



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

# THE DIGEST

## VOLUNTEER RAILROADERS ASSOCIATION

Volume XVIII, Issue II



*Combined train Q156-02/SU-100B barrels eastbound past the Hawthorne station enroute to Little Ferry on September 3, 2013. This was one of three CSX detours NYSW crews handled this weekend due to track work near Selkirk, NY.*

*Photo by Kevin Phalon*

## President's Report

*By Justin Kerstner*

As with all organizations and businesses, a time may come where you have to modify what has been your main focus. For years, the VRA was our motorcar operations. Then, we had a couple of members who decided they could do it better create their own group. Which is fine, except that they decided to make it so we were no longer able to run trips. After some legal back and forth, it was decided we would cut our losses and move on. It was clear we would not be able to undo the damage that was done. With that being said, there was a knock on our door, and in comes our next opportunity!

It seems there is going to be a new operation happening up on the Stourbridge Line, and the VRA has been asked to be in charge of the volunteers! What this means for the VRA is that we can get back to doing what we did for many years, running real trains! As you may or may not

know, our organization was created to staff the NYS&W's excursion trains in the nineties, and the 614 trips as well. Now before you get too excited, this all hinges on the Stourbridge Railroad getting their operation up and running. But the chances are very good that this is going to happen so keep your fingers crossed!

Work on the station is continuing with Frank getting quotes for gutters, the cracked glass on the display case was replaced, and Kevin and Frank have put fertilizer on the lawn. Kevin, Carolyn and myself last weekend stained the new wood for the benches which almost perfectly matches the dark green trim on the station. NS 5291 made a surprise appearance during the staining, but offered no help.....

2013 is shaping up to be a very exciting year for us!

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### NEXT MEETING:

Thursday, May 16, 2013  
St. Clement's Church,  
271 Lafayette Ave., Hawthorne  
Meeting starts at 7:00 PM

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

## URHS Report

By KC Smith

Did you hear the arm twisting from your house? Are you thinking what is he talking about? Well.... After Frank Reilly made clear he was not looking to run for the President's position of the URHS again a few long time representatives approached me about doing the job. At first I said no, but after seeing that no one else was going to do it and believe it or not my wife, Carol, suggested that maybe I should do it, I consented although with a few caveats. The first is that I will only do the job for one year and the second that the URHS elect a few Vice Presidents and allow me to appoint others when needed to keep the time I need to spend on the job to a minimum. Well they agreed and at the April meeting I was elected President.

So now what? Well we now have Larry Gross as Operations VP, Ken Brown as VP and General Counsel, the VRA's own Carolyn Hoffman as Secretary and Fred Heide as Treasurer and together we will work towards making sure the URHS has a successful year. But these people cannot do the work alone, it is going to take all of the other representatives and most importantly the member groups own members to see the URHS succeed. So when the time comes I

ask you all to help when you can, it is not only rewarding it is also a heck of a lot of fun and you get to meet some good people.

As for current projects, we have 2 National Train Day events, the first is the one on the Cape May Seashore Lines (mentioned in the VP's Report and elsewhere) and the second is that our 2 restored and Amtrak operational cars, the Hickory Creek and NYC 43, will be in Grand Central Terminal to take part in the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration taking place on May 10<sup>th</sup> through the 12<sup>th</sup>. If you are unable to join us on the CMSL be sure to take part of a day and go visit Grand Central.

Boonton yard should be busy this spring and summer as we get ready for our open house on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. Our yard foremen Steve Gerritsen and Larry Gross have plans to work on the Pennsylvania Railroad Flat car - #469521, Delaware, Lackawanna & Western RR Cement Car (hopper) - #19525, Swift Company Refrigerated Box Car - SRLX #025048 and get the second prime mover in the General Electric 100-tonner - PSE&G #100 running again.

The Site Committee has been hard at work looking at potential sites and hopes to have a location or multiple locations picked out to start working on in the coming months. In the meantime, the Heritage Trail committee is working on collection data on various historical rail sites around NJ in hopes of creating multiple self-guided tours people can future if the need and or want exists.

take to find out more about the rich transportation heritage we have here in NJ. They may also organize guided tours in the

The URHS is looking into the sale and lease of a few of its passenger cars and if that happens there will be a need for volunteers to help prepare the cars to leave Boonton. As with all the other projects, volunteers are the back bone of anything they do and your help is requested and appreciated.

