

# The Chesapeake Dispatcher



Bi-Annual Newsletter of the Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum

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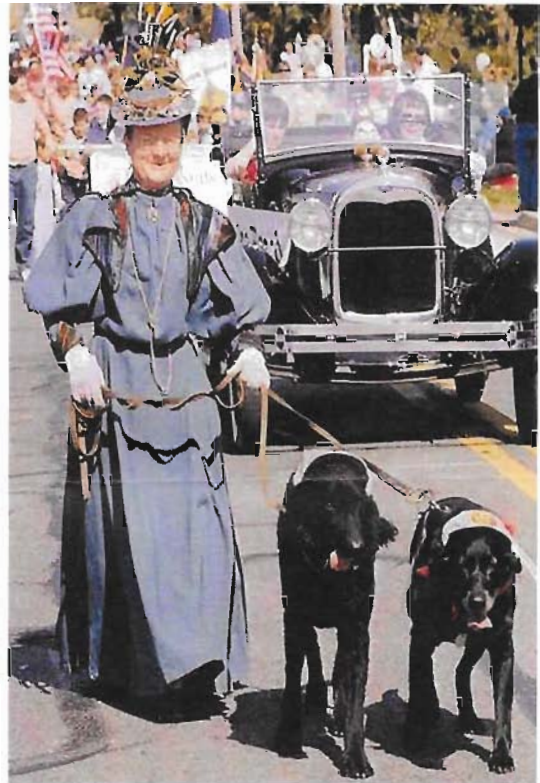
## Message from the Curator

by Harriet M. Stout

Life's journey should be filled with new adventures. When a familiar path comes to an end, new vistas open if the mind and heart are receptive. Familiar paths are comfortable, but travelling along them may be too easy. Taking an unfamiliar route will teach us and test us, but it should also delight us. If we are open to new experiences, we will be more alive and we will continue to grow and learn no matter what our stage of life. Reaching a long sought after destination should not bring us to a stop, but should open us to new adventures.

At the end of May, I will be reaching one of those life-changing destinations; I will be retiring from my place as curator of the Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum. But I have no intention of retiring from this wonderful adventurous journey through life. I am looking forward to working on my own historic site (a 200 year old farmhouse in eastern North Carolina), doing historical research on the house and neighborhood, doing a bit of archaeology in the surrounding landscape and farmland, spending lots of hours gardening, getting to know my new neighbors and participating in community activities, and, of course, spending time raising and training my beloved dogs and enjoying time with my family.

I take with me my lifetime experiences in history, archaeology, museums, and, most especially, my personal and professional friend-



Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum Curator,  
Harriet M. Stout  
accompanied by Belle and Mariah

ships. I will continue to enjoy the stories shared in the past and listen to stories told in the future, and I will pass these stories on to friends and acquaintances I make along the way. I do not intend to take it easy, except for maybe an occasional snooze on the porch on a pleasant afternoon. I promise I will not forget the many friends I have made on my journey or forget the wonderful experiences we have had together. I will continue to live and learn and laugh for the rest of the trip. Thank you all for joining me on this recent part of my journey!

Harriet Stout

## Message from the President by Mike Sweeney

"Today is yesterday...tomorrow is today". This ancient Chinese saying is so true, as it pertains to all things in our lives. Keeping with that credo, we are moving along nicely with the initiatives that we set out to complete, not only to improve the operations at the Museum, but to more effectively serve our members and the public.

We were very gratified to have our first visitor to the Museum who discovered us in the May issue of the nationally circulated TRAINS magazine. Our advertisement ran in the May issue, and will also run in the June and July issues. The purchase of the ad was approved by the Board in February as an experiment in national exposure. So far, it has worked!

The gift shop at the Museum is now using a new cash register that accepts credit cards for purchases, and keeps our inventory of items current. These two features have increased sales and at the same time has eliminated the need for our annual counting of items. A HUGE thank you to interim Treasurer Kris Scott for her work in getting this register up and running.



