

## Relay Improvement Association Newsletter

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**Relay Improvement Association Board of Directors 2013-2015**

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### November, 2013 Special railfan (trainspotter) edition

#### LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Tradition in Relay is thriving. If you were one of the many folks who joined us for the community yard sale, wine and cheese party or Relay Day, you know what I mean. All of these events saw beautiful autumn weather and record numbers of participants. Thank you to Bill and Faith Hermann for pulling together the yard sale for another year with signage and publicity. Linda and John Kacur hosted yet another wine and cheese party with panache. Ornamental grass and orange seed pods transformed the room along with items that Linda had collected to hold sweet and savory treats. Even a casual passerby would have seen the pleasure and camaraderie that we shared. Thank you, Linda and John, for making it happen.

Relay Day was so well attended that we ran out of food and lemon sticks. We raffled off eight gift baskets, held a karaoke competition and listened to some wonderful, mellow music. Sheila Muccio is to be applauded for a job well done.



I also noticed that this tradition is in good hands for the future. I predict that Julian Mintz will be the future president. He worked the RIA table with the raffle baskets. He quietly assessed the situation, decided what needed to be done and took charge. Why can't our government work this way? We had doctor Theresa Sheets at the spin art table and chief engineer Cole Sheets working on construction. Samantha and Shelby Meek headed up

communication and publicity. The sense of community and the value of working together are clearly evident. I want to thank the many volunteers, especially members of the men's club who live in other communities and who worked with us until everything was packed up and put away. Special thanks go out to Greg Miller, Dick Mencken and David Smith. Your addresses may say Violetville, Arbutus and Ellicott City, respectively, but you are Relay.

Maybe you were at my house for the covered dish last Sunday. What a turnout! I want to thank all those who brought a dish and joined me. I love company for dinner. Relay is the kind of place where if you need someone to hold you up, there is an army behind you. If laughter and good company are the best medicine, we are healed.



#### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

October 28 – RIA Agenda Setting Meeting

November 1 – Senior Luncheon

November 9 – Clean-up Day

November 11 – RIA General Meeting

November 17 – Covered Dish Dinner (Young)

November 20 – Bookies

November 21 – Men's Club

December 15 – Relay Cookie Exchange

December 18 – Bookies

January 15 – Bookies

January 17 – Newsletter submissions deadline

January 19 – Covered Dish Dinner (Plitt)

February 16 – Covered Dish Dinner (Trevey)

**RIA AGENDA SETTING MEETING -  
Monday, October 28 at 7:30 PM**

If you have a topic you would like to add to the November 11 RIA General Meeting agenda, please come to the Town Hall on Monday, October 28 at 7:30 PM. Any member is welcome.

**SENIOR LUNCHEON 10<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY -  
November 1 from 11:30AM to 2PM**

This event is coming very soon! All of the invitations have been sent out and the RSVPs are pouring in. Once again, we rely on the generous support of our neighbors to make this event happen. If you are inclined to help by making a dish or helping serve, please call Theda Mayer at [410-737-9319](tel:410-737-9319) in advance so we know how to coordinate the meal. You may drop off your dish at the Town Hall on Thursday, October 31, 6 - 8 PM, or bring it to the Town Hall on Friday morning 10 - 11:30 AM. It is an event that a number of our residents and former residents look forward to each year. Thank you in advance for your support.

**RELAY CLEAN-UP DAY- Saturday,  
November 9 from 7:30AM to 12 noon**

A recent song asked, 'What you gonna do with all that junk?' Well, we have an answer! Thanks to Rob and Beth Mintz for organizing another community clean-up day. The dumpsters will be at the Town Hall from 7:30AM to 12 noon. The following items are prohibited in the containers: explosives or flammable materials, medical/radioactive waste, acids, caustics, pesticides, chemicals, liquids or liquid wastes, drums or tanks (unless clean and cut in half), animal carcasses, large stumps, wood/logs greater than 8" in diameter and 6' in length and any large items that cannot be lifted manually.

In addition, some household electronics are no longer acceptable in the community cleanup containers. They include: computer equipment (CPU's, keyboards, monitors, printers, laptops, scanners, cables and cords), televisions, VCRs, DVD players, telephones (including cell phones and answering machines), stereos, fax machines, and video display devices.

