



# The Chesapeake Dispatcher



Semi-Annual Newsletter of the Friends of the Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum, Inc.  
Museum Telephone (410) 257-3892

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May 2010

## Message From the President Winter Excitement

By Kristen Scott



I have a treasure box in the back of my closet. Every once in a while I pull it out and go through it. There are many things in there that have survived my fits of purging over the years. While nobody would give me a penny for the whole lot, I cherish each piece. I consider our Museum a treasure chest; it's where we keep our precious memories and stories of Chesapeake and North Beach. Many times a visitor has come in, looked at a picture and said, "That's my uncle," or "That's my grandmother."

It's why I volunteer for the Museum; for the memories of all who have gone before. I remember visiting the Museum, as a child. On weekends I would come across the street and down to the Museum. I was fascinated by the display of artifacts dug out of the ground from my neighborhood and a volunteer would patiently answer all my questions. I would then stage scouting exhibitions in the woods to find new items (which, unfortunately, I never did). The Museum is the touchstone of our Town. I thank every one of you for making the Museum possible.

By Kathleen Scott

Although the Museum closes for the winter, activities and fun do not.

This year the Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum hosted its first gingerbread train workshop. What fun! A few volunteers baked and cut the gingerbread into train shapes. Then on November 21, 2009 families gathered around tables and the fun began.

Some very innovative trains pulled out from Northeast Community Center loaded with M&M's, marshmallows and candy canes. It was a family event with parents full of recommendations on decorations and details. Such smiles as each child carried their own train home intact.

December was the long awaited North Beach Christmas parade! Over the summer, Dana Watkinson, our Educational Coordinator, had children make and paint train boxes. Then on December 5, 2009 all the children wore their train section and Train #25 rolled down the



Left: The parade gets ready.

Below left: One of the gingerbread masterpieces.

Below right: Smiles abound as children and parents make trains.



boardwalk. Adults, children and our Santa-clad dog fought the winter elements of snow, sleet, rain and winds. The winds were icy and blowing 28 mph from the North.

The next day, December 6, was the Annual Holiday Open House. The tree was aglow with decorations and lights. Dolls danced in the stations' window. We had hot cider and home baked goodies. Enjoying good friends and warm words. A great start to the holiday season!



## Message From the Curator

By Harriet Stout

The ideal grandmother of decades past lived in the big, old family house and kept the family treasures in the attic. On a rainy day the boxes, suitcases, and trunks would provide children with a gateway to make-believe and older family members with the opportunity to explore family and community history. Grandmothers of today have sold the old house and moved into a cozy little apartment. The treasures have been dispersed to the second-hand shop and the old house remodeled. Insulation has replaced the attic's treasures. If the community was lucky, grandma may have given the contents of the attic to a local museum.

Our Museum is indeed a community attic. We are selective in what we accept because our space is limited. But we try to collect artifacts and documents that help to tell the story of our town and the area around it. This is the place where local residents, as well as visitors, can come explore the past. We hope that this exploration will stimulate the imagination and inspire the mind and heart. The Museum welcomes all who wish to discover the treasures that our collection holds. Come for a visit and take a look into our community attic.

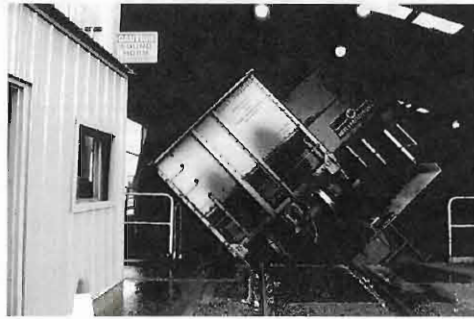
# A Railroad in our Backyard

By John Riedesel

When the Chesapeake Beach Railway (CBRY) was operating (between 1899 and 1935) it joined with two other railroads: the famous B&O, whose interchange point was in the Deanewood section of Northeast Washington; and a lesser-known railroad called the Baltimore and Potomac (B&P), which connected with CBRY near Upper Marlboro.

The B&P had been in operation since 1873, running from Baltimore to Pope's Creek on the Potomac River in southern Charles County. Though nominally independent, it was controlled by the Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR). The Pennsy (as it is also known) had provided financing for building the B&P as a way to gain access to Washington with a branch line from Bowie, which was along the B&P route.