At our February Board meeting, Wesley Donovan from the Resort and Spa gave us a presentation on the improvements to the Rod N Reel and Resort complex. To say it is stunning would be conservative. The improvements will include Museum parking and grounds. We are all excited to see this happen, and are most thankful to be included in his future planning.

In keeping abreast with the latest laws and practices, Board members will be attending courses at the College of Southern Maryland in managing non-profit organizations. The small tuitions for their attendance will be paid by the Friends. While our charter has not changed, the world of non-profits has, and

we must keep up to date with these changes.

While I could continue to list the accomplishments of our Board and members, I can sum them up in one word...progress. Their forward thinking and willingness to take risks have proved beneficial to not only the Museum, but all of our members and our public. We are rightly proud of the results of our efforts, and have laid the foundation for great years ahead. Today is yesterday, tomorrow is today.

MARYLAND Chesapeake Beach  
**CHESAPEAKE BEACH RAILWAY MUSEUM**  
4155 Mears Avenue



Located on the Chesapeake Bay 30 minutes from Washington, D.C. this preserved turn of the century station houses a museum that captures life on the railway and the local area from the early 1900s to the present. The station was the terminus for the Chesapeake Beach Railway, which ran between Washington, D.C. and Chesapeake Beach from 1900 to 1935. Situated on the grounds of the Rod 'N' Reel Restaurant and Chesapeake Beach Resort and Spa. The local area features beaches, antique shops, great restaurants, playgrounds, waterpark, rail trail and beach boardwalks. Museum admission free. Family fun at its best!  
[www.cbmr.org](http://www.cbmr.org) 410-257-3892

Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum advertisement as it appears in TRAINS Magazine



The Railway Museum Gift Shop is now using a "Square" reader and can accept credit cards for purchases

## Pocket Watches and Telegraphs

by Corrine E. Moore

A friend of mine belongs to the Morse Telegraph Club, Inc. He gave me a few copies of their official newsletter, *Dots and Dashes*, because I work at the Museum.

While perusing a few of the articles, I read about the telegraph and how it was an integral part of railroading and shipping as a matter of communication, and throughout its history, was crucial to matters of security and intelligence.

I became curious about The Chesapeake Beach Railway and their need for a telegraph operator. It is believed that there was no need for one because of the railway's short distance, the advent of the telephone and no immediate evidence substantiating the existence of an operator at the CBRy. (Harriet and I conferred on the matter and came to the same consensus.)

One article, written by Wayne Stevenson<sup>1</sup>, captured my attention. It involved a telegraph operator in Redwood, Minnesota and pocket watches.

The telegraph operator on duty at the Redwood train station received a crate of pocket watches. The crate went unclaimed and the operator contacted the manufacturer. The manufacturer did not want to pay for the return shipment and asked if the operator could sell the pocket watches. The operator agreed and enlisted other agents to sell the ones from the abandoned shipment. The watches were sold in less than two days at a great profit.

A watchmaker was hired by the telegraph operator to satisfy the growing demand for the watches. (It is not clear how the original manufacturer felt about that!) A business was born and eventually

grew from pocket watches to dry goods.

The telegraph operator was Richard Sears and the watchmaker was Alvah Roebuck.

[1] Stevenson, W. (Winter 2014-2015). Buying a Watch in 1880: History You Probably Didn't Know. *Dots&Dashes*, Volume Number 40, Issue Number 1, Page 13.



Vintage Sears Roebuck & Co. "Stag Deer" pocket watch

## Museum loses a Friend

by Joanie Kilmon

The Railway Museum family lost a dedicated, dear friend last winter with the passing of one of our faithful Stationmaster Volunteers, Carolyn Leverone. Carolyn was always smiling and welcoming to our visitors! There were several organizations she was active in during her retirement years including the Rosehaven Civic Association and the International Soroptimist Club. We are very thankful she also chose to spend some of her time with us! Our condolences go to her husband of 65 years, Roy Leverone.