One final item, the gentleman who has volunteered for many years to do the URHS's taxes has asked that he be relieved of his duties. So a new accountant is needed, preferably one who will volunteer their time. If you know of anyone who fits that job description let me know.

See you around the railroad,

KC ☒

## Boonton Yard Highlights

By Steve Gerritsen

It's been a productive couple of months to start 2013 in the yard. There was a meeting to discuss projects for the year, out of which came a plan to finish the PRR flat car, restore the DL&W cement hopper, and hopefully a paint job on the 100 tonner. Along with that for the 100 tonner, the charging system should be figured out and reinstalled, and we have been able to un-seize the one engine, so we are one step closer to rebuilding it. A

handful of us were on hand one weekend to really tackle the downed trees from the last few storms and made a huge dent in them.

I am going to make a big effort to get most of the supplies needed for these projects donated to these projects. If anyone would like to donate their time in the yard to help out, or donate to these projects please contact me. All help is greatly appreciated as I would like to finish these before the next open house this September!

### VOLUNTEER RAILROADERS ASSOCIATION

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Mike Goralski  
Matt Phalon

## Vice President's Report

By KC Smith

Well I can honestly say I did not think I would be back as a VP of the VRA, but I am looking forward to assisting Justin and the rest of the board to help lead the group for the next year. Having been a member for all of the 20 years the VRA has been in existence I can tell you that this year we are going to have the chance to get involved in some of the best projects we have ever done. I look forward to as much participation from our existing members as we can get and to all the new members we attract along the way.

We have a number of projects coming up in the coming weeks and months that will keep us busy, the first one being the May 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> National Train Day event on the CMSL that we are running to benefit the URHS and VRA. I know it's late in the game, but we need all the volunteers we can get to make this weekend event go smoothly and I hope many of you can come out and help. Complete information can be found elsewhere in this issue or contact our co-chairs, Carolyn and Justin for more information.

One of the ongoing efforts is to complete the restoration of our Lehigh and New England 40B motorcar. Steve Gerritsen, Frank Ball, Kevin Phalon and others are working to finally get this car completed. The goal is to have the car done well before the URHS Boonton Open House, which is scheduled for September 22<sup>nd</sup>. In addition we have work to do on our A5 Brush car, which had an engine failure, and also on the A3 and the Fairmont Brush car we bought from the Middletown and New Jersey. Anyone who would like to volunteer on these cars should send an e-mail to our main address, [volunteerra@yahoo.com](mailto:volunteerra@yahoo.com) or call the station at 973-238-0555 and say you want to volunteer.

The major new item is that we have been asked to help manage the volunteers for The Stourbridge Line

excursions that will hopefully start running in the fall over their Honesdale to Lackawaxen line. This will not only give our existing members a brand new opportunity to get their "hands dirty" it will also give us the opportunity to grow as an organization and pass along all the knowledge we have gained over the many years we have been operating trains to a new group of people. Because the effort to bring back the trains is a work in progress there is nothing firm that we can say regarding timing or what volunteer opportunities may exist but as soon we know something firm we will be sure to post the information to our web site and Yahoo group.

Speaking of our web site, I want to thank Mike O'toole for all the work he has done and continues to do on [vratrips.org](http://vratrips.org) and all the sub-sites that we maintain. In today's electronic world our web presents is probably our most important tool to reach not only our members, but also the general public.

Another project we really need to get on is the landscaping at

Hawthorne Station. A number of members have begun the process to not only update the landscaping, but also get the pathway with the personalized bricks and benches in their permanent places. We also have a few loose ends to tie up with the bricks around the station foundation and also the drainage issues that have developed. With the longer days of spring and even longer days of summer ahead of us, we should be able to do much of this work during the week after work. A schedule of work days will be posted

on our web and Yahoo pages as early as possible so you can reserve a few days to come out and help. Many of you already know this, but we are constantly told by residents and officials of Hawthorne, that the station is the best thing that has happened in Hawthorne in a long time. We need to make sure that we keep up the station and property so we can continue to be a bright spot in the center of town.

