

The Chesapeake Dispatcher



Bi-Annual Newsletter of the Friends of the Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum

Volume 44, Issue 1, Number 88

May 2026

NEW Summer Rotating Exhibit: A Scrap Book Journey: *The Fires & The Heroes of the Twin Beaches* by Kris DeGrace Museum Registrar

Our exhibit this summer is riding the wave of the 100th Anniversary of the North Beach Volunteer Fire Department (NBVFD), officially incorporated on August 4, 1926.

The exhibit is a medley of newspaper clippings and photographs, as well as some ceramic and glass pieces that were collected from the site of the Belvedere Hotel, that was destroyed by fire in 1923. In addition, we are exhibiting some items from the Loveless family. If you are not familiar, Bernie G. Loveless Sr. was a member of the NBVFD, and his son Bernie G. Loveless Jr. was one of the founders of the Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum. The Loveless family connection is near and dear to us, on many levels.

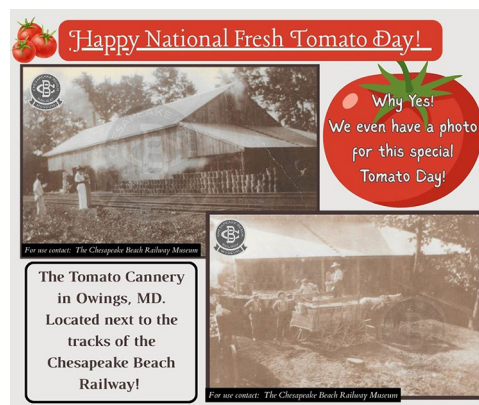
The display is largely in the style of a scrapbook and focuses on fires that affected the beach, both big and small. The majority of the clippings are about pre-1926 fires, meaning pre-NBVFD. But it was these fires that made clear the need for the Twin Beaches to have a fire department of their own!

Here is a little sneak peak, while one of the larger and widely-broadcasted fires was at the Belvedere Hotel in 1923, it just so happened that an earlier fire occurred there in 1909! It happened when a cigarette was thrown out the window of the 2nd floor and the roof caught fire. It obviously was con-



tained, but internal company correspondence revealed that upgrading the roof was too costly and instead they decided to rely on the hope that this would remain fresh on people's minds... seems a risky gamble but seemed to payout until 1923!

Visit us to see our exhibit honoring these heroes of the Twin Beaches, especially the North Beach Volunteer Fire Department! We celebrate you for your 100 years of service, courage, & commitment to answering the call! And with deepest gratitude, thank you! **Happy 100 Years!**



Follow "Friends of the Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum" on Facebook for more fun facts provided by Kris DeGrace!

President's Message

by Mike Sweeney

President, Friends of the CBRM

After a bit of time off, I am happy to return and get back into the swing of things.

In getting back, I want to thank all of you for your good wishes and prayers during a most trying time. With that hiatus, I took the opportunity to think about a lot of things, the museum being near the top of the list.

Most on my mind were the opportunities to improve our service to the public. The museum has the potential to become a world-class organization, and we all must seize on every opportunity to be better lest we just exist and not prosper.

A few of these opportunities are:

1) Expand the season to the entire year. Our co-location with the Rod 'N' Reel Resort places us in a great position to improve our visibility while offering the public greater access.

2) Make more use of what we have to improve our ability to tell the story. We have a tremendous amount of interesting items that the public can enjoy, and it's time to showcase these things.

3) Invest in our volunteers. The Friends are charged with recruitment and training of new volunteers. Their care and feeding is another matter, which has not been a priority in the past. I have personally trained 21 volunteer and 5 paid docents since the training program started in 2015. Where did they all go? This needs to be, and will be, fixed.

Together we can all make this museum the stellar organization that it can be.

So let us all climb aboard for an exciting year!

Refurbished Rod 'N' Reel Resort provides new backdrop as Railway Museum opens for 2026

by Jeff Murray

Museum Director

The Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum opened for the season on April 1 in front of a newly refreshed, refurbished and enhanced Rod 'N' Reel Resort that includes architectural features designed to reflect the Town's railway history. The next time you pop into the museum, make sure to walk over and take a look at the new lobby and interior of the Rod 'N' Reel – I'm sure you'll be impressed.

