



THE DIGEST

VOLUNTEER RAILROADERS ASSOCIATION

President's Comments

By KC Smith



KC Smith poses with the Sheffield 40B

It's hard to believe that eighteen years ago, the VRA (formerly SVA) was formed to serve as car attendants on the #142 steam trains. Boy have we come a long way since then. This little group of dedicated people has made a huge difference in the railfan community - raising countless thousands of dollars to help preserve railroad history, and let the public learn about why railroads were, and still are, so important to our American way of life.

Of course our lasting legacy is sure to be Hawthorne Station. It is very fitting that we are doing what we are there, as it was the place that helped bring this group together in the first place. It is also the place

where many of us first got to know each other as members and for many - as friends.

Over these eighteen years we have had a lot of great people become part of our effort. Recently we lost one of the best when Charley Roselius passed away on January 23rd, just two days after his 89th birthday. Charley was with the VRA since the beginning, and his contributions to our group over the years are too numerous to list here. However, I can assure you that we would never have been able to accomplish so many of our projects without his help.

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Meeting:

Thursday, February 17th, 2010
St. Clements Church
271 Lafayette Ave.
Hawthorne, NJ 07506

Meeting starts at 7:00 pm

*A railroad is like a lie - you have
to keep building it to make it stand.*

- Mark Twain

Order your Hawthorne Station paver today! These bricks will make up part of the landscaping of the new grounds of the station. You can find the order form at the end of this newsletter.

President's Comments

(continued from page 1)

A while back the board had voted to give Charley the first of what we called the VRA Outstanding Service Award. With Charley's illness he was never able to make it to one of our meetings to accept his award but I told him of our plans a few months back and he was very touched. When we heard of his passing we decided it would be most appropriate to present the plaque to Charley's wife, Aline, and his family at the funeral, which Charles Smith and I had the honor to do.

I can tell you that it was very moving to hear all the good things people said about Charley and how he touched their lives. What I found most interesting was they were all telling the same story that we knew about Charley. He was a good and decent man who would do anything to help when asked, and sometimes even when he wasn't. They all spoke about a man who listened better than anyone they knew and never judged another person. He just accepted you for who you were

and tried in his own way to help make you a better person. We can all learn something from how Charley walked the face of this earth and from the hole that is left now that he is gone.

I was proud to let his family know that we had decided that from that day forward the award that we gave him will forever more be known as the Charley Roselius Outstanding Service Award. The smile on Aline's face told me how proud she was to hear what we had planned - but more to the point, how proud she was of Charley for all he had done with and for us.

So, once the station is done be sure to stop and look at the plaque that will hang on the wall in his honor. Many people will receive this honor in the future, but none will be more deserving than its first recipient. I will miss our friend Charley and will use the memory of him to work towards being a better person. Rest in peace my friend.

Easter Bunny Train 2011

As we have done for too many years to remember we will once again be running our Easter Bunny Trains Rides in 2011. This year we have asked for an eight-car train to be run on April 16th from Wayne and April 17th from Glen Rock with departures at 9:30am, 12 noon and 2:30pm. This will give us 2160 seats to sell each day and 4320 total for the two days. Selling these trains out will give us most of the money we will need to complete the work on the station, which of course is extremely important.

As with every other year, our first order of business is to get the word out about the trains. So, starting the first week in March we will need to get volunteers out to put up the posters and signs. Please watch your e-mail for dates and times.

With our Internet ticketing system working so well, our need to be at the station to help answer customers' questions has been reduced - but not eliminated. We will still be looking for people to man the phone on Tuesday and Thursday nights from 6 to 8pm and also on Saturday afternoons from Noon to 3pm. Any and all help will be appreciated.

On each train day we will need people to wear the four bunnies and four other costumed characters. Plus we will need eight helpers, sixteen car hosts, six parking / platform attendants plus three crew chiefs - a total of at least 41 volunteers each day. So if you or anyone you know would like to help please call the station at (973) 238-055 or write to vratrips@yahoo.com and say you want to volunteer.

