

The Black Diamond

Official Newsletter of the Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society

December 2011

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

The December 2011 edition of "The Black Diamond" features full details about Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society events during the past year as well as historic photographs contributed by Hank Kingston of Rochester, New York, and an article about recent Lehigh Trail improvements at Rochester Junction written by Paul Worboys of Honeoye Falls, New York. Please send any Society news and/or historical articles about the Lehigh Valley Railroad to me by U. S. Mail at P. O. Box RR, Manchester, NY 14504 or by e-mail at kemay59@hotmail.com. Thank you for your contributions.

Ken May, Editor/Trustee

2011 STATION MUSEUM OPEN HOUSES

The Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society Station Museum in Shortsville, New York, was open to the public one Sunday afternoon a month from May to October this year. Open house dates were May 15, June 19, July 17, August 21, September 18, and October 16. Attendance at all of the open houses was good. Thanks to the LVRHS members who volunteered at the station museum open houses.

FALL FOLIAGE TRAIN EXCURSIONS REPORT

The Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society, in cooperation with the Finger Lakes Scenic Railway, sponsored fall foliage train excursions over the former New York Central Railroad "Auburn Road" branch line between Shortsville, New York, and Phelps, New York, on Saturday, October 8, 2011. Four passenger train excursions were operated from Shortsville to Phelps and return over the Finger Lakes Railway using two diesel locomotives and five passenger coaches. Each train ride lasted 90 minutes and was an 18 mile round trip.

A total of 1,071 passengers rode the trains. All four round trips were sold out. Paid passenger counts for each trip were as follows: 9:30 a.m. - 261, 11:30 a.m. - 277, 1:30 p.m. - 266, and 3:30 p.m. - 267. The average passenger count per train was 268. Thank you to all of the passengers who rode our train excursions. We appreciate your patronage!

Paid ads were placed in the Daily Messenger, the Finger Lakes Times, and the Genesee Valley Pennysaver. News releases were published in the Daily Messenger, the Democrat and Chronicle, the Finger Lakes Times, and on various Internet web sites. The excursions were featured on the "Getaway Guy" segments on Time Warner Cable.

The Society freight station museum was open to passengers during the excursions. Sales at the gift shop were very good. The food concession operated by the Shortsville Presbyterian Church did a brisk business before and after each of the four trips. Special thanks to Joe Dickson, Deb Halderman, Ross Liddiard, and Jack Tuttle for cleaning the station before the excursions.

As always, we received excellent service and cooperation from the Finger Lakes Scenic Railway train crew comprised of Kevin Buckland, Bruce Habberfield, and Craig Holden. Thanks to Judy Salone and the FGLK on-board crew (Bonnie Buckland and Judy Habberfield) for their services.

Thank you to all of the Society members who assisted with the excursions in one way or another. Thanks to Deb Halderman for volunteering in the gift shop and arranging newspaper ads.

Thanks to Bev Halderman for volunteering in the gift shop. Thanks to Dick Coffey, Joe Dickson, Gary Lembke, Ross Liddiard, and Jack Tuttle for volunteering as parking lot attendants. Thanks to Dave Halderman for volunteering as a guest conductor. Thanks to Roger Halderman for helping out at the station.

SANTA TRAIN EXCURSIONS REPORT

The Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society, in cooperation with the Finger Lakes Scenic Railway, sponsored Santa train excursions over the former New York Central Railroad "Auburn Road" branch line between Shortsville, New York, and Canandaigua, New York, on Saturday, November 26, 2011. Five passenger train excursions were operated from Shortsville to Canandaigua and return over the Finger Lakes Railway using two diesel locomotives and three passenger coaches. Each train ride lasted one hour and was a 12 mile round trip.

A total of 775 passengers rode the trains. All five round trips were sold out. Paid passenger counts for each trip were as follows: Sat. 10:00 a.m. - 149, Sat. 11:30 a.m. - 150, Sat. 1:00 p.m. - 151, Sat. 2:30 p.m. - 172, and Sat. 4:00 p.m. - 153. The average paid passenger count per train was 155. Thank you to all of the passengers who rode our train excursions. We appreciate your patronage!

Paid ads were placed in the Daily Messenger and the Genesee Valley Pennysaver. News releases were published in the Daily Messenger, the Democrat and Chronicle, and on various Internet web sites. The Finger Lakes Visitors Connection also publicized the event on their calendar.

The Society freight station museum was open to passengers during the excursions. Sales at the gift shop were very good. The food concession operated by the Shortsville Presbyterian Church did a brisk business before and after each of the five trips. Special thanks to Bev Halderman and Deb Halderman for cleaning and decorating the station before the excursions. Thanks to Dan Hodge for displaying his N scale model train modules.