**RIA GENERAL MEETING – Monday,  
November 11 at 7:30 PM**

The guest speaker at the next Relay Improvement Association meeting on Monday, November 11 is Charles Bury, Special Agent with CSX. Agent Bury will share some cautions and safety tips for pedestrian railroad safety. Given our proximity to the railroad, this is information we all need to hear and share with our families, especially our children. He will also briefly review the role of the CSX police and how they can be contacted. Handouts will be available.

We will also be discussing the RIA budget during the meeting.

Thanks to our speaker from the September meeting, Vince Gardenia, who helped us understand the 'Rain Tax'. Some other interesting facts from the last meeting were:

- MARC train will be starting weekend service on December 7, 2013.
- It's the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Arbutus fire department this year.
- You can get a free home safety survey from the police department. Contact Officer Warehime at 410-744-1584 for more information.
- Thanks to Diana Chism for committing to making a donation for the new handrail in memory of Greg Senkus.

The RIA remains committed to Maryland Food Bank collection, especially during this holiday season. A box for non-perishable foods will be at the front door of the Town Hall before the meeting. Thank you to Lucy McKean for taking the food to SWES.

**COVERED DISH – Sunday, November 17, 5 -  
7:30 PM**

Many thanks to the McGarritys (right) and Theda for wonderful covered dish dinners these past few months. Theda, your renovations are looking great!



Upcoming covered dish events will be:

- November 17 from 5-7:30 PM at Lisa and Bob Young's house
  - January 19 from 6-8 PM at Herb and Dolores Plitt's house
  - February 16 from 6-8 PM at Kathy Trevey's house
- As usual, please bring something to share. If you need the address or if you're interested in hosting a covered dish, kindly contact the delectable Laura Vetock 410-302-8511.

### **RELAY BOOKIES – Wednesday, November 20 at 7:30 PM**

This past month the Bookies celebrated our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on the back deck at Daniel's. Twenty folks came together for the celebration and Faith brought a beautiful cake. We toasted Karen Shannon and the ten years she has kept the Bookies going strong. We remembered Kathy Plitt too as we lifted glasses, as she is part of the group, even while half a world away. We did discuss a book, albeit briefly. We had such a nice time at Daniels; don't be surprised if you see Bookies in more black leather and riding Harleys.



The next meeting is on Wednesday, November 20 at 7:30PM at the Town Hall. The book is *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen in honor of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the book being published.

December's meeting will be held at Doreen DeSa's house on Wednesday, December 17, 2013 at 7:30 PM We will be reading the short story, *A Christmas Memory* by Truman Capote. We plan to do our usual gift exchange (under \$10) and this year, we are inviting folks to donate \$1-5 so that we may make a donation to a local charity.

### **MEN'S CLUB – Thursday, November 21**

Men's Club meets on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of every month. For information, contact Bruce Packal at 443-413-3057.

### **COOKIE EXCHANGE – Sunday, December 15 from 7 to 8 PM**

The Relay Cookie Exchange is scheduled for Sunday, December 15 at 7-8 PM at the Relay Town Hall. If you wish to participate, please email Faith at [fchermann@comcast.net](mailto:fchermann@comcast.net) with your name and your cookie recipe. Deadline to let Faith know is Sunday, December 7, so that she can notify folks of how many cookies to make to exchange and how to package them.

### **YARD SALE A SUCCESS!**

Thanks to all those who participated in the annual Relay-St. Denis Community Yard Sale this year. Please mark your calendars for Saturday, September 20, 2014 for the next community yard sale.



### **WE LOVE THE WINE AND CHEESE PARTY**

Thanks yet again to the Kacurs for arranging the beautiful decorations, fantastic treats and fun atmosphere for another fabulous wine and cheese party. Just so great to relax and chat with our neighbors and friends. The event raised \$464 for the Town Hall. We are counting the days till next year's party.



**Partying at the Town Hall**

## OH, WHAT A WONDERFUL RELAY DAY!

A great time was had by all at Relay Day this year! The weather was perfect, the food delectable and the music fantastic, but best by far was the gathering of friends and family from near and far to celebrate our great town. Over 40 volunteers donated their time and spirit to create such a fun event.

The festivities opened with the Bike and Trike contest, which along with the ever popular Dog Costume contest, were enthusiastically chaired by Caroline Wellman.