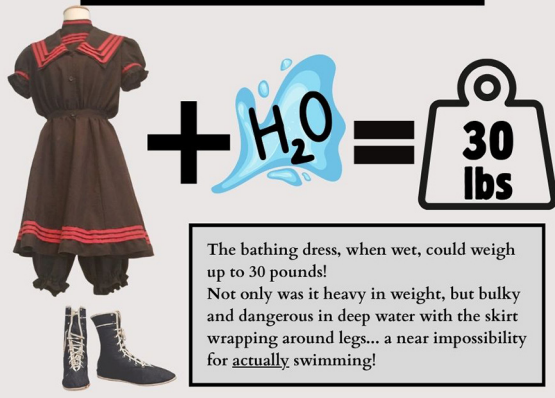
Not to be outdone, the Railway Museum has had a winter of offseason improvements, including the replacement of rotting boards and painting of the walkways and porch floor outside the museum, which was supported by the Friends of the CBRM. The county also washed and painted the outside of the building, and the flagpole was painted. At this point, we're ready for a hot summer with a new HVAC system and our recently replaced roof.

There is also a brand-new exhibit in the museum's changing exhibit space that is focused upon the North Beach Volunteer Fire Department as 2026 happens to be their 100th anniversary! Created in the form of a scrapbook, the exhibit traces a century of firefighting history in the beach communities.

During the winter months the museum also placed an exhibit in the Twin Beaches library, and are scheduled to do so again this summer.

Finally, we're glad to have our Friends of CBRM President back. Mike Sweeney, thanks for being such a generous friend and supporter of the museum, and may the years ahead be a bit kinder to you!

THE BATHING DRESS



**A worthy use of your time:
come volunteer at the Museum!**

We are always in need of new volunteers to help us interpret the Museum's mission - in the museum - and out and about, in the community!

FAQs about becoming a Museum Volunteer:

- Exhibits and displays are designed to be self-interpretive. This means that our interaction with visitors is minimal.
- Volunteers do not need to have the breadth of knowledge that was required in the "old days."
- We require only three hours of your time every so often, here and there from 1 to 4 pm.
- Docent training takes an hour, tops. This is preferably completed in an evening, but we're flexible!

If you are interested in joining the ranks of the Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum Volunteers, please contact **Mike Sweeney** at **avn29@hotmail.com**

We Need your Support!

by Mike Zitzmann

Membership Committee, Friends of the CBRM

Dear Friends,

First of all, thank you for your support of the Friends of Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum over the years!

It's that time of year again - time to renew your membership in the Friends of the Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum.

The mission of the Friends is to support the Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum by fundraising and recruiting volunteers, in addition to helping maintain the museum's programs and collections. Your support also contributes to the ongoing restoration of the parlor car "Dolores", a project the Friends are very proud to support.

If you feel you can help in our endeavors, please make a check out to the "Friends of the Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum" and mail it to:

**Friends of the Chesapeake Beach
Railway Museum
P.O. Box 82
Chesapeake Beach, MD 20732**

For those of you who would prefer to renew your membership virtually, please visit our updated website:

chesapeakebeachrailwaymuseum.com
and click on "Support."

Thank you,
Mike Zitzmann
Membership Committee Chair

Individual Membership: \$20 annually
Family Membership: \$30 annually
Business Membership: \$50 annually
Life Membership: \$100

**Chesapeake Beach's official name
for Kellam's Field is the *Lynwood T.
Kellam Memorial Recreational Park*
by Fred Donovan & Joanie Kilmon
Friends of the Museum**

Lynwood T. Kellam was born in 1914 in Wachapreague, Virginia and died in 1984 in Chesapeake Beach, Maryland. Known as "Capt Buddy" to all, he was a marine contractor and marina owner operator. He owned a liveaboard yacht "The Navajo" which also doubled as his tug to mobilize his 70' barge for driving pilings. The "Navajo" was very prominent and admired locally as the only yacht in the harbor among the charter boats, crab boats, skipjacks and patent tongers.



The Navajo

In 1958, Buddy Kellam sold the "Navajo" to purchase 70 acres of marshland. A self made man, he built Kellam's Marina with boat slips on both sides of Fishing Creek which included cover slips, two marine railways to haul boats, a boat showroom, shop and office. Years later he added Chuck's Carryout and Anne's Laundromat which is now the Faststop. Some may remember the Goodyear building, that was Capt. Buddy's woodworking and machine shop. Next to the bridge was the Subway shop, that was his Showroom/Office.

In 1992 the Kellam property was conveyed to the town. Subsequent transfers of property resulted in locations as we know today, Kellam's Field, The Faststop, the Waterpark, Northeast Community Center, Miller-Love-

less Park, the Courtyards at Fishing Creek and Rod N Reel Marina West.

Capt Buddy had natural business acumen and civil engineering talent. He was very active in community events and belonged to The Lions Club. He was a widely respected businessman. Of personal interest, he had an athletic appearance and was always well groomed, neat, trim and stylish. Dapper!

Lynwood T. "Buddy" Kellam



Buddy Kellam

Lynwood T. Kellam's contributions remain a pinnacle to the success of the Town of Chesapeake Beach which are embodied by all the good things that now take place in the center of town - on a field that bears his name.

