



THE DIGEST

VOLUNTEER RAILROADERS ASSOCIATION

"So close, only the paycheck is missing!"

Volume XVII, Issue III

Vice President's Report

By Justin Kerstner

DECEMBER, 2012

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NEXT MEETING:

Thursday, February 21st, 2013
St. Clement's Church,
271 Lafayette Ave., Hawthorne
Meeting starts at 7:00 PM

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.

I would like to personally thank the eight or so core members whom we have come to count on to be there for every event. But what I would really like to do is be able to thank some new faces. Without these core people, the station would sit undecorated, there would be no Toys for Tots train, and soon there would be no reason for the VRA to exist. How can we inspire you? What would you like to see the VRA take on in the future? I personally would like to hear from each of you, as would the rest of the

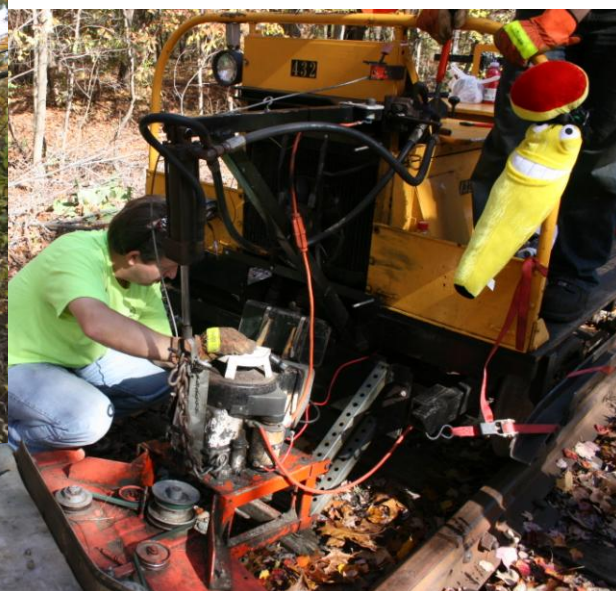
VRA Board. We can be reached with one email address: board@vratrips.com I know everybody has a hectic schedule, but your input is important

I would like to wish everybody a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and a very Happy New Year and I look forward to seeing more of you in 2013! ☘

N.B. - The Vice President's report is submitted in lieu of the President's report this month.

**VRA Brush Cutting Returns
on the Morristown & Erie's
High Bridge Branch!**
(Full story on Page 3)

Photos taken by Carolyn Hoffman



**Joseph K. Weber Library
Update**
by Paul Trabert

Binding of Railpace is now complete.

The following is a list of magazines in the JKW Library. Following each magazine is the number of issues of that magazine in the library. After that is the number of binders which would be needed to contain these

issues. A letter "B" indicates that they are already in binders.

CTC Board 106 9
Diesel Era 61 B 6
Extra 2200 South 64 B 10
Model Railroader 290 B 24
Model Railroading 13 1
Pacific Rail News 135 13
Railfan & Railroad 239 25
Railpace 283 B 25

Continued on page 3...

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President	Steve Gerritsen
Vice President	Justin Kerstner
Secretary	Carolyn Hoffman
Treasurer	Andrea Rebner

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Kevin Smith

DIGEST Editors
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Matt Phalon

VRA Cuts the M&E's High Bridge Line

Article by Matt Phalon
Photos by Carolyn Hoffman

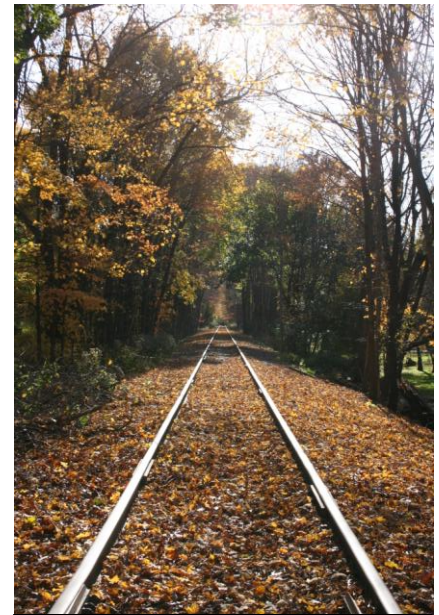
On Saturday October 20th, a VRA crew set out to cut brush on the Morristown & Erie's High Bridge Line in preparation for the USMC Toys for Tots train. The crew consisted of Justin Kerstner, Carolyn Hoffman, Steve Zachowski and myself as well as M&E Track Foremen Chris Mazzei and Buddy Lacey. The MofW convoy of the VRA's brush cutter #432, hy-rail ME-501 and the M&E's grapple truck cut brush and cleared countless trees for approximately 7 miles from Ferromonte Jct. to the end-of-track at the Toys R Us distribution facility in Flanders.