Bike and Trike winners were

Seasonal Sensation – Shelby Meek on ‘Jack-o-lantern’

Best Theme - Heidi Middleton on ‘Pokemon Bike’

Funniest – George Middleton on ‘Minion-mobile’

Most Original – Ula on ‘Sweeter than Candy’



Dog Costume winners were

Funniest: ‘Grass Skirt’ Kelly led by Lauren

Most Original: ‘Box of Crayons’ led by Rosie

Best in Show: ‘Dogasaurus’ Buddy led by Rose Gloth

Many thanks to the Bike and Trike judges: Rose Gloth, Cliff James and JP Courneya and to the Dog Contest judges Barbara Jones, Linda Cain and Terri Chavez.

Children's games reached a new level of frenzy as Jeremy Vetock, “the Gamemaster”, ran our kids (as well as himself) ragged throughout the day.

Whether in the traditional sack races or tossing cheese curls at your



partners whipped cream coated head, the kids ran wild and definitely deserved the pies they devoured at the end of the day pie eating contest.



Mr. D's Magic performed for us this year and one enthusiastic fan was really impressed by his rope trick and teleportation of a watch.

We had terrific music all day with DJ B, our own Bruce Packal, goading shy stars-to-be onto the stage in the ever popular karaoke contest. We even had an all star guest singer, Ms. McCusker, who is a Spanish teacher at Arbutus Middle School. Bob Young ran the stage and aided the O Street Band, who were a perfect accompaniment to the rest of the afternoon with their Americana music and fun loving style.

The busiest food stall was a neck and neck contest between the bake table, governed by Diana Chism and Kathy Sweet and the Men's Club tent, where Richard Gloth led a rotating staff in a non-stop pit beef marathon. They were hopping all day long and both sold out completely! Don't worry, nobody went hungry.

Faith and Bill Herman organized tempting raffle baskets with generous donations from Relay residents Kim Box, Gloria Huff, Theda Mayer, Sheila Muccio, and Kathy and Steve Sweet.

The spin art and face painting booths had lines all day thanks to Jennifer Stearns, Karen Shannon, Lynda Sweet, Merjean Irwin and Susie. Many local artisans showed a variety of wares for purchase and several community organizations were on hand to get their message out. Thanks also to volunteers Charlie Beusch, David Gleason, Penny, Loyd Smith, Janice Smith, Rob Mintz, Barbara Reeves, Ann Fishman, Desiree Anton, Sheryl and Gordon Snyder, Elizabeth Young, Harry Frank and Maureen.

All of this fun and hard work raises money to help maintain our Town Hall. But more importantly, Relay Day brings us all together and creates a real sense of community. It showcases our unique town and history and, of course, our beautiful Town Hall. The community spirit was so evident that several people express their desire to move into the

neighborhood. Relay enthusiast Cole Sheets summed it up perfectly, "It was a good time all around!"

Thanks to the 2013 Relay Day Committee; Diana Chism, Richard Gloth, Faith and Bill Hermann, Barb Jones, Theda Mayer, Mary Beth Meek, Sheila Muccio, Jeremy Vetock and Bob Young.

Please support our local businesses that made donations to Relay Day prizes or raffle baskets! They are: The Hub-C'Ville Bikes, Rheb's, Karen Kenner-Avon, The Fractured Prune, R/C Hollywood Theater, Sweet Bee Aviary, Paul's Restaurant, Sorrento's and the Ice Cream Cottage

Thanks to Malory Quinn for donating the proceeds from making bracelets. Also thanks to Margery Fahrenbach for her donation. For more Relay Day pictures, please go to the RIA website.

### **WE GOT MAIL!**

#### **Baltimore County Police Community Outreach**

Dear Relay Residents:

Thank you for using the I-Watch Citizen Tip Report system. The subject who was staying at 5009 Cedar Avenue did not have permission from the legal homeowner to be on the property and had been living in the house for 2 months. The subject was identified as Keith Allan Hussell and he has been charged with Burglary. Currently Mr. Hussell is being held at the Baltimore County Detention Center pending trial for the burglary charges. Mr. Hussell was originally from Maryland and has spent time living in California and Utah before returning to Maryland. Mr. Hussell has had prior contact with So Law Enforcement in California and Utah for Misdemeanor Offenses. Please remind your community members to call 911 immediately whenever they see or hear anything suspicious. Thank you.

