

RIDERS

MAY 1992



IN THIS ISSUE

| | |
|---|----|
| Philadelphia Chapter News & Meeting Notice..... | 2 |
| PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS, by Frank Tatnall..... | 3 |
| ON THE SCENE, by El Simon..... | 7 |
| Extra List..... | 10 |
| NRHS Spring Directors' Meeting Summary..... | 11 |

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Newsletter of the

Number 5

PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER

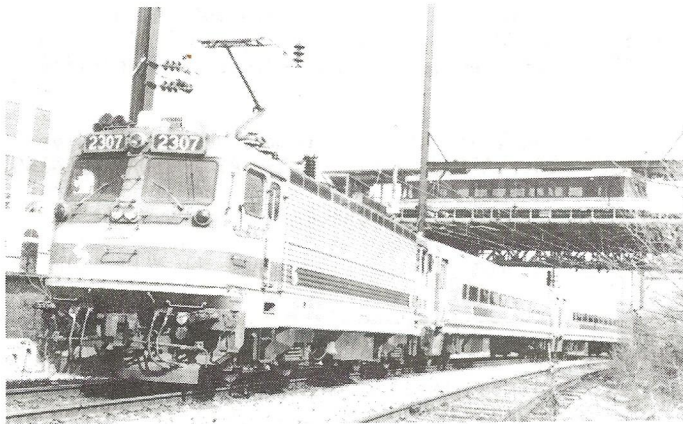
National Railway Historical Society Inc.

Post Office Box 7302

Philadelphia, PA 19101

RIDERS OF CHAPTER SPECIAL ENJOY VARIED ROUTE, GOOD WEATHER

Philadelphia Chapter's special train on Sunday, March 29, was billed as a "Farewell to the Reading's Ninth Street Branch" as well as the first public charter of SEPTA's push-pull equipment. One week after the excursion, SEPTA shut down four miles of the old Ninth Street branch--now officially the Mainline--in North Philadelphia for the massive rebuilding project known as "RailWorks."



Philadelphia Chapter's push-pull special poses at the Norristown Transportation Center on March 29, as new N5 car #451 is parked on the Norristown High Speed Line directly above. AEM-7 locomotive #2307 powered the five-car special on a sunny Sunday afternoon.

--Photo by FRANK TATNALL

The five-car special was made up of AEM-7 electric locomotive 2307, 1987-vintage Bombardier coaches 2515 and 2514, cab car 2406, coach 2525 and cab control car 2402. With Chapter Member Rich Werner at the throttle, the special departed its origin point, West Trenton station, slightly behind the scheduled time of 9:05 AM with about half of the 191 fare-paying passengers on board. Because of single-tracking on the Neshaminy Line, the dispatcher was required to issue Form D movement permits to follow regular train #2369. After a further wait at "Wood" interlocking near Langhorne to allow train 2369 to clear Jenkintown, the extra ran against the current of traffic on northbound track #2 to bypass a brush-clearing crew at Philmont, forcing Conductor Paul Hutchinson to flag several road crossings.

Picking up passengers at Jenkintown and Wayne Junction, the "Bomb" special proceeded through the center city tunnel to 30th Street Station, arriving about 15 minutes late. The remaining passengers boarded there while others visited the restrooms, then the train continued via Amtrak and SEPTA

to Chestnut Hill West for a photo stop at that historic, recently-rebuilt Pennsylvania Railroad station. With the cab car now in the lead, the train departed on time for Philadelphia International Airport by way of Amtrak's mainline through the Lower Level of 30th Street Station. A further delay was encountered at "Phil" interlocking when the Amtrak dispatcher was unable to display the signal for access to the Escape Track leading to SEPTA's Airport Line. A backup move at "Phil" resulted in the train arriving at the Airport 15 minutes down for the one-hour lunch stop.

A photo run was made between Terminal E and Terminal B, with sunshine and pleasant temperatures prevailing as they did throughout the day. At Engineer Werner's suggestion the cab of AEM-7 #2307 was opened for inspection by passengers at Terminal B. Departing a few minutes late from the Airport, the special ran via 30th Street and 16th Street Junction onto the ex-Reading Norristown Line, a branch rarely if ever visited by the Bombardier equipment. A movie runby was nicely executed at Conshohocken for which the locomotive--contrary to normal SEPTA practice--was leading in the northbound direction.

Arrival at Norristown Transportation Center was on time at 2:05 PM, and an unadvertised treat had been arranged there by Chapter Member Russ Jackson and other SEPTA people. Prototype N5 transit car #451 was posed at the elevated platform directly about the Regional Rail tracks, allowing photographers a unique picture as the AEM-7 moved its train slowly beneath. The scene was somewhat reminiscent of the now-famous "over and under" photo in June 1986 when a Philadelphia Chapter Blueliner special was spotted beneath the P&W structure as a Bullet car passed above it. Suburban Transit supervisors also were on hand to open the Transportation Center restrooms for patrons of the Bombardier excursion.

PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER, NRHS, Inc.
Post Office Box 7302, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302

CHAPTER OFFICERS

President.....Michael L. Burshtin
Senior Vice President.....Douglas W. Watts
Vice President & Treasurer.....David L. Kopena
Secretary.....Marie K. Eastwood
National Director.....Frank G. Tatnall, Jr.
Historian.....Larry DeYoung
Editor.....R. L. Eastwood, Jr.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Equipment.....Harry Garforth
Membership.....Sheila A. Dorr
Newsletter.....R. L. Eastwood, Jr.
Program.....Douglas W. Watts
Publications.....Peter M. Senin, Jr.
Publicity.....Thomas F. Moran
Trip.....Frank G. Tatnall, Jr.

MEETINGS: 7:45 PM, third Friday of each month (except second Friday in December) at Eakins Lounge, Thomas Jefferson University Alumni Hall, 1020 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA. Dinner at 6:15 PM (\$18.00 per person), cash bar 5:30 PM, Meeting 7:45 PM.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES: \$25.00 per person, which includes Chapter and National dues. Chapter-only dues \$12.00 per person per year. Membership applications should be forwarded to: Post Office Box 7302, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302. Membership in the parent National Railway Historical Society is required to hold Chapter membership.

ADDRESS CHANGES should be sent to the Editor at Post Office Box 353, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006-0353. PLEASE INCLUDE NEW PHONE NUMBER.