**"I'm Sorry...Hobos Everywhere."**  
by Kris DeGrace, Collections Manager

I owe hobos an apology. I have come to realize that I completely misunderstood what being a hobo means.

I thought hobos simply rode the trains, from place to place, with no ambition and no real purpose. My mind was changed after stumbling upon an article from 1914 about a Hobo Convention. Yes, a Hobo Convention! I had to learn more about this convention and of course hobos.

It turns out, that in the mid-to-late 1800s, sixty-three hobos decided to create the Tourist Union #63 to avoid being prosecuted for vagrancy (pretty clever I think!). Being a member, and carrying a union card for the Tourist Union #63 made them legit and legal, as long as they were looking for work. The convention met yearly, where dues were collected, new members were signed up, a hobo king and queen were elected, and rules were made to name a few. The hobos were surprisingly organized, at least compared to what I previously thought.

They created a list of rules to live by, which to be quite frank, we all could take a lesson from! These rules were basically as follows: to decide your own life, don't let anyone rule you, respect the law, be helpful, don't take advantage of others, always try to find work and be productive, seek out work that others don't want as this will help you and others like you, find a talent (craft), set a good example, be as clean as one can be, respect nature, and protect children as well as encourage runaways to return home, and one of my favorites, don't get stupid drunk. I am sure there were hobos that did not follow this to the tee, but I must say I am impressed with their gumption.

~ continued on page 5 ~



Hobos on a train  
courtesy of vintage.es.com



1907 Hobo  
courtesy of vintage.es.com



A "Hobo Nickel"



Britt, Iowa: Home to the National  
Hobo Convention

**"I'm Sorry...Hobos Everywhere." (cont'd)**  
 by Kris DeGrace, Collections Manager

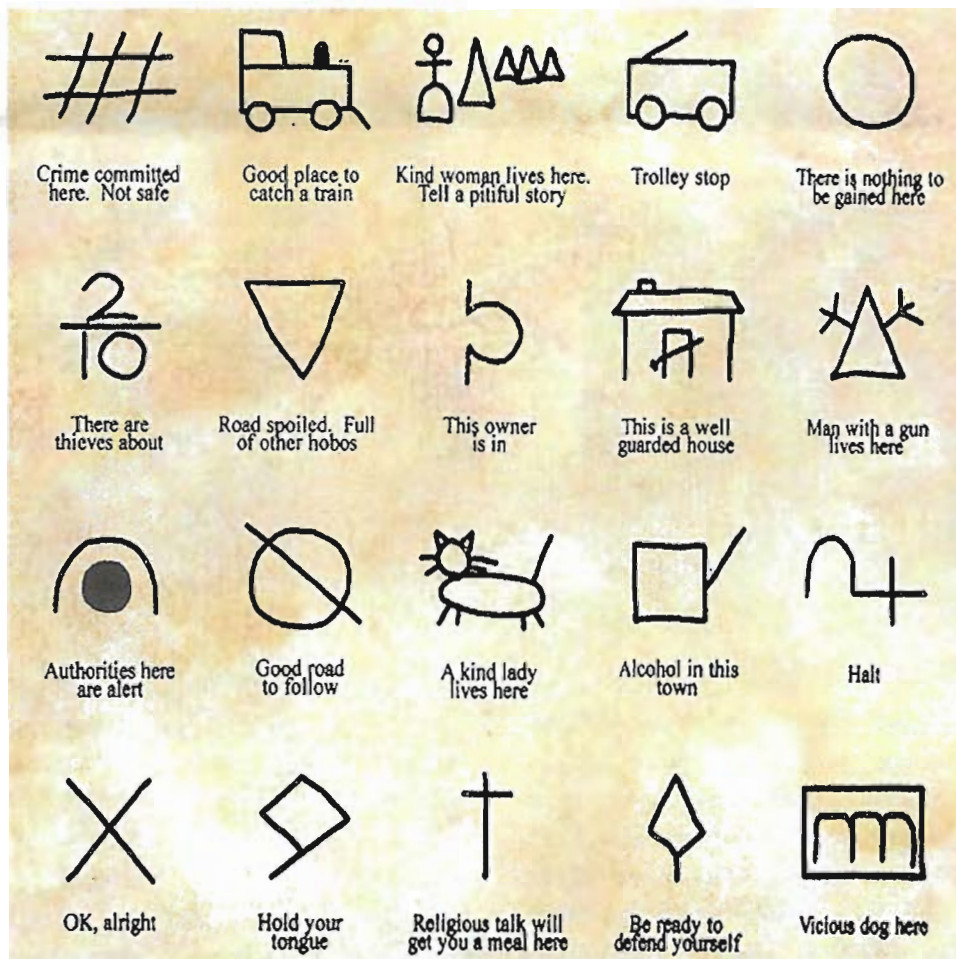
At the convention, a copy of symbols was also handed out to the members. These symbols were used to alert fellow hobos what to expect in a certain town, farm or area. The symbols were carved into fence posts, or trees along the roads. They let the hobos know such things as beware of dog, a judge lives here, it's a dry town, will feed for work, etc. These codes looked like simple markings to a non-hobo, but to a hobo, they spelled out if it was worth staying or moving along to a more receptive town.

