



2008 Special Events

March	Easter Bunny Express	Peter Cottontail will be on board the train to meet each child
May	Regular Season Opens	On Saturday, May 3, our regular season opens, with excursions running every Saturday and Sunday through the last weekend in October. Unless otherwise noted, trains run on our regular schedule of four round-trips each Sat and Sun. Regular excursions also run on Memorial Day (Monday, May 26).
June 20–22	Railroad Days	Ride a passenger train or caboose train, and see special equipment on display at Ringoes station. Kids can ring the bell of a steam locomotive and blow locomotive horns. See speeder and diesel horn demonstrations, and HO, O, and G scale layouts! Photo freight on Friday.
September 20 & 21	The Great Train Robbery	Kids, bring your cap gun, cowboy hat, and bandanna and help the Sheriff protect the train against the dreaded Covered Bridge Gang! Proceeds from the sale of Black River Bucks will be donated to charity.
October	Halloween trains	Come for fun and frights on the Spooky Special.
November & December	Santa Express	Santa and his elves will be on board the train to meet each child and give each one a candy cane. Once the train arrives at Ringoes, there is plenty of time for photos with Santa.
November & December	North Pole Express	Come board this evening train for an exciting journey to the North Pole to meet Santa Claus. Santa's elves will lead a sing-along of familiar Christmas carols on the brightly lit train, and Santa himself will give each child his or her first gift of Christmas.

For schedules, details, and more information about any of our events, visit brrht.org or contact us at info@brrht.org



The Grip is a publication of the BRRHT Public Relations Committee. If you have news or information you would like to see included in the next issue, please mail a hard copy to the BRRHT at:

BRRHT Attn: The Grip
P.O. Box 232
Ringoos, NJ 08551

Submissions also may be sent electronically to Scott Kwiatkowski at sjkski@patmedia.net. For information about advertising in *The Grip*, contact Michael Shea at mshea@brrht.org.

For more information about the Black River Railroad Historical Trust, visit our website, brrht.org or email us at info@brrht.org.

A Light at the End of the Tunnel for #60 Restoration

Steam engine should be running in 2008

by Bill Winecker

Five years ago, a small group of volunteers began the task of disassembling Black River and Western locomotive #60. The path to restoration has been a long road and not always a downhill run.

Nonetheless, many technical difficulties have been met and overcome, and numerous projects have been undertaken and completed. Now, at long last, the process of putting #60 back together has begun.

Last March, we took delivery of 160 two-inch boiler tubes. Shortly after, we received 30 five-and-a-half inch super heater flues after they had been swaged down to fit the rear tube sheet. The next step was to install all the boiler tubes. Installing several tons of boiler tube was no small task and required some planning. Having all the proper tooling on hand to expedite the process was crucial, as were the efforts of the volunteers to do the work. Volunteer Bill Cross supplied a Kalamazoo band saw to cut the tubes.

Another significant job completed this year was installing the brake stand. Brian Jepsen took on this job. With no prints or written procedure, Brian fabricated all the copper plumbing, soldered the

Santa Trains an Early Gift for Visitors and Black River

Thanksgiving was early this year, and thus so was Christmas. After a long day on the Stop Hunger Express, Mike Shea, his new bride Erin, and several unnamed elves went to work decorating the coaches for the Santa trains and the North Pole Express (NPX). They worked late into the night, and pulled off the Christmas miracle: the coaches were ready for the upcoming weekend. But Erin wasn't done yet. She scaled the station semaphore to string some additional lights for an added touch.



Ringoos Station, as decorated by Mike and Erin Shea. Erin scaled the semaphore to string additional lights there.

As a result of mild weather and a big push to promote advance reservations, ticket sales were excellent. Almost all the Santa and NPX trains were sold out. The operating plan was improved this year, too. The NPX train deadheaded early to Flemington, completed the runaround, then shoved north around the CNJ curve to wait until train time. When the platform

A Letter from the Editor

It has been a while since you have seen an issue of *The Grip*. We enjoy producing this newsletter to spread the word about the accomplishments of the Black River Railroad Historic Trust. But it takes time and requires content. So we need you help! Please send us stories, pictures, or other information about BRRHT activities—or railroading in general—that may be of interest to the Trust's members and friends.