CINDERS is published 11 times a year by Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS, Inc. Correspondence regarding Cinders should be directed to the President at P. O. Box 7302, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302.

EXCHANGE COPIES SHOULD BE SENT TO: R. L. Eastwood, Jr., Editor, P. O. Box 353, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006-0353

OUR MEETING:

FRIDAY EVENING, MAY 15, 1992

Eakins Lounge, Alumni Hall, Thomas Jefferson University, 1020 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA (three blocks south of Market East station)

Dinner at 6:15 PM (\$18 per person); Meeting at 7:45 PM
Parking in Wills Eye Hospital garage, 9th Street above Locust (\$5.00 after 6 PM), or Parkway Garage, also 9th above Locust (\$5.75 after 6 PM), Downtown Garage, Walnut Street east of 10th (\$5.00 after 5 PM)

Our May 15 meeting will feature another in our long series of professional railroad film nights. Members and guests will enjoy GG1: AN AMERICAN CLASSIC, a film produced by Avanti Productions in 1984 and narrated by Chapter Member Tom Moran, documenting the history of the famed PRR electric locomotive, with primary focus on NJ Transit GG1 #4877; GREAT RAILWAY JOURNEYS OF THE WORLD - COAST TO COAST (AMERICA), crossing the United States on early Amtrak; and OPERATION READING, an overview of the commuter rail service from the early 1960's on the Reading in Philadelphia.

Our usual sit-down dinner will be held in the Eakins Lounge, Alumni Hall, Thomas Jefferson University, at a cost of \$18 per person, beginning at 6:15 PM. DINNER RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE BY TUESDAY EVENING, MAY 12, 1992 to National Director Frank Tatnall at 215-828-0706. This is a strict deadline, and we ask that you please specify when ordering if you desire a fish dinner. There will be a cash bar beginning at 5:30 PM.

We invite you to attend our May 15 meeting and enjoy some professional films from the NRHS Film Library.

SPECIAL NOTICE: As Cinders was going to press, the future of the North Philadelphia streetcar lines was in a state of flux. Based upon current information, it is possible that a farewell trip for PCC cars would be held on Route 56 on Saturday, June 13. For further information, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: PCC Trip, Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS, P. O. Box 7302, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302.

CHAPTER OFFICERS RE-ELECTED AT ANNUAL MEETING

All officers of Philadelphia Chapter were re-elected without opposition at the annual meeting of the Chapter, held prior to the regular monthly meeting on April 10. They are: Michael L. Burshtin, president; Douglas W. Watts, senior vice president; David Kopena, vice president & treasurer; Marie K. Eastwood, secretary; Frank G. Tatnall, national director.

RIDERS OF CHAPTER SPECIAL ENJOY VARIED ROUTE, GOOD WEATHER (Continued from Page 1)

This activity required that the special wait for regular train #4141 to depart before it could follow at 2:35 PM, 20 minutes behind schedule. Skimming along the Schuylkill River, the train returned to 30th Street Station, then proceeded to Amtrak's "Zoo" interlocking where it backed through the New York-Pittsburgh subway in order to again reverse direction. Making a final stop at 30th Street and running for the last time over the Ninth Street branch, the train soon encountered speed restrictions along the Neshaminy Line because of signal problems. West Trenton was reached at 4:50 PM, 25 minutes late, after which the special terminated in West Trenton yard ready for its regular assignment the next morning as express #6321 to center city.

The Chapter wishes to thank everyone who helped make this a successful venture, both operationally and financially. Trip Committee Chairman Frank Tatnall extends his personal appreciation to Chapter Members Wayne Bode, Michael and Lynn Burshtin, Dan Knouse, Pete Senin, Doug Watts and Gerry Wilson who served as car hosts, and to Larry and Marie Eastwood who operated the Chapter store in car 2406, selling more than \$300 in merchandise. Thanks also go to SEPTA for its cooperation and to the very able crew of Paul Hutchinson, conductor, and Rich Werner, engineer, assisted by Hank Habersett.


Thanks also go to all members and non-members who purchased tickets for the excursion and made it all possible. Everyone seemed to enjoy this most unusual event.

PHILADELPHIA



FRANK G. TATNALL, JR.

After one of the most contentious debates in SEPTA history, the Authority's board on April 23 ratified a new three-year contract covering 5,200 workers on the City Transit Division. The action headed off a looming strike by Local 234 of the Transport Workers Union, which would have stranded more than 450,000 daily riders.

 The dramatic vote, taken as scores of boisterous union members packed the boardroom at SEPTA headquarters, brought to an end more than five weeks of suspense since a tentative agreement was reached by SEPTA and TWU bargainers on March 14. Estimated to cost SEPTA more than \$25 million in higher wages and pension benefits, the agreement was immediately attacked by City and State political leaders and some board members as too expensive for the financially-strapped Authority, which is projecting a deficit of \$100 million in the next fiscal year. The later disclosure of a "side letter" between negotiators, which would allow the union to veto a plan to cut \$8 million from SEPTA healthcare costs, proved embarrassing to management and increased pressure on the board to reject the agreement. Meanwhile, on March 27 union members approved the contract by a ratio of 23 to 1.

During the board meeting, Local 234 President Harry Lombardo pledged a good-faith effort to help reduce SEPTA's healthcare costs, citing the union's previous cooperation in lobbying Harrisburg last year to secure dedicated funding from the State. SEPTA Chairman J. Clayton Undercofler agreed that union support had been crucial to that victory, and expressed confidence that Lombardo was a man of his word. In response to intense questioning from Board Member Andrew Warren of Bucks County, General Manager Louis Gambaccini said that SEPTA intended to pay for the contract through an expected upturn in the economy and ridership, as well as from lower healthcare costs, service cuts on certain lines to match demand, and staff reductions (see letter on page 9).

When push came to shove, however, a majority of the 15-member board felt that it had to back its negotiators, that it was too late to be asking "what if?" questions and that the region could not afford a costly transit strike--which rejection would surely produce. The members first turned back an amendment offered by Philadelphia Member and City Solicitor Judith Harris, who tried to make approval of the contract contingent upon realization of the promised healthcare savings. Then, about 5:15 PM, they voted nine to three to approve the contract amid cheers from the predominantly-union audience. Only State Senator Earl M. Baker of Chester County, State Representative Lois S. Hagarty of Montgomery County and Harris voted against it, with Philadelphia Lawyer James Schwartzman abstaining. Members Mary Harris of Philadelphia and Franklin C. Wood of Bucks County were absent. Everyone else--including Warren--supported ratification.