As always, we received excellent service and cooperation from the Finger Lakes Scenic Railway train crew comprised of Kevin Buckland, Bruce Habberfield, and Craig Holden. Thanks to Judy Salone and the FGLK on-board crew (Bonnie Buckland and Judy Habberfield) for their services.

Thank you to all of the Society members who assisted with the excursions in one way or another. Thanks to Deb Halderman for volunteering in the gift shop and arranging newspaper ads. Thanks to Bev Halderman for leading the Christmas caroling on the trains. Thanks to Dick Coffey, Joe Dickson, Ross Liddiard, and Jack Tuttle for volunteering as parking lot attendants. Thanks to Dave Halderman and Tom Monnat for volunteering as guest conductors. Thanks to Roger Halderman for helping out at the station. Thank you as well to Sean Miller, Kristi Ward, and Walt Crum, the balloon artists, and to Jim Lockwood, who did an outstanding job as Santa Claus.

LEHIGH VALLEY RAILROAD HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS

Attached are the LVRR photos. My great grandfather, Henry H. Kingston, was the General Traffic Manager for the Lehigh Valley Railroad in 1900. His private business car was LVRR # 354. These photos were taken by his son, H. H. Kingston Jr. Hank Kingston - Rochester, NY



LV 354 - H H Kingston, Sr - Private Car
General Traffic Manager
Photo by HHK Jr 1900



LV 354 - HHK Private Car 1900
Photo by HHKingston Jr

BIOGRAPHY OF HENRY HOUSTON KINGSTON, SR. (1854-1931)



Henry Houston Kingston, Sr.

- 1854 - Henry Houston Kingston, Sr. was born on July 7th in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was the son of Stephen Beasley Kingston, Jr. & Julia Elizabeth Kingston (Elliot). Henry was named for his father's good friend, Henry H. Houston, and his railroad co-worker. Henry grew up in the Germantown section of Philadelphia. Henry graduated from the Germantown Academy.
- 1870 - Henry began working at age 16 for the Pennsylvania Railroad, where both his father and grandfather had offices and held railroad positions during the Civil War.
- 1875 - Henry married Fannie Hunter on September 9th at St. Peter's Episcopal Church.
- 1879 - Recorded in the Philadelphia City Directory, Henry was listed as a clerk working for the Pennsylvania Railroad.
- 1883 - Henry left the Pennsylvania Railroad for a new offer as Traffic Manager with the Lehigh Valley Railroad. This position provided him with his own private rail car to travel in for the Lehigh Valley. He had offices in Philadelphia and New York City, and was promoted to the position of General Traffic Manager for the entire Lehigh Valley railroad system. Sometime during his Lehigh Valley employment, Henry was given a large cigar chest filled with cigars in recognition of his railroad work. The gift was a bit ironic, since he did not smoke at all.
- 1903 - Henry retired from the Lehigh Valley Railroad after a railroading career of 33 years. That same year, Henry Sr. lent his private rail car to his son, Henry Jr. and Jane Kingston for their honeymoon trip. After retiring from the railroad, Henry became an officer of the Guarantee Trust Bank of Philadelphia.
- 1931 - Henry Houston Kingston, Sr. died on April 2nd in Philadelphia three months short of his 77th birthday. He was buried in the Whitmarsh Cemetery adjacent to his wife Fannie's grave and next to his good friend, Henry Howard Houston.

**Why Is This Man Smiling?
By Paul Worboys**



Paul Worboys

At last, due diligence is winning the day!

This self-portrait of the writer in smile mode was snapped on the first of December, when all should have been cold and snowy, rather than mimicking the first spring kiss of April. He's smiling because of the beehive of activity that is transforming Rochester Junction into a semblance of the intriguing place it was decades ago, when the Lehigh Valley Railroad bisected Plains Road in the Town of Mendon.

Tooling through this beloved site in October, this fellow, being a genius of perception, exclaimed upon spotting a crater near the highway, "Hey, who dropped a bomb on Rochester Junction?!" A bit later, down the trail toward Mendon, he happened upon an abstraction jutting skyward and spewed quizzically, "For gosh sakes, since when did this place become a sculpture garden?!"

Rushing back to hobo jungle down by the mineral spring, a terse letter was to be scrawled to news editors, but it slipped his mind in a can o' beans. For you Millennials, Generation Next or Echo Boomers, beans were a staple to hobos, tramps and floaters, those poor souls ridin' the rails, stomachs forever growlin', in search of their future.



Freight House Work

Weeks transpired before I returned to the scene of my distress, now, of course, Mendon Foundation's Lehigh Valley Trail. As it turns out, the perceived bomb crater is blooming into a replica of the former freight house that was on the site.

By next year, this building, painted in Lehigh Valley livery, will offer toilet, meeting room and mini-museum amenities for trail users and fans. A combination of volunteer and contractor labor will do the trick.

