



"So close, only the pay check is missing!"

THE DIGEST

VOLUNTEER RAILROADERS ASSOCIATION

Volume XVIII, Issue I



Members, Family and Friends of the VRA, NYSW, Middletown & New Jersey, Morristown & Erie and Military Transport Association pose with the train's honored guests of the United States Marine Corps. and United States Navy and Santa!

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President's Report

By Steve Gerritsen

As my term as President comes to an end, let's take a look back at the last year of the VRA. Easter train at the beginning of last year was a success, and we partnered with a new ticketing company called Dynamic Ticketing Solutions. We were all set up to give the system its first trial run for Santa train before NJ Transit suspended excursions. That was a big hit to our income, so finishing a few things on the station, and some motorcar repairs were put on hold. We took delivery of the A-car from the Middletown & New Jersey Railroad, and we are now figuring out how to move the Fairmont brush car. It is indoors and not in the way currently so we have some time. With some work, it will be operational and be a big help to future brush cutting activities. I'm going to try and trace the heritage of these cars, as they may be MCC or NYSW. Right now we are prepping for Easter Train 2013! With contract in hand, signs going

up, and tickets sales beginning, we all need to lend a hand in spreading the word. Come down to the station and grab some roadside signs and paper flyers to put out. We are only running Saturday March 23rd so let's have a quick sellout! After the train we can focus on finishing the station. Gutters need to be installed, bricks covering the steel beams under the building need to be laid, and landscaping needs to be completed.

The VRA will also be participating in the Jersey Central Mother Seton train show again on March 3rd, where we will have the remaining pieces of the Joe Weber collection for sale, as well as others. So come out and see us at the train show, volunteer for the Easter Bunny train, and come down to the station and help finish some minor projects. See you all trackside!

NEXT MEETING:

Thursday, February 16th, 2012
St. Clement's Church,
271 Lafayette Ave., Hawthorne
Meeting starts at 7:00 PM

November Membership Meeting Minutes and the Brick Order Form are included in addition with this newsletter!

Joseph K. Weber Memorial Library

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	B24
Model Railroadng	13	1
Pacific Rail News	135	13
Railfan & Railroad	239	25
Railpace	283	B25
Railroad Explorer	16	B2
Railroad Model Craftsman	50	7
Railroad Press, The	26	3
Short Line, The	34	B2
Trains	341	B33

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.

We have added Trains Magazine on DVD to the library. There are 70 years of Trains contained on 2 discs.

I've Been Workin on the Railroad

By Paul Trabert

10 years ago, Sun Oct 13, 2002, I did some volunteering as shown by the following items from the VRA Yahoo Group archives:

Working on the railroad
Posted by: trabert35
Sun. Oct 13, 2002
6:22pm

Today was a busy day for me. I opened up the station as a VRA member for the NYS&WT&HS to use as a waiting room & ticket office. Then I joined the train crew as a car attendant for the NYS&WT&HS. On the way back I helped John Pavelchak raffle off a framed print of the Lackawanna to raise money for the URHS. Three jobs, no paycheck & no tax liability.

Paul Trabert

Economy

By Paul Trabert

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 ☒

United Railroad Historical Society Highlights

By Steve Gerritsen

Recently the URHS's Hickory Creek took a trip to Buffalo, NY for the Rail Passenger Car Alliance convention. Ray Clauss, KC Smith and I took the ride up Amtrak, and spent a long weekend tied up in Niagara Falls station. It was my first time going to the convention, had a great time, met some great people, and learned a lot about the private car sector of our hobby. Work is stopped at the moment in Boonton Yard for the winter, and there will hopefully be work to do come spring. I'm looking to do the

restoration on the Swift car and the DL&W covered hopper this year for starters, and looking to get the materials donated for these projects. We are currently planning a trip on the Cape May Seashore Lines to benefit the URHS and the VRA, more information to come when we finalize everything. With the overwhelming success of the URHS Transportation Heritage Festival, over 2500 people in attendance, we look forward to another one this year. Hope to have more equipment restored for display as well.

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Paul Trabert
Kevin Smith

DIGEST Editors

Mike Goralski
Matt Phalon

Toys for Tots

By Carolyn Hoffman

Forth the fourth consecutive year Operation Toy Train has been met with enthusiasm and generosity! We added a third day this year, visiting the Middletown & New Jersey Railroad for the very first time with great success. The passenger car this year was the URHS's NYC#43 Tavern Lounge car, and after some complications with the camo boxcar the URHS also allowed us to borrow PRR Baggage Car #9286 for the first two days. This worked out superbly as there was more than enough room for toys and the MTA members in charge of the toy counts and loading had ample space for themselves as well. The simple addition a string construction lighting and we were all set!

