

MILEPOSTS

A Newsletter for MTA Metro-North Railroad Customers



October 2015

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Every Year, We Get Slimed...



...but there is no need to call any "Ghostbusters." The problem isn't caused by pesky poltergeists, but by autumn's fallen leaves.

When they drop from the trees and get crushed on our railroad tracks, they leave a gelatinous slime that can cause dreaded "slip-slide" conditions—and delays—during your commute.

In severe instances, when this "leaf ectoplasm" causes the wheels to slip or slide along the rails, a train may automatically make an emergency stop. This is because the on-board computer system perceives "slip-sliding" as excessive speed.

And, horror of horrors, slip-sliding and braking can also create flat spots on the train's wheels, forcing us to take much-needed equipment out of service for repairs.

Over the past several years, we have taken a very proactive approach to combating this problem (*garlic and wooden stakes are not involved*), and you've been experiencing slippery rail less and less frequently.

[Read more to find out what we are doing.](#)

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Sledge Hammers, Saws, Spikes...



...No we aren't hunting vampires.

As you may have read in past *Mileposts*, Metro-North is aggressively rebuilding our infrastructure (as well as our organizational culture) to ensure that safety is the foundation of everything we do, and to improve service reliability. (*That's why you see so many track workers with the aforementioned tools during your travels.*)

But what are the results of all these efforts?

While we still have a lot to do, you will be pleased to learn that our service reliability continues to show steady improvement:

- **System-wide performance** stood at 94.2% on-time during July and 96.1% on-time in August.
- **AM and PM Peak Service** continues to operate reliably at 97.3% and weekend performance improved to 98.1%.
- **Off-Peak Service** operated at 93.9% as we continue our ongoing track infrastructure work.

[Read quarterly updates on our progress here.](#)

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Where Do Those Old Staircases Lead To?



The Grand Central Oyster Bar of course. (*Where did you think they went, Dracula's tomb?*)

But they won't be looking old much longer. That's because we are restoring the historic Oyster Bar Staircases to their old world beauty, one step at a time!

The two staircases are used by an estimated 25,000 customers daily as they make way from train platforms up to the East and West ramps to wend their way into Grand Central Terminal's main level.

Heavier than expected pedestrian traffic (*we are talking volume, not weight*) passed through these staircases over the years, as exhibited by the area's wear and tear.

First up for rejuvenation was the east-side staircase which was brought back to historic life in a mere 12 weeks (from early June to end of August). Underway now is the west-side staircase revamp which is expected to be completed by year's end.

We did a significant amount of custom work, while also giving a nod to durability of materials. All work had to follow guidelines issued by the NYS Historic Preservation Office, which helps communities identify, evaluate, preserve, and revitalize their historic, archeological, and cultural resources.

[Read more.](#)

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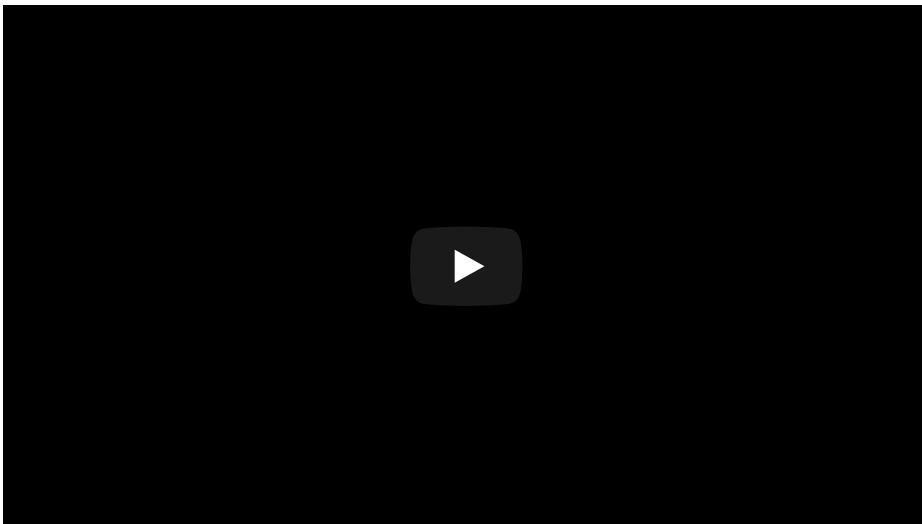
Avoid the Horror...



...of traffic, tolls and trying to find a parking space. **Just take Metro-North** to the **New York City Village Halloween Parade**.

Short of flying in on a broom, it's the fastest way to get to see thousands of ghouls, goblins, witches, and warlocks (*and those are the folks dressed normally*) as they march along 6th Avenue North of Spring Street to 16th Street from 7 PM – 10:30 PM.

Check out previous festivities:



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Safety Rule of the Issue

What body part works best to hold open a train's doors as it is departing the station?

- **Your head?** Too difficult to replace (*though they do seem to be able to transplant anything these days*).
- **Your arm?** While you do have two (*making it seem like an attractive option*) losing one would definitely spoil a person's "symmetrical" good looks.

• **Your leg?** See the arm argument above.

The truth is no body part, or anything else for that matter, should be used to try to keep open a train door. If you can't board a train, wait for the next one (*Trust us, it will appear shortly, as if by magic!*)

We bring you these rules not to scare you (*well, maybe just a little*), but because your safety is our first priority.

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Courtesy Corner



Who doesn't like an M. Night Shyamalan "surprise twist" ending? (*Film critics, apparently, but what do they know about scary movies...*)

We can tell you for sure that no one likes the surprise of finding the "remains" of your sandwich, coffee cup, or newspaper on their seat when they board our train. It's disgusting! (*And not in a cool zombie-like way either...*)

Please remember to take your trash with you when you leave our trains, and be sure to put it in the proper receptacle.

The shame of not doing so will haunt you for the rest of your days. And it is also the courteous thing to do...

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Sweeter Than Halloween Candy!

That's how good the savings are when you purchase one of Metro-North's Getaway packages! You get discount admission and rail fare to some of the region's best events. (*Did we mention many are calorie-free and won't rot your teeth?*)

Among the treats we have in store for you are discount packages to:



The Chocolate Expo, New York's largest chocolate event, will make its mid-Hudson Valley debut at the Motorcyclepedia Museum in Newburgh, NY, on **Sunday, October 25**. You won't find any stale unwrapped Tootsie Rolls here. Take our Hudson Line to Beacon Station and catch a free shuttle bus to the event. Despite what we said earlier, this one may result in tooth decay.

You would swear they moved: That's how incredibly life-like the exceptional wax figures at **Madame Tussauds' New York** are. All 85,000 square feet of this amazing attraction, located right in the heart of Times Square, offers interactive entertainment. Over 200 celebrities from the worlds of film, TV, history, music and sports line up every day to provide you with the experience of a lifetime. (*No, they aren't being held against their will. They are wax, after all...*)



No need to watch out for these beasts! **Boo at the Zoo** is back at the **Bronx Zoo** on weekends through November 1. Wander through an illumination of 1,000 hand-carved and beautifully lit Jack O'Lanterns in a World of Darkness. Join a parade of dancing snakes, bats and more.

We've got so many 'Getaways' you won't believe your eyes! [See a full listing here.](#)

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