Starting in 1872, the B&P mainline from Baltimore to Bowie, along with its branch line from Bowie to Washington, became filled with PRR freight and passenger trains. The portion from Bowie down to Pope's Creek, however, carried less traffic: passengers bound for Baltimore or Washington, farm-related freight, and consumer goods. Major stations along the branch included Up-



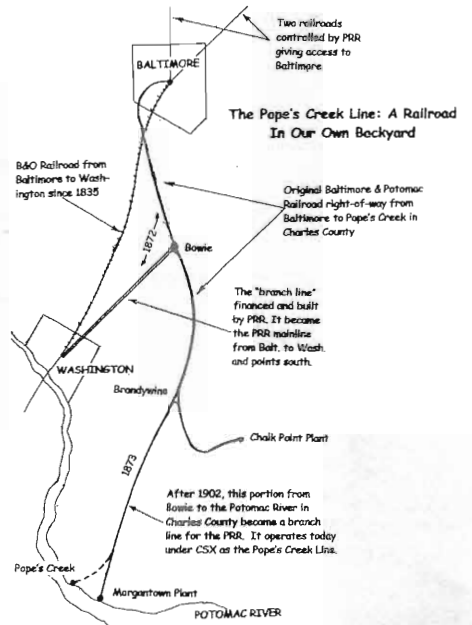
Above: Unloading a coal hopper at Chalk Point the quick way: turn it over and dump it out!

Right: Map of the Pope Creek Line

per Marlboro, Waldorf, and La Plata. It became the Pope's Creek Line.

At Brandywine, in Prince George's County, the Pope's Creek connected with another line, the Washington and Point Lookout Railroad. This little line never got to Washington or Point Lookout, but operated between Brandywine and Mechanicsville, in St. Mary's County. It went belly up around 1940, and taken over by the U.S. Navy, extended to Pax River NAS, and re-named the Brandywine and Cedar Point Railroad. Around 1954, the Navy gave control to the PRR, and traffic all but ceased.

Meanwhile, the Pope's Creek Line operated well into the twentieth century, although its fortunes languished due to the Depression and improved roads and motor vehicles. Passenger service ceased in 1949, and by the early 1960s, freight



was down to almost nothing.

Then, later in the decade, two building projects breathed vibrant new life into the Pope's Creek Line. In 1964, Chalk Point Electric Generating Plant, on the Prince George's side of the Patuxent, came on-line. Operating partly on coal provided by train, a rail extension was run from the now-defunct Brandywine and Cedar Point RR at Gallant Green near Hughesville eastward to Chalk Point. In 1970 the Morgantown Generating Plant on the Potomac opened, also requiring long coal trains. The lower end of the Pope's Creek Line was re-routed from Pope's Creek to the new plant.

Today, the Pope's Creek Line, now part of CSX Transportation, is very much alive with long coal drags bound for both power plants as well as other bulk products. So although we at CBRY have great interest in the history of our lamented fallen flag, there is a living, breathing railroad—the Pope's Creek Line—right in our backyard!



Left: Near Hughesville, the Chalk Point extension curves north and ties into the old Brandywine & Cedar Point RR at Gallant Green Road.

\* The writer is indebted to Misty Allen, Director of External Affairs, Mirant-Mid-Atlantic Corp., and John Wearmouth's booklet, *Baltimore and Potomac Railroad*, for some of the information in this article

*The Chesapeake Dispatcher*  
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## The Railroad Lantern: *Shining the Light on Volunteers*

By Hilary Dailey

Carolyn Leverone grew up far, far away from Calvert County - in Kansas, to be exact! Luckily for us, about thirty years ago, she bid the Midwest a fond farewell and headed east, landing at the Chesapeake Bay. Her husband, a local to these parts, set up a Charter Boat business at the dock of the Rod N Reel, and they settled right in!

Carolyn, looking to become more active in her newfound community, decided to volunteer at the Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum since it is right next door to her husband's place of business. She enjoys her time volunteering and feels that she still learns new things about the history of our area and of the railroad from daily visitors. "Just

when you think it's a slow day and nothing's going on, someone will come in with a good story or a question that I have to look up. It's definitely been a much more interesting experience than I thought it would be when I started."