Saturday, December 8th got off to a bit of slow start on the NYS&W Railway at Rochelle Park. This was a new stop for us and we had some difficulty getting the town involved. The guys from Bergen County Harley-Davidson showed up however, with a pickup truck with toys and a beautiful Harley. They pulled the motorcycle right up behind the station and took numerous photos with Santa and members of our volunteer crew. They are looking forward to being much more involved in 2013! From Rochelle Park the train moved on to an extremely enthusiastic welcome in Hawthorne. Members of the Boys and Girls Club came out with boxes of toys, as did the local Daisy Scout troupe. The VRA donated several boxes full of toys as well. Wortendyke and Wyckoff were great stops again this year. The Hot Dog Caboose is always so excited to have us, and the Wyckoff Fire Department seems to get a kick out of lining the road with trucks each year. Oakland was a new stop this year as well and did not see many donations, but the train certainly attracted attention sitting right off route 202. Then it was on to Pompton Lakes, historically a huge stop. Once again the town did not disappoint having the local radio station on hand as well as the Mayor. Finally it was on to Butler for the final stop of the day. We collected toys in Butler and then were met by a truck donated by UPS to bring the toys to Picatinny Arsenal. Lakeland Bus also made a donation, having provided the bus to get our volunteers back to their vehicles in Ridgefield Park. The train continued up the NYS&W to spend the night in Warwick, NY.

Sunday, December 9th was spent in a new area for us on the M&NJ. Frank Eichenlaub of the M&NJ and his wife Justina did a wonderful job of promoting the train to the small towns in upstate New York. The crew boarded in Warwick and toy collection commenced at 9 am. Volunteers and visitors were given a chance to see the Warwick Chamber of Commerce's office located in the former NYS&W# 0119 caboose. From Warwick the train moved on to Sugar Loaf, a beautiful artists village. The original train station has been restored and is now a deli & country store. We were delighted to pull in to a large crowd here! Many families had come out to see the train, the deli had set up a table outside with hot chocolate and snacks, and the people were all friendly and excited. On to Campbell Hall and the Hamptonburgh Caboose Museum. Volunteers and visitors were able to tour the museum while the crew collected toys, then we moved on to Montgomery. This was a huge stop for Operation Toy Train. The town was out in force! A local DJ had a music trailer set up with Christmas carols playing, refreshments were being sold, and the Town Council was there to thank the residents for their support. The last stop of the day was in Walden, where several of the MTA's members brought large trucks to offload the toys and deliver them to Stewart Air National Guard Base in Newburgh, NY. Overall our first visit to the M&NJ was very successful and we are looking forward to being able to do it again.

Our final run was Saturday, December 15 over the Morristown & Erie's High Bridge Line and Dover & Rockaway Branch. The crew boarded in Dover that morning and the train made its way to Flanders. Once again the Flanders Fire Department went all out for the event with bagels & donuts, hot chocolate, tea & coffee for all the visitors and volunteers alike. Santa took his annual photo with the fireman and their ladder truck as well as

numerous children. We were met by a donor who drove his van all the way from Old Bridge, NJ full of toys just to be able to see the train and give to this great cause! From Flanders the train rolled on to Route 10 in Ledgewood at the Sleepy's parking lot. A local Girl Scout troupe came by with a large donation, and as usual Santa made quite the sight hanging on the end of the caboose right next to route 10. A short, 5 minute hop to Morris Marine in Kenil and the Girl Scout troupe who has been working with us each year was waiting once again with pile of toys. The local Police department also came with a pickup truck loaded with donations. Next was Dover and a stop in the middle of town. The people of Dover were very supportive once again. From there we moved on to Rockaway, but not before a car had to be towed away from the right of way for the second year in the row! Once the car was moved it was on to our final stop at Potbelly's Cafe in Rockaway. The local Boy Scouts came out with quite a few toys again this year and the town of Rockaway was happy to see us again as well.

Overall, Operation Toy Train collected roughly 14,000 toys over three days of operation. While this is slightly less than in past years, considering the impact of Hurricane Sandy on the region we were very pleased overall. Thank you again to all of the VRA members who donated or came out to help for Operation Toy Train's 4th successful run! ☒

Photos from all three trains can be seen on pages 4, 5 and 6!