In closing I want to thank everyone who has helped make the VRA what it is today, it is my privilege to have worked with you all in the past and I look forward to many more years of being part of the best rail group I know.

Now let's get our hands dirty,

KC ☒

## VRA Open House

By Carolyn Hoffman

The VRA will hold a Membership Open House on Monday May 27. The Hawthorne Memorial Day Parade occurs that afternoon, and a BBQ and Open House will be held at 80 Royal Ave immediately following.

## NTD Volunteers

By Carolyn Hoffman

Volunteers are needed May 11th for our National Train Day event on the Cape May Seashore lines. Car hosts & ground safety crew are needed both days in Tuckahoe, NJ. The CMSL has graciously offered to run a train at their cost for the URHS. Please email [Carolyn Hoffman atch2112@gmail.com](mailto:CarolynHoffmanatch2112@gmail.com) if you would like to volunteer either day. Tickets may be purchased at [www.VRATrips.org](http://www.VRATrips.org)

## National Train Day at the Cape May Seashore Lines

By Carolyn Hoffman

On Saturday May 11, and Sunday May 12, 2013 the United Railroad Historical Society (URHS) and the Volunteer Railroaders Association, Inc. (VRA) will be holding a National Train Day event for the public. Each day, three special trains will be run at 10 am, 12 pm and 2 pm offering 2 Coach cars, one Deluxe Car and one First Class car. For tickets and pricing information please visit [www.vratrips.com](http://www.vratrips.com).

The historic Tuckahoe Train Station at 157 Railroad Ave, Woodbine, NJ 08270 will be open to the public with many displays of railroad history, antique equipment and various vendors. Visitors will be able to explore the railroad station, the switch tower which is in the progress of restoration, as well as various coaches and maintenance of way equipment. ☒



**Volunteer Railroaders Association, Inc.**  
**General Membership Meeting**  
**February 21, 2013**

**VRA Membership Meeting – February 21, 2013**

- 1) Call to Order – 7:11 pm
- 2) Elections Results – Paul Trabert & Steve Gerritsen – Sent out 43, received 25 back. Director – Frank Ball 15, Matt Phalon 10 – Frank Ball New Director. Justin Kerstner 23 votes for President, KC Smith 24 votes for VP, Andrea Rebner 23 votes for Treasurer (Carol Smith 1 vote), Carolyn Hoffman 23 votes for Secretary. Paul willing to be Election Chair again for next year.
- 3) President's Report - (Steve Gerritsen – Thank you for the opportunity, very up & down. We made the best of it, made headway with the station. Wish new Exec Committee & board best of luck). Justin Kerstner – Thank you for opportunity to lead, many positive things coming up. Will need everyone's help.
  - a) Member of the Year Award – Members give their time, but several go above and beyond. This year award goes to Frank Ball. Frank thanks everyone and states that many give a lot of time but he appreciates it greatly.
  - b) Easter Train – Andrea printed several hundred, members are encouraged to take and place wherever possible. Some road signs and banners still in the station.
- 4) VP's Report - KC Smith – Met Frank Ball at a friend's house, saw him at Boonton and suddenly Frank was heavily involved. Instrumental in the station move and many projects, very proud & honored to have him not only in the VRA but as a friend as well. I am back in this position mostly because no one else stepped forward. Does not want to continue to be the person everyone turns to, wants to see us encourage others to step up and take charge. Must work on expanding our membership base as well.
- 5) Treasurer's Report – Savings - \$2622, JK Weber - \$6163.10, Checking - \$1908.53. KC comments that the amounts seem low, what have paid? \$800 to NJ Transit, \$800 to North Jersey Media Group. Tri-State is up to date now. JK – CMSL owes no more money. Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report – Steve Gerritsen, Seconded by Matt Phalon, passes unanimously.
- 6) Secretary's Report - Old minutes have been updated and added to Yahoo Group. Motion made by KC Smith to accept Secretary's Report as submitted, Seconded by Steve Gerritsen. Passes unanimously.
- 7) Committee Reports –
  - a) Easter Train – Justin – Must be cognizant that we are catering to our customers and must give them the best service possible to ensure we have their business again. Betsy is Crew Caller, what she says goes. She has a reason for placing people where she does and we have to abide by her decision. So far we are doing pretty well on volunteers, looking for parking lot people. Frank offers to run a brainstorming session – See new business. Rose called Matt today, they are running a train in May for a new group, would like us to help them with ticketing etc. KC offers to be at the station at 10 am Saturday, February 23 to do fliers.
  - b) Toys for Tots – Very successful year once again. Trip over M&NJ generated more toys than expected. Will begin planning for 2013 much earlier and looking for help with getting support from local businesses.
  - c) Hawthorne Station – Not too much going on during the winter. Frank Ball getting quotes for gutters & flagpole as well as cleaning the basement. Everlast quote, seamless gutters in teal - \$3800. Egutter.com sells components, won't be seamless, to do it ourselves would run about \$1300-\$1600. Will get another quote. Flagpole - Apollo Flag and Gates – 30' installed from Apollo \$2495, Gates \$1790 (with flag). Kevin Smith asks about checking with railroad to make sure, KC and Steve feel that it wouldn't matter as it doesn't interfere. KC spoke with Nathan Fenno, he is very happy with what we have done and glad we are preserving. This year – HAVE to stain the benches or wood will go bad.

