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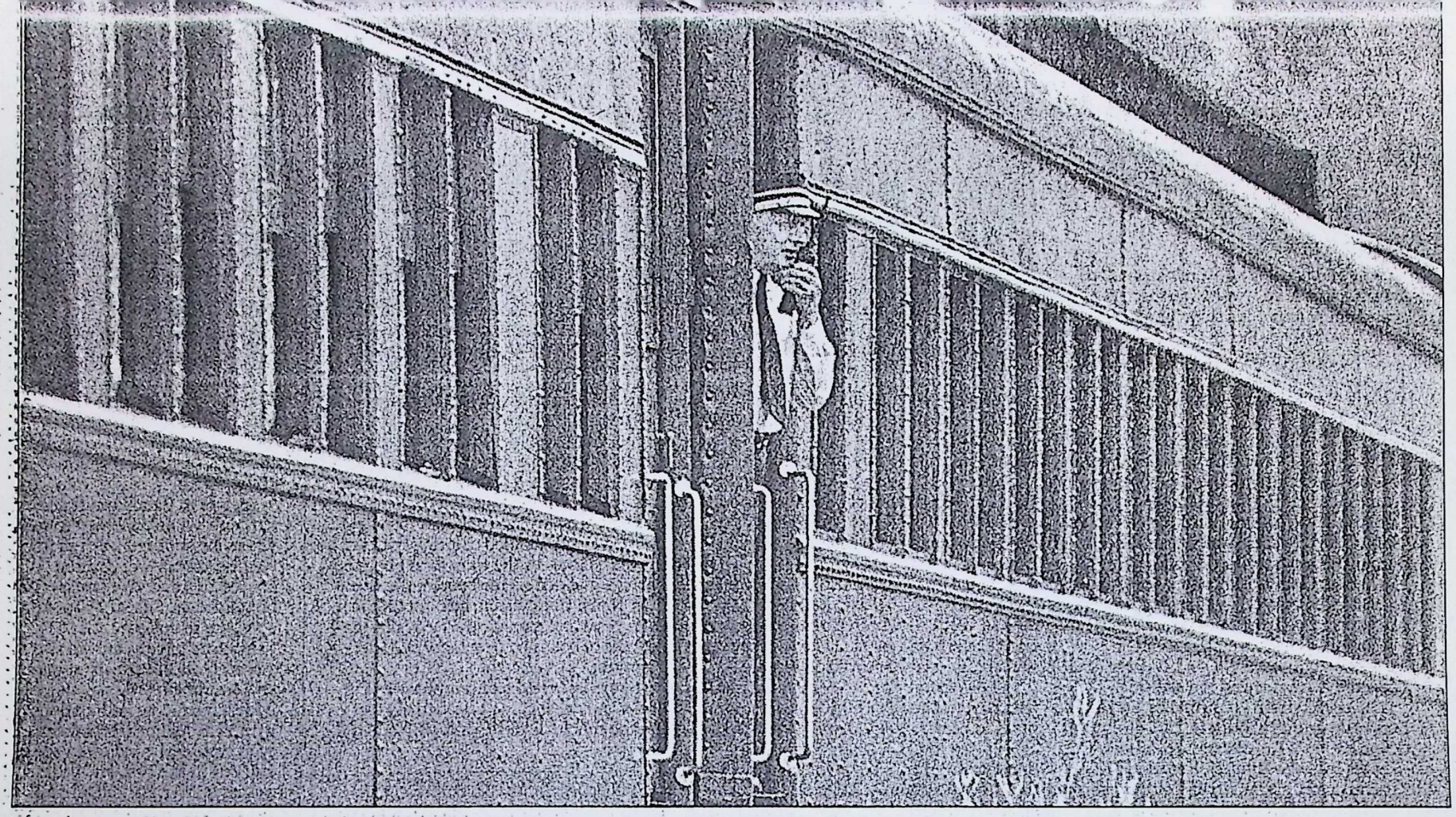

Photos by Meredith L. Kaiser, Gazette Photographer

The Gazette Sept. 17, 2000

Conductor Eugene Corsale of Saratoga Springs uses a walkie-talkie to speak with the engineer during a recent run of the Upper Hudson River Railroad. Corsale, retired director of property tax services for Saratoga County, works the scenic run twice a day. Below, he takes a break with fellow conductor Ernie Nenning (at left).

People: Corsale

The run from North Creek

SARATOGA ROOM

Corsale, 72, checks his pocket watch at the North Creek station. The scenic train runs along a wild stretch of river in northern Warren County, from North Creek to Riparius and back.

Conductor for scenic train ride is veteran railroader

By STEPHEN WILLIAMS
Gazette Reporter

NORTH CREEK — The diesel locomotive is idling, passengers and crew milling about the railroad station. Gene Corsale keeps flipping open his polished gold pocket watch.

The retirement gift from the Saratoga County Assessors' Association is exactly what you'd expect a white-haired and uniformed railroad man to pull from his pocket.

"They knew about my love of railroads," Corsale said, checking the time again.

Finally, it's time. He hollers, "All aboard."

As a conductor on the Upper Hudson River Railroad, the retired director of property tax services for Saratoga County has found an outlet for his enthusiasm. The scenic tour train runs along a wild stretch of river in northern Warren County, from North Creek to Riparius and back, twice a day.

"It's very relaxing, just sitting and watching the river," Corsale would say a few minutes later, as the train edged along a fast-flowing section of the Hudson far from the nearest road.

But for now, on a late summer morning, the train is still boarding. Corsale is more brisk than relaxed. He's up and down the platform at a trot, making sure no one will be left behind in the gift shop, no children are extending their heads or arms out the windows.

"The conductor is the boss," he said. "Anything happens on the train, it's his responsibility."

Everyone aboard, Corsale calls "Highball," into a walkie-talkie. The train begins crawling from the historic station in the Adirondacks, where 99 years ago on Sept. 14 Theodore Roosevelt learned he was president of the United States — William McKinley had just died of an infected gunshot wound.

Why does a 72-year-old rise at 6 a.m. several times a week and dr from his Saratoga Springs h feel the sway of a moving ra

It's in the blood.

Corsale's father, Joseph, at the Saratoga rail yard. Al Joseph's sons ended up wo railroads. Gene's brother D 79, still works regularly as a conductor.

"We're all railroad-orient gets in your system, it stays,

Rail activist

In the Capital Region, Cor finger in nearly anything rail He's an advocate of reopeni Creek line all the way south Springs, and has strong opin to route a commuter line fro into Albany.

He's also a key player in B efforts to educate schoolchil trespassing on railroad prop

See CONDUCT