



WINTER 2009

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HAWTHORNE STATION UPDATE

By K.C. Smith

Our effort to move and restore Hawthorne Station is once again a major topic in Hawthorne. The Mayor and Economic Development Committee recently asked us to attend a meeting to discuss our plans and to see how those plans might fit into what they are looking to do. Charles Smith, Lou DiGeronimo and myself attended the meeting and I am pleased to report that it appears the town would like to see the project done as much as we do. At this time the town is looking into a number of items that they feel they need to address so that we can move the project forward. We will be meeting

again this month to discuss what the next step will be and to set up a plan of action. At the meeting the town a proposed completion date of July 4th for the move of the building, which is ambitious but with hard work we should be able to meet that goal.

Once the station is moved (about 75 feet North) we will then begin the process of restoring the exterior of the building and updating the interior to meet the vision we have laid out. It is hoped that once we are all done we will be able to open the building on a regular schedule, so that residents and visitor will be able enjoy the displays and maybe even learn some-

thing. We have proposed to the town that they use the back part of the station to have a Museum about the history of Hawthorne. This will not only enhance the experience visitors have but will also make for a great partnership between the VRA and the town.

Please watch our Yahoo Group messages and the next newsletter for updates.

Dates to Remember

- *Easter Bunny Trains:*
April 4th & 5th
- *National Train Day:*
Saturday May 9th
- *URHS Open House:*
May 23rd & 24th

ELECTION RESULTS ARE IN

The following are the election results for the 2009 VRA positions. 25 ballots were returned out of the 54 mailed out. Of those returned they break down as follows:

Director

Steve Gerritsen 24 votes

Mark Schmitt 1 vote

President

Craig Hartman 25 votes

Vice President

KC Smith 25 votes

Treasurer

Charley Roselius 25 votes

Secretary

Charles Smith 25 votes

The results will be formally presented at the next VRA meeting, Thursday, February 19, 2009.

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THE HIDDEN SPEEDERS OF STEAMTOWN

BY CHRIS VITZ

Last summer when Steamtown held their railfest event several new areas were open to the public for tours. I was unable to attend the event but I have seen several photos from those that did.

Did you know Steamtown has a basement? Well it does. And it's warehousing no less than 5 motorcars. When I saw the photos posted online I could hardly believe my eyes. In addition to the Erie Lackawanna M-19 motorcar were several others of a style I have never seen.

With curiosity getting the better of me, I contacted the National Park Service Historian at Steamtown. Unfortunately Steamtown does not know what it has in the collection nor do they know where it came from. I offered to help. After a few back and forth emails and phone call he offered to give me a private look at the cars to get any information I could from the cars, such as serial numbers. On October 14, 2008 I made the trek up to Steamtown, met with Patrick McKnight and off to the basement we went.

They have five speeders located in the basement in various states of disrepair and decay. Four are located at the bottom of the stairs to the basement, the fifth is located down a long dark passageway that had originally been an underground tunnel to another building used by the Lackawanna Railway. Two of

the speeders are Fairbanks Morse / Sheffield, both are single cylinder, however one of the two has a condenser similar to a Fairmont design. I have attached a photo of one of the Fairbanks Morse cars. The other three cars are Fairmonts. One is an M-14 with the two speed rear end, the others are M-19s. One is obviously from the Erie - Lackawanna, the second did not have any obvious emblems, but did have a full serial number.

One additional car, an early M-14 or an S-2 is on display next to the Steamtown roundhouse. So there are a total of six cars on site.

At the end of my look at each car I could only find serial numbers on one of the Fairmont cars, and on one Fairmont engine that was sitting on (not in) the M-14 in the basement. I contacted Harsco Track Technologies (current owner of Fairmont) with the serial numbers to see if they had any information. After a few weeks of waiting they responded with answers. The M-19 with no markings, but with serial numbers is a C&O M-19 E built on December 29, 1945 and delivered to Barboursville, West Virginia. The loose engine on top of the M-14 was built on April 26, 1967 for the Central Vermont Railway and delivered to Saint Albans, Vt.

The car outside on display is most likely a Rutland Railroad car due to its windshield configuration. This would seem

to "fit" considering Steamtown originally was founded in Vermont and moved to Scranton in the early 1980's.

I am still working to confirm the style of Fairbanks Morse cars in the Steamtown collection and am chasing a few more leads. My goal is to provide Steamtown a booklet including original manuals for each car, where available, and the specific information provided by Harsco for the C&O car and the engine. There are no current plans to restore or dispose of any of the cars. However Steamtown would gladly welcome a sponsorship or volunteers for the restoration of any of the cars. Their wish is to have the Erie-Lackawanna car restored first, since that is the most historically significant to their mission statement. And out of all the cars, this one is probably the most complete.