New Editors Take Over

By: Matt Phalon

Effective the date of publication of this newsletter, Mike Goralski and myself are the new official editors of the DIGEST newsletter.

On behalf of Mike, the VRA, and myself, we would first like to thank former editor, Mr. Jon Berkemeyer, for his hard work in the role that both Mike and I now fill. Thank you, Jon.

Along with a new newsletter editing team comes a new look! With this new look, expanded PDF versions of the DIGEST will be published to the VRA's website (www.vratrips.org) featuring more updates, more information, and a new photo section. The photo section will contain photographs submitted by members of VRA sponsored events and projects as well as general photos relating to the VRA and its interests. All of this cannot and will not be possible without contributor support! So keep any and all submissions coming. Remember: we can't do it without your help!

VOLUNTEER RAILROADERS ASSOCIATION

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Hawthorne Station Update

With all the snow we have been having, you would think we would not be getting much work done at the station. Well, that assumption would be wrong. A dedicated group of members have been spending almost every Saturday working at the station trying to get everything done in time for our proposed April 29th Grand Reopening.

Some of the work done includes replacing the wood that was used to fill the gap between the steel frame and the bottom of the building. In years past, the many gaps under the building did not matter. Now that we have a basement, closing them and sealing the gaps matters a great deal. We have been running heat tape along all the water lines in the basement so they don't freeze, spackling and painting the interior walls, insulating the walls and ceiling in the addition, and cleaning and setting up the basement. This is important so that we could move the JKW collection and other items back from Andrea's house. There are also many small odd jobs I am sure we did but I can not remember specifically.

The people that have put the most work in have been Frank Ball, Matt Phalon, Steve Gerritsen and myself. Many others helped them from time to time but these five have done most of the work – and they can use more help if we are to think we will get the

job done in time. Every Saturday we have a work session starting at nine o'clock A.M. and running into the mid to late afternoon. So, if you have all day (or only an hour or so), why not come down and help? If a work session needs to be canceled for any reason it will be posted on the Yahoo group, so be sure to check your e-mail before leaving home. We are also planning some weeknight work sessions, but because they will not always happen on the same night, a posting will be made when the night and time is determined – again watch your e-mail. If you are not a member of our Yahoo Group, please visit our web site (www.vratrrips.org) and look for the link on the front page.

As the snow melts (or should I say *if* it melts), we will start to work on the exterior of the building and on the grounds. We have ordered the fence for the perimeter of the property from Forever Fence in Pequannock, and they said they could install the fence during the winter if the snow was not too bad. Well we can all look out our windows and see that the fence will not likely be installed any time soon. With this delay we are going to have to work even harder to get the grounds ready once the snow goes away. Please watch for updates on workdays, needed help, tools and materials.

We are also planning on putting in a new floor. While hard wood would be great, it is expensive and requires a lot of maintenance. With that in mind, we

are leaning towards putting in a laminate floor, which simulates wood, and would be much easier to take care of. The cost is also less, making it a good choice.

All of the above and more will need to be done before the doors open to the public, and it is going to take a lot of time and even more money to make it possible. Please consider making a monetary donation to the project and ask your friends and family to do the same. In addition we have paver bricks on sale that you can customize with your family name, dedicate to a loved one who has passed away or simply put your name on so everyone who visits the station will see that you helped support the restoration. Please look for the order form for the bricks at the end of this issue.

I look forward to seeing all of you at one of the upcoming workdays.

- KC Smith

Carolyn Hoffmann reports that the annual Santa Claus Train Ride was a resounding success! On Saturday December 4th, 2010, the VRA ran three sold-out trains out of Glen Rock Boro Hall station to the delight of hundreds of children and parents alike.