Though claiming that he never intended to scuttle the contract--which he could have done if both Philadelphia members opposed it--Mayor Edward Rendell made it clear that he was not happy with its terms. (The settlement might affect negotiations with municipal unions, from which Rendell has vowed to extract major concessions this year.) "I have real doubts about whether SEPTA is going to be able to pay for this, and whether it will want to take it out on the backs of the riders in fare increases and service cuts," he told the Daily News. But, he added, "on balance, there's something to be said for no strike...I believe the citizens are better off with a contract, with even this contract."

Early in the meeting, Chairman Undercofler announced that he had sent letters to Rendell and Governor Robert Casey, assuring them that SEPTA will not ask for additional funding beyond currently authorized levels, plus inflation. The new contract provides for no wage increase until July 1, 1993, with a 10.5-percent boost spread over the final two years. But increased pensions are expected to cost SEPTA \$7.5 million more a year, and each employee will receive an immediate \$500 "signing bonus."

SEPTA's chief financial officer reports that its deficit for the first nine months of Fiscal Year 1992 totaled \$12 million, caused largely by falling ridership. But an ongoing austerity program, plus the transfer of certain operating expenses to the capital budget, should eliminate the deficit by the end of the fiscal year on June 30, she said.

SEPTA last month reached agreement with the United Transportation Union on a new three-year contract covering 280 Red Arrow drivers, averting a strike set for April 2. Similar in terms to the City Transit settlement, this pact still awaits formal approval by the SEPTA board. But 126 drivers on the former Frontier Division continued to work beyond their negotiating deadline of April 7, with no reported agreement.

Well, the shoe has finally dropped. SEPTA has come right out and said that it intends to junk its entire remaining fleet of PCC cars operating on surface routes 15, 23 and 56 (see March Cinders). The cuts are part of an economy drive spelled out in SEPTA's proposed \$600-million operating budget for FY 1993 beginning this July 1. "While we value the City's trolley operation, our current fleet of the older...streetcars are no longer maintainable within the parameters of our operating budget," said General Manager Gambaccini in a budget analysis for board members. Riders also feel that "the old cars lack the reliability and comfort offered by SEPTA buses and trackless trolleys," he concluded. No mention was made of the fact that SEPTA is selling 20 PCC's to San Francisco for rebuilding and continued service.

(Continued on Page 4)

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS (Continued from Page 3)

The proposed budget, according to a Daily News report, includes an average two-percent cut in City Transit Division service beginning with the summer schedules on June 21, another five-percent reduction in September, closure of the ancient Luzerne depot, removal of all trolleys from Callowhill depot, operation of the Broad-Ridge subway spur only in peak hours and substitution of buses for subway-surface cars between 1 and 5 AM. In addition, Regional Rail service would be cut five percent at the end of this year's RailWorks project in October, including possible elimination of most weekend service. One bizarre aspect of the plan calls for substitution of trackless trolleys on rail Routes 23-Germantown Avenue and 56-Erie-Torresdale Avenues, beginning this fall. Surplus coaches and those diverted from Northeast trackless routes would be used, after a second trolley wire is strung. Meanwhile, the lines would be bused, with the last cars probably to be removed in mid-June. Route 15-Girard Avenue would receive buses permanently by this fall.

Public hearings on the FY 1993 operating budget and its proposed cuts will be held this month in all five SEPTA counties. In Philadelphia, the hearings are scheduled for Thursday, May 7 at the Holiday Inn, 1800 Market Street, beginning at 11 AM and 6 PM.

Mayor Rendell has acted to replace the City's two representatives on the SEPTA board, City Solicitor Judith Harris and Consultant Mary Harris. (They are not related.) Subject to City Council approval, the new members will be Richard Voith, a Federal Reserve Bank economist who has written research papers on the economic impact of transit, and Lawyer Sheila Vance Lewis, a former SEPTA staff attorney.....John F. Tucker, a friend of Philadelphia Chapter and former chief officer of Regional Rail, has been named director of SEPTA's Engineering Development Department. He succeeds Jerome Kirzner, who has moved to California's Peninsula commute service.....David Stumpo, SEPTA's manager of surface rail operations, has resigned to join DALLAS AREA RAPID TRANSIT in Texas.

SEPTA is mulling an offer to consolidate its headquarters offices in Six Penn Center, once CONRAIL vacates that center-city building later this year.....SEPTA has issued its Annual Report for Fiscal Year 1991, which shows operating revenue of \$347 million, operating subsidies of \$282.3 million, expenses of \$630 million (including \$56.8 million in casualty claims) and a deficit of \$700,000. Capital expenditures for the year totaled \$150.2 million. Entitled "Building New Connections," the 40-page report has an aerial photo of the Fern Rock complex on its cover.....Transit suffered a blow last month when the chairman of the House Public Works & Transportation Committee, Robert A. Roe of New Jersey, announced his retirement after 24 years in Congress. Just last year he helped push through the landmark Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act. SEPTA earlier had lost a longtime supporter when Congressman Lawrence Coughlin of Montgomery County decided to retire.

On May 22 SEPTA will "celebrate" the first anniversary of the arrival of N5 car #451. The high-tech car has yet to carry its first revenue passenger as testing continues on the Norristown High Speed Line.....John Cowan, 70, the last of SEPTA's original P&W operators, retired last month. Hiring on in 1951, Cowan worked for the Philadelphia & Western Railroad, then successors P&W Street Railway, Philadelphia Suburban Transportation and SEPTA.....Those RTS buses stored in Conshohocken are to be rebuilt for SEPTA by an outside contractor.....SEPTA reports that crimes committed in the Broad Street subway dropped by more than 50 percent in March and early April, compared with the same period last year. SEPTA police took over patrols in the subway north of City Hall effective March 8.....Seventeen people, including 16 SEPTA passengers, were injured in the March 27 collision of a Route H bus and an auto in West Mount Airy.....SEPTA may install experimental carpeting in six Budd Market-Frankford cars.

