



THE VRA DIGEST

Official publication of the
VOLUNTEER RAILROADERS ASSOCIATION

"So close, only the paycheck is missing!"

EASTER TRAIN 2014 *By Charles Smith*



Volunteer Ally Smith with a cast of characters at the 2014 Easter Train

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joining forces again and again the funds raised will be used for two familiar projects - a new compressor for Lackawanna #663 and the final landscaping at Hawthorne Station. Saturday saw four trains depart the Wayne/Route 23 Transit Center. On Palm Sunday, the Glen Rock/Boro Hall Station was the host to four more excursions. With the only exception of the 9am departure from Wayne, all trips were sold out and ran very smoothly. Volunteers from both groups came forward to staff the trains. Old friendships were renewed and the spirit of camaraderie was pervasive throughout the weekend. ☘

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New Flag at Hawthorne

by Frank Ball

On a beautiful Saturday morning in April, representatives of Columbia Bank, the borough of Hawthorne, and the VRA descended on our Hawthorne Station. to dedicate our new flagpole. What began as a casual conversation at Hawthorne Day resulted in Columbia Bank agreeing to fund the installation of a new 25' flagpole at our station.

Marge Hochkeppel, branch manager at the Hawthorne's Columbia Bank championed the pole within Columbia, and was successful. Many thanks to Marge. Since the weather during installation was snow, snow, and more snow, we agreed to wait for better weather for the dedication. Along with this was a commitment to Columbia that we would not fly the flag until the pole was dedicated. On April 19, the weather man cooperated and gave us a beautiful day. After greetings

and hellos from everyone, the dedication plaque was revealed, and the flag was raised to the top of the pole. As the flag rose, the sun actually shone a little brighter, and a breeze snapped the flag in grand fashion, as if to say hello. Good friend Ed Neuman was kind enough to supply and install night time lighting, which will enable us to fly Old Glory 24/7. All things said, it was a great day for the station. Thanks to all who showed up and helped make the celebration a big success!

Upcoming Events:

Membership Meeting

Hawthorne Station
May 15

Streamliners at Spencer

(with URHS Reading 284)
May 29-June 1

JCRHS Monthly Meetings

Westfield American Legion
1003 North Ave. W, Westfield, NJ
June 5, July 3, August 7

Tri-State NRHS Monthly Meeting

Morris Museum-Brickford Theater
June 12

URHS 3rd Annual Transportation Heritage Festival

URHS Boonton Yard
September 21



EL Discovery Day by Charles Smith

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Erie Lackawanna Discovery Day Report
On Saturday, April 5th, the Volunteer Railroaders Association (VRA), the Tri-State Railway Historical Society and the Jersey Central Railway Historical Society joined co-sponsored the return of the Erie Lackawanna Discovery Days. The three groups worked together to host members from the Erie Lackawanna Historical Society (ELHS) as they visited three EL themed sites.



The day began with the society touring the restored 1894 New York, Susquehanna and Western Railroad (NYS&W) station. The interest is sparked by the Erie Railroad's ownership of the NYS&W from 1898 through 1940. Today, the historic station wears the Erie's classic two tone green with red window sashes paint scheme partly in tribute to the Erie Railroad whose own Hawthorne Station which

stood at the end of Washington Place until the 1980s when it was taken down.

The second stop on the tour was the historic Waldwick Tower. Chairman of the restoration efforts and VRA member Curt Springstead hosted the group as they got to see the inner workings of the famed signal tower. NJ Transit was good enough to provide the mornings entertainment as several regularly scheduled commuter runs rumbled past the tower. Curt advised that the tower intends to be open on Sundays this summer as well as host a movie night on "Goosy Night" on the night before Halloween. If you were unable to make the Discovery Day, mark your calendars as Waldwick Tower is a "must see destination" for any railfan.