Not having grown up in the area, Carolyn says she is surprised at how many Calvert County natives still come in to



donate items or share local histories. "I really love the Bay and this area and the donated items are really interesting." Carolyn spends some of her leisure time these days with a few other local clubs, such as a writers' group, "we write our little stories and publish them in our little newsletter," she says with a smile in her voice; but the biggest chunk of her free time is devoted to being a faithful Station Master at the Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum.

Ms. Leverone, you're not in Kansas anymore! You've traveled over the rainbow to the place we all think is the prettiest place on earth, the beaches on the Chesapeake Bay. Thank you for joining our volunteer family and for all that you do. We appreciate you so much!

## Breaking New Ground

By Harriet Stout

After many years of planning and ground work, the project of building the Chesapeake Beach Railway Trail has finally gotten underway. The Town of Chesapeake Beach held the ground breaking ceremony on April 20, 2010 with Mayor Bruce Wahl proudly overseeing the activities. Mayor Wahl has been working toward this goal for over twenty years. Stewart Cumbo, other members of the town council, as well as Museum friends and staff, have contributed to this project.

Past Chesapeake Beach mayor, Gerald Donovan, was also an important member of the team who made this day possible; and current and past county commissioners helped to see this project

become a reality. The list of enthusiastic and hard-working supporters is, in fact, too long to recognize all of them here, but a big thank you goes out to everyone involved.

The Trail will connect the subdivisions of Bayview Hills and Richfield Station with the Fishing Creek area and the old Chesapeake Beach Railway right of way. It also joins the further corners of Chesapeake Beach with the Waterpark and Marina. Townies and visitors will be able to enjoy a walk along the old railway and beside the creek and marsh without the hubbub of traffic. The trail will provide not only a walk in nature, but the opportunity to get to the shops and restaurants of the town center



Mayor Bruce Wahl, Curator Harriet Stout and past president of the Friends, Joanie Kilmon look on as the trail map is presented.

without taking the busy roads.

We are all looking forward to the completion of the trail in the months to come. Here is another great attraction for Chesapeake Beach and a plus for the Green Team.

## Summer Fun Day Schedule!

- June 24 Natural Resources- Be prepared for a long walk down the boardwalk to Bayfront Park.
- July 8 Museum Visit- Explore the Museum and decide on your favorite item.
- July 15 All About Trains- Look at train related artifacts and see how train tracks are laid.
- July 22 Fishing Tournament- Fish for species of the Chesapeake and see who catches the longest fish!
- July 29 Working on the Railway- Role play as railway employees to see how they all worked together.
- August 12 Amusement Park- Experience the fun and games of the amusement park (sorry, no roller coaster).

Programs are held Thursday mornings from 10 am to 11:30 am on the Museum porch. These programs are geared toward pre- and early elementary school aged children.

## A Meeting of the Minds

By Janet Bates

The Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum will be held at the Museum, Sunday, June 6 at 1 pm. There will be a short meeting, including induction of officers. A buffet luncheon and music by the Jumpin Jax, brought by Hal Gearhart, who was known as Hal Holiday will follow. Their band played at Uncle Billie's in the early 1960s. Hopefully, Hal will speak about that era. This will be a nice sendoff to Curator Harriet



Stout's "History of Music in the Beaches" theme for this summer. We hope you'll be present to enjoy the afternoon, so mark down June 6 on your calendar and come on out!

*Hal Gearhart in front singing on stage. The stage was to the right of the front door as you entered from the street into the wild atmosphere of Uncle Billie's. They played Friday, Saturday nights and a Sunday matinee. By Sunday he had to drink hot tea to open his vocal chords. They stayed anywhere they could find room.*

*Photo and caption courtesy of Hal Gearhart*

## Music to Soothe the Soul

By Betty MacDonald

It's time to start marking calendars for the 2010 Bay Breeze Summer Concert Series. Concerts are on the second Thursday of the months of June through September. A varied and innovative program has been arranged to provide entertainment for a wide range of tastes.

Beginning June 10, Stardust Memories will be coming from Baltimore to perform romantic melodies, upbeat tunes and patriotic songs in vintage 1940's dress and sound. These four ladies are fun and sure to please in their coquettish style.