SEPTA's massive RailWorks rebuilding project got underway as scheduled on April 5, as the Railroad Division ran a Sunday dress rehearsal with full weekday service. Weeks of effort to educate the public preceded the startup as thousands of copies of the "Railworks Fact Pack" were distributed to passengers, signs were erected at all stations, informational sessions were held in center-city locations and new timetables made available two weeks in advance. The second issue of "Connections," the RailWorks newsletter, was also distributed in late March. Even former Eagles Football Star Mike Quick was enlisted as official spokesman for the \$354-million project.

On Monday there was the expected peak-hour crush of displaced railroad passengers on Broad Street subway trains, at Fern Rock Transportation Center and at City Hall station. But the next day the Inquirer headlined "SEPTA's project passes its first big test." An outpouring of SEPTA managers and supervision was on hand to assist bewildered riders and keep traffic flowing over the alternate routes that will be in effect through October 3. Day one estimates were that at least 80 percent of regular passengers on the six rail lines affected by RailWorks had used these alternate routes. However, SEPTA quickly began fine-tuning the operation, attempting for example to steer some afternoon customers away from the crowded City Hall station to the Walnut-Locust and Race-Vine stations and suggesting Broad Street local trains as an alternative to the jam-packed expresses. (Running time for the locals is only six minutes longer between City Hall and Fern Rock.)

The project has other problems as well. Some of the substitute services, such as express buses between Norristown and center city, have had trouble running on schedule--and passengers are obliged to pay the higher rail fares. Then the merchants association at Suburban Station began complaining that their business was off by as much as 40 percent because of reduced pedestrian traffic. Some had laid off employees and a few even talked about going out of business, in spite of SEPTA's offer to cut their rents by 25 percent during the RailWorks period. The real unknown, of course, is how many riders will return to the system next fall.

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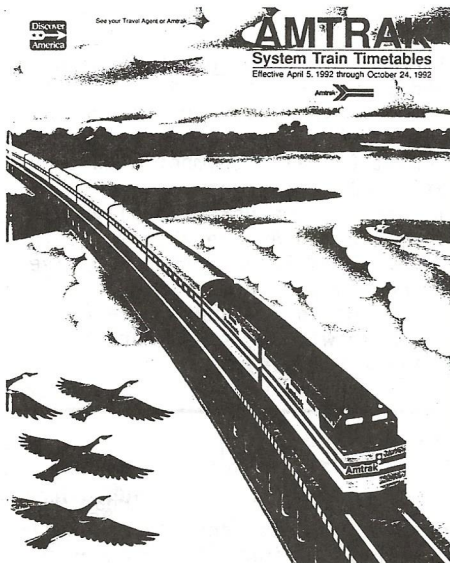
PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS (Continued from Page 4)

Meanwhile, dirt was flying as contractors moved in to begin the task of rebuilding or replacing deteriorated bridges in the four-mile work area, installing new track, switches and signals and stringing new catenary. By mid-April the area between "16th Street Junction" and North Broad station was completely cleared of track and further north workers were preparing to roll prefabricated bridges into place. Welded rail was laid on the shut-down Norristown Line in Conshohocken and the new Liberty maintenance-of-way yard near Wayne Junction was placed in service as the base for heavy track equipment. SEPTA took delivery in late March-early April of its two new 1,000-hp RL1 diesel locomotives (#60-61) from Republic and the dark-blue units made several test runs to Lansdale with Bombardier push-pull cars. Then they were assigned to moving the daily MU car transfers using CONRAIL track between Wayne Junction and Powelton yard near 30th Street Station.

Chestnut Hill West service was beefed up with added rush-hour trains and half-hourly service during midday periods, to handle displaced Chestnut Hill East passengers as well as those driving in from communities along the Lansdale line. In a quirk of scheduling, however, SEPTA is operating more trains to Chestnut Hill West on Saturdays (36) than on weekdays (35), and in late evening they run every hour on weekdays but half-hourly on Saturdays!.....SEPTA plans to complete its cab signal project in June from 30th Street Station to "Zoo." Cab signals are already in service through the center city tunnel.....SEPTA and CONRAIL have agreed to the closure of "Trent" tower at West Trenton, with the interlocking to be remoted from "Wind" tower at Wayne Junction. SEPTA will reimburse Conrail the \$1.5-million cost of the conversion.

Several SEPTA stations were in the news last month. On April 20 the Lansdowne station was gutted by a mysterious fire. SEPTA announced that it will install a shelter at Downingtown to replace the historic station destroyed in a late February blaze. And the Overbrook Farms Club is circulating a petition to renovate the wood-framed Overbrook station. Built in 1858, it is the oldest building in the Philadelphia area still used for railroad purposes.....A distinctive-looking wooden platform for handicapped passengers has been built on the westbound side at Bryn Mawr.....A SEPTA study estimates that it would cost \$40 million to restore the crumbling ex-Pennsy viaduct which spans the Schuylkill River at Manayunk.....The Pennsylvania Convention Center Authority reportedly is interested in either a steam locomotive or an ex-Reading Blueliner to exhibit inside the Reading Terminal trainshed, which is to be renovated over the next two years as part of the new convention center.

SEPTA push-pull train D5010 deadheading east on April 7 struck and killed a 30-year-old trespasser on AMTRAK's Harrisburg mainline near Thorndale. The victim was a patient at nearby Coatesville Veterans Hospital.SEPTA train 8363 struck a 15-year-old boy as he walked across the high bridge over Cobbs Creek near Swarthmore on April 20. He was listed in critical condition at a nearby hospital.....The Environmental Protection Agency has proposed a \$25-million Superfund cleanup of PCB-contaminated soil in and around the Paoli railyard. EPA can assess the costs against present operator SEPTA and owner AMTRAK, as well as previous operators. Penn Central Corp. has filed suit in Federal court to remove itself from the case on grounds that it transferred the yard "as is" to CONRAIL in 1976.



President Bush stepped into the long-running dispute between AMTRAK and eight of its unions in time to head off a systemwide strike threatened for April 4. By naming an Emergency Board to explore the dispute and recommend a settlement by May 3, the President effectively delayed a possible strike until June 3 when a 30-day cooling-off period expires. Amtrak is still at odds with more than 8,600 workers, or 40 percent of its unionized workforce. The largest groups involved are 2,000 members of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees and 2,500 carmen belonging to the Transportation Communications Union.....The President also appointed separate Boards to deal with two other disputes, one between the BWME and CONRAIL and the other between the International Association of Machinists and 40 railroads nationwide. None of these were covered by the Congressionally-mandated settlement of last year's one-day strike against most freight railroads.