This year, you will see a format change in *The Grip*. Following this eight-page double issue, future issues will have only two pages, or four pages when we receive sufficient material. To keep information flowing between issues, the newsletter will be supplemented by e-mail messages, postcards, and pony express.

Also, this is the time of the year to start thinking about when and how often you would like to be on the roster to crew our trains. This is very important. If everyone committed to helping just one day a month during the May-to-October season, we would have plenty of crews for our trains.

Sincerely,

Scott Kwiatkowski

Grip contributions may be sent to:
The Grip
 522 Old York Rd.
 Flemington, NJ 08822
 or by e-mail to: sjkski@patmedia.net

REMINDERS

T-Shirts For Sale

Dark green t-shirts with the yellow BRRHT logo on the front and back are still available in all sizes S-XXL. The price per shirt is \$15. BRRHT members may still purchase the shirts at a discount. Contact Mike Shea for more information at mshea@brrht.org.

Fridge Magnets

White vinyl with the black Trust logo, about 2.5 inches in diameter. A nice addition to any fridge. \$1 per magnet. Contact Mike Shea for more information at mshea@brrht.org.



Unity Bank provides a full range of commercial and retail banking services through retail financial service centers located in Hunterdon, Middlesex, Somerset, Union, and Warren Counties in New Jersey.

**Unity Bank, Flemington is
 a proud sponsor of
 The Black River Railroad Historic Trust**

Visit us in the restored
 Central Railroad of New Jersey Station at:

157 Main Street
 Flemington NJ 08822
 908.782.2000

Santa Trains an Early Gift
 continued from page 1

was filled with children and adults, GP9 752 eased around the corner and into view, to the delight of the bright-eyed children. Once aboard, moms and dads and little ones sang Christmas carols in the cozy glow of the colorful lights strung through the coaches.

As the train arrived at the North Pole (a.k.a. Ringoes station), Santa greeted the excited children. One by one, each child confided a Christmas wish and had a picture taken with Santa, amid North pole signs crafted by Jerry Jagger, a new member of the Trust's Board of Directors. Hot chocolate warmed everyone on these cold evenings.



Back at Ringoes Station, children and their parents gathered around Santa and his elves, sharing Christmas wishes and sipping hot chocolate.

As the last NPX train deadheaded south on December 8 and Santa went to visit other children, the BRRHT's members received an early Christmas gift—the sense of accomplishment gained by completing a safe and successful 2007 season. The trust continues to get stronger as a result of the hard work of its members and their friends who come along to help. All should be proud of their accomplishments. ♦

The Puzzler

By Scott Kwiatkowski

In the last week of January of 1909, a mysterious New Jersey native was seen in the Lambertville area. Who was it?

Bonus question: In reference to the above question, what was significant about one of the mile posts on the Flemington branch of the Bel-Del, according to the track map of the 1800s?

Hint: this was a 12-mile long branch.

As always, find the answers to the Puzzler online. Go to the BRRHT home page (brrht.org) and look for the *Puzzler* link. I have posted the track map to help you.

Recap of the last puzzler:

The Question: What structure on the railroad was nicknamed after a flower—and not just one flower, but two?

The answer: Ringoes Station. According to the book, *Down Along the Old Bel-Del*, by Warren Lee, Ringoes Station became known as the “Sunflower Station,” in the early 1880s. The reason was that the structure, built in 1872 or 1873, had deteriorated so much that it actually sagged.

But then things started looking up. In 1883, the railroad renovated the building, and, as Lee writes, a reporter from the Hunterdon County Democrat commented that “the Sunflower is about to be turned into a daisy.” Hence, Ringoes station was nicknamed after not just one flower, but two!

Pennsy Railcar Restoration LLC

At Pennsy Railcar Restorations LLC, our passion is preserving railroad history.

Our services include assistance with railcar acquisition, transportation, and restoration.