The ever popular bluegrass band, the Dixie Ramblers will be returning once again in a new time slot on July 8. This group is under the direction of Mike Phipps and they never fail to enthrall their many devoted fans.

Local artist and entertainer, Jimmy Payne, comes to us on August 12. Supported with Big Band backing tracks, Jimmy will take the audience on a

swinging song journey that you won't soon forget!

The Dixie Power Trio with special guests will complete the series on September 9. Look forward to an evening of authentic New Orleans jazz and original compositions, augmented for this performance with The New Line Brass. After listening to a variety of instruments played by six talented musicians you will become a fan!

**June 10- STARDUST MEMORIES**

**July 8- DIXIE RAMBLERS**

**Aug. 12- JIMMY PAYNE**

**Sept. 9- THE DIXIE POWER TRIO**

All concerts are outdoors on the Museum porch starting at 7:30 pm and are free to the public.

This series of concerts is made possible with the cooperation of the Calvert County Commissioners and the financial assistance from the HELP Associates, Inc., the Town of Chesapeake

Beach, Prince Frederick Walmart, and our generous membership. We are grateful for their strong support. Floral arrangements are arranged by the Chesapeake Beach Garden Club. Refreshments will be provided during the intermission.

Plan to join us for an enjoyable summer evening of music. Concerts are arranged months in advance and are subject to change. Please consult the Museum web page [www.cbrm.org](http://www.cbrm.org) or call the Museum, 410-257-3892, for current information.

*Audience members enjoy a free night of music at the Museum.*



## Working on the Railway

By Harriet Stout

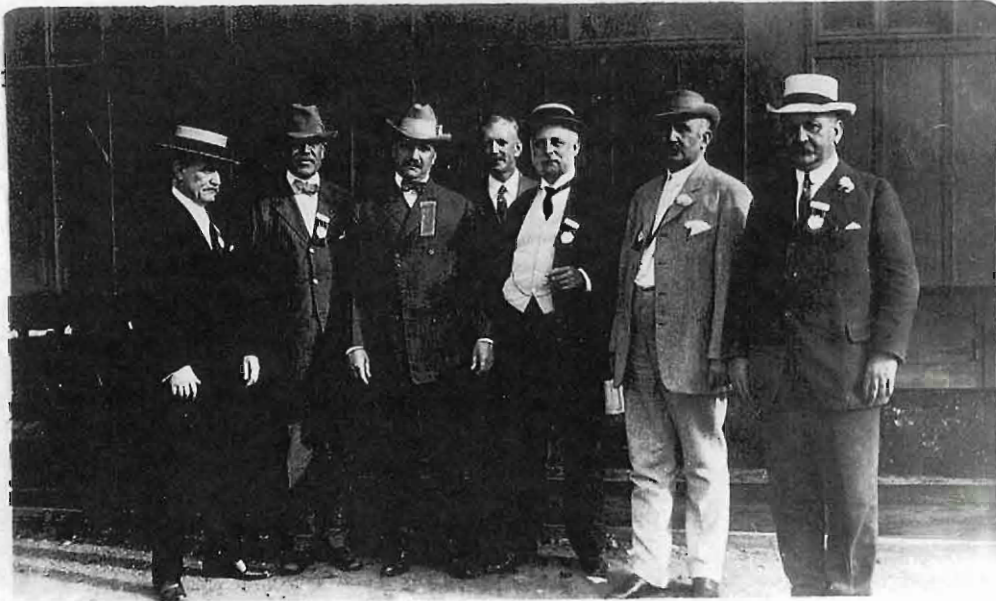
Now that the weather has moderated, work on the Dolores Project has gotten back on track. If you notice that the clerestory windows are missing, that is because they are being restored. Jeff Larry, of Restoration Concepts, is the craftsman who is working on the windows. The frames are being repaired;

when returned to the Dolores they should do a good job of keeping the weather out. The next big job will be the main windows and the siding on the outside of the car; this will be on-going during the summer.

The ramp on the east end of the Dolores was replaced in the fall with

manufactured decking. This type of deck should last much longer than wood; it is also safer because it is not as slippery. NASTOS, the construction contractors for Calvert County, did this work. They did a fine job of repairing the platform on the west end of the railcar as well.

## Recent Acquisitions



Here are some recent postcards acquired by the Museum.