AMTRAK ran its three experimental RoadRailer units on their first revenue trip April 15, on the rear of train #29 from Washington to Chicago. These hybrid trailers are carrying U.S. Mail on a series of test runs, connected to the trains by means of a transition device known as a CouplerMate. Earlier, the RoadRailers made several test runs on the Corridor and from Philadelphia to Harrisburg behind an AEM-7 and instrumented Amfleet coach 21150.....AMTRAK has redesignated its eight ex-GO TRANSIT GP40TC locomotives as GP40H. Engine 197 was spotted April 6 powering Harrisburg-bound train 609.....NARP reports that AMTRAK plans to open its first-class lounge in 30th Street Station this summer.....AMTRAK has been advertising its luxury Keystone Classic Club service in the Sunday Inquirer.....The City last month closed the 34th Street bridge over AMTRAK at "Zoo" after the 70-year-old span dropped three inches. It is not known whether it will be rebuilt or replaced.

The Supreme Court, by a 6-3 vote in March, upheld AMTRAK's authority to condemn and resell 49 miles of the Conn River Line in Vermont and New Hampshire, after previous owner GUILFORD TRANSPORTATION refused to maintain the track for normal Montrealeur speeds. Industry observers believe that the decision will strengthen Amtrak's hand in renegotiating its trackage agreements with the nation's freight railroads by the 1996 deadline.

(Continued on Page 6)

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS (Continued from Page 5)

That's why eight major roads filed briefs with the Court urging that it affirm a lower court ruling in Guilford's favor. An attorney in the Justice Department, which backed Amtrak, said that the "railroads aren't in the catbird seat anymore. The ruling gives Amtrak a valuable tool in negotiating trackage rights" (Journal of Commerce).....The House Energy & Commerce Committee last month approved \$800 million in funding for Amtrak in Fiscal Year 1993, including \$397 million in operating subsidies and \$300 million in capital spending (Rail News Update).....AMTRAK has ordered 153 waste storage systems for Amfleet II cars from Microphor, Inc. All Amtrak cars must be equipped with waste retention systems by 1996 (Railway Age).



CONRAIL reports its net income during the first quarter of 1992 was \$38 million, versus only \$18 million in the same period last year. Revenues rose from \$755 million to \$798 million, a 5.7-percent increase, while traffic volume was up eight percent..... In its 1991 Annual Report CONRAIL said that it responded well to a 3.6-percent decline in revenue (\$120 million) during the year by slashing expenses by 5.1 percent (\$151 million). Excluding a special charge of \$719 million for asset writeoffs and labor buyouts, Conrail would have reported net income of \$240 million, a drop of 2.8 percent from 1990. With the special charge, net loss for the year was \$207 million.....The market price of CONRAIL common stock skyrocketed 110 percent during 1991 and reached an all-time high of more than \$93 per share in April 1992..... CONRAIL said that it will spend about \$500 million this year on capital projects, compared with \$398 million in 1991.....CONRAIL started construction last month on its \$25-million computer center near Woodhaven Road in Northeast Philadelphia, replacing a center-city facility and another in King of Prussia.

CONRAIL made an unusual switch in its executive ranks last month, as Timothy P. Dwyer moved from assistant vice president-steel in the Marketing Department to general manager-transportation & customer service for the Philadelphia Division. Dwyer replaces Ronald J. Conway, who becomes AVP-petrochemicals in Marketing. Numerous other changes were made in the upper echelon of the Transportation Department, prior to the expected retirement of Senior Vice President-Operations Donald A. Swanson. Titles of the six division GM's have been changed to reflect their responsibility only for transportation and customer service, with engineering and maintenance personnel reporting directly to system officers.....The May 4 edition of Business Week reports that CONRAIL Chairman & CEO James A. Hagen received total 1991 compensation of just over \$1 million. BW also said he was the best among CEO's of major railroads in shareholder return compared with pay.....CONRAIL has centralized all crew dispatching for the system at Dearborn Division headquarters in Dearborn, MI.

CONRAIL will reopen six miles of the ex-Reading Stony Creek branch between Norristown and West Point, PA, to use in routing high-cube cars to the Lansdale area. The SEPTA-owned branch, out of service for several years with washouts and rotted ties, will provide a shortcut for freight trains as opposed to the present operation from Philadelphia over SEPTA's Mainline. This project was discussed by Tony Giobbie, Conrail division manager-customer service, during his appearance at Philadelphia Chapter's April meeting. He also mentioned the Park Junction connection planned for next year (see March Cinders).....CONRAIL assumed ownership of AMTRAK's "O" running track between "Shore" and "North Philadelphia" on April 5, renaming it the Shore running track. Now under control of Conrail's Philadelphia dispatcher, it is the route for freight trains using the Delair bridge to and from Camden, and will be tied in with the Park Junction route.

The Interstate Commerce Commission ruled in March that CONRAIL must negotiate with the DELAWARE & HUDSON to allow the smaller road access to Philadelphia industries. But first D&H parent CANADIAN PACIFIC must secure reciprocal switching rights from the D&H estate because those rights granted nine years ago to the "old" D&H were not conveyed in the 1990 sale to CP. Meanwhile, Conrail has been accused by local port interests and the press of trying to freeze out the D&H to restrict competition ("Obstructionist Conrail" trumpeted an Inquirer editorial on April 3).....CONRAIL is still the object of Teamsters picketing at certain of its intermodal terminals (see March Cinders), although arrangements have been made at most locations, including Morrisville, to keep traffic moving in and out.....CONRAIL this year will close its historic Merion Avenue records center, moving the remaining files and records to a new building near the Airport.....CONRAIL has purchased five 1700-series GP16 locomotives from CSX and is rebuilding them under a U.S. Army contract. The first, USA 4626, emerged from Juniata shop last month.....NJ TRANSIT will host the annual convention of AAPRCO, the American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners, at Hoboken Terminal October 7-11. There will be space for 33 cars from all over the U.S., and special trains will be run to and from Hoboken (Private Varnish).

RAILROAD MUSEUM TO CELEBRATE PENNSY WEEKEND JUNE 13-14

The Pennsylvania Railroad will be the subject of special historical activities at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, Strasburg, on the weekend of June 13-14. Sponsoring the event will be the Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society and Friends of the Museum. Members of both organizations will be granted free admission.