Joseph K. Weber Memorial Library Update By: Paul Trabert

Mini DV Tapes - In addition to the two motorcar trip tapes, which were shown at the August meeting, I have copied four more tapes to DVD. Each tape takes about two hours to copy to a DVD.

Magazine indexes - Of the thirteen magazines in the collection, I now have workable indexes for 8 of them. Not all of them are complete (there are some years missing) but we will have something of value for our members to research. I am currently working on magazine number 9, Railroad Model Craftsman. Most of these indexes are created by copying data from the Back Issues descriptions on the magazine's website.

Last October, I got hit with a very bad computer virus, but am now back in business. I purchased a new computer and when I am able to, I will clean the old one and donate it to the VRA to use as a research tool for users of the Joseph K. Weber Memorial Library. This computer is older, and while I don't expect it to be connected to the internet, there will be a list of VHS tapes, DVDs, Magazines and magazine indexes on it – along with other useful data, which can be copied over through a flash drive.

Boonton Yard Update By: Steve Gerritsen

2010 was a year of great progress in the Boonton Restoration Yard for the URHS. The volunteers completed the re-decking of the PRR flat car, and made great headway on priming the car. The addition of a fence around the yard created a secure working environment, and vandalism has appeared to stop. With the loss of the Lebanon storage site, Boonton now has an added 12 pieces of equipment. After some planning and rearranging, StarTrak wasted no time in getting to work restoring many pieces. With GG1 4879 getting new sheet metal, GG1 4877, RDG 284 and NJT 4253 all receiving final body work, painting began towards the end of the warm weather. 2011 will prove to be an even better year with the completion of at least four projects. Keep your eyes out for work session dates, and come lend a hand whenever possible.

Events Oct to Dec 2010 by Paul Trabert

The following is a list of events during the last quarter of 2010 in which VRA members participated, along with some links to videos and photos taken during these events.

