

VOLUNTEER RAILROADERS ASSOCIATION



THE DIGEST

MOVE ALONG.. MOVE ALONG..

VOLUME 15, ISSUE 3

AUGUST 2010

President's Comments

Well I am not sure how the first 6 months of my time as President could have been much busier as we have been one active bunch.

Since February we have put over 4300 people on our Easter Trains, run 2 motor-car trips, did a brush cutting run two new railroads, had the ground breaking for the station project, had multiple work days at the station to clean it out in preparation for the move and finally have watched and helped the digging and building of the new foundation for the station. None of this would have been possible without you, our members. A few of you stood out above the rest and they are: Justin Kerstner who, amongst other things, has spent countless hours at the station during the first phase of construction. Mike O'Toole for all of the work he does on our multiple web sites, his work has not only kept us and the public up to date on what we are doing but he has also kept us at or near the top of every search engine. Carolyn Hoffman who has been there every time she is called and Andrea Rebner

who graciously offered to temporarily house some of the stuff we removed from the station.

I also want to thank Jon Berkemeyer for his time and effort on a number of projects and for his time as vice president. You will see elsewhere in this newsletter that due to health and other concerns Jon has had to step down as VP but he is staying on as our editor and as the Santa Train chairman. Both of these jobs will keep him very busy and to get them done he is going to need all of our help.

These next few months look like they will be just as busy as the first 6 and we are going to be turning to do what you do best, which is VOLUNTEER. We need to do some more fund raising to complete the station and meet our April 29, 2011 grand opening goal. One of the ways you can help is to buy a paver brick, which will be used to make the path leading from Diamond Bridge Ave to the new site of the station. You

can also ask your friends, neighbors and relatives to buy a paver and support the project. You can find the order form in this issue or by going to our web site, www.vratrips.org, where you can place and pay for your order on line.

I would like to close with a reminder that the VRA is only as good as the effort put in by the people in it. We have done many great things over our 17 year history and this year we have the chance to make a lasting impression on the people of Hawthorne and the countless people who will visit the station in the years to come. So the next time you see an announcement about a work party, why not come on down, you will be glad you did.

MEETING:

Thursday, August 19th, 2009
St. Clements Church
271 Lafayette Ave
Hawthorne NJ 07506

Meeting starts at 7:00 pm and will be followed by a short presentation by Kevin and Matt Phalon of their week at Rail Camp.

If you would like a hard copy of this newsletter mailed to you, please email Jon Berkemeyer at berkemeyerjj@yahoo.com.

Copies will be available at the meeting as well.

STEPPING DOWN

As K.C said in his President's report, I have stepped down as Vice President of the group. When I sought the position of VP, I made a promise to myself. First priority would be my son, second would be my job so I could support my son, and third would be the VRA (A very close third to my job, if only this was a paid position!).

What I didn't do was make a promise that this wouldn't interfere with my own well being. Recently, while on my way to work, I took a slight detour to the hospital with the beginning signs of a heart attack. Heart issues in my family are like The Force in the Skywalker family: strong. I spent the night in the hospital to find out it wasn't a heart attack, but stress. A lucky break, but it was a wake up call. So reluctantly and with tremendous sadness I submitted my resignation to the VRA board as Vice Presi-

dent. In time, the other stressors in my life will fade, and I will more than likely take on another official leadership role within the group.

In the months that I was VP, we accomplished a lot. We teamed with Tri-State for the Easter Bunny Train. This harkened back to the very beginning of the VRA when the SVA and Tri-State ran the 142 trip to Warwick, with the famous 142 east-bound past Bairds Farm shots.

We also began, and continue to work on the station move. In my previous newsletter comments I mentioned this being the most ambitious project a New Jersey based group has every undertaken. I still believe that. My trips to the station since work began have only proven that each time. If you haven't been to the site, I encourage you to go down and see what is being done, what YOU have helped

BY: JON BERKEMEYER

make happen with volunteering on the Easter and Santa trains. While you're down there, why not lend a hand?

While I'm no longer Vice President, I am still a proud member of the VRA, and I will continue to be so for a long time. Coming up (and discussed further in another article) we have the Santa Train, which like years past will continue to fund our activities. We also will be finishing the station's move, but the work at the site will go well into spring of 2011.