Among the events will be a slide lecture by David R. Sweetland, author of Pennsy Steam Years, PRR Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment and other all-color books. Well-known PRR authorities Don Wood and Michael Bezilla will be among those present for the weekend. An exhibit of PRR artwork and 33 original calendars will be on display, and the recently-discovered original oil painting "Speed and Security," which appeared on the first PRR calendar in 1925, will be unveiled. A special display of scale-model PRR equipment and a roundtable of Pennsy veterans recalling their careers will also be featured, along with historic PRR locomotives and cars on exhibit in the Museum.

Regular Museum admission charges will apply to the public.



 A PERSONAL NOTE: The card received that you all signed at the March Chapter meeting was a pleasant surprise, as were greetings received from any number of individual members. I'm pleased to report that my sudden surgery was successful, and my recovery was well enough along to permit a short visit to the April Chapter meeting. EWS.

After a good deal of soul-searching, Amtrak elected to continue operation of the Montrealer over its present route between Washington and Montreal, at the same time implementing some economies in its operation. The baggage car will operate only during the winter season (largely for skis), and the second sleeper will operate Thursday-Sunday only. The Amdinette (and its tray meal service) will be discontinued and Amcoach II's will be used in lieu of Heritage coaches. Sleeping car passengers will receive a boxed dinner. A sample menu will show chicken slices with spinach, red cabbage, sliced orange, small pasta salad, cheese slices, cookies and an apple.

On March 20, Amtrak operated a special train for Ohio DOT between Cleveland and Cincinnati via Galion, Columbus, Springfield and Dayton. An F40, three Amfleet II coaches, lounge 3101 and track inspection car 10001 were operated by Conrail crews, with a CSX pilot west of Dayton. Reports have suggested that a connection via this route would connect at Cleveland for points east.

Among cars recently put up for sale by Amtrak are three twin-unit diners and four ex-B&O "Bird"-series 16-4 sleepers. No dome cars were on the listing.

North of the border, Ontario Northland will eventually operate a fleet of 20 cars rebuilt from GO Transit commuter cars. Perhaps ten of these are now in service on the Northlander, where they have replaced the former TEE equipment.

After a spate of broken axles, VIA removed all of its LRC cars from service around March 15. Some temporary bus substitutions were necessary and spare cars (including power cars) were borrowed from GO Transit to operate west of Toronto. Consists were shortened and conventional cars were used on the Toronto-Ottawa-Montreal-Quebec corridor trains. Some F40's were teamed up with steam generator cars, but classic FP9's were also noted in service. Many of the axles on these cars must be replaced and it could be May before the re-equipped cars can be returned to service.

The Canadian has assumed a faster schedule, more amenities and a higher fare. No separate Skeena will operate this summer, limiting the sleeper business and favoring the privately-operated Rocky Mountaineer.

The Halifax-Montreal VIA train operating through Maine operates VIA's only all-year dining car (the Canadian's diner runs during holiday and summer seasons only); four Budd diners (Acadian, Emerald, Louise and Wascana) have been noted recently. On the rear will be found one of four dome-sleeper-observations: Algonquin Park, Laurentide Park, Sibley Park or Waterton Park).

Chicago's METRA has ordered 173 new gallery cars from Morrison-Knudsen, which will consist of 75 cab cars and 98 trailer coaches. Many of these cars will replace some of the steel cars on the Chicago & North Western routes, but about 100 of the C&NW's will remain in service. The same contract calls for the rebuilding of 140 double-deck electric coaches in use on the Illinois Central electric lines.

Chicago's Southwest rapid transit line to Midway Airport was to begin service about Columbus Day, but the recent flood which interrupted subway service downtown, sending North-South trains onto the el and West-Northwest passengers onto substitute buses will delay the introduction of service. Damage to the subway will most likely not be corrected until sometime in May. The first Morrison-Knudsen-built cars for CTA (3200 series) have begun to arrive.

The new Caltrans cars on order from MK (bodies by SOREFAME) will seat 146 in commuter version and 95 in intercity version.

Montreal's electrified ex-CN route to Deux Montagnes will survive and be upgraded. Twenty-nine motor-trailer sets have been ordered from Bombardier and plans have been made to upgrade track, stations, signals and power supply.

The Reading Company last operated a full-service dining car on its passenger trains more than 30 years ago, so many of our members may not be aware of the type service that was provided and the trains which carried meal service cars. We'll take a quick look at the post-World War II services this month.

(Continued on Page 8)

ON THE SCENE (Continued from Page 7)

Reading and Jersey Central jointly operated the dining service, primarily with eight steel cars and the Crusader stainless diner. Both railroads also operated a number of steel-sheathed cars, some of which were even air-conditioned.

At the end of the War, three trainsets were offering meal service on four trains between Reading Terminal and Jersey City. The Crusader, eight years old in late 1945, left Philadelphia at 6:50 AM and 2:00 PM and departed Jersey City at 10:12 AM and 5:12 PM. The use of the unique bi-directional consist facilitated a rapid turnaround at end points and the center car was laid out as a 32-seat diner with an adjacent cocktail lounge, the first on the railroad.

The Wall Street Special, meanwhile, left Reading Terminal at 7:40 AM with a dining-club car and CNJ observation. The lounge came back from Jersey City at 4:12 PM weekdays and 6:12 Saturdays, whereas the dining-club car came back at 1:12 PM Saturdays (to cater to those who worked half-days Saturdays) and 6:12 weekdays. A third dining car left Jersey City at 2:12 PM and returned from Reading Terminal at 5:00 PM weekdays, but this car did not last long due to low demand.

On March 1, 1948, the "streamstyled" Wall Street was introduced, replacing the 7:40 AM train from Reading Terminal and returning from Jersey City at 1:12 PM Saturdays and 4:42 PM Monday-Friday (the Crusader was departing Jersey City at 5:27 PM). A diner-cocktail lounge and club car were featured. At the same time, a third set was re-introduced on weekdays, leaving Reading Terminal at 10:00 AM and returning at 6:12 PM. It would last until April, 1950.

In April, 1949, the 7:40 AM from Reading Terminal and the 10:12 AM from Jersey City were discontinued on Saturdays. Now, the Crusader and Wall Street each made a Saturday round-trip, and this arrangement prevailed until the fall of 1954, when the afternoon trip was discontinued. In April, 1955, the Crusader's midday round trip was discontinued.

