

# VOLUNTEER RAILROADERS ASSOCIATION



# THE DIGEST

HOP.. HOP.. HOPING ALONG

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## EASTER BUNNY TRAIN 2010

We will once again run Easter Bunny trains this year and March 27<sup>th</sup> & March 28<sup>th</sup> are the dates we have chosen. As I write this we are still waiting for NJT to approve our request but we do know most all of the other details. First we are going to once again work with our old friends at Tri-State Chapter NRHS. Those of us who have been around since the beginning of the VRA will remember that it was our 2 groups that ran the first Fall Foliage trip to Baird's Farm with the NYSW 142, which by the way was the only time it ran there and faced East allowing for the classic shot at the farm. Tr-State is looking to raise funds to fix and repaint their F-3 into Lackawanna colors.

We have requested to once again run out on Wayne on Saturday and Glen Rock on Sunday. The new Rt. 23 station in Wayne has served us well since last year and so will once again be our departure point on Saturday. With the problems still etched in our minds that we encountered at Ramsey last spring, we

have decided we are going to run out of the Glen Rock Boro Hall Station on Sunday. Both days we have requested an 8 car train, up 2 from our normal Easter Trains. This means we need to have a few more volunteers each day, but with Tri-State being a partner this year that should not be a problem.

We will be looking for help at the station the weeks before the trips to answer the phones and take orders if customers do not have Internet access. Due to our on-line reservations system we do not need a lot of help at the station but we do need as much help as we can to put out signs and posters. We will be announcing the dates when we will be ready to put out the advertising on the Yahoo group, so please watch your e-mail. Not signed up for our Yahoo Group yet? Go to our web site [www.vratrips.org](http://www.vratrips.org) to find out how you can sign up.

Then on train days we will need the greatest amount of help. It takes about 40 people each day to make these trains

BY: K.C. SMITH

operate and some of the most important people are those who volunteer to wear the costumes. Each year we get members, friends and relatives to come out and put on a costume and this year is no different. So if you or anyone you know might be interested in helping out please have them get a hold of Charles Smith, Craig Hartman or myself. The other volunteers during train day are car attendants and station help. To sign up to help drop us a note at [vratrips@yahoo.com](mailto:vratrips@yahoo.com) or call the station at 973-238-0555 and say you want to help.

## MEETING:

*Thursday, February 18th, 2010*  
St. Clements Church  
271 Lafayette Ave  
Hawthorne NJ 07506

Meeting starts at 7:30 pm and will be followed by a short presentation of Railroad History.

If you would like a hard copy of this newsletter mailed to you, please email Jon Berkemeyer at [berkemeyerjj@yahoo.com](mailto:berkemeyerjj@yahoo.com).

Copies will be available at the meeting as well.

## URHS REPORT

BY: JOE MELE

The URHS has been busy this past winter with a couple of different projects. Even though there haven't been any work sessions due to the winter season, I would like to update the VRA members on the URHS activity.

Below are the newsworthy items:

New Jersey Transit approved the fence for Boonton Yard.

URHS members discussed the possibility of running a spring train ride on the Cape May Seashore Lines, possibly on National Train day in May.

We have also discussed the possibility of running a fall foliage train this coming October on either the

NYS&W Delaware Division or to Port Jervis. More details still have to be worked out.

New Jersey Transit is retiring their Comet I coaches. The URHS has put a request into NJ Transit for one of the Comet I cab cars. As of the January URHS meeting, NJT had not responded to the URHS' request.

The NYGL advised the URHS that the U34CH & Erie 436 will be returned to Boonton Yard this spring.

The Friends Symposium will be held on March 27, 2010 @ Drew University.

The Jersey Central Historical Society will be sponsoring their annual train

show at Mother Seton High School in Clark, NJ on March 7, 2010.

The Erie Lackawanna Historical Society will be sponsoring their spring meet train show on March 21, 2010 at the Parsippany, NJ Holiday Inn.