I realize that this is only one side of the story. And I did find an article about the "Hobo Problem" in Chicago, where crime was in issue, and I'm sure that this was not the only city with a "hobo problem."

That being said, I like the hobos I learned about. They were migrant workers, traveling men and women, free spirits. As defined by the Hobo Convention: "a hobo wanders and works, a tramp wanders and dreams and a bum neither wanders nor works." I kind of like the picture conjured up by this definition, and I am going to hang onto the romantic and I suppose naive view of the hobo.

I didn't find any articles about hobos heading to Chesapeake Beach, however, who is to say that a few hardworking hobos didn't make their way along the railway to the beach for some seasonal work?

Now, in case any of you are interested, while it is a bit harder to be a hobo in the same way as they existed 100 years ago, the yearly Hobo Convention still exists in Britt, Iowa, on the 2nd weekend in August. I'll see you there!



Some Hobo "Codes"

## Tales from Fishing Creek by John Riedesel

“Weather and tides were not cooperative as the intrepid explorers navigated their way through uncharted waters.” The opening lines of a Herman Melville novel? Not exactly.

It describes the experience of nine participants in the CBRV Friends’ 2016 Heritage Tour, Saturday, April 2. This year’s unique tour was a trip by watercraft up Fishing Creek, past the end of the Chesapeake Beach Railway Trail, to an access site of the CBRV right-of-way not visited by the public in recent memory.

The goals of this trip were (1) to view the presumed site of the “big blowout,” where backed-up waters from a still-undated storm pushed through and destroyed a section of railroad fill; and (2) to walk an unexplored portion of right-of-way from the blowout site to the probable location of the July 2, 1900, head-on collision of two CBRV trains.



The seldom-seen “blow-out” point

Tour day dawned chilly and rainy, but nine venturesome souls, dressed in hoodies and other weather gear, showed up to ride the classy, new pontoon boat from the Rod ‘N’ Reel. All went well as skippers Mike Sweeney and Don Hooker guided the craft upstream under the Rail Trail bridge, then maneuvered past the end-of-trail viewing

platform. A quarter-mile more brought the group to the inlet off Fishing Creek where they could view the site of the big blowout and clearly see how the tracks approached on both sides of the destroyed fill.

It was then the skippers discovered that the low tide would not permit the boat to be brought to shore for the group to disembark and walk the right-of-way. Disappointed but not discouraged, the participants enjoyed being on part of the creek not often visited. The fearless leaders determined to make this trip again sometime, with better cooperation from Mother Nature! Stay tuned.