*Above:* Can anyone identify this group? Some distinguished gentlemen on excursion to Chesapeake Beach sometime between 1913 and 1915. Note that most of the gentlemen are wearing some type of badge so it must have been a very special trip to Chesapeake Beach. If you have any information please contact Curator Harriet Stout at 410-257-3892.

*Below:* View of the beach with the Boardwalk, buildings, and Scenic Railway in the background. Pre-1916.



## Railroad Passes, Otto Mears and the Chesapeake Beach Railway: Part III

By James Tigner, Jr.

Continued from the previous issue



Otto Mears made and lost several large fortunes in his lifetime. After the "Silver Crash" of 1893 in which his losses were substantial, Mears traveled to Maryland. He had been convinced by David Moffat, a prominent Colorado banker and railroad financier, that there was another fortune waiting to be made by building a railroad between Washington D.C. and the shores of the Chesapeake Bay. Building the railroad

created more challenges and took longer than Mears had first anticipated. For sheer beauty, the early annual passes issued for the Chesapeake Beach Railway are in a class second to none. The passes issued from 1899 to 1902 bear the name Otto Mears and the designation "President" on them. The passes from these years all feature an attractive bathing beauty as part of a logo while decorative lettering completes the design. The involvement of Otto Mears with the Chesapeake Beach Railway ended after disappointing sales were reported at the end of the 1902 season. Still the Chesapeake Beach Railway continued the yearly practice of handing out passes. Shown as part of this article is one from 1906. Although the attractive beach gal is gone from the design, each pass remains an important piece of the history of the Chesapeake Beach Railway that

can be held in the hand. The pass was signed by Paul Y. Waters who was then the general manager of the railroad.

On June 29, 1906, the United States Congress passed the Hepburn Act. The Hepburn Act gave greater power to the Interstate Commerce Commission to regulate fees charged by railroads and allowed the commission easier access to the financial records of railroads. The Hepburn Act also made it illegal to issue free passes to loyal shippers. It was thought that the railroads were buying too much influence by issuing free annual passes to whoever they pleased. After the passage of the Hepburn Act, the issuance of free passes by a railroad, with a few exceptions for charity purposes and the clergy, was limited to that of its own employees and their family members.

## Clickety Clack—Going Down The Tracks

By John Riedesel



Historical Narrator, John Riedesel (far right), points out landmarks along the right of way.

On Saturday, April 10, 2010 a dozen railroad enthusiasts boarded a county bus and spent several hours exploring the old Chesapeake Beach Railway right-of-way (ROW) on our annual Heritage Tour.

The group visited approximately 18 sites where parts of the 28-mile ROW can still be clearly seen in cuts and fills through the landscape. Starting with three sites in Chesapeake Beach, the

tour proceeded to Mount Harmony Road at Paris; down MD 260, on more than five miles of straight road which until 1935 was the actual railroad ROW; then to additional sites in the Upper Marlboro area.

The expedition worked its way up Brown Station Road—where the old ROW has been turned into paved hiking/biking trails by private developers—and on through the Ritchie area, heading for its terminus at Seat Pleasant. CBRY went right through what is now Addison Road Metro Station to the yards and roundhouse at Maryland Park, now a shopping center.

The farthest point on the tour was a hill in Seat Pleasant overlooking the site of District Line Station (now a gas station) where the

majority of beach-bound travelers boarded the train. Then our able bus driver drove us to Patuxent River Park, on the Prince George's side of Jug Bay, where we enjoyed a picnic lunch and explored features of the park, finally visiting three other ROW sites on our way back to Chesapeake Beach.

The Heritage Tour usually takes place the first Saturday of April each year. You are cordially invited to enjoy the fellowship and information that we share on this annual event; so mark your calendars for next year!

Bottom left: Enjoying a picnic lunch along the Patuxent River

Bottom right: Marker at the end of the right of way in Seat Pleasant, MD.



