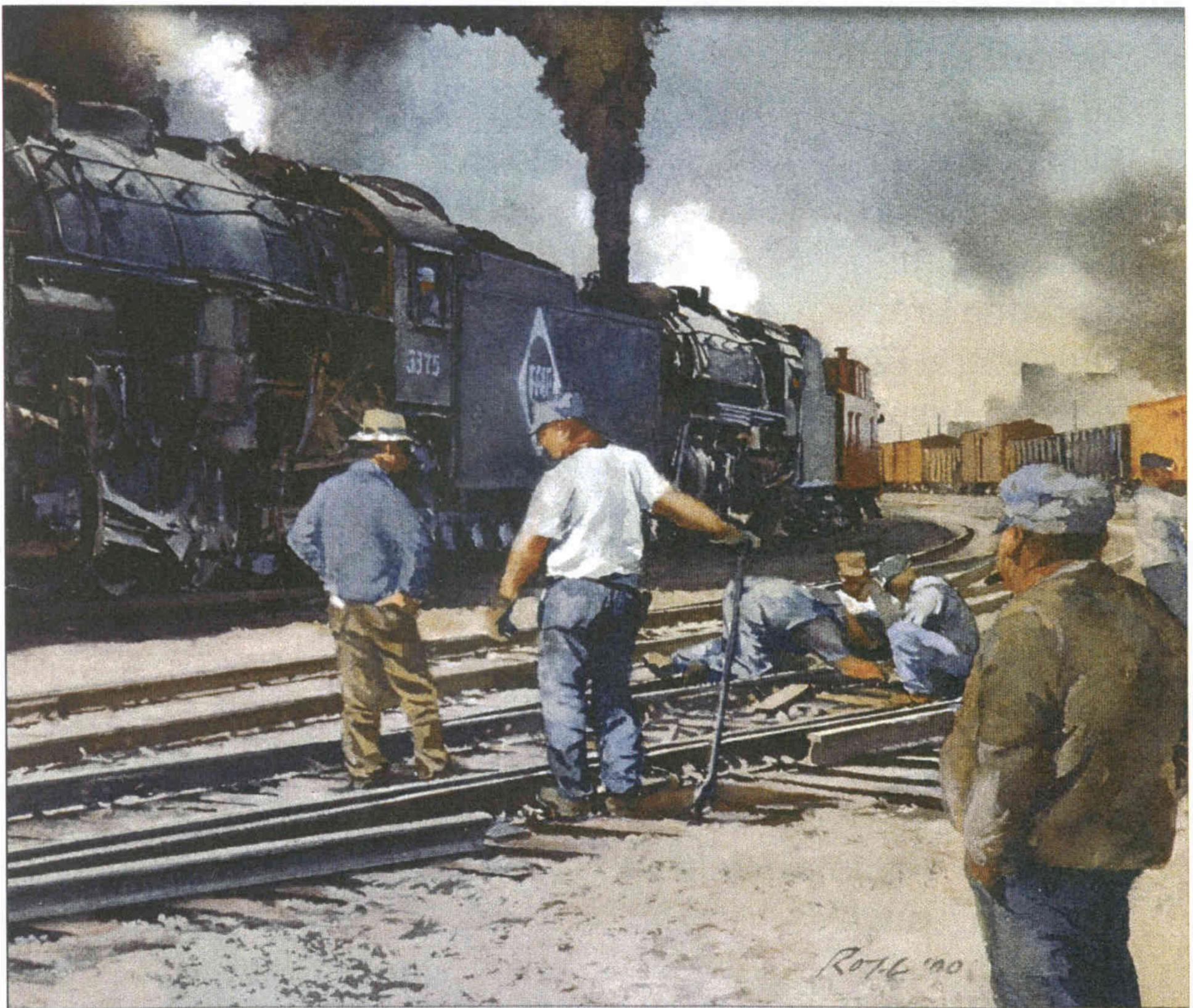


The Railroad History of Kent

A Free Informative Event

Tuesday, October 7th 7PM

The Kent Stage



KENT HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM



Timeline of the Depot's Renovation and Second Life

- 1971** Sam Apicello invites Bill Birkner, Titus Jackman, Leland Keller, Reed Strimple, and others to discuss forming a Kent Historical Society (KHS). KHS forms with the goal of saving the Depot from demolition and elects Apicello as its first President
- 1973** Bill Birkner becomes President and Sandy Halem joins KHS' leadership team
Negotiations begin with the Erie Railroad to purchase the Depot for \$32,100
- 1974** KHS membership unanimously approves purchasing the Depot
The National Register of Historic Places lists the Depot as part of Kent's "Industrial District"
- 1975** The Depot is reappraised at \$28,000
Portage County Commissioners give a \$10,000 grant towards the purchase
- 1976** KHS officially become the owners of the Depot
Restoration estimates come in at \$375,000 (~\$2 million in 2025)
Architect Robert Gaede joins to lead the restoration project
- 1977** Architect George Lewis begins interior planning
The City of Kent receives grant to improve Franklin Avenue with new streetlights, buried utility lines, and restored brickwork
- 1978** The National Park Service gives \$18,500 grant for roof repairs
Fundraising events raise over \$15,000
KHS membership grows to 143
New trustees Hinda Golding, Peter Opperman, M. L. Davey, and Ted Sapp join
- 1980** George Lewis and partner Tom Roehl propose restaurant plan: The Pufferbelly. A search for 25 investors at \$10,000 each begins
Major investors include Dorothy Parsons, the Davey Foundation, Ted & Cal Rowe, and the Ohio Historical Society
Volunteers help restore the Depot canopy and interiors
- 1981** The Pufferbelly restaurant opens on December 6th, marking success of the ten-year preservation effort
KHS names the Depot's central tower in honor of Bill Birkner, who becomes Museum Director.
- 2011** The Pufferbelly's 30-year lease expires. Owner Kevin Long chooses not to renew.
Ron Burbick invests in renovation and the restaurant Treno opens
- 2023** After Treno shuts down during COVID, Shannon & Chad Zemba open Over Easy at the Depot, soon voted Kent's #1 breakfast spot by KentWired

The authors of *Steel Rails, Small Town* would like to express their thanks to the following people whose photographs and other contributions made the book possible:

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Program of Events

- 6:30** **Doors Open.** Bruce Dzeda's newest book, *Steel Rails, Small Town* is available for purchase in the lobby. Mr. Dzeda is also available to meet and sign copies.
- 7:00** **Welcome & Opening** with KHS President **Matt Metcalf.**
Keynote Address by **Bruce Dzeda.**
- 7:50** **Brief Intermission.**
- 8:00** **Panel Discussion** with **John Flynn, Sandra Halem, and Jim Myers** - all of whom worked to save the Depot from demolition. Moderated by KHS Board member **Doug Fuller.**
- 8:30** **Audience Q&A**
- 9:00** Bruce Dzeda returns to the lobby to sign books and meet attendees. Talk to KHS representatives about membership!
- 9:30** **Doors Close.**

Special thanks to Richele Charlton and Tom Simpson of the Kent Stage