Discussion on building a shed, we have most of materials already. Would house mower, grill, etc. Paul Trabert suggests we check municipal code as to height of flag pole.

- d) Newsletter – **Needs to go out earlier.** Matt just emailed to Mike to go on web site. 7 pages of content, 3 of pictures. Justin – Do we want to include meeting minutes? Printed copy to include, electronic not included as they are available on line. Brick Orders – All up to date, everything has been ordered/corrected.
- e) JK Weber Fund – Mother Seton March 3, will bring remainder of the collection, china, lanterns. Getting down to the end of the collection, will attempt internet sales. Brass to be listed on eBay.
- f) JK Weber Library – Paul Trabert – running out of room to put things. Will come in to get rid of duplicates and excess binders to open up room. Will continue to transfer camcorder tapes to DVD. Many magazines now becoming available on DVD.
- g) URHS Report – Bill Hoerkner passed, extremely instrumental in what the URHS accomplished. The Hickory Creek & #43 should be at Grand Central Terminal for National Train Day. There is an effort slowly progressing to establish a Heritage Trail across NJ for Railroad History to encompass many sites rail related. Will be put together as a trail map as well as online. Please send anything noteworthy which can be added. Site Committee back in session with a long list of possible museum sites. PATH Cars that have been in question which survived the collapse of the Twin Towers which we have been trying to get for URHS collection has been at a stalemate, still trying.
  - i) CMSL Train – May 11 National Train Day event, proceeds to URHS, May 12 Mother’s Day with proceeds to VRA. This is a brand new event, need to get the word out through channels in that area. Take 2 LV F units and place them in prominent display for patrons to view. Train will run on Beesley Pt line, 3 trips to Richland & back (90 Minutes). Will need more people on the ground than in the train but will rotate.
- h) Radios – Justin – Recent change to narrow banding, old Motorola radios are now illegal. Yeasu radios are narrow band capable. Mike Goralski is in the process of getting us our own license for our own frequency.
- i) Motorcars – Woodings still in Cape May, Kevin Phalon & Frank Ball worked on the 40B several times & got tracings & pics of the lettering. Nothing much new with the other motorcars. If we can get 40B sandblasted and painted in April then we can show it at National Train Day on CMSL.
- j) Elections – Covered above

8) Old Business – Nothing

9) New Business – Other ways to raise money? Frank Ball has offered to run a brainstorming session. KC mentioned getting an ornament made to sell at holidays. Also discussed shirts, etc. Carolyn will look into Cafeexpress.com to order shirts.

- a) John Kroll – recruiting new members – What about cross recruiting in Boonton to help with the yard and be new members? We have motorcars there, would be a great spot to work. Membership waxes and wanes with activity, as we get more things going again we will see membership increase.

10) Motion to Adjourn - KC moves to Adjourn – 9:15 pm.

## Spring 2013 Work in Boonton Yard

Photos taken by Steve Gerritsen



## Spring 2013 Hawthorne Station Exterior Work

Photos taken by Justin Kerstner





**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

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Visit [www.VRATrips.org](http://www.VRATrips.org) for more information and on-line ordering options.