**Get your daily dose of local history
on **Social Media****

Find us on Facebook. Search for:
*Friends of the
Chesapeake Beach
Railway Museum*

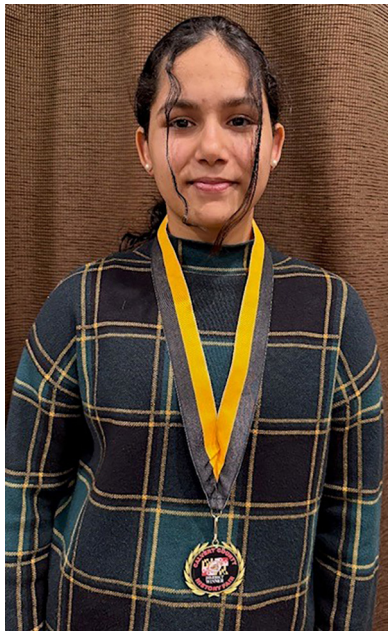
Find us on Instagram. Search for:
Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum

Calvert County's 2026 History Fair Winner

by Correine E. Moore

Railway Museum Administrative Aide

Please join us in congratulating Miss Vidheha (aka Bideha) Ranjan as District Winner of Calvert County's History Fair: Keeping the Past Alive, 2026.



Bideha Ranjan

Bideha's project is titled *When the Trails Met the Tide*. Her presentation's focus is on the Chesapeake Beach Railway and the impact on the development of the area highlighting the devastating fire which destroyed the Belvedere Hotel on March 31, 1923. The economic impact that ensued due to the Belvedere's collapse was explored within her presentation.

The documentary's perspective was a distinctive look from that angle borrowing from the Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum's information and research. Bideha is now heading to the state competition and will be presenting an expanded focus which will include the areas of Chesapeake Beach and North Beach.

The video, impressive on its take of the economic ramifications from the loss of the Belvedere hotel, is even more so considering that Bideha is a 12-year-old, seventh grader

attending Windy Hill Middle School!

Thank you again Bideha, for including us in your history project. The video will be posted on CBRM's website, cbrm.org and can also be viewed on this [LINK](#).



Local School Engagement

by Correine E. Moore

Railway Museum Administrative Aide

In another recent community outreach initiative, Ms. Allison Embry, an 8th grade teacher at Mill Creek Middle School, requested educational resources and information from the CBRM to provide a meaningful, local connection to their study of "The impact of the railway system on industrialization and the movement of populations into rural areas across the country."

To support this effort, Museum staff developed educational handouts designed to encourage critical thinking and student engagement with the subject matter.

Ms. Embry reported that approximately 107 students participated enthusiastically and were highly engaged throughout the lesson activities.

CBRM extends its appreciation to Ms. Embry for incorporating local history into her classroom instruction.

Celebrate Trails Day!

by Kris DeGrace
Museum Registrar



Celebrate Trails Day is an annual celebration of America's trails. It originated from the Rails to Trails Conservancy, which began 40 years ago as a way to reuse and repurpose old railway beds and rights-of-way. It continues to grow as it reclaims unused yet very purposeful pathways to create trails that combine history, nature, health, fun, exploration & joy!

The "The Walkable Community Advisory Group" committee, headed by Town Councilwoman Laura Blackwelder, hosted "Celebrate Trails Day" in Chesapeake Beach on April 25, 2026, aptly titled: "Celebrate the Journey! A History from Tracks to Trails in Chesapeake Beach!"

The event in town was held on the Chesapeake Beach Railway Trail. It was a collective effort with participation from The Green Team, The Chesapeake Beach Oyster Cultivation Society, the ROTC from Northern High School who collected trash from Fishing Creek, and the actual builder of the trail back in 2011, John C. Riffe. Mayor Wahl spoke, and honored those involved, as well as honored a special student guest, Bideha Ranjan, who had prepared a remarkable documentary on the history of Chesapeake Beach for her history fair project.

The event covered a vast amount of information, including the history of the town, nature, where we are, where we have been,

where we are going...and highlighted the simple beauty of the Twin Beaches that is available at our fingertips! It was a day of fun and celebration for our own railway trail, which officially opened on September 30, 2011.



Twin Beaches Library display

by Kris DeGrace
Museum Registrar

In an ongoing connection with the Twin Beaches Branch Library, we had a display this past December & January. It has been wonderful sharing our collections and stories with the community, outside the museum. This year we focused on sun and fun in the Twin Beaches...with a slightly reworded adaptation of the song 'California Dreamin' by the Mamas & the Papas, which we obviously called 'Twin Beaches Dreamin'!! And from what I understand, it appears the men's fish swimming trunks were quite the talk of the town! We will be exhibiting again for a portion of June & July, come check us out! Thank you Twin Beaches Branch!