Ofc. Tom Warehime, Baltimore County Police Community Outreach Unit, Precinct 1, ph. [410-744-1584](tel:410-744-1584)

### **RELAY VOTED 'MOST WELCOMING TOWN IN AMERICA'**

We are so friendly in Relay that we give welcome baskets to all new residents, even squatters.

### **RELAY HOUSE TOUR POSTPONED**

Due to circumstances beyond our control, the house tour has been postponed to 2014. We hope you will join us next year.

### **TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS**

It is not too late to send in your tax donation for 2013. RIA secretary, Rob Mintz, will gladly send you a letter stating the amount of your donation for tax recording purposes. Money donated will help pay for the painting of the exterior trim of the Town Hall. We did get a \$1000 grant from the Baltimore County Preservation Alliance last June, but that will not be enough to cover the entire job. As you know, building maintenance is a top priority to keep it looking so good.

### **NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN RELAY?**

The Board of Education of Baltimore County is planning a 750-seat addition to Relay Elementary. This news was quietly sent to parents recently and so we are trying to find out exactly what the plans are. The Executive Board of the RIA is inviting a representative from the Board of Ed to speak at the February general meeting on February 9, 2014. In the meantime, there is an open community meeting which may be of interest to parents and Relay residents.

**What:** Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) will host two community meetings to address capacity expansion and modernization of schools in the southwest and central areas of Baltimore County.

**When & Where:** Both meetings will be held from 6:30 - 8 PM on the dates and at the locations listed below:

#### **Southwest Area Capacity Relief Strategies**

**Meeting:** Monday, October 28, 2013 Catonsville High School 421 Bloomsbury Avenue, Catonsville 21228

#### **Central Area Capacity Relief Strategies**

**Meeting:** Tuesday, October 29, 2013

George Washington Carver Center for Arts and Technology 938 York Road, Towson 21204

There is a Frequently Asked Questions at

<http://www.bcps.org/construction/southwest/faq.pdf>

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## RAILFANNING IN ST. DENIS

Seventy years ago, young Matt Carson wore his good white Sunday suite down to the train station in St. Denis, walking with his grandfather to watch the coal-powered steam trains rumble by. The trains emitted great plumes of black soot that choked the air as the whistle blew and the wooden station platform shook. The engineer waved from his small window at the front of the train. It was everything a little boy could want.

“I’d come home covered in grey soot,” Mr. Carson said, chuckling at the memory. “Grandma would say, ‘What have you being doing?’”

“We have a generational thing,” he continued. “We have grandfathers, sons and grandsons come here.” “Here” is the small St. Denis train stop and shelter, only a few feet from where the old train station stood until 1976. Every weekend dozens of railfans gather on either side of the tracks to watch the trains go by, taking scores of photos and waving to the train engineers.

“It’s being a ‘foamer,’” Jim Vechecko explained. “That’s what the train companies call us. We’re foaming,” he said and ran his index fingers down from the sides of his mouth. Mr. Vechecko has been coming to watch the trains for 20 years.

Railfanners are so excited to see the trains that it is like they are foaming at the mouth.



“The old Main Line is the last one over there,” Mr. Carson said, pointing across the three sets of tracks to the far side in Relay. “[Hurricane] Agnes tore one of the tracks up. Track 4 got washed out from Hollow Field to Washington Boulevard.”

“My dad worked on the railroad, so it’s in my blood,” said Harry, who has also been coming to watch the trains for 20 years.

“I’ve seen it from steam to diesel,” Mr. Carson said. He settled in to tell the visitors the local story of

railfanning. A grandfather himself now, he wore a lightweight jacket and a ballcap that said “Pop-Pop” across the front. “Parents bring their tots on from 3-6-7, early childhood. Some kids from the high school come out, take pictures. [Their parents] know we more or less watch out for them.”



Railfanners enjoy the trains and come to watch them roll by, learning their names and numbers, taking photographs and encouraging the engineers to wave and blow the horns. Many of the men coming to Sr. Denis have train gardens of their own at home. Mr. Carson points to the men around him, mentioning each man’s profession during the week.

“We’ve got all kinds of people,” he said. “But we all love trains.”

During the conversation, the group of six men and their visitors were joined by a seventh man, walking across the tracks from Relay. “Oh, here comes the mayor,” Mr. Carson announced.

“Mayor” (and Relay resident) Cliff James returned the greeting while the visitors were introduced to him.