We provide both on-site and off-site consulting, advice, and support.

Learn more at
www.prrllc.com

Restoration Begins on CNJ Baggage Car 420

Future railroad museum is planned

by Donald Lachenauer

Now that the Black River Railroad Historic Trust has become the owner of CNJ baggage car 420, much is happening behind the scenes to prepare for the Trust's project to restore the car for future use as a railroad museum.

Restoration Plans

By restoring CNJ baggage car 420, with the ultimate goal of housing a railroad museum in the car, we will preserve an historic piece of railroad equipment and provide an important way for the Trust to fulfill its goal of educating the public about railroad safety and history.

We plan to apply for grants to support the project, but to do that, important preparation is needed. Key first steps will include some initial restoration work (to demonstrate to granting institutions that we are committed to the effort, and to present a more appealing project), and documenting the car's history, to underline the historical significance of the car in the history of railroading and New Jersey.

History of the 420

CNJ baggage car 420 was built around 1920. The exact date and location of its construction are currently under investigation, but we believe the builder was Harlan & Hollingsworth of Wilmington, Delaware—at that time, a division of Bethlehem Steel—and began life as a baggage-express car for the Central Railroad of New Jersey. The car first arrived at Black River almost 40 years ago. Now that BRRHT has become the owner of the car, we are ready to begin restoring it.

How Members Can Get Involved

To make this project a success, the committee will need a lot of help! We hope that many members of the Trust will get involved. To ensure that the project runs smoothly, and to make the best use of everyone's time and efforts, we ask that interested members get involved by following the steps below.

Contact the lead. The first step is to contact the project lead, Scott Kwiatkowski, by e-mail (sjkski@patmedia.net).

Carry out the steps assigned. Scott will let you know what the upcoming steps are, and where help is needed. Great care is being taken to ensure that the project is carried out in a logical sequence, so we ask that all members follow Scott's leadership and stay within the parameters of each step. Please don't just decide on your own what you think needs to be done; check first.

Please follow safety precautions. In this and any other BRRHT project, all members are expected to use proper safety equipment and follow all proper safety precautions at all times.

When in doubt, ask. When you are at the site carrying out steps assigned by the project lead, questions may arise about how to carry out a step, how to handle an unexpected obstacle, or which step to do next. In such cases, please stop work and contact Scott before proceeding.

This is an exciting project! We hope you share our enthusiasm and will get involved. If you have any questions, please contact Scott or me at any time. We will be giving regular project updates at the bi-monthly meetings. ♦

Stop Hunger Express a Hit With Riders, and a Boon to Needy Families Served by the Local Food Pantry

Both trains were filled to capacity, even after an extra coach was added for the second run.

The Grip Staff

Early in the 2007 season, Trust member and Flemington area food pantry volunteer Jason Feldmen had a new idea: to run a train to support the food pantry. Black River & Western's general manager, Kean Burenga, graciously agreed to donate an engine and coaches for the event. Don Lachenauer stepped in to find a crew and take care of advertising. The plan was to run two trips on Saturday, November 17, right after our regular season ended and in time to help the food pantry boost its supplies for the holiday season.

Riders were asked to bring two non-perishable food items to receive a free train ride in return. Because it was the first time this event was run, no one knew what to expect. But there was a good crowd on the platform in Ringoes, unusual for a cold Saturday morning a week before Thanksgiving. When the three-car train pulled out of Ringoes, it was almost half full.

As the train approached Flemington, engineer Don Lachenauer and brakeman Scott Kwiatkowski could not believe their eyes. The Flemington platform was standing room only! Marian LaRowe was on the platform warning people



to stay behind the yellow line as Don eased the train into the station. The crew scrambled to get as many people on board as possible, but some folks had to be turned away. In true holiday spirit, they cheerfully agreed to wait for the next train.

Once back in Ringoes, the train made its station stop and then proceeded into the yard to drop the caboose and add a much-needed extra

coach. Then it was back to Flemington, to another full platform. Somewhere between panic and joy, the crew loaded all four coaches to capacity with generous passengers.