Sat Oct 2 Riverdale, NJ -Southern Division motor car trip

Sun Oct 3 Riverdale, NJ - Southern Division motor car trip

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJePM8trkR8>

Wed Oct 6 Hawthorne, NJ – Cleanup inside station

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8mnPkd386c>

Sat Oct 9 Hawthorne, NJ – Spackling inside station

Wed Oct 13 Fanwood, NJ – URHS Meeting

Fri Oct 16 Hawthorne, NJ – Addition over station steps

Fri Oct 16 Hawthorne, NJ – Station basement wired

Tue Oct 19 Hawthorne, NJ – Installation of sewer & water lines

<http://www.facebook.com/album.php?aid=2097638&id=1234064686&l=666080cb75>

Sat Oct 23 Hawthorne, NJ – Lumber for station delivered

Sun Oct 24 Hawthorne, NJ – Siding installed on station addition

Tue Oct 26 Hawthorne, NJ – Station work

Sat Oct 30 Hawthorne, NJ – Station work

Sat Nov 6 Hawthorne, NJ Station work & Santa train sign distribution

Sun Nov 7 Hawthorne, NJ – Santa train sign distribution

Tue Nov 8 Hawthorne, NJ – Discussion with mason about work on station

Wed Nov 10 Fanwood, NJ – URHS Meeting

Fri Nov 12 VRA Newsletter distributed

Sat Nov 13 Hawthorne, NJ – Station work

Mon Nov 15 Hawthorne, NJ – Plumbing work on station passed inspection

Mon Nov 15 Hawthorne, NJ – Stairs for station delivered

Thu Nov 18 Hawthorne, NJ – Membership meeting

Sat Nov 27 Hawthorne, NJ – Curb installed at station

Fri Dec 3 Hawthorne, NJ – Santa Train sold out

Sat Dec 4 Glen Rock, NJ – Santa Train

Mon Dec 6 Hawthorne, NJ – Station work

Wed Dec 8 Fanwood, NJ – URHS Meeting

Sat Dec 11 Hawthorne, NJ – Station Work

Sat Dec 11 Hawthorne, NJ – Toys for Tots train

Sat Dec 18 Hawthorne, NJ – Station work

Mon Dec 27 – Nominations for officers open

Tue Dec 28 Hawthorne, NJ – Snow shoveled at station

VP's Message

I guess (no, not guess, I know) another year has gone by for the VRA. After three great years as your President, one year as V.P. and now running for Director, I have witnessed many things go on in our group. I have seen many Santa trains as Santa, run on many Easter bunny trains, and done countless other fundraising for the VRA, and IT HAS WORKED. Through the shared efforts of all of us, WE as a group have done almost miraculous things. We have moved the station (still more work to go there, so don't be shy!), have started long due restoration of our 40B (still plenty to do there too), and contributed greatly both in manpower and funds to the URHS (and have witnessed great progress there due to our efforts for them). Our speeder excursions are almost legendary, and we expect a full, great year of fun again on the rails, along with the infamous Hobo Party back at my place after the Saturday run on the Southern Division. The VRA has had new people step up to help run these great projects, and their efforts are much appreciated. I look forward to working with all of you in the future. I thank all of you for the trust you have put in me in the past, and pledge to continue to work in our best interests in the future. I will be going for my excursion coordinator certification, so as better to assist in our speeder runs, and hope to make it an even better experience for all.

Sadly, this has been another year of loss to us as well, with long time member Charlie Roselius passing just a few weeks ago. His contributions, stability, and wit will be missed by all of us that were privileged to have known and worked with him. Ring those trolley bells in heaven for us Charlie.

As an aside, today I did some railfanning as I heard the mothballed NYSW plow unit was lashed up to CSX power and was clearing the way to Pelton. I took a few pictures at Pompton Lakes, Butler, Smith Mills and the Charlotteburg Reservoir. You can enjoy them in the photo section.

- Craig Hartman

IMPORTANT BALLOT INFORMATION:

We are aware that the section about Craig Hartman in the 2011 Ballot was cut off mid- sentence. We apologize for the omission. Anyone with concerns may email vratrips@yahoo.com for more information on Craig's history with the VRA. Thank you

Motor car update

Hello and Happy New Year everyone! As some of you may know, NARCOA had been dropped by their insurance carrier last year. Quick work by the NARCOA Insurance Administrator ended with an insurance policy being purchased through another carrier. We are lucky to have such dedicated volunteers within this hobby, as not having insurance in place would have jeopardized having any trips in 2011.

Getting more specific to our group, Craig Hartman asked to become a NARCOA Event Coordinator this year. I will be working closely with Craig so that he too can look for new venues for future motorcar trips. I personally thank Craig for expressing this interest and I look forward to working with him. There is a lot that goes into running these trips, and while it is fun, it takes quite a bit of time.

I have asked member Steve Weiss to ask the NYS&W to allow us to run two trips over their lines in 2011. Specifically a spring run (May) over the Southern Division. We are looking at doing something a little different on this run, but that will not be let out of the bag yet. A summer or fall run over the Northern Division's Syracuse branch is also being requested.

The Utica Division is not currently being requested as there was a lot of behind-the-scenes work that went on to



convince the NYS&W staff to allow us to run between Sangerfield and Sherburne. Loss of the line below Sangerfield reduces an eighty-plus mile round trip down to about forty miles. We would not be able to break even or make money on this trip with the fee the NYS&W charges.

We will again send a request to the Delaware-Lackawanna to see if we will finally be allowed to run between Scranton and the Water Gap. This is very preliminary, but supposedly the transfer of ownership has occurred between Norfolk Southern and the County to have the entire line under D-L control. This has been a sticking point in the past, so we will see if the D-L has had a change of heart.

We may also look at teaming up the Cooperstown and Charlotte Valley with the Ulster and Delaware for a full weekend, but it will depend upon available dates.