## SANTA TRAIN WRAP UP

BY: K.C. SMITH

For the first time in many years we ran only 1 day of Santa Trains but we also did not run out of Glen Rock. Due to NJT running extra trains on Sunday's into Giant's stadium we were not able to get a train on that day. So we opted to just run one Saturday and to make that run be from Wayne. This did open up how many cars we could use so another first happened and that was we ran with 9 cars. We were able to do this because there is no crossing to worry about at the Rt. 23 station.

As always Charles Smith led the way getting out signs and posters and with the help of a few others we basically blanketed the area around Wayne with publicity. All this hard work proved its worth when we sold the trains out a week in advance. We also had our crew all set to go around the same time, so the last week before the trip we could simply concentrate

on making sure everything else was in place and ready to go.

Due to the huge amount of cars and people we knew we needed to handle getting in and out of the parking lot and on and off the trains we expanded our normal ground crew and put John Kroll in charge. John always has some great ideas how we can do things better and or make our passengers experience more enjoyable and this year was no exception. He came up with a great plan on how to handle both cars and people and the process went exceptionally well.

On board the train we had 4 Santa's played by Craig Hartman and Tim Stack, John Smith and Jason. The Mrs.' were played by Tina Smith, Shirley Hartman and Carol Smith. Kevin Rebner, Carolyn Hoffman, Tara Thomas, and Diane Smith. To round or our cast of characters were Andrea Rebner as Cookie, Vanessa

Trapona as Elmo, Jon Berkemeyer as Ernie, John Pinho as Bert and Betsy Newberry and Rudolph. I want to give these people an extra special thank you because if it were not for all their sweat and hard work we would not have had all those happy faces on the train.

Our on board crew was made up of about 30 other members who handled boarding and ticketing and hand outs and questions and everything else it takes to run a successful train. In the end we had over 2400 people ride the train and from all accounts 2400 people who had a great time. It is because of the dedication and hard work put in by all of our volunteers that this train and all the ones that came before it were a success. As chairman I can tell you that I am proud to lead a crew of people like we have and you should all be proud of yourselves as well.

## HAWTHORNE STATION UPDATE

BY: K.C. SMITH

Believe it or not we might actually get the station moved this year. I know we have been working on this project for what seems like decades. But this year looks like we could finally see the building sitting safely away from the corner. It will finally be 75 feet from that high cube truck that would have once again smacked the roof and put the station in jeopardy.

We have met with the President of the NYSW and come to a verbal agreement to get the work started in the spring. We have a copy of a lease in our hands that the railroad gave us and now all we need to do is have it reviewed by our lawyer and the towns lawyer (which is happening as I write this) and make any

changes we would like. If the railroad agrees we can sign the lease for not only the station (which is all we have had all these years) but also for the property the station currently sits on and the property on and around where we are proposing the station be moved.

As proof that the railroad is behind what we are doing, they hired a contractor to repair the roof that has been damaged over the many years of being struck. The contractor, who has worked with and for the NYSW for years, did a great job and has even offered to give us a deal on moving the building. We will be meeting with him this week to see what he can offer us.

We have set a target date of April 1<sup>st</sup> to start the digging for the new base-ment / foundation and with any luck we will not only meet that date but also we will have all of the work completed before the first day of summer.

As we have said in the past this project is going to take not only a lot of money to complete but also a lot of our volunteer time. Please when the time comes, VOLUNTEER. It is with everyone's help that we will be able to complete this project. Once we are done we will all be able to stand back and proudly look at what we did and as the people walk through the door of the station to look at our JKW Library and railroad museum we can say "We did it".

## JOSEPH K. WEBER MEMORIAL FUND &amp; LIBRARY

BY: K.C. SMITH

It hard to believe but it has been just over 3 years since we lost our friend Joe Weber and I am proud to say that we have done a good job fulfilling his request to sell his railroad collection and create a fund in his name. But we have a lot more work to do. We still have a good (although shrinking) supply of items available for sale so if you have not had the chance to look through what we have available or have and did not pick up something you saw and wanted, you still have time. If you are interested in HO scale modeling, railroad lanterns, china, silverware or other railroad collectables we might just have that something special you have been looking for. Members are welcome to look through the collection any time the station is open, which will be Tuesday and Thursday nights from 6 to 9 and Saturday from 12 to 4 during the next month for Easter Train ticket sales. Come on down and lend a hand with tickets and

take a look through the collection while you are there.