After the round trip and the passengers' departure, the team loaded the food into the John Bishop and headed to the Central Railroad of New Jersey station. There, bag after bag of food was loaded into the food pantry's vehicles. One car, one SUV, and the bed of one pickup truck were filled with supplies for the needy families the food pantry serves.

The Stop Hunger Express was a huge success. It developed from a casual idea to an all-out performance from the crew, and became a day to remember for the professionalism of the Black River Railroad Historic Trust and the generosity of the Black River & Western Railroad. All involved should feel proud of their part in making someone's holiday season a little brighter. ♦

Steam engine #60 restoration

continued from page 1

joints, and connected them to the stand. We then connected shop air to the brakes to ensure proper operation, and adjusted the linkage to ensure there was enough piston travel to apply the brakes.

**I have learned so much
—from so many people—
about steam engines
and the history
behind the railroad
in Hunterdon County.**

The last fabrication job is to make new arch tubes and install them. After that, the super heaters and throttle need to be installed in preparation of our first hydro test. While no official timeline is set for #60 to return to service, our goal is to have her running sometime this year.

As I look back on this odyssey, I feel a tremendous amount of satisfaction knowing that once this project is done, thousands of people will be able to ride a train pulled by a steam locomotive. I feel privileged to have learned so much from so many people about steam engines, how they work, and the history behind the railroad in Hunterdon County. Most of all, I will remember all the wonderful people I have gotten to know and the friendships I have made as a result of my experience working on #60. ♦

Volunteers on #60

Now that the long process of the FRA inspection and rebuilding of Black River and Western locomotive #60 is nearly complete, it is time to recognize some of the people who have played significant roles on the project.

The project is being led by Paul Nicholson, a chemist for FMC Chemical Corporation and a veteran of the #60 crew at the railroad. Paul has a love for all things mechanical, particularly those that run on coal. This gives him a good excuse to play with fire—really hot fire! Paul’s leadership and decision-making have kept the project moving forward and ensured the work being done will make #60 a better locomotive to operate.

**John has traveled
the world to ride and
operate steam engines,
from Mexico to China.**

John Konn is another veteran crew member of #60. He has been involved in operations at Black River for about 30 years, including working as the engineer of #60. John has been around trains his whole life and has literally traveled the world to ride and operate steam engines, from Mexico to China. Were it not for John’s tireless efforts during the week when the rest of us are working, this project would not be so far along.



Brian Jepsen is a civil engineer for Schiavone Construction and works on the massive water tunnel project for New York City. He is also a qualified fireman for #60. Brian got interested in trains early in life as a result of his dad Gary’s involvement with #60 as an engineer.

My own challenge on the project has been to see if my skills as a machinist are up to the task. Working to tolerances plus or minus 1/16th of an inch was a new challenge for me, and sometimes I found myself to be too much of a machinist and not enough of a blacksmith.

As the project has moved into its final stages, we have been fortunate to get some dedicated retirees to come down during the week and help John Konn with tube installation. This group of retired men includes Jack Dooley, a retired Captain from the Jersey City Police Department and cousin of John Konn; Tom Beadl; Gene Bally; and Dick Hague. This group has spent time during the week installing, rolling, and beading tubes while the rest

of us have to be at our day jobs. Other people who came down to help with the push to install the tubes included Casey from the New Hope and Ivy Land Rail Road, and John McCluskey, one of Brian Jepsen's co-workers. Thanks to the efforts of all involved, the tube installation was completed in about two months. Jack Dooley, Tom Beadle, Gene Bally, and Dick Hague all have spent time working on various other jobs to get #60 back in service. Other important volunteers include Bill Cross, Dave Hensarling, and Adam and Colin (sorry, I don't know their last names). Bill Cross, who is a machinist, lent us the band saw, without which we could not have cut the five-and-a-half inch tubes as accurately or as quickly. Dave Hensarling, who is a project manager for a software company, prepared FRA Form 4, which took over a year to complete and without which we could not operate the engine. Adam and Colin also contributed a lot of work. Many others contributed as well, and I apologize to those I have omitted. ♦