In October, 1957 the Crusader swapped places with the Wall Street, leaving Jersey City first in the afternoon on weekdays. The midday Saturday return came off in April, 1959, replaced by a 5:44 PM departure using the Wall Street cars without the club car. On April 24, 1960, full meal service was replaced by a continental breakfast and refreshment service.

Between Jersey City and Harrisburg, the Queen of the Valley and a companion pair of trains provided morning and late afternoon departures from each end point. Pullman parlors had come off in September, 1941, and in April, 1951 this was reduced to a lunch trip from Allentown serving dinner on the return from Harrisburg in the evening. This proved to be short-lived, however, with service ending the following September.

Between Philadelphia, Bethlehem and Scranton, meanwhile, a diner-club arrived in Philadelphia on the morning connecting train from the Lehigh Valley, serving breakfast, returning on the Scranton Flyer serving dinner. Parlor-coach 699 ran between Scranton and Philadelphia both ways on the Flyer. In September, 1948, this car came off and the club-diner replaced it, with first-class riders accommodated in the lounge. Once again, this didn't last, and the car came off in April, 1950.

On the Mainline, buffet-parlor use had ceased in the mid-1930's (replaced by "reclining seat coaches" such as car 1546). Only a single diner-parlor (a modified cafe car with fewer dining seats, a smoking lounge and a parlor section) continued on a Shamokin-Philadelphia round-trip. This car, 1189, was modernized and continued in service on the King Coal after September, 1949. In April, 1952, the car was cut back to operate between Pottsville and Philadelphia; parlor service ended in October, 1955.

On November 14, 1948, meanwhile, Reading had introduced the Schuylkill, including "grill" car 2060. This "signature" car included a lunch counter and several tables at the end of a reclining-seat coach. The train made two round-trips between Pottsville and Philadelphia, serving breakfast and dinners inbound and lunch and late suppers outbound. From September, 1954, one Sunday round-trip was eliminated. Both mainline trains lost their meal service in July, 1958 and the cars eventually were assigned to the two Philadelphia-Jersey City trains until the advent of the Budd RDC's in October, 1966.

As an aside, one can still eat a meal in a Reading diner ("grill" car 2060) at Felty's diner, located on PA Route 25 in the village of Fountain, PA, near Pottsville; the car's interior has not been altered too greatly and the patron can use his imagination to simulate a ride from Pottsville to Philadelphia while eating!

"TRAINS" ISSUE CONTAINS TOURIST ROAD INSERT

The May 1992 issue of Trains Magazine contains a 16-page supplement entitled "Trains Guide to Recreational Railroading," which provides information and advertisements for tourist railroads and museums around the U.S. It also features an article by Harrisburg Chapter Member Dan Cupper on the subject of "Recreational Railroading." The Pennsylvania listing includes 25 attractions across the state.

A Trains press release states that the tourist railroad industry generates about four million passenger trips per year and takes in gross annual revenue of \$42 million. The industry has been experiencing a growth of five to six percent a year, according to a well-placed source. For those who do not subscribe, Trains is on sale at hobby shops for \$2.95 per copy.

SEPTA CHIEF CONFRONTS FISCAL CRISIS

The following letter dated April 3, 1992 was addressed to all SEPTA employees. It details the serious nature of the financial crisis facing SEPTA in the immediate future.

Dear SEPTA Employee:

In the next few weeks, senior staff will be introducing approaches to meet SEPTA's expenditure target of \$600 million for FY '93, which is a reduction of approximately \$65 million from next year's proposed budget. Meeting this target will require a number of severe measures which will affect SEPTA employees and our riders.

It would be a mistake to blame the tough decisions that must be made on any labor settlements. These problems would and do exist independent of any labor contracts.

The challenges facing us are largely the result of economic conditions in the region, the state and the nation. Last summer, when we achieved dedicated funding, we launched FY '92 with confidence and a sense of financial stability based on adequate funding and the promise of economic recovery. By February 1992, virtually every assumption was obsolete, and we faced a gaping financial chasm in FY '93:

- Our customer base has been eroded by the continuing economic downturn. Fewer people are traveling to work or making discretionary trips. Rather than recovering by mid-year, ridership has continued below the prior year, and we now project \$32 million less in revenue because of the ridership losses. As has been the case in many metropolitan areas in the country, the long-term trend of population dispersal has contributed to the ridership decline.
- State revenues have also not been immune to the economy. The Commonwealth is withholding some of the operating subsidy previously appropriated for this fiscal year, and no increase is proposed for FY '93. Also, the dedicated fund created for transit is yielding 35 percent less than expected when it was enacted last August. The total shortfall adds up to \$27 million in subsidy which we expected to get for our operating budget. The Federal front is not any rosier.

I believe we are facing a new reality with our subsidizers: that we can't expect significant increases in subsidies each year. The economic realities in Washington, and especially Harrisburg, are not going to permit that. Consequently, I believe we must look within SEPTA to help us through the coming fiscal years.

Many of you have already been aware of the darkening financial clouds facing SEPTA in recent months. Often in prior years, we adjusted service to achieve budget goals. But we know that such strategies can not fully address the financial crisis which we face. Service economies are only acceptable in conjunction with a program of internal administrative downsizing and other cost efficiencies which are now being formulated. This will mean changing the way we conduct business, if it can save money and provide equivalent service; removing obsolete equipment and facilities which are expensive to maintain; and reducing our administrative and management staffs. I hope that most of the reductions can be accomplished through attrition, but I would be less than candid if I said that there will be no layoffs.

I know that the subject of layoffs is a great concern to all of you. I wish I did not have to raise it, but all one has to do is pick up a newspaper these days to know that it is occurring throughout our region. A downsizing of SEPTA is an essential part of our plan to meet our budget goals. Any layoffs will be done according to collective bargaining agreements or appropriate administrative guidelines that we will develop and make known to you.

We are in what I believe to be the most difficult period for SEPTA since I became general manager. We must all work more diligently than ever to retain and increase ridership to stem the hemorrhaging of passenger revenue as well as to demonstrate our overarching concern for our passengers. I ask for your cooperation in the difficult task of retrenchment, and your help in meeting the challenges that face us.

Sincerely, .