Vice President's Report

By Justin Kerstner

2013 is already looking to be a better year for the VRA. After dealing with the many setbacks of 2012 I am hopeful that we will be able to make much needed progress this year. Our Easter Train is coming up very quickly and we need to make this one count after not being able to run our Santa Trains. There are signs to put up

and flyers to distribute, If you can give an hour or a whole day we would appreciate it! I would again like to thank our eight or so core members who are always there to make sure our events happen, without you the VRA would not be what it is today. I look forward to working with all of you this coming year!

New York, Susquehanna & Western Railway
Saturday, December 6, 2012



Photos By:
Ralph Bonnano
Matt Phalon



Middletown & New Jersey Railroad

Sunday, December 7, 2014



Photos By:
Ralph Bonnano
Matt Phalon

Morristown & Erie Railway

Saturday, December 15, 2012



Photos By:
Ralph Bonnano
Matt Phalon

2012 End of Year Happenings

October 22 was spent brush cutting the Morristown & Erie's High Bridge Line in preparation for the 2012 Toys for Tots train with Carolyn Hoffman, Justin Kerstner, Steve Zachowski and Matt Phalon.

November 24 was spent decorating the Hawthorne Station! Thank you to KC & Carol Smith, Allyson Smith, Charles Smith, Frank Ball, Justin Kerstner, Steve Gerritsen and



Betsy & Colin Newbury for all of your help! – Carolyn Hoffman

December 1st was the Toys for Tots collection day from 10 am - 2 pm with Santa at the station followed by the Hawthorne town tree lighting that evening.

December 6 was the NYSW Toys for Tots train.

December 7 was the Middletown & New Jersey Toys for Tots train (first run on M&NJ).

December 15 was the Morristown & Erie Railway Toys for Tots train.



2013 Elections

Excerpt from November 2012 Meeting Minutes of Candidates for the 2013 Election

Justin Kerstner is running for President

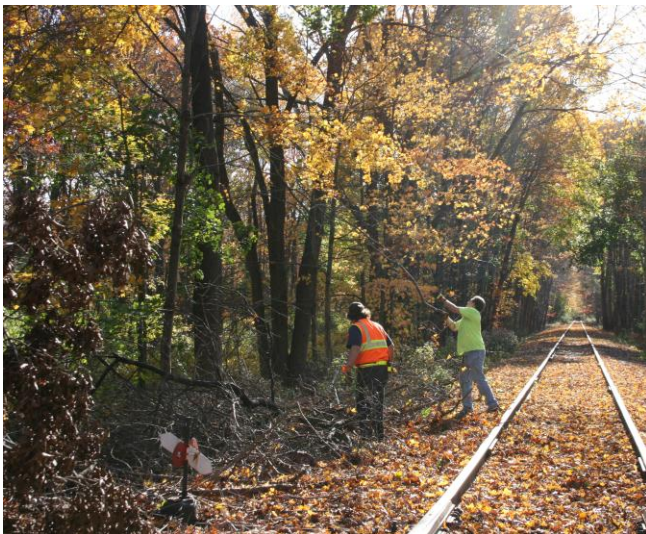
KC Smith is running for Vice President

Andrea Rebner is running for re-election as Treasurer

Carolyn Hoffman is running for re-election as Secretary.

Frank Ball is running for Board of Director's position.