THE HIDDEN SPEEDERS OF STEAMTOWN

BY CHRIS VITZ

James J. Hill, empire builder and founder of the Great Northern was an extremely thrifty man. Making one of his periodic rounds of inspection one day, he discovered a new track spike on the roadbed. With fire in his eye and the spike in his hand, he sought the section foreman. The foreman, who must have

been one of the quickest thinkers ever born, saw Mr. Hill approaching, saw the spike, guessed what was coming and hurried to meet him.

"Thank goodness you found that spike Mr. Hill!" he exclaimed. "I've had three men looking for it for nearly a week."

Communicated by H. R. Wiecking, Public Relations Assistant, Great Northern Railway, St. Paul

The Friends of the New Jersey Transportation Heritage Center Present

"What's next...?"

OUR NINETEENTH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

SATURDAY, MARCH 28TH, 2009 9 AM - 5 PM

This day long public event will feature 16 fast moving, informative, illustrated presentations. It will focus on the statewide effort to create a Transportation Heritage Center and save / preserve / restore Jersey's historic transportation equipment, structures, sites, artifacts, memorabilia and memories.

This is an important symposium for everyone who wants a New Jersey Transportation Heritage Center. The activities, accomplishments, and future plans of the organizations working to preserve and restore New Jersey's rich and varied transportation history will be presented. You will be able to ask questions, learn, benefit and participate....

HIGHLIGHTS

HERITAGE CENTER UPDATE: Accomplishments, current status, and future plans of the NJ initiative.

PRESERVATION & RESTORATION: See the successes of Friends, United RR Historical Society & others around the state.

EXPLORING NEW JERSEY'S TRANSPORTATION HERITAGE: Presentations will cover NJ railroads, buses, trucks, canals, trolleys and ferries including planned looks at: The Feasibility Study for Rail Access to Liberty State Park; RR Car Restoration; Owning and Operating Tugboat PEGASUS; the Erie RR Bergen Hill Tunnel; DeCamp Bus Co. Part II; NJ Bus Manufacturers; VRA Motor Car Trips in NJ; Santa Claus Trains; Inspecting the PATH tunnels after 9.11.01; Lincoln Highway in NJ; Rails Along the Delaware & Raritan Canal; and perhaps some surprises. The day will conclude with an auction of Transport Artifacts, Publications, Memorabilia and Model Railroad items, with all proceeds going toward the Heritage Center. Also: Presentation of New Jersey Legislative Proclamations.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

EVERYONE interested in New Jersey's transportation history should attend, whether you want to be a part of, or just learn about the vital work of creating a Heritage Center and preserving/restoring the transportation heritage of the "Garden State". **LUNCH PLUS MORNING & AFTERNOON REFRESHMENTS ARE INCLUDED**

Sponsored by the Friends of the New Jersey Transportation Heritage Center.

LOCATION: Drew University, Hall of Science Auditorium, Route 124 (Madison Ave./Main St.) Madison - west of town center, within walking distance of NJ Transit Madison Railroad Station. (The Hall is located at the east side of the campus - closest to the NJT station.)

NOTE: THIS EVENT IS NOT CANCELED IN EVENT OF BAD WEATHER!

RESERVATION FORM

Please fill out the following and MAIL TO: Thomas C. Hellyer, FofNJTHC, PO Box 2968, Trenton, NJ 08690-2968

YES, I (We) would like to attend the Heritage Center symposium on March 28, 2009. Please reserve the following;

___ Admission(s) with lunch for current Friends members, @\$25.00 each (No Charge for presenters.) TOTAL \$_____

___ Admission(s) with lunch, plus Friends individual membership*, @45.00 each TOTAL \$_____

*(Membership categories are: Individual \$20; Family \$25; Organization \$50; Supporting \$100; and Benefactor \$500)

Please make check payable to "F of NJ THC" - No charge for scheduled presenters. - Note Late registration fee is \$5 additional if received after March 15th.

Please print;

Name(s)_____

Address_____

City/Town/State/Zip_____

Home Phone_____

Email Address: _____

2009 EASTER BUNNY TRAINS

BY K.C. SMITH

We have once again decided that we would like to run Easter Bunny trains this year and April 4th and 5th are the dates we have chosen. NJT has approved our request but we are not yet sure which station we will be departing from. We may once again run out on Wayne on Saturday and Glen Rock on Sunday, but we might have a change. We have requested that we be able to run out of the new Rt. 23 station in Wayne on Saturday and the new Rt. 17 station in Ramsey on Sunday. This will allow us to get more cars on the platform which will allow us to have a bigger train and sell more seats.

In addition on Sunday we have asked that the train run up to Salisbury Mills NY, which is just past Moodna Viaduct. The bridge was constructed between 1904 and 1908 by the [Erie Rail-](#)

[road](#) as part of the Graham Line and was opened for service in January 1909. The trestle spans the valley for 3,200 feet (975m) and is 193 feet (59 m) high at its highest point, making it the highest and longest railroad trestle east of the [Mississippi River](#). This will allow us to not only market the train for Easter but also have the added feature of going through some very scenic areas.

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.vratrrips.org to find out how you can sign up.