Finally, a fall run on the Stourbridge Railroad may again be run. However the owner, M&E, charges a fee of \$1,200 for the one-day run, so it may be out of our price range. Our 2009 run on that line – with a \$1,000 fee – netted the VRA about \$100.00 in the end. While this trip is fun and very scenic, we cannot run any trip that will lose money for our group.

I look forward to seeing everyone on the rails.
- Chris Vitz

United Railroad Historical Society Highlights

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 will be donating a Comet 1 ex-Erie Lackawanna cab car, #5120, to the URHS. URHS is waiting for NJT to sign over the title.

The URHS will be leasing Erie Railroad locomotive #436 to the Morristown & Erie Railway. The M&E plans on using this locomotive on the Stourbridge Railroad.

The URHS is in the process of purchasing a steel shop building from a manufacturer in Southern New Jersey. The plan is to erect this building on the Cape May Seashore Lines (CMSL) in Tuckahoe, NJ at the wye location. The URHS and CMSL are currently working out the details for this building. The plan is to use the building for maintenance on the URHS /CMSL equipment and also for trolley storage. Stay tuned for more details.

Listed below are the Spring 2011 URHS member groups' model train/railroad shows:

Jersey Central HS Clark Show is scheduled for March 6, 2011 at Mother Seton High School in Clark, NJ

The BRHT will be having their train show on March 26, 2011 at the Elks Hall, in Flemington, NJ

ELHS will be sponsoring their Spring Meet on March 27, 2011 at the Holiday Inn in Parsippany, NJ

Friends of the Transportation Heritage Center - Symposium, Drew University, April 2, 2011. Bill McKelvey is looking for presenters. If any VRA member is interested in presenting material for this show, please contact Bill via email at erie5012@hotmail.com

NJ History Fair: May 7, 2011, 11 am-5pm at Allaire State Park, Farmingdale, NJ

Volunteer Railroaders Association Southern Division Run

by Craig W. Hartman

It's morning on Saturday October second in Riverdale, New Jersey, and the set on is already in full progress. About twenty-two cars and their operators jockey around to set their speeders on the rails and prepare for the next two days on them. Many have attended the NORAC class the night before, have passed the test, and now can run on NYSW trackage for the next three years. It is fall, the temperature in the mid-fifties with a light breeze, which is a bit chilly for some as we prepare to go out on a beautiful, clear day. The set-on is going well due to the large, paved area of side-by-side tracks, which makes easy work of lining up and unloading. Most are on in less than an hour's time. Inspection is going on as various types of cars are checked over, and paperwork is filled and examined as we prepare for the day.

The safety meeting is next, as the excursion coordinators Chris Vitz and KC Smith go over the various safety items, track conditions, and operating procedures for the day's run. Our pilot for the day's trip follows them: NYS&W engineer Steve Weiss. He delivers a report on track conditions, grade crossings and Form D receipt for the trackage we will be running. Shortly after, there is the familiar crack of the poppers firing up, along with the wonderful smell of the two cycle exhaust wafting through the air. The other four-cycle engines then begin to fill the air with their own hum as they start up as well.



The flaggers are in place, the gates drop across Hamburg Turnpike, and the order is given to move out. The hydraulic motor whines as I nudge the throttle forward, and Beavercar CN 146-45 moves out. The consist crosses the diamond at Pompton Junction, backs through the switches, and heads west. As we pass through the quarry and industrial area, the view rapidly becomes much more rural. We are maintaining restricted speed as we wind our way through Butler, passing the old Hardco rubber plant and the yard for the NYSW, then starting up the grade under Route 23 on our way west. There is some fall color in the trees as we pass the crossing for Smoke Rise

and hit the 2.5% grade headed for Echo Lake Crossing. We all make it up the grade, go through the crossing, and continue through Green Pond, Oak Ridge, Stockholm, riding at times high above Route 23, and other times below it as we pass scenic reservoirs, and old farms and homes along the way.