After a lunch stop at a railroad themed restaurant in Ramsey,

NJ, our final stop of the day was the Mahwah Museum. The museum boasts two sites full of railroad artifacts. We began at the main museum on Franklin Turnpike. For the railfans, it featured several displays on the Erie in Mahwah and the local trolley line plus a working multi-level HO layout. Additionally the museum is host to a fascinating array of guitars and studio equipment from electric guitar pioneer and Mahwah native Les Paul. Our day ended with a visit to the Old Station Museum. Our docent for the visit was friend and VRA founding member Jack Norris. Jack served cookies and hot chocolate while sharing information about many interesting exhibits in the station and the restored Erie woodside caboose located right next to the station. Favorites included the station master's desk with hideaway typewriter and the

Erie Railroad stylized system map that originally resided in the Office of the Erie Railroad President. The most popular exhibit of the day had to be the live-steamer that is kept in the Old Depot. It comes complete with a boiler certificate proving its capabilities as well as lineage - a construction of the Erie's Dunmore Shops. The Mahwah Museum can rightfully claim to be the home of the last preserved Erie Railroad steam locomotive!

A group photo next to the Erie Caboose was taken before the day ended. The stops were well received by the participants and the three groups hope to be able to organize a similar event in conjunction with next year's ELHS spring meet. ☒





URHS Goes to NC by Steve Gerritsen

At last year's Transportation Heritage Festival, I was told of a (hopefully) big event to be held at the North Carolina Transportation Museums Spencer shops, site of the Norfolk Southern's Heritage Unit debut. This time it will be Streamliners at Spencer! The plan for the event is to gather up as many streamlined locomotives as possible for a rare gathering. The number of attendants on the first announcement began small, with the three units already at Spencer, an Atlantic Coast Line, and two Southern engines, plus two Pennsylvania E8s and Norfolk Southern's pair of F7s. Fast forward to the present and the number of attending locos is up to 24! Most notable of them being the recently restored Nickel Plate Road 190 a PA1 and the Class J steam locomotive #611!

After making an inquiry to the NC Transportation Museum and a decision from the URHS, planning began to get our very own F7, Reading 284 ready to make the journey to this probably once in a lifetime gathering! Over the last few months, after the northeast thawed out, our dedicated volunteers began to get 284 ready to be showcased. Lighting has been worked on for night photo shoots, the cab has been repaired and prepped for paint, the brake system has been redone and is in good working order, and the

trucks/fuel tank have been painted. With a little more time and work, Reading 284 will be ready to head south for the spring. I will be attending this event, so look for photos and stories in the next newsletter!

The URHS is also working on plans for this year's Transportation Heritage Festival, so stay tuned for that. The NYC E8 4083 and PRR GG1 4879 will also be getting painted in the coming months. It was decided after careful thought and a request from Walkersville Southern Railroad in Maryland, to donate Lackawanna MU # 3453 to Walkersville. They were in need of a car to expand their operations and have the time and money to restore this car to service. It was loaded up on a trailer, and trucked down to their facility in Maryland. We wish them the best of luck with the restoration and look forward to riding in the car when it is in service! This looks to be another promising year for restoration and preservation for the URHS! ✘



President's Report

by Carolyn Hoffman

Hello VRA Members!

First of all, I'd like to thank all of you for your votes in electing our new Executive Committee and Director for 2014. I'd like to welcome Carol Smith and Allyson Smith to the VRA Board for the first time! Carol joins us as our Secretary for this year, and Allyson will be fulfilling a 3 year Directorship. Returning this time as Vice President, I am looking forward to working with Steve Gerritsen on MANY projects this year, as well as Andrea Rebner who is returning as Treasurer and Frank Ball continuing as Director. Finally, the Board of

Directors appointed Kevin Phalon to the Board to complete the term of Mike O'Toole. Mike will remain as our very competent and talented Webmaster! Thank you to all of our Board members for your time and commitment.

A few quick notes of thanks about some recent events, most of which you can read more about later on in our newsletter. THANK YOU to Frank Ball for expertly managing the donation, installation and dedication of our new flag pole donated by Columbia Bank. To KC Smith as chairman of our Easter Bunny Train this year. Once again he went above and beyond to ensure the trains all ran smoothly. Last but not least, to Kevin Smith and Frank

Ball for overseeing Hawthorne Station and our landscaping. Kevin & Frank have been mulching, fertilizing, mowing, clipping... you get the idea! Within the next few months we will have the front of the building professionally landscaped with our paver bricks all laid out again thanks to Frank!

We have a lot coming up this year! Please keep an eye on your email as I will be posting work days and fun events as often as possible. We are planning a float for the Hawthorne Memorial Day Parade, as well as opening the Station for visitation on the days when the Farmer's Market is here.

Looking forward to seeing everyone soon! ☒





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.