

Railway society 'chugs' along on station repairs

by JILL SCHMELZER
Reporter

In the Sept. 27, 1978 edition of The Amherst Bee, an article titled "Parents, mayor unhappy with station's disrepair," spoke of the dilapidated Lehigh Valley railroad station on South Long Street in Williamsville.

The terminal was built in 1896 but fell into disrepair after it stopped operations. The article stated that youths vandalized the property, making it difficult to restore it to the original appearance.

The terminal closed passenger operations in the 1940s and stopped loading cargo in the mid-1970s, according to P. Thomas Stackhouse, founding president of the Western New York Railway Historical Society Inc.

Now, nearly 30 years later, Stackhouse and other society members have been pouring their hearts and souls into renovating the terminal to look as it did when it was a major freight agent in



Members of the Western New York Railway Historical Society have been renovating the Lehigh Valley rail road station.

Williamsville.

"We know enough about it to restore it to the way it originally was," Stackhouse said.

When the society was formed, there were about seven members.

It has since grown to more than 400 members.

"I never quite grew up from the train around the Christmas tree," Stackhouse said of why he co-founded the railway organiza-

tion. "I used to make model trains, and then in 1981, we formed the Western New York Railway Historical Society."

The group bought the railway terminal in 1986. It was about then that volunteers cleaned and painted the outside, later replacing the north interior wall. Most of the renovations have been made within the past four years.

Once completed, the building will be used as a small historical museum, Stackhouse said, noting that during the summer, people can visit the site on Sunday afternoons.

Stackhouse still serves as one of the trustees, and he, along with other members of the society, have been dedicating their time to repairing the roof, replacing windows and reconstructing the interior of the station.

Four other Williamsville residents were involved in the renovations, including former mayor Larry Brenton, who donated bricks from Buffalo that were used to install a walkway along

the outside of the station. The others are Harold Douglass, Mark Klepadlo and Don Wood. Wood recrafted windows and two of the pillars that act as roof stabilizers.

Each window costs approximately \$700. There is a lot of wood to be replaced, and the windows are a continual project, Stackhouse said.

The men found that stained glass windows once surrounded the top half of the fixtures but were boarded from the exterior and interior of the building. The society has 13 of the 17 original colored panes, Stackhouse said.

"There is still a lot more we need to accomplish," he added. "But we'd like to get more activities going on around here."

Stackhouse noted that the Amherst Players have performed plays on the railroad station's lawn, and it was once a stop on the Williamsville Santa bus tour.

To donate to the railway society, which also owns property in Orchard Park, call the Williamsville office at 633-7002.

Kadimah School of Buffalo's two-year-old program has waiting list

Early registration and high demand for the 2006/07 two-year-old program at has resulted in a waiting list, according to Headmaster Jeffrey Shapiro.

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