The High Bridge Line was originally constructed by the Central Railroad of New Jersey to connect to the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western's Chester Branch, Wharton & Northern Railroad and Mount Hope Mineral Railroad all at Hopatcong Junction. Conrail acquired operation of the line from the CNJ and abandoned a good portion of it south of Flanders which is now a hiking trail, the Columbia Trail. The northern portion between Bartley and Kenvil (Hopatcong Junction) was sold to Morris County on July 1, 1986 and was immediately leased to the Morristown & Erie Railway which has been its operator ever since. Today, where the diamond used to be at Hopatcong Junction was rebuilt by the M&E in 1986 with a new connector to run trains directly on to the High Bridge Line from the Chester Branch and was

renamed Ferromonte Junction.

We also have been asked to cut the Dover & Rockaway Branch, Chester Branch and Whippany Branch (approximately 19 miles total between the three lines) before the growing season, but this will not take place until at least the spring of 2013 due to the cold weather and needed repairs to the brush car.

This was the first notable cooperative effort between the Morristown & Erie and VRA outside of Operation Toy Train, and I am happy to say it was a great success and the beginning of a great new relationship.



Looking west towards the current end of track which once led to High Bridge, NJ.



Justin Kerstner and Matt Phalon removing tree limbs fouling the main near MP 15 near Toys R Us. "Maintaining the way."

Joseph K. Weber Library Continued

Railroad Explorer 16 B 2
Railroad Model
Craftsman 50 7
Railroad Press, The 26 3
Short Line, The 34 B 2
Trains 341 B 33

Andrea & Robert Rebner have added Classic Trains magazine to the library. There are 48 issues from 2000 to 2009 and they are all contained on one DVD. ☒

Hawthorne Station Update

Article and Photos by Frank Ball

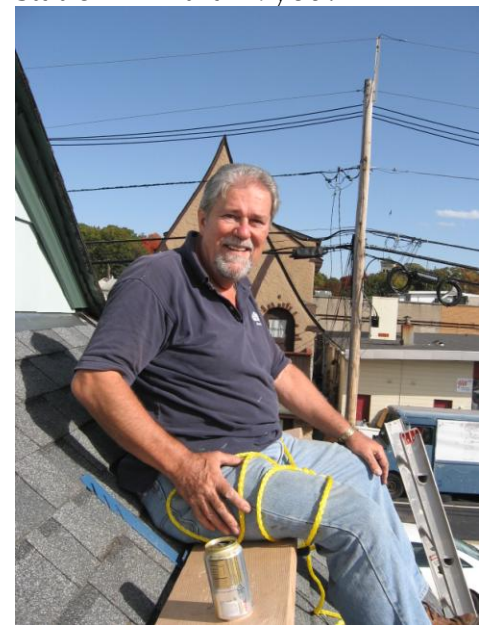
On October 25, 2012, Steve Gerritson, Kevin Smith, and Frank Ball descended upon our favorite station to work on the gable ends of the roof. After a quick morning trip to Home Depot (assisted by Charles Smith) to pick up a required 2 X 10 X 16 foot plank to use as a work surface, we began to develop our plan. After much head scratching, we mounted the plank on roof brackets which we previously installed on the roof slope. Steve and Frank then climbed the ladders and mounted themselves on their precarious perch while Kevin prepared himself for the all important ground work. Stainless steel flashing was installed first, and then installation of cedar shingles began. (Thank goodness we painted the shingles first!). After a bit of a learning curve for all involved, work proceeded at a good pace with the east end



The finished ends on the east end of the station.

of the station completed by the end of the day. As the photos show, the end result is quite pleasing. While our initial hope was to complete both ends of the roof in one day, it wasn't to be. Time, the hot sun, and sore legs precluded doing more than the east end. Accordingly, there will be another work session to do the west end of the building. If anyone is interested in becoming a roofer in training, let us know.

We can always use another pair of hands. You will go home tired and sore, but the station will thank you!



2013 Elections

By Paul Trabert

Nominations for the VRA are closed. We have the following slate of people running for office:

Justin Kerstner for President
KC Smith for Vice President
Carolyn Hoffman for Secretary
Andrea Rebner for Treasurer
Frank Ball for Director
Matt Phalon for Director

Ballots are being prepared now. They will be sent out at the beginning of January, 2013. You can send the ballot back or bring it with you to the February 21 membership meeting BEFORE the start of the meeting.

Paul Trabert, retiring director
Steve Gerritsen, retiring president
VRA Election Committee





Volunteer Railroaders Association

Hawthorne Station

Restoration Project

80 Royal Ave, Hawthorne NJ 07506

Personalized Paver Bricks

Order Form

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!

Name

Address

Phone

E-mail

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