Mr. James motioned to the old village behind the St. Denis train shelter. “One time St. Denis was the main town. It had a sheriff, town hall and restaurants. Back in the day, it was a very busy station. It had a big potbelly stove. When it used to snow, the station manager used to let the kids warm up by the potbelly stove.

“I’ve been here 18 years,” Mr. James added. “I wouldn’t trade it. I love it, I love railroads.”

Railfanning as a hobby and a lifestyle are highlighted online, through various community message boards, fan clubs and with hours upon hours of video of trains passing through St. Denis and Relay, along with the thousands of other railfanning sites across the United States. Mostly, it's smaller gatherings of local railroad enthusiasts, each trying to out-do another for who can be the biggest kid when it comes to trains.

"I think the neighbors are glad we're down here," Mr. Carson said, adding that there are railfanners even in to the early hours of the morning, that there is almost always someone there. "We'll call the police, CSX (train) police, if something doesn't look right." Noting that vandals burned the then-100-year-old St. Denis railroad station in 1976 that he remembers well from his childhood, Mr. Carson added that they are keeping watch on things and are willing to step in when there is a problem.

"We keep an eye on the place," Mr. Vechecko said. "We know the cops and we call them if there's a problem."

At the St. Denis stop, Mr. Carson said they call themselves the "day" and "night shifts" as the groups who come out to watch the trains. Mostly men, there are a few wives and daughters who occasionally come out.

"You better believe we have fun," Mr. Carson said after a train came by. "That's what it's all about."

*Bio: Article and photos by Karen and Kurt Hoffman, who moved to St. Denis in August 2013 and live on Sutton Avenue.*

### **LIVING NATIVITY IN RELAY**

A Living Nativity will be presented by children and adult members of Grace Reformed Presbyterian Church on Sunday, December 8, every half hour from 5 to 8 PM in front of the church on Linden Lane. The nativity scene will be accompanied by scripture reading and Christmas carols and hymns. The shepherds, of course, will have their livestock with them for children to enjoy. Finger food, hot chocolate and hot apple cider will be provided.

### **LIVE MUSIC – GAUCHO COMING TO BALTIMORE**

Dave and his band Gaucho will be back in Baltimore on Sunday, November 3 at 7:30 PM. They will be playing their Gypsy Jazz-Swing Music at 1900 St. Paul Street, Baltimore, Maryland. There will be refreshments afterwards.

### **NO, REALLY, WHAT'S THE RUSH??**

A concerned resident shared a continuing worry about the speeding in Relay, especially around Viaduct and Woodland avenues. A newsletter can not solve the world's problems, but perhaps if we take a moment to be conscious of what our speeds are when driving through town – and to try to keep within the speed limit, we can slow things down.

### **THE 'DAYS OF SHIVERY' ARE COMING BACK THIS WINTER**

According to the Farmers Almanac, 2014 will be having a cold winter. A few ways to plan ahead...

- Winterize your home by insulating walls and attics, caulking and weather-stripping doors and windows, and installing storm windows or covering windows with plastic.
- Clear rain gutters; repair roof leaks and cut away tree branches.
- Maintain heating equipment and chimneys.
- Insulate pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic and allow faucets to drip a little during cold weather to avoid freezing.
- All fuel-burning equipment should be vented to the outside and kept clear.
- Keep fire extinguishers on hand, and make sure everyone knows how to use them.
- Learn how to shut off water valves
- Lay in a supply of romance novels and Kleenex.

### **THANKS TO NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS!!**

Thanks to Karen and Kurt Hoffman, Theda Mayer, Laura Vetock, Bill and Faith Hermann, Barb Reeves, Howard Wellman, Sheila Muccio, Linda Cain, Louise Ricketts and Rob Mintz  
Please contact [caroline.wellman12@gmail.com](mailto:caroline.wellman12@gmail.com) or 443-799-4042 by February 11 to get into the next newsletter.

Thanks to our awesome Relay Day Sponsors

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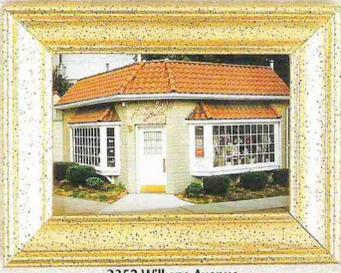
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