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June 09, 2015

Danger! Lakewood Train Safety Allegedly So Poor, Train Engineer Wants To Quit Rather Than Continue To Drive Through Heavily Haredi NJ Town

Kids in heavily haredi Lakewood, New Jersey – the home to North America's largest haredi yeshiva – allegedly ride bikes on train tracks in front of moving trains, throw stones, sticks and lumber at trains, and place rocks on the train rails and stand nearby to watch moving trains smash them, while parents dodge rail crossing fences and try to outrun trains.



The Lakewood Scoop <u>reports</u>:

SHOCKING: Conrail Engineer Close to Quitting Job over Dangers Posed When Passing Through Lakewood

NOTE: The following information was submitted by TLS by a reader and witness of the incidents. TLS has also submitted the letter to the BOE to distribute to the local public and non-public schools to ensure this issue is taken seriously by parents and teachers.

Dear readers,

I would like to share with you an occurrence I witnessed last week that I feel strongly defies what we represent. What I'm referring to is what goes on during the weekly visit we have from what is known simply as 'The Train'.

What I witnessed was as follows:

I was walking down Park Ave by the intersection of County Line when I started to hear the horn of the train from the distance. Suddenly, as if summoned by some hidden force, close to one hundred kids started to appear from all sides. The first thing I noticed was that there were a whole bunch of kids, some who looked to be as young as 5 years old, who ran or rode their bikes on the tracks right in front of the train as if to escort it into town. No elaboration is needed to describe the danger involved in doing this. The kids actually did this all along as far as I was able to see by each intersection as the train proceeded along Park ave and continued into town.

The next very disturbing thing I saw was that the kids started spreading rocks and stones from the rail bed onto the actual tracks to see them get crushed as the train rode over them. Again there is no need to elaborate on the danger this can cause.

The next thing I saw really shocked me.

As most have heard or noticed, the intersection of County Line Rd and Park Ave was recently equipped with new gates to block the road as the train passes through the intersection. During the short pause (definitely lengthened by the procession of kids) not less then 3 cars went around the gate and crossed the tracks. The last car almost collided with the train and had to back up after making a shortstop right on the tracks. I then noticed some kids throwing rocks and pieces of wood at the train as it went by.

A short while later I met up with the Engineer and the Conductor of the train and was able to hear their perspective on this weekly occurrence.

The Engineer unsurprisingly had some very strong words to say to us. He stated as follows:

He has been driving trains for over 25 years and has been doing this run from Seyerville NJ to Lakewood for the past couple of years. (Just as a side note, a lot if the lumber used to build the houses in Lakewood, are delivered through this run.)

He said that what I witnessed happens every Thursday in the summer as he passes through Lakewood. He told me that from all the towns and cities that he passes through, Lakewood is the only one where the kids do this and the only town where cars jump the track. He also said that in all his career he has never seen cars pass through a closed gate until this past week in Lakewood. He said that the danger he faces when passing through Lakewood to himself and the children makes him question his job, and he's close to quitting.

He went on to explain that besides for the damage to the rail company's property, the stones laid down along the track pose a danger to himself and the children as there exists the possibility of the train derailing. I do not need to go into detail about what can happen in such a situation. He continued to say that as the train pulverizes the stones, the fragments of rock that shoot out can be going as fast as a bullet and can pierce right though anyone standing close by. He also said that a train takes a lot more time to stop than a car does, and this poses great danger to kids who run and ride in front of him if they were to fall. He went on to say that he constantly sees adults just standing by and not saying anything as all this happens, greatly adding to his frustration.

I'll quote a question he asked me during our conversation:

Do we need a child to get killed in order for the parents to stop them from doing these things?

I am writing this letter to hopefully stop the problem in it's tracks, so to say, before that can happen.

It is situations like these that at times make us looked down upon by our neighbors.

Parents, please tell your children that it's fine to stand and watch the train go by, but anything that may be a danger

they may not do. It is YOUR responsibility to teach your children how they must act.

Name withheld

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Posted by: OFFICE OF THE CHIEF RABBI | June 09, 2015 at 10:26 PM

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