nfcnrhs.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 mail at a subscription rate of \$35.00 a year postpaid, e-mail rate \$25.00. Please contact the Chapter at PO Box 1043, North Tonawanda, NY 14120 for details.

www.nfcnrhs.com



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED DATED MATERIAL – PLEASE EXPEDITE

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