



Crew News: March 2019

Welcome to the 2019 season! Hope you can join us as we look forward to an exciting season. We have some new trains and new employees. This winter saw plenty of maintenance work as well as our usual planning. We have a new ticketing agency, FareHarbor, along with a new website at the same address.

Visit here www.adirondackrr.com and get tickets for our first trains of the season, including the Easter Bunny Express and the season opener for Beer & Wine Trains. Look for more first-class seats available and some new special events, like the 1st Annual ASR Motorcycle Rally in May.

Polar Express tickets go on sale April 1st. Help spread the word!
Photo – waiting for spring

Membership – Our membership is now being processed through the FareHarbor ticketing system. To become a member, renew, or upgrade your membership, be sure to go to www.adirondackrr.com

Visit our Website

Random Notes

Current Office Staff

Jack Roberson - Executive Director
Constance Gachowski - Finance Director
Sheena D'Alba - Executive Assistant / Customer Service
Judy Roberson - Utica Manager / Volunteer Coordinator
Lisa Getchell - Customer Service Rep
Al Pestar - Customer Service Manager

Annual meeting notice - Our 2019 ARPS Annual meeting will be on Tuesday, May 14th. Time and place yet to be determined. Watch for further information

Shop Update – We are waiting for the last step - acquisition of title.

New Office – The target date to move to our new office in the Doyle Building is May 1st.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION EVENT

Thursday, April 25, 2019, 6:00 pm. Trackside Restaurant at Union Station

Free appetizers, drinks (non-alcoholic), socializing,
Plus a special program by rail historian / author John Taibi.
Limited seating. Please RSVP by April 18: volunteer@adirondackrr.com
Or call: 800-819-2291 --- Watch for the flyer. Hope to see you there.
Volunteers are encouraged to bring a friend who is interested in volunteering.
Watch for more information.

Volunteer handbook – At the February meeting, the Board of Directors adopted an improved volunteer handbook. Volunteers can expect an email link to the document soon. (excerpt from page 6 shown below)

- Comp tickets - Volunteers may apply for 2 comp tickets per 40 verified volunteer hours. Hours may be verified from Nov 1, 2018. (Mechanism is determined by ASR Staff) These tickets may be used for any train other than Polar Express or trains with included meals. All comp tickets must be recorded with our ticket agency.
- Reciprocal agreement – The ASR has a reciprocal agreement with other area attractions to provide ticketing benefits to qualified volunteers and staff. For volunteers to qualify, they must have at least 40 verified volunteer hours. Hours are verified from Nov. 1, 2018.

Looking Ahead with FareHarbor

“Working with FareHarbor will really make a difference this season,” said Sheena D’Alba. On Feb 20 and 21, Sheena, along with staff members Judy Roberson, Lisa Getchell, Constance Gachowski and conductor Al Heywood, attended a training session presented by 3 FareHarbor staff members.



Held in our office as well as in the gift shop in Union Station, our staff learned how FareHarbor handles booking and accounts, plus the ease of reporting anything from conductors’ manifests to sales information and more.

The sophistication and ease-of-use for this system was demonstrated as staff learned about options and capabilities when we expand our offerings. Plus, FareHarbor is designing, and will update, our new website. “After all,” one of the FareHarbor reps said, “the more inviting we make your web page, the more tickets you sell. And that’s good for everybody!”

Unanimously, our people were very impressed by both the training skills of the FareHarbor staff along with their entire ticketing system. When asked about comparison of FareHarbor to our previous ticketing vendor, Al Heywood simply, emphatically, said “Like night and day.”

Photo – Becca Gibbs (FareHarbor) Sheena D’Alba, Lisa Getchell.



Connections: Bagg’s Square Association

Wednesday, Feb 27th staff members Judy Roberson and Constance Gachowski attended the organization’s annual meeting at the thINCubator building on Broad St. Constance reported that she and Judy, being new to Bagg’s Square, made some significant connections with nearby businesses. These included Oneida County Tourism, Utica Coffee, and the Bagg’s Square Brewing Company along with many others.