Matt Phalon is running for Board of Director's position. ✕



VRA Membership Meeting – November 15, 2012
Call to Order – 7:15 pm

- 1) President's Report – Did some work to the station recently, Frank Ball, Steve & Kevin Smith. Not able to run Santa Train due to NJT damage. Will be running Toys for Tots December 8, 9, & 15.
- 2) VP's Report – Will discuss with other business
- 3) Treasurer's Report – Savings, \$2600, \$6000 in JKWeber, Checking \$607.90. Board approved moving up to \$5000 out of JKWeber fund if needed to cover operating expenses being that we aren't running our Santa Train. Need to find copies of old invoices for Tri-State. Santatrain.net and Easterbunnytrain.net web sites renewed. KC asks how much is still outstanding in accounts receivable. May not have to move anything out of JKWeber fund. KC Smith makes motion to approve Treasurer's report, seconded by Matt Phalon, approved unanimously.
- 4) Secretary's Report – KC makes a motion to approve the Secretary's report as submitted, seconded by Matt Phalon, passes unanimously.
- 5) Committee Reports
 - a) Santa Train – Canceled due to NJ Transit Damage. DTS will refund all tickets, no fees charged. Carolyn will contact North Jersey Media. All signs and banners should be down, if you see anything please grab them.
 - b) Toys for Tots – Shaping up to be a great year. Hawthorne is excited, Boys & Girls Club involved. Will be looking for volunteers for ground/stations again.
 - c) Hawthorne Station – Frank, Kevin Smith, Charles Smith & Steve Gerritsen installed shingles on east side of the building.
 - i) Pavers – Justin – 2 need to be ordered due to misprints on bricks.
 - ii) Benches – Andrea – Spoke to freight company, will place order for new set and freight shipper will make all arrangements.
 - ✘iii) PSE&G – Had one very high bill, Andrea tried to call and couldn't get very far, will go down there to see them.
 - iv) Cable/Phone – Cablevision had to come out and replace modem and lines to poles.
 - v) Station door on Royal Ave side has been fixed.
 - vi) Hawthorne Tree Lighting - Need short curtains done. Decorating day on Saturday November 24, 2012. Justin is working on LED Christmas lights. Tree lighting November 30th. Mayor's Office asked if there would be a layout & we will provide.
 - vii) Santa Visit – Have Santa visit the station on December 1st as a Toys for Tots Drive. Bring a new unwrapped toy & sit on Santa's lap and take pictures. Use as an opportunity to publicize Operation Toy Train the next week. Carolyn will send emails to past riders.
 - viii) Displays – Anyone have any ideas for displays? Matt & Justin have changed some pictures. Carolyn will keep trying to contact Jackie from Hawthorne Historical Society
 - d) Newsletter – Due to Hurricane Sandy and lack of articles there will be a Holiday Edition. New deadline November 24th, Matt will post to Yahoo group.
 - e) JK Weber Fund – Steve will be looking into Clark show on Sunday March 3, 2013.

- f) JK Weber Library – New addition to Library. Old copies of VRA Digest to be scanned to website then put in binders. KS & Mike O’Toole suggest looking into shelving for under windows with spaces at bottom for heat/AC returns.
 - g) URHS Report - KC – There is a URHS meeting Saturday in Philipsburg. Will be inspecting equipment in Gilbert which has been sitting 20 yrs. Some will be scrapped, some may be moved if locations can be found. The E-unit (Future B&O 98) – out of money for restoration. About \$10,000 to get it painted. If URHS decides to complete there will probably be a request to the member organizations for donations. GG1 has plenty of money left in grants. There is a renewed interest in a combined “Steam Boat/Steam Train” trip, that will be discussed. Boonton Open House September 16th – 2000 to 3000 people there, URHS basically broke even for the day. There were no complaints from the public at all.
 - h) Radios – No update
 - i) Motorcars
 - i. A5 mower car – We believe it may have sustained more damage than originally thought from CMSL. Frame is bent, pretty sure it has bent axle. Break shoe was “borrowed” from another car.
 - ii. Woodings is out of the container and in a volunteer’s garage at CMSL.
 - iii. 40B – Had a work day to prep and sand, can be sandblasted. Frank was able to trace off numbers and we need to make into a stencil.
 - b. Elections – Paul – Have a full ballot so far. Justin is running for President, KC for Vice President, Andrea re-election as Treasurer, Carolyn Hoffman as Secretary. Frank Ball is running for Director. KC must step down from Election Committee as he is running for VP. Steve Gerritsen will step in on committee. Each nominee should send a short statement on why you should be voted for. Motion to close ballots made by Paul Trabert, seconded by Gary Kazin, passes unanimously.
- 7) Old Business –
- a. Owney Day – Charles – Have some interested parties, will be working on something for the spring possibly.
 - b. Wrigley’s Machine – American Restoration wanted \$2200 to refurb machine, plus out of pocket for travel twice out and back. We suggested alternative options but the production company was not interested. As of right now it is in the station. Will continue to look into cosmetic restoration.
 - c. NYS&W donated a semaphore to URHS, Steve was approached by track department because another group is interested. Needs a copy of letter that it was donated to URHS and they will drop it off.
- 8) New Business
- a. Whippany Railway Museum got hit very hard by Sandy. One shed almost destroyed, ticket booth knocked over. Will be having a work day on November 17 to clean up.
 - b. Food Donation – Allyson Smith has been making phone calls to find out what relief efforts needed. Reached out to Red Cross in Fairfield, they need non-perishable food items for food pantry in Hillside, NJ Community Food Bank. Need all non-perishables, baby supplies, etc. Andrea – Hawthorne HS Marching Band is collecting for South Jersey. St. Clements is very active in 3 different food pantries, a battered women’s shelter and an animal shelter. Would be great opportunity for VRA to pair with St. Clements on a project. Need to get word out ASAP, can be held in conjunction with decorating day. KC mentions that we should keep the focus on Sandy victims.

Motion to Adjourn – Carolyn Hoffman – 9:39 PM



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.