So with all that being said, I look forward to the tasks ahead, and wish everyone continued good health and happiness.

Finally, I'd like to thank my mentor and friend, K.C. for all that he has taught me, and all that he continues to do for the VRA. Thank you, Boss.

HAWTHORNE STATION ON THE MOVE

Well after many many years of talk the move of Hawthorne Station is about to become a reality. On July 13th the first real shovel (not a ceremonial one) was put into the ground and so officially the work on the new foundation began. The first few days saw a number of weather related delays, including the first day that only saw a small amount of work done before the skies opened up and the following day when no work was done at all due to heavy rain. But then the progress was quite good and by the 19th we had footings being poured and the days that followed saw the foundation walls being built. The foundation was finished on August 2nd and the following day the floor was poured. Then on Wednesday August 3rd the backfilling was completed and so was completed that phase of the project.

During this whole time the building mover had been working on taking out portions of the old brick foundation to

take a look under the station and see what wood repair might be needed and what they would need to do to safely move the building. The steel I-beams that will be permanently attached to the building were delivered and work began on prepping them to go under the station.

It will take about 2 weeks for the concrete in the foundation to cure and be able to handle the weight of the station as it moves into its new home. So sometime around August 18th if everything else is ready the station could be moved. When a date is known an announcement will go out to everyone via our Yahoo Group and through our web site so that anyone who wants to can come and watch history being made.

By the way in searching through materials found in the station it appears that the station has been standing on the corner of Diamond Bridge and Royal Avenues

BY: K.C. SMITH

since 1894 and from what was written it cost \$900 to build at that time. So 116 years after it was built it will have a new home just 75 feet from where she spent all those years. In her new home she will be safe from those nasty trucks, have lots of air flow under her (thanks to the new basement) so that her wood will not rot, she will be preserved for many more years to come so that countless people can learn about the past and enjoy all we will have to offer. *(Continues on page 3)*



A WEEK AT RAIL CAMP

This July, I had the fortune of attending Railcamp thanks to the financial aid from the VRA and the Joseph Weber Memorial Fund. With my brother Matt, who was sponsored by the Jersey Central Chapter of the NRHS, spent six days in Scranton with twenty two other rail enthusiasts from ages 14 to 18. I speak for myself, my brother, and all of the other campers when I say we all had the time of our life.

Our first day began with a five AM wake up call at our dorm at the University of Scranton. We boarded a bus and took a trip to Wilmington and Bear, Delaware for a rare unseen tour of Amtrak's locomotive and car shops. Inside we saw various locomotives and coaches undergoing a complete overhaul, being refurbished, or having repairs done. This was a unique experience because only a small handful of groups, such as ourselves, and the employees get to see the inside of the shops. We took a different route back to Scranton through Harrisburg to see the inside of Harris tower.

On day two we were given a lesson by the park rangers on how to do a

"railroad interpretive program" in which the park ranger taught us the ways in which they teach the history or railroad-ing to the public at the museum. We were split up into group and we were each assigned to a car or locomotive. My group and I explained the mechanics of a steam locomotive. In the afternoon we took a tour to the Anthracite Museum and the Lackawanna Coal Mine.

One of the important things Railcamp tries to do is to inspire young people such as ourselves to get careers in rail-roading. They told us that with the growing industry, new opportunities will be open to people like us looking towards a career with the railroad. On day three we were given a lesson on Maintenance of Way procedure and also had a chance to meet 5 employees from Amtrak who described the company and they're jobs. We were also given a lesson by Mike Muldowney, one of the councilors, on Steam generation in locomotives which I found to be quite interesting because I have not been taught about steam in that kind of detail.

Day four brought us to the Steamtown

BY: KEVIN & MATT PHALON

shops where we got an in-depth look into what the Steamtown employees do. We were able to go into the firebox of a locomotive under repair, walk in the inspection pit underneath a fired steam locomotive, change a brake shoe, as well as look at the way all the locomotives and cars are inspected and repaired.

