

THE ADIRONDACK RAILROAD REFRESHES YOUR RUN FROM UTICA TO OLD FORGE

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I started last week's column intending to highlight the Adirondack Scenic Railroad, but if you will excuse the pun, I got sidetracked. I promise not to digress too far here.

Last week's article began with my observations on how popular the railroad is becoming. My own experiences have shown me why.

The first trip I took was in the company of my two oldest granddaughters. I did so for two reasons. One was to spend some time with them in a pursuit I felt we would all enjoy in spite of the gender and age gap. The other was to relive a part of my life that I had left in the far distant past.

Our trip took us from the Thendara station south to the crossing at Minnehaha. Although the trip was over terrain I was very familiar with, I enjoyed viewing it from a different perspective. I shared the scenes and some of my past experiences with them. I truly enjoyed our trip and am looking forward to repeating it with the balance of the brood.

In an area where there is an abundance of places to visit and things to do, I can think of no other activity where everyone in the family can really enjoy themselves together.

Since that time the operations have expanded and there has been more to see and do with each passing season. This was demonstrated to me in a most dramatic fashion last spring on one of the earliest trips from Utica to Thendara. It was one of those truly rare times when wife Nancy and I have been able to experience a day of togetherness sans children or grandchildren.

We were dropped off at the train station in Utica with time to look over the renovations to the station there. While we were waiting, I watched with interest as an exceedingly long line of freight cars rolled by. Several of them sported containers with the Evergreen Line emblazoned on their sides. I was reminded of the many loads of veneer logs I helped supply to buyers who filled the cars with the logs. Their ultimate destination was Taiwan or other Indonesian port cities where they would be processed.

After boarding the passenger cars, we leisurely eased out of the station and began our journey north. Our route, of course, paralleled one we had all taken many times, but none of us had viewed it before from that perspective.

The cars were air-conditioned and a club car dispensed food and refreshments as we tooted along. Like a kid, I was reluctant to take my eyes from the passing scene, trying at times in vain to figure out where we were.

The railroad's growing popularity is understandable after you have witnessed the interest shown by onlookers as it made its maiden runs. Groups of people waved and snapped pictures and their enthusiasm was evident from the expressions on their faces.

We were treated to many interesting views, but none could quite match the sight from the trestle over Kayuta Lake. It's worth the trip for that alone. The crossing over the Moose River at McKeever and the several views along the route of the river would please anyone.

To make a long story short, if you are looking for something the whole family will enjoy, regardless of age or physical condition, the Adirondack Scenic Railroad is it. Try it, you'll like it as much as you do the *Adirondack Express*.