



THE VRA DIGEST

Official publication of the
VOLUNTEER RAILROADERS ASSOCIATION

"So close, only the paycheck is missing!"

VRA SUCCESS ON THE HICKORY CREEK



(From left to right) Alex Abaza, Robert Rebner, Joan Hoffman, Carolyn Hoffman, Jim Brennan, Kevin Phalon, and Allyson Smith stand in and around the Hickory Creek after two successful runs to Albany.

When the URHS's own Hickory Creek was to be featured on the Travel Channel's "Ticked out Trains," VRA VP and URHS President KC Smith knew that the Volunteer Railroaders Association was the right crew for the job. The "Hudson Limited," as it was named, was scheduled to run on the first and second of June, leaving New York City in the morning, travelling up the Hudson River to Albany, and returning in the afternoon. On board, it was the VRA's job to ensure that the guests on the trip were treated to a true first class experience.

The URHS's Hickory Creek and 43 were put on the rear of Amtrak

train 233 in the early morning and arrived in New York Penn Station on time for their 11:20 departure to Albany. In New York, the Hudson Limited's passengers boarded along with the "Tricked out Trains" film crew. On board, the film crew set up for interviews and filmed the train's journey along the river as the VRA crew served passengers on board.

The second trip on Sunday operated on the same schedule. On the second trip, many of the passengers were guests of VRA member Bill McKelvey. There were many familiar faces on the train, and like the

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Upcoming Events:

Transportation Heritage Festival 2013

Boonton Yard, September 22

Hickory Creek & 43 Fall Foliage Trip

New York to Albany, October 19

Membership Meeting

Hawthorne Station, November 21

Santa Train 2013

Wayne Rt. 23 Transit Center
November 30

Toys for Tots Train

NYS&W- December 7
M&NJ- December 8
M&E- December 14

Hawthorne Fundraiser!

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.

Saturday trip, all passengers left having had a great time, and had great things to say about our crew.

A big thank you goes to all of the staff who made the trip a success. In the kitchen for the weekend was Carolyn Hoffman, and her mother Joan Hoffman. Together, in a kitchen just big enough for two, they prepared meals, desserts, and hors d'oeuvres for over 60 people. Behind the bar was VRA member John Kroll, whose professional experience on the American Orient Express helped in giving the passengers a first class experience. Serving passengers were VRA members Justin Kerstner, Allyson Smith, Joe Mele, Alex Abaza, Robert Rebner, Kevin Phalon, and guest member Jim Brennan. Passengers gave rave reviews of the service aboard the train, and the VRA should be very proud of putting on such a great event.

The Hickory Creek's segment on Tricked out Trains is past the editing stage and will soon be ready for television. Stay tuned! ❌



President's Report

By Justin Kerstner

I would like to start off by thanking two very important people to the VRA, Frank Ball and Kevin Phalon. Frank has been working hard to make sure the gutters get completed, and Kevin has stepped up and taken on our newsletter. I also would like to thank everyone else, as you are all important to the continued success of the VRA.

I want to plant this seed early and let you know that I will not be seeking a second term as president. Some of you know I

have been working recently in South Plainfield and have not been able to make it to HW very often. I feel it is very important to be available for events and work sessions, and this job makes that almost impossible for me. The determining factor for this decision came early this week when they signed me on for the next three years. If you have thought about running in the past, this year will be your chance!

I hope you enjoy the rest of the summer and stay safe! ❌

Justin

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URHS Report
By Kevin Phalon

The URHS Volunteer Staff has made phenomenal progress on all fronts in preparation for the Third annual Transportation Heritage Festival. The URHS will be hosting this event on September 22 from 10am to 4pm at Boonton Yard. The event will feature several locomotives and cars on display, presentations in the DL&W freight house next door, visiting trucks and busses, and refreshments sold to guests in the yard. This year will also feature a very special guest: Norfolk Southern's Lackawanna Heritage Unit. Thanks to the efforts of committee chairman Pete Hasler and others, Norfolk Southern has agreed to deliver 1074 to Boonton Yard to be displayed alongside our GG1 in front of the restoration building.

Another new feature to this year's Festival will be the newly completed GG1. While 4877 was in paint for the previous event, it was missing key cosmetic details to be completed. Over the summer, volunteers rewired new headlights, marker lights, and number boards. New glass was also cut to replace worn and faded plexiglass that was put in years earlier.

Cosmetic work also continues on the other locomotives which will be on display. NJDOT 4253 has had its headlight and number board lights rewired and lit, and new number boards will be put in Reading 284 before the event.

Other vital work has been done throughout the yard by volunteers to prepare for visitors. Yard equipment has been cleaned and painted, public areas are being cleaned, and cars that will be open to the public are being cleaned and prepped. Volunteers are also working to again, to prep the army hospital car for its green paint job. This has been made a priority because it is the first thing seen by visitors entering the gate. The hospital car closest to the gate will have new paint in time for the festival.

Accompanying the Transportation Heritage Festival will be the very first URHS night photo shoot. A limited number of tickets will be sold to the public to photograph four of the URHS's locomotives and the Lackawanna Heritage Unit. Robert Ruotolo, one of the guests from the VRA's Hickory Creek Trip, has offered his professional services to us, and is excited to aid in creating some iconic images for the organization.



TRANSPORTATION HERITAGE FESTIVAL!



SPECIAL GUEST: NORFOLK SOUTHERN 1074

SEPTEMBER 22

BOONTON, NJ 10AM-4PM



Images from the "warm up" photo shoot with professional photographer Robert Ruotolo.

Hawthorne Station Update

By Frank Ball

At last, the new roof drainage system has been installed. Contractors descended on the station on Friday, August 02, and installed the long awaited gutters. The dark green color of the gutters matches the trim of the station perfectly. The half round "period" design gives the building the look that befits a 118 year station; one that we can all be proud of. It adds the finished appearance that our station deserves.

On Saturday August 10, a VRA team descended on the station to dig trenches, install the underground drainage piping on the west side of the building, and complete the system.

The weeds that were taking over the front area of the station were pulled, cleaning up the area.

Thanks to all who participated and went home tired from a hard but rewarding days' work. The block wall at the front street side of the station is



beginning to lean toward the street, and will be in danger of collapsing before long. A team effort must be put together to remediate this problem. Anyone who wishes to help on any of the station projects is always welcome to "come on down!" All we ask is a couple of hours of your time to keep your station beautiful!

Proposals have been for a new flagpole, and a paver walkway, which includes the engraved pavers already on site, from the city sidewalk to the deck of our station. They will be presented to the board and reviewed for future installation as funding becomes available. Sponsors are always welcome! ☒

Note From the New
VRA Digest Editor
by Kevin Phalon

Hello members! I am proud to introduce myself as the new editor for the VRA Digest! Our former editor, Mike Goralski, was happy to pass on the duties of editor to someone new, and I look forward to putting together many great publications for the Volunteer Railroaders Association. As a communications student at Seton Hall University, many of the skills I learn here will transfer to this publication and I look forward to seeing it improve over time. My apologies for the tardiness of this issue. Transferring all of the data has been complicated, but now we are good to go. I hope you will enjoy my first issue, and many more to come! ☒



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

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