As for the sculpture garden, that's what it is, but with a historical theme to pique the curiosity of railroad buffs and recreationists alike. In 1964, a tremendous railroad wreck resulted in numerous freight cars strewn about this very spot, in various forms of crumpleness.



Sculpture Garden

After LVRR maintenance-of-way crews cleared away the dozens of cars scattered akimbo, one notable artifact lay half-buried under the tailings. Forty years after the fact, a distorted steel boxcar door was found in the brush.

To commemorate that event (and a similar derailment at the same location in 1943), an Eagle Scout project turned that frumpy door into a reminder that Rochester Junction, which served about 700,000 trains, millions of people and untold millions of railroad cars, was a heavy duty, life and lore, gritty and growling, railroad place for three generations.

Now comes the best part, something the writer dreamt of ever since the Mendon Foundation gang began resurrecting the spirit of the old Lehigh Valley more than a decade ago. The predominant feature of Rochester Junction, especially as it now can serve trail users, is the way the branch line flared off toward Hemlock Lake, through Honeoye Falls, Lima and Livonia Center. With tracks laid out in a Y formation, trains, at least the locomotives pulling those trains, could do a sort of three-point turn, like we might do in our gas-guzzlers.

For several years, only the westerly leg of the Y [wye], including its little bridge over Surrine Creek, was adapted to trail use. The other leg, flaring toward the east, was buried in brambles, with its two little bridges (each spanning about 30 feet) topped with dangerously rotted wooden ties (sleepers). Fresh stone dust has been laid down and the bridges cleared for new decking. Soon, the entire wye will be a full-fledged part of the Lehigh Trail. Hoooo-ray!



South Approach to Wye



RSY A Bridge

The wye was a favorite place for adventuresome kids, who often walked the branch tracks from Honeoye Falls for a day's viewing of the LV's mainline of rolling thunder. For a railroad setting, either leg was bucolic, since, by the 1960s, passenger train service was gone and branch traffic usually amounted to five to ten short, slow freights per week. Mainline action, however, from New York to Buffalo via Mendon and Rush, Caledonia and Victor, still amounted to a couple dozen long trains per day.

The Clover Street overpass (Route 65), removed in 1977, after the Lehigh quit in 1976, muted the loud chime horn of onrushing locomotives from the east. Often, just before our arrival at the junction, we'd detect a muffled train whistle blowing for the Quaker Meetinghouse Road crossing.

Running as if pursued by a railroad cop, we'd race up one leg of the wye, just in time to catch sight of a speeding, thundering wall of freight cars and a kaleidoscope of light and shadow through the trees. As far as people can recollect, no one ever turned an ankle or got a mug full of cinders in scampering to glimpse those trains.

We never feared recrimination, either from getting smushed by a locomotive or collared by the law, for our days were days of freedom to roam and explore almost at will. Sure, vandals have existed since ancient times, but most fuzzy-faced scouting parties appreciated the elbow room and refrained from, as it were, "soiling the nest."



RSY 379 A Sign

There's still work to be done on the wye, especially the deck/railing installations that will provide safe passage over those bridges (formerly designated "RSY 379 A" and "RSY 379 B"). One of those signs, found buried under cinders by the writer, will grace the finished product, as trail users access the presently undeveloped Great Bend Park from either direction.

Swallowed in the swamp, the old hobo junction at the ruins of the former commercial mineral spring is gone forever. Otherwise, a reincarnation of this old-timer's youthful vision of the Rochester Junction railroad era is proceeding at "full steam ahead!"

LVERRHS MEMBERSHIP AND ELECTIONS

As always, membership renewals and new memberships are welcome. Please remember to renew your membership and remind anyone who may be interested to join the Society and pitch in for a worthwhile and fun cause. Also, please remember to cast your votes in the upcoming election and return your ballot as soon as possible. Thank you for your support of the LVERRHS!

2012 ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

The annual meeting of the Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society will be held on Sunday, January 15, 2012, at 2:00 p.m., at the Society's Station Museum in Shortsville, New York. Election results for officers and trustees will be announced, 2011 activities will be reviewed, and 2012 activities will be discussed at the meeting. The monthly meeting will be held after the annual meeting. All Society members are invited to attend as well as the public.

DONATIONS

Thank you to Dick Coffey for providing lawn mowing services this year. We appreciate your generous donation!

LVERRHS MEETINGS

Society meetings are held on the third Sunday of each month at 3:00 p.m. at the LVERRHS Station Museum, 8 East High Street, Shortsville, New York. All members are encouraged to attend the monthly meetings.

Visit the Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society website at www.lverrhs.org for the latest information about Society activities.

"The Black Diamond" is published by the Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society, P. O. Box RR, Manchester, NY 14504-0200. Displays and archives are located at 8 E. High St., Shortsville, NY. Hours by appointment. Contact Deb Halderman, Treasurer, at 585-289-8022.

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The Society wishes all of its members and their families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!