The last day was the most everyone's favorite. The last day gave us a chance to climb into the cab of the Nickel Plate 514 and operate a real diesel locomotive. We also learned hand signals and made a hitch with the locomotive and cars. We also were able to take a ride in a hi-rail truck and operate a one eighth scale steam locomotive.

Railcamp was one of the best weeks of my life. I met a group of people that I will never forget, campers and councilors both included. I had experiences I will never have again and I owe it all to the VRA. Without their help I would have never been able to go and I am tremendously grateful. Railcamp is an experience that every high school student with an interest in trains should have. It is a week you will never forget.

HAWTHORNE STATION ON THE MOVE

Our job is far from over as now we need to do more fund raising and complete the exterior work. This will include stripping off the old paint, repairing and preserving the wood and then repainting the station into the proper red she wore for many years. We will need to complete the park where the station once stood and in the area railroad west of her new location. This will include a path made of paver bricks that the public can buy to, among other things, honor a loved one or just put their names to be part of history. We will need to repair the damaged corner and put on a new roof that will have the look of the old slate roof that once was there. Our goal

is to have the stations grand re-opening on Friday April 29th 2011. Why that date you ask? It would have been Joe Weber's 50th birthday and I cannot think of a better way to honor him and remember all he did for and meant to the VRA than to have the grand re-opening on that day. Lets all work together and reach that goal.

(Editors note: Please see the order form for the paver bricks mentioned in this article.)

BY: K.C. SMITH





VOLUNTEER RAILROADERS ASSOCIATION

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*NYS&W symbol freight SU-100 passes the new
foundation of Hawthorne Station.*

SANTA TRAIN

With summer coming to a close in the next few weeks, the VRA has the Santa train to look forward to. The Santa train committee consisting of myself, Carolyn Hoffman, Joe Mele, K.C. Smith, Betsy Newbury & Charles Smith have already held our first meeting on August 4th (retailers held their Christmas meeting in April!).

As with last years Santa train, we are running only one day, **Saturday, December 4th**. Sundays NJT has its hands full with trains for the football games. We'll be running out of Glen Rock Boro hall for the first time in two years.

The plan is to have a total of 10 cars, 9 passenger and 1 crew car. There will be 3 trips for the day. 9:30, 12:00 and 2:30. I'm pushing NJT for as many bathroom equipped cars as possible, and I'm hoping that we have a minimum of 4 bathrooms.

As always, we need volunteers to make this work. We'll need 18 car hosts, 4 characters, 4 character helpers, 4 Santas, 4 Mrs. Claus, and at least 8 platform people. That's a minimum of 42 people. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact me directly by email: berkemeyerj@yahoo.com.

As important as the volunteering effort is on the day of the train, there is an equally important time BEFORE the train pulls out of the station. We must sell this train to the public. With out their turnout, we will not have a train to run. Starting November 6th, the station will be open every Saturday until December 4th so we can take calls to sell tickets, and answer questions. Also, the station will be open every Tuesday and Thursday night for tickets and questions that come in via phone. I ask that anyone that can help out, please lend a hand. The efforts put forward

BY: JON BERKEMEYER

before December 4th will pave the way to a successful and profitable operation. This years proceeds will go towards the completion of the station restoration and the park.

We will be having another planning meeting at some point in early October just before the signs and banners start going up. I'll keep everyone posted as to the date and time. I'm hoping this meeting can take place at the station once it is moved. Anyone interested in attending is welcome to join.



Volunteer Railroaders Association, Inc.
Hawthorne Station Restoration Project
 80 Royal Ave, Hawthorne NJ 07506
Personalized Paver Bricks



4" x 8" Engraved Brick – Grey \$75.00

1 – 3 Lines, 18 Characters and Spaces

8" x 8" Engraved Brick – Red \$150.00

1 – 5 Lines, 18 Characters and Spaces

Add a logo for \$25.00: Please Circle One

- | | |
|----------|----------------------------------|
| Heart | *Hawthorne Fire Dept. |
| Cross | *Hawthorne Vol. Ambulance Corps. |
| Train | *Hawthorne Police |
| VRA Logo | Hawthorne Bears |

* \$5.00 will be donated to the corresponding organization when you chose their logo for your brick!

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

PayPal _____

transaction ID _____