The nine “venturous souls” (John Riedesel not pictured)



Ghosts from the past: broken pilings from the original Chesapeake Beach Railway peek out in low-tide under the current Rail Trail bridge

*Editor’s Note: If you are interested in being placed on our e-mail mailing list to be alerted to upcoming events such as the Heritage Tour, please contact the Museum at [cbrrailway@co.cal.md.us](mailto:cbrrailway@co.cal.md.us)*

## Volunteer Workshop 2016 by Corrine E. Moore

This year's volunteer workshop was held on March, 12, 2016 at the Museum. Introductions by Mike Sweeney, President of the Friends of the CBRM and Corrine E. Moore, Museum staff, were done after morning refreshments.

Information and updates about the Museum's operations and events were given while expressing our deep gratitude to those who serve the Museum's efforts.

Harriet M. Stout, Curator, gave handouts of an article on the difference between the terms railroad/railway--station/depot prior to her presentation of period clothing called "Grandmother's Trunk".

Workshop attendees mingled about after the presentation and then walked over to the Rod N' Reel Restaurant for a formal lunch and camaraderie.

### **CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS!**

The Railway Museum is in need of  
Volunteers to help out at the annual  
**Spring Family Fun Day**  
on Sunday, May 15, 2016 from 1-4pm

We will need help with games, crafts  
and refreshments  
~ no experience necessary ~

Interested? Contact us! 410-257-3892

### **A Conversation about Trains** by John Riedesel

Twin Beaches Library hosts a monthly program known as Calvert Conversations. The attendees discuss topics of general interest, including local history. I was privileged to be asked by Joan Kilmon, Library Director, to speak on aspects of the Chesapeake Beach and East Washington Rail-

ways at the March and April meetings.

I was born after the Chesapeake Beach Railway ceased operations. My knowledge of that line has come from years of involvement with the CBRM, much reading and study, and lots of footwork along portions of the right-of-way. But my connection with the East Washington Railway is a personal one, having grown up just a couple of blocks from the roundhouse and yards in Seat Pleasant during the time the railroad was running.

At the March meeting, I focused on one aspect of the CBRM: water crossings—bridges, trestles, and culverts. We discussed the swing bridge which took the railroad across the Patuxent; the Lyons Creek Trestle with its two remaining concrete bridge piers; and the erstwhile culvert just off Fishing Creek, 1½ miles in from the beach, presumed site of the "big blowout," a topic still under investigation. The week following the March meeting, a group of eight took a field trip to Jug Bay Wildlife Center to walk the CBRM right-of-way on the ¾-mile causeway out into the Patuxent. We visited the bridge site and saw the remains of the concrete and steel pivot on which it rotated.

At the April meeting, I told about growing up near the East Washington Railway, the less-well-known successor to CBRM. It operated from 1935 to 1978 as a short freight line (about three miles long) from Seat Pleasant into Washington to a B&O interchange, with a spur to the Benning Road PEPCO plant. I often walked home from school along the right-of-way, and served the *Washington Daily News* to Mr. Marquess, who lived in a converted passenger car near the roundhouse.

If you're looking for an interesting way to spend a Thursday morning, I would recommend Calvert Conversations at Calvert Library, Twin Beaches Branch, meeting monthly on the second Thursday at 10 AM, September to May.



Friends of the Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum  
PO Box 1227  
Chesapeake Beach, MD 20732

## Upcoming 2016 Special Events

### Spring Family Fun Day

Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum ~ Sunday, May 15 from 1-4pm

### Founder's Day & Friends Annual Board Meeting (You're Invited!)

Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum ~ June 9 at 7pm

### Summer Bay Breeze Concert: Blue Rhythm Boys

Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum ~ June 14 at 7:30pm

### Summer Bay Breeze Concert: Dixie Ramblers

Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum ~ July 12 at 7:30pm

### Summer Bay Breeze Concert: Dave Chappell Band

Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum ~ August 9 at 7:30pm

### Summer Bay Breeze Concert: Dixie Power Trio with The New Line Brass

Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum ~ September 13 at 7:30pm

FREE **Children's Summer Programs** will be held every Thursday from 10-11am from June 30-July 28, 2016  
at the Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum

### **\* Chesapeake Beach Railway Newsletter \*Spring 2016 \***

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