Thank you

by Kris Scott

Treasurer, Friends of the CBRM

The Museum has been a constant in my life for many years. I remember visiting as a child, talking to the stationmasters, and learning about the history of our small town. I started working there in 2003, and even after pursuing other opportunities, I remain a volunteer and proud board member to this day.

I am also proud of the work that the Friends of the Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum have accomplished over the years. In 2023, the Friends agreed to purchase a digital photography package to preserve the collection and make it more accessible. In 2023 and 2024, the Friends obtained lighting and shades for the Dolores. For 2025, the Friends agreed to pay for the painting of the sprinkler system inside the Museum.

Without you, the members, none of this would have been possible. I truly believe that the Museum is the touchstone of our community, and it is your support that helps the Museum grow and thrive. I want to thank each and every one of you for your continued support.

I hope to see you soon at one of our upcoming events!

You're Invited!

Founders Day Ceremony

June 6 at 1pm

***General Membership
Meeting & Elections
at 1:30pm***

At the Railway Museum

Mama Duck was back!

by Kris DeGrace

Museum Registrar

For the 2nd year in a row a Mama Duck has determined our flowerpot at the front door of the museum was the perfect nesting spot.

We quickly made a sign to make sure people were aware she was there... and to be mindful of her. One man actually even brought her a dish of water!

Last year we were lucky to see her little ducklings hatch, but this year, sometime between April 21 & April 22, she chose a more private route and we missed it!

Nevertheless, we loved having her here and we will have her flower pot ready and waiting next year.



Railway Museum Volunteers actively participated in several local community events last year, including the Halloween Family Fun Night in Chesapeake Beach in October and the Christmas Parade in North Beach in December.

A Pearl and a Track

by Correine E. Moore

Railway Museum Administrative Aide

Exterior power washing and painting of the museum building had long remained on the annual maintenance wish list, pending available funding. Last year, the county was able to move the project forward in partnership with the Friends of the Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum, who generously offered additional support for power washing, painting, and selective replacement of porch boards.

At the same time, updates to the HVAC system required that most upstairs collections and materials be temporarily relocated downstairs. Several shelving units also had to be disassembled, including an original shelving unit situated above an air duct vent. For these reasons, scheduling the work during the museum's off-season was essential.

While documenting the progress whenever possible, an unexpected discovery was made beneath the porch: a long section of railway track resting in front of the double windows:



Unfortunately, due to safety concerns, inclement weather, and scheduling limitations, a more extensive examination could not be conducted at this time.

Nevertheless, the track will be cataloged as part of the museum's own "dig" discoveries, alongside smaller artifacts such as plastic forks and a children's tracing tool left behind

from one of our educational programs. And, alas, my coral pearl-button earring — lost several years ago — remains somewhere beneath the porch as well. Should it resurface a hundred years from now, I kindly ask that it be returned to my family.

The following excerpts are reprinted from our very first newsletter, Spring 1982.

RESTORATION

The exterior restoration of the old Chesapeake Beach railroad station is about complete. The changes must be outstanding because people ask "Did you move the station here?" No, it's the same 1897 station fixed up and newly painted. The porch fronting on the Bay has been opened up, with new posts and a new deck. The old chimney topped in brick & the lightning rods compliment the new wood shingle roof and tower. Of particular interest are the "nipped" shingles on the tower and gable; and the flair at the base of the tower; all to conform with the 1897 design. All windows and trim have been painted "Tuscan Red", an original color used on railroad stations and cars. The (half) car Dolores has been moved to the south of the station where its restoration is continuing. Bernie Loveless and Dave Harris of your Committee managed this project. We all owe thanks to Charles Lovins & Son, General Contractor; Robert b. Loveless, Architect; Morse Catterton, Moving Contractor; two grants from the State and the Maryland Historical Trust; use of a crane from the Naval Research Lab; and electric service dropped by BG&E.

PRIORITY PROJECTS

1. Build benches for the bayside porch area.
2. Develop sturdy exhibits for the porch area. (Does anyone know where to set a coin-operated mounted binocular? Maybe we could overlay the actual view of the bay with a photo of the old pier?)
3. Rearrange all the interior exhibits (so you can see in and out of all the windows).
4. Catalogue the railroad records.
5. Sand & paint the railroad car DOLORES, and scrape and paint her wheels.
6. Clean the station.
7. GIFT SHOP! We already have a number of souvenir items that could be a start, with Judge Williams' book; a picture file set up to make quality prints; the souvenir booklet; dandy lapel buttons; our sketch of the museum; engraved brass plaques of the station and engine; and bumper stickers.

Come Visit!

*The Museum is open daily
1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
April through October*