## A Day of Fun

Spring Family Fun Day will be on May 23, from 1 to 4:00 pm. Come see the Washington And Metro Area Lego Train Club's display of motorized trains, build at Lego tables, jump in the moon bounce, have your face painted by Piper the Clown and be sure to catch Paul Hadfield's antics as "The Funny Guy." You may remember him from last year, he was the one with the unicycle! Be sure to look at all the trains in our LEGO train contest. If you are interested in entering the contest, please bring your train-themed entry on a base no larger than 12"x15" to the Railway Museum on Saturday May 15, 10 am—1 pm or on Friday, May 21, 5 pm—8 pm. Thank you to Bob Estes of Boy Scout troop #430, who agreed to loan us some of his 800 pounds of Legos for the day, and Rick Salen of Boy Scout troop #422, who has Scouts volunteering to help at the building tables.

If anyone would like to volunteer, there are many opportunities. Please contact Dana Watkinson at 410-535-1326 for more information or to sign up.

## Brand New



After many starts and stops, much like the trains, The Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum's new website is now up and running! The new look and design by our very own webmaster, Margie Bliss, was developed over the last three years. The new site's ease of use, an essential piece to the redesign, and the vibrant look, were key elements so that the user could quickly obtain the information they needed. The feedback to date has been very positive and we look forward to hearing from all of you about the new website. While there are some tweaks still to be made, we hope you enjoy the new look. Thanks to Margie for all of your hard work and patience.

## Remembering Tom Wisner

June 1930—April 2010

Tom Wisner is well remembered as the Bard of the Chesapeake. But few people remember that during the early years of the Museum, Tom also provided inspiration and technical assistance to the Museum Committee. He helped with the creation of a physical layout for the museum exhibits by designing the standing panels in the main gallery. He also left us with several works of art that recreate some of the historical photographs in the Museum. Tom encouraged the gathering of oral histories from a number of old timers as well; many of these personal stories would have been lost if not for Tom's guidance. Tom's early contribution to the Museum has left an important legacy to the citizens of Calvert County, and his work will be a part of the Museum forever.

## Celebrate Summer

The *Celebrate Summer* 2010 Exhibit will focus on the history of music and dance in the Beaches. The Curator has been collecting photographs, documents, and artifacts during the past few months for use in the exhibit. There are a number of items in the collection that will be on exhibit for the summer, and new items have been purchased to enhance the display. Music was always an important part of the enjoyment of the Beaches, and people came from miles around to dance in the Pavilion or Ballroom. It is a rich story well worth listening to.

If you have artifacts, photographs, documents of any kind, or memories of the good times music and dancing gave you at the Beach, please share them with the Museum for the summer exhibit. This could include dance programs, tickets, clothing items, musical instruments, records, newspaper articles, advertisements, and many other items. Call the Curator at 410-257-3892 to make arrangements for the artifacts to be loaned to the Museum.



## Bayside Chats

Bayside Chats 2010 consisted of presentations by three speakers. Dr. Jim Gibb spoke with us in January about the Drum Point Railway; the railway was never completed, but lots of effort was put into starting it. The railway would have connected Baltimore to Lusby if the funding had lasted through the railway's completion.

Dr. Frank Gouin joined us in March and offered his knowledge, gleaned from years of farming in Maryland, to inform us of the species that grow best in our region. His advice included day-neutral Everbearing strawberries, Claudia raspberries, and of course sweet oriental persimmons. Follow his column in the Bay Weekly to find more tips.

The blizzard in February forced us to wait until April to hear Mr. Sean Kery of the Naval Architects and Marine Engineers, Marine Forensic Committee. He presented data he has been collecting. We watched cool computer generated models of wave action on a sinking boat and explored how the process of discovering the true cause of a vessel's demise can create new standards for safety in the construction of ships. The secrets learned from old wrecks of the past can save lives to this day.

If there are topics or speakers that you are interested in hearing, please let Dana Watkinson, Educational Coordinator know. The seeds of next year's chats are being planted now!

www.cbm.org



Friends of the  
Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1227  
Chesapeake Beach, Maryland 20732

RSVP: Conductor Kristen at [krescott@aol.com](mailto:krescott@aol.com) or 443-486-8893

Special Musical Guest:

Jumpin Jax!

# FULL STEAM AHEAD!

CHUGGA CHUGGA CHOO CHOO!  
COME HELP US CELEBRATE  
ALL THAT OUR VOLUNTEERS DO!

Station: Museum - Sunday, June 6th

Arrival Time: 1:30 pm

Departure Time 3:30 pm

\* Annual Meeting at 1:00 pm