We will have tables at a number of upcoming trains shows, the first of which is the Jersey Central NHRS Mother Seton show on March 7<sup>th</sup> in Clark, NJ. After that we will be at the Black River Railroad Historical Trust show in Flemington on March 20<sup>th</sup>. We are also looking to attend other shows in the region as well. Please watch our web site and Yahoo Group for updates.

Paul Trabert has been busy working on trying to get Joe's collection of magazines into order and into binders. He has found what looks to be a great way to use 3 ring binders to display and protect the magazines. And just the other day he heard from Kalmbach Publishing, who has said they will be giving us a discount on their very handsome and high quality binders to keep the collec-

tion of Trains and Model Railroader magazines in good shape. I want to thank Paul for all he has done with the library.

We found more drawings, blue prints, books, magazines, photos and collectables while helping Joe's Dad at his house and added them to the library. If you are not aware the library is open to all members with many of the pieces available to borrow and all of them available to look at, study and use as a reference. We also make the library available to the general public when the station is open, but they cannot remove anything from the station.

Part of Joe's wish was that we use the money we raise to fund worthy railroad related projects. So if you hear of anything that needs a little shot in the arm please let someone on the board know.



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2010 MOTOR CAR TRIPS

BY: K.C. SMITH

The motorcar trip committee, made up of Steve Weiss, Chris Vitz and K.C. Smith, have been hard at work trying to put together a good series of trips for 2010. Steve has lined up July 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> for our run on the NYSW Syracuse line, September 11<sup>th</sup> for a proposed Utica Branch run and October 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> for our 10<sup>th</sup> year on the Southern Division. In addition we are looking to line up a trip on the Cooperstown and Charlotte Valley on September 12<sup>th</sup> to go along with the Utica trip.

Other plans are being made to try and run on 2 new railroads for us up in Maine that will be sure to draw a good crowd. Plus we are firming up plans to return to the Stourbridge Line in Pennsylvania, which we hope combined with a run on the Catskill Mountain RR if they get the track open all the way to Kingston. (As a side note as you may remember we had been asked to help them lay some track to accomplish this and we hope that this spring we can lend them a hand and get the work done).

In addition to all of the above we are always looking for new lines to run on, so if you know of any that might be interesting let us know. Better yet if you have a contact a railroad that might entertain running a trip let us know so we or you can look into the possibility. Like the saying goes "Hey, you never know".

Please watch our web site, [www.vratrips.org](http://www.vratrips.org), for date confirmations or to sign up. Heck you can even use your credit card to pay for the registration taking the time away from having to write a check and drive to the post office.

SAD NEWS

It is with deep regret that we report the passing of two long time VRA members. Timothy Stack, and Gisele Drennan

Timothy Stack, 41, passed away on Wednesday, January 27, 2010 after a battle with cancer. Tim was a long time member of the VRA, notably playing Santa Claus on our 2009 Santa train. He also was a dedicated flagger on many of our speeder trips. Tim is survived by his parents, Maureen McAleer Stack and William J. Stack, II; two brothers, Maurice J. Stack, II, Thomas J. Stack two sisters, Teresa S. Pearson and Shelagh S. Gilbert, his nieces and nephew, Devyn, Camryn and Liam Stack, Blair and Caleigh Gilbert and Bridget Pearson.

On February 4th, 2010 long time VRA member Gisele Drennan passed away. Gisele and her husband, John were active members of the VRA, participating in many of our train rides as car hosts and flagged many of our NYS&W motor car trips. She is survived by her husband, John; her children, Susan K. Duroncelet and Donald S. Schmidt; her stepchildren, Susan R., John A., Matthew J., M. Juliet, Caridad C. Featherstone and her nine stepgrandchildren.

Information regarding charitable donations on behalf of Tim and Gisele will be forth coming via the VRA's yahoo group.

*-This article was compiled from the contributions of K.C. Smith, Gary Kazin and Carolyn Hoffman*