“When we left,” said Constance, “we felt very excited about the prospect of future networking with our neighbors.” The ASR is a long time member of Utica’s Bagg’s Square Association

From the Bagg’s Square Facebook page... The Bagg’s Square Association announced the winners of the 2019 Neighborhood Awards at its annual meeting. The evening’s agenda included the presentation of the Slate of Board of Directors for 2019, a review of 2018, and what is planned for the upcoming year. In addition, Bagg’s Square Brewing company gave attendees an update as to the status of opening. This year’s winners include: Legacy Award: Rachael Hamlet; Neighborhood Advocate Award: Vinny Ficchi; Business of the Year Award: Bagg’s Square Café.

Photo: Constance Gachowski at the thINCubator

On the cars, in the cold

Mechanical Department News

By Chris Talluto

March arrived with plenty of snow and with windy days, yet our mechanical staff has been steadily working in the Utica yard.

On the Old Forge coach, we've recently repaired the floor. We also have new partitions to replace the old ones and new glass will fill in for the old ones that have been missing for years. Soon, we'll install more contemporary new carpeting.



Photo - inside the 800 car

We also added electrical outlets on both ends of the car as well as an LED emergency lighting system. Meanwhile, baseboard heating components for the heating and air conditioning system are being assembled for installation.

Our mechanical staff is making progress on the 800 Café car as well. Prep work to repaint the interior is just about complete. The café booth seating is prepped and will soon be painted. The whole interior is being extensively cleaned in order to paint a primer and then the finish color palette. (*photo- in the 800*)

As in the Old Forge car, a more contemporary designed carpeting will be installed soon. Once the painting and carpeting are complete, we can begin reassembly of the 800 car.

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From the editor: Mechanical Director Chris Talluto said "With the selection of the color palette and carpeting for the café and coach, it's exciting to see progress. We can't wait to see the finished products! It will certainly enhance the ASR fleet of rolling stock."

Chris continued. "While the Mechanical staff has been working steadily this winter, many members and volunteers have braved the weather to stop in to see staff and the progress. Also, I have received many e-mails from members offering their best wishes for braving the working conditions to continue to improve and enhance the ASR fleet.

Thank you ARPS members for your continued support of the mechanical department!"

Mechanical Staff

Chris Talluto - Mechanical Supervisor

Richard Carnes - Mechanic

Hank Crossman - Mechanic

George DeAngelo - Mechanic

Trevor Laber - Mechanic

John - Norton - Mechanic

Our neighbors in Bagg's Square Union Station Barber Shop

From the 1920s through the 1940s, most large train stations across the country had a barber shop in the station. As passenger rail traffic waned, most of those closed. In Utica, we're lucky to have *Union Station Barber Shop*. In continuous operation since 1913, it is one of only 2 remaining train station barber shops left in the country. (The other is in Washington DC)



The ASR is glad to have owners Leo Gillman and Grant Gillman as our neighbors. *Photo, Grant Gillman and customer*

Editor's note – this is the start of a new series about our neighbors.

The Adirondack Lumberjack

The Adirondack Lumber Trilogy (Part 1) 1840-1950

By: Bill Wolfe

The logging industry has a very long history in the Adirondacks. It began as the first settlers cut the trees for their cabins and barns, and was usually done by one isolated family or individual. Logs were cut, sized and minimally processed by axe and adz for individual use.

Water-powered sawmills came next, and often were the nucleus around which villages formed. As demand for forest products grew, the industry expanded and changed to meet the demands. Transporting and processing the logs, of course involving railroads, will be described in the next parts.



The logging season began in the late fall, when a young man's mother or wife "sewed" him into his red flannel "union suit". These were adult sized "onesies" that had a three-button fly in the front and a two-button "trap door" in the back. The navel-to-neck opening was what was sewed shut. This garment would not be removed until the logging season was over. Next, a pair of heavy wool "Malone Pants" was put on. They were "all wool and a yard wide" and made in Malone, NY. Woolrich Company pants also were used.

A wool shirt was next, and a pair of heavy canvas and leather suspenders held up the pants. Two pairs of wool socks went onto his feet, and if he was an older, prosperous and thrifty lumberjack, he had a pair of knee-high leather boots with metal "calks" on the sole. Less affluent lumberjacks wore ankle-high heavy shoes called "Croghans", named for the town where they were made. A heavy wool jacket, hat and maybe a pair of leather gloves completed his outfit.