Then on train days we will need the greatest amount of help. It takes about 30 people each day to make these trains 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 vratrrips@yahoo.com or call the station at 973-238-0555 and say you want to help.

URHS REPORT

BY K.C. SMITH

The URHS has a number of events coming up, but the biggest is a 10 trip to northern California that they are sponsoring. The trip, which could bring in \$2100, will start in San Francisco on June 21st and will spend 10 days visiting railroad and non-railroad sites throughout the region. The tour will visit the Sierra Railroad, Railtown, Napa Valley Wine Train, Skunk Railroad and the Sacramento River Train. In addition a number of non-railroad places will be visited, like Yosemite, Lake Tahoe and more. Prices start at \$2,099 not including getting to and from California. If you know of anyone who would like more information on this great trip have them contact me.

March 7th is the date set for the 2009 version of Eastrail. It will again be held at Warren Hills Regional High School

and this year will feature Jim Shaughnessy, Author of "The Call of Trains". Jim will be available at the show to sign the book. Other topics include Chessie System, Jersey Central Railroad, The Future of Railroad Photography, Restoring Main Line Steam, Rio Grande Zephyr and Vintage Georgia Railroad. Tickets can be purchased on line at www.urhs.org for \$12 or at the door for \$15. We will be bringing items from the Joe Weber collection to be sold and will need a few people to help out. If you are interested in helping you will get free admission to the show. We only need a few volunteers so let me know right away if you want to help.

The Friends are hosting their 19th Annual Symposium on March 28th, held each year at Drew University. This day

long public event will feature 16 fast moving, informative, illustrated presentations. It will focus on the statewide effort to create a Transportation Heritage Center and save / preserve / restore Jersey's historic transportation equipment, structures, sites, artifacts, memorabilia and memories. The VRA has been invited to put on a show about our motorcar operations in NJ, so if you have never gone to the symposium this would be a great year to start. For more information about the event please look for a copy of the flier for the event in this newsletter or go on line to <http://www.njthc.org/events/symp2009.html> to get all the details.

The joint Friends / URHS site committee has recommended Boonton as the primary site for the NJ Transportation (Cont. on next Page)

URHS REPORT (CONT.)

Heritage Center and the committee is now working on the next step to put all the pieces in place. They are working on putting together a package to hopefully get funding for the Boonton site. There is still a lot of work to do and sure to be roadblocks to overcome, but the committee is hopeful that we will finally have a home for the Heritage Center.

Finally, we turned over our final check totaling \$1529.17 to the URHS for our 2007 Santa Train ride proceeds, bringing the total for that years trip to \$9029.17. In addition the URHS ask that we authorized the proceeds from the 2007 train be used for the fence at Boonton instead of the 5012 project. They feel that without a fence around the yard, bringing the car there would only subject it to vandalism. The VRA board approved that request. In addition we reported to the URHS that the proceeds from the 2008 Santa Trains should be approximately \$8400. This money will also be used for the fence at Boonton. The total needed for the fencing is expected to approach \$100,000.

If you have any questions about URHS projects or would like to volunteer to help please contact me at rft2786@yahoo.com or at 973-208-9854.

2009 MOTORCAR EXCURSIONS

BY CHRIS VITZ

Steve Weiss, KC Smith and I are working on setting up several trips for the 2009 motorcar season. It gets tougher each year to find suitable weekends for these trips due to other NARCOA trips within our region. As of today we are working on the following trips;

1. Our ever popular NYS&W Southern Division trip weekend
2. A combined NYS&W Utica / Syracuse Branch trip weekend
3. A Cooperstown & Charlotte Valley / Catskill Mountain weekend trip
4. A one day Stourbridge Railroad Trip

We have several dates in mind for each which we can discuss further at the meeting.



Above: Following the Delaware & Ulster dinner train to Roxbury NY, July 2007.
Photo by Carolyn Hoffman



Left: K.C. Smith & Dave Czerwinski on the URHS 100 switcher in Boonton NJ, run by Allen Allaco.
Photo By Carolyn Hoffman



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Hawthorne NJ

Phone: 973-238-0555
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WE'RE ON THE WEB:
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SO CLOSE, ONLY THE PAYCHECK
IS MISSING!

JOSEPH K. WEBER MEMORIAL FUND

BY K.C. SMITH

It has been just over 2 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 have about \$7000 in the account and still have a good supply of items available for sale that should make that number grow. If you have not had the chance to look through what we have available and are interested in HO scale modeling, railroad lanterns, china, silverware or other railroad collectables you are missing something.

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 1st in Clark, NJ. After that we will be at the Black River Railroad Historical Trust show in Flemington on March 21st. We are also looking to attend other shows in the region as well. Please watch our web site and Yahoo Group for updates.

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. One of the things Joe talked about was using the money to send a young person to the NRHS Rail Camp help each year at Steamtown. The camp is open to high school students who are at least a sophomore and costs \$850. If anyone knows someone who might like to attend the camp please let me know. Deadline for submissions is March 15th.

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