We continue our trek, now hitting the grade that will bring us to the highest point on the rails in New Jersey at 1013 feet above sea level in Stockholm, New Jersey. We then pause on Hamburg Mountain, overlooking the beautiful valley below us, and High Point in the far distance. Next, we pass the remains of the famous Beaver Lake Station, and continue through Sparta and the Limecrest industrial (for the lime formerly mined there), through the beautiful Lake Grinnell area and to the site of the former Zinc mine in Franklin. We pass through Vernon on our way to Baird's Farm, enjoying the scenery all the way. We arrive

at the historic Baird's Farm crossing, where we make our turn, and then back up to the end of the line at Pelton Road, where the NYS&W meets Norfolk Southern's territory.

After enjoying the beauty of Baird's Farm for a while, we head back, stopping at The George Inn in Vernon for lunch and rest, and of course, the never-ending rail stories that are a part of our enjoyment. The ride back is non-eventful, though scenic. We drop my wife Shirley and several others off at the Smoke Rise crossing to go back and prepare for the Hobo Party, and we arrive back at Riverdale soon thereafter. In preparation for tomorrow's ride, we tie the cars down for the night in the secure facility where we set on. I set the Beaver car off and take it home, to swap it out with my MT19 Adirondack Scenic Railway car for tomorrow's run.



Then home, and time for the Annual Hobo Party there, where a good time is had by all. Also enjoyed by all are the hobo stew, chili, beef stew, and other treats prepared by my wife, myself, and several generous participants. My homemade soda fountain keeps us all refreshed (no alcohol here), and then dessert! We all go home full and tired, anticipating tomorrow's run

Sunday arrives, I set my MT19 on, with another cool-but-beautiful day in front of us. We have our safety meeting and pilot's report, and we head out again. This time instead of the countryside, we are going urban. We pass through some country areas going through Oakland, Franklin Lakes, Wyckoff and Midland Park, but then as we approach Hawthorne, it starts to change. We make a stop at the Historic Railroad Station at Hawthorne for a break, and get to admire the work the VRA has done to preserve this landmark – the latest having been the movement of the entire station seventy-five feet to get it off the corner, where it was hit several times by turning trucks.

Moving out again, we pass over the Passaic River Bridge and into historic Paterson (the first industrial city in the U.S.), where we see many varied sights as we pass through this great city of past railroad works such as Rogers Locomotive and Machine Works and Union Iron Works. We pass silk mills, the Colt Gun Mill, and others. Thankfully all goes well as we go through and we proceed on through the towns of Elmwood Park and Rochelle Park and then Lodi Junction, finally arriving at Maywood Station where we stop and have lunch.

Next is Hackensack, where I give a big wave to my brother firefighters at the main firehouse as we go by, then pass over the Hackensack River (home of the historic USS Ling WWII submarine on display there), and on to the NYSW engine facility at Ridgefield Park. We stop there and see several CSX trains go by as we rest, several loaded with futuristic looking military armaments on board. We then head across Overpeck Creek to Little Ferry yard, where we turn our cars on the historic turntable in preparation for the run home. We observe several large snapping turtles in the water under the turntable (wouldn't want to fall in there) while the turntable creaks and groans as it reverses our direction of travel. Sad to say, it is now time to head back. As we arrive back at Riverdale, it is unanimously agreed by all, it was another great day with the VRA! We have traveled approximately 140 miles in the two days on some of the best track and scenery anywhere. Thanks to our teams of flaggers that make this amount of mileage possible, speeding us across many crossings in this area, we couldn't do it without you! I certainly hope that you enjoyed vicariously riding the rails with us, and hope you can come and do it for real in the near future!

See you next time...



Volunteer Railroaders Association

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:

***Hawthorne Fire Dept. / *Hawthorne Ambulance Corps. / *Hawthorne Bears**

***Hawthorne Police / VRA Logo / Cross / Train / Heart**

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

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Visit www.VRATrips.org for more information and on-line ordering options.