Most men had a spare shirt, and maybe a couple extra pairs of socks. The rest of his "kit" consisted of a pocket knife, pipe and tobacco, a sharpening stone and his axe. His axe and his boots were his most prized possessions and were cared for with absolute attention.

The logging camp, his home for the next several months, would be a bunkhouse with about 10 rows of 2-high bunks, a table, benches and a grindstone. Heat was an open fire pit with a hole in the roof to allow the smoke to escape. The bathroom was an unheated outhouse. Often, 20 men would live there. Sometimes, the bunkhouse was also the mess hall, but some larger operations had a separate mess hall.

All the stories about the legendary lumberjack appetite were mostly true. These men burned 3000+ calories a day and demanded to be fed accordingly. The food was plentiful, consisting mostly of carbs and protein. Beans were a staple, sweetened with molasses, and salt pork was often added, along with flapjacks, cornbread and boiled eggs. Coffee was a luxury for the rich, so the lumberjacks preferred tea that was "so strong a spoon would stand up in the mug". They ate breakfast and supper in camp and lunch was carried in their "lunch pails" with them and lunch was eaten on the work site.

The day began before dawn and ended long after dark. Kerosene torches provided such light as there was and weather was not a factor. Men were expected to work in snow, rain, bitter cold and any other rough conditions. In deep snow, they wore small round "bear paw" snowshoes, which gave them some mobility and footing. When only axes were used, each man was expected to cut 70 trees in a day. Later, when the cross-cut saw was introduced, the men were paired up and the quota was doubled. The speed at which these men could chop or saw is astonishing. They also prized their ability to fall a tree exactly where they wanted it to go.

When the day's cutting ended, the men returned to camp for supper and ate at the tables in absolute silence. The cooks demanded that, since the crews were made up of men from many different nationalities, and the slightest insult could lead to a fight. The stereotypical lumberjack is "Dirty Pierre" a wild French Canadian. French Canadians were often in lumber gangs, but so were immigrant Italians, Scots, Irishmen, Germans, Swedes and Norwegians.

When the meal was over, the men lit their pipes and sharpened their axes and treated their boots with oil to keep them water repellent. Once that was done, they went to sleep in their bunks. Each bunk had a rope netting of springs. Plus, a canvas sack held straw or pine boughs for a mattress and a cheap, scratchy wool blanket was the cover. Their shirts were often rolled up as a pillow.

No facilities for washing, shaving or doing laundry were provided. Imagine the atmosphere; 20 unwashed, hard working men, cooking smells, wood and kerosene smoke. Lice and bedbugs were rampant, so every few weeks, all bedding was removed, and the place was liberally sprayed with kerosene or turpentine to kill them off. This minimized the crawlies for a couple days, but within a week, they were back in force. Rodents were controlled by a couple of ferocious camp cats. It was often said

that the teamster's horses lived better than the lumberjacks, and in many cases, it was true.

So it went, until the spring thaw made the woods impassable even for horses. Cutting stopped, and the crew moved the logs to the banking grounds, onto the ice or to the jack works to await the spring breakup and the river log drive. The paymaster showed up, and soon a whole herd of newly "rich" young men were set loose upon civilization. Once there, a bath, shave, haircut and some new clothes were in order. The married men went home to their wives and families, but the younger bachelors went off on a drunken spree thru the gambling dens, houses of ill repute and the gin mills. Once the money was gone, they went off to find whatever work they could until they could work the lumber camp once again.

*Oh, It gets so cold when you're cutting trees
The words you speak, they often freeze!
To find out what you talked about...
You build a fire and thaw them out!*

Author unknown

Contributions welcome

ARPS members, volunteers and ASR employees may contribute items to this newsletter. Articles celebrating our history, our work, as well as captioned photographs, especially those which show volunteers at work, are encouraged. Please understand that the newsletter staff has the right to edit submissions.

Please send newsletter contributions to Vince Sperrazza, editor at vksperr@gmail.com

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