/s/ Lou Gambaccini

Louis J. Gambaccini
Chief Operations Officer/
General Manager

MAY 9, 1992: Amtrak excursion from Harrisburg, Lancaster and Paoli to West Point, NY and return. THIS EVENT HAS BEEN CANCELLED.

MAY 16: Railfan Day on South Branch Valley Railroad to begin the second operating season of the "Potomac Eagle" diesel-powered train over scenic route along the South Branch of the Potomac River. Powered by specially-painted GP9 #6506, train will leave Romney, WV (West Virginia Route 28) at 9 AM, returning about 5:30 PM. Numerous photo stops will be made and food is available aboard the lounge car. Fares: \$35 per person in coach, \$49 in "classic club." Order tickets from: Potomac Eagle, 2306 35th Street, Parkersburg, WV 26104 (Visa and MasterCard accepted).

MAY 16: "Farewell? to the Maybrook Line" circle excursion from Danbury, CT to Beacon, Croton-Harmon, NY, Stamford, CT and return via Conrail and Metro-North Lines, sponsored by Western Connecticut Chapter NRHS. Train hauled by vintage New Haven-painted FL9 locomotives will depart Danbury at 10:15 AM, with convenient connection via Metro-North train leaving Grand Central Terminal at 8:07 AM. Special returns about 4:30 PM, after covering former NH Maybrook and Beacon branches now threatened with abandonment, also Hudson and New Haven Lines of Metro-North. Fares: \$45 adults, \$25 children (5-12). Order tickets from: WestConn Chapter NRHS, P. O. Box 1042, New Canaan, CT 06840, enclosing stamped, self-addressed envelope.

MAY 30: Spring excursion from Baltimore to Charlottesville, VA and return via CSX lines, sponsored by B&O Railroad Museum. Train will use MARC equipment, leaving Baltimore 7:30 AM. Fare: \$55. For information, write: B&O Railroad Museum Excursions, 901 West Pratt St., Baltimore, MD 21223-2699 (telephone 301-752-2393).

MAY 30: Railfan Day on the New York Cross Harbor Railroad, Brooklyn, NY, including runbys with rail equipment and inspection of facilities at 65th Street yard, Atlantic Terminal and Greenville yard in New Jersey. Night photo session scheduled. Bus leaves Pennsylvania Station, New York, at 10 AM, returns at 6 PM (11 PM for night photo participants). Meal stops will be made. Tickets are priced at \$45 per person (\$55 including night photo session). Order from: Bernard Ente, P. O. Box 568, Maspeth, NY 11378, making checks payable to "Vanderbilt Transportation Associates" and enclosing stamped, self-addressed envelope.

MAY 30-31: One-day excursions on Maine Coast Railroad (former Rockland branch of Maine Central) from Brunswick to Rockland, ME and return, sponsored by 470 Railroad Club. Train will consist of Maine Coast locomotive and privately-owned coaches, leaving old station site in Brunswick at 8 AM each day and returning about 5:15 PM. Photo stops will be made on this scenic line along the Atlantic Ocean. Fare: \$39 per person. Order tickets from: Trip Committee, 470 Railroad Club, 18 Melody Lane, Portland, ME 04103, making checks payable to "470 Railroad Club" and enclosing stamped envelope.

JUNE 1: Ringling Bros. 49-car Blue Unit circus train will operate from Hershey, PA to South Philadelphia via Conrail, prior to the circus two-week engagement at the Spectrum. Estimated arrival time 12 Noon.

JUNE 12-14: Boston Trolley Meet at Sheraton Inn, Lowell, MA, sponsored by Boston Chapter NRHS. Events include show with model displays, clinics, operating layouts, banquet, trolley rides at Lowell Historical Park, bus trip to Seashore Trolley Museum at Kennebunkport, ME. For information and registration form, write: Boston Chapter NRHS, P. O. Box 252, New Town Station, Boston, MA 02258, enclosing stamped, self-addressed envelope.

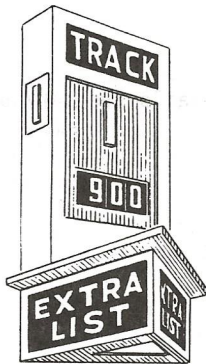
JUNE 13-14: Pennsylvania Railroad Weekend at Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, Strasburg, sponsored by Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society and Friends of the Museum. See story elsewhere in this issue.

JUNE 14: "'Almond Joys' to Norristown" excursion on SEPTA's Norristown High Speed Line, using converted Budd Market-Frankford cars, sponsored by Buckingham Valley Trolley Association. Special two-car train leaves 69th Street Terminal at 1 PM, making two full round-trips to Norristown with photo stops and meets with regular trains. Fares: \$20 per person, \$15 for BVTA members, \$25 on day of trip. Order tickets from: George Metz, 130 Springton Lake Road, Media, PA 19063-1826, making checks payable to "BVTA" and enclosing stamped, self-addressed envelope. Fare includes free Almond Joy candy bar. For information, telephone 215-565-0528.

JUNE 20-21: "Mauch Chunk Special" excursions from West Leesport to Jim Thorpe, PA and return via Reading, Blue Mountain & Northern and Carbon & Schuylkill Railroads, sponsored by Jersey Central Chapter NRHS. Two-car train of Blue Mountain & Reading RDC's will leave West Leesport at 9 AM each day, operating over newly-rebuilt Catawissa branch to Haucks, PA and on to Jim Thorpe, with several quality photo stop opportunities. Fares: \$32 adults, \$28 children. Order tickets from: Ticket Agent, Jersey Central Railway Historical Society, P. O. Box 700, Clark, NJ 07066-0700, enclosing stamped, self-addressed envelope. For information, telephone 908-454-4848.

JULY 22-26: NRHS national convention at San Jose, CA, featuring Union Pacific trip with 4-6-6-4 #3985 to Stockton, CA and return, excursion to San Francisco and return with ex-Southern Pacific 4-6-2 #2472 connecting to/from trip to Oakland and return with #3985, SP trip headed by "Daylight" 4-8-4 #4449 to California State Railroad Museum at Sacramento, 4449-2472 doubleheader to Watsonville, CA and return, tour of Niles Canyon tourist railroad, excursion on new San Jose light rail line with vintage cars, night photo session and Friday evening banquet. All members should now have received their complete convention brochure and order form. Tickets still available for all events except Stockton trip and night photo session. For further information, write the sponsoring Central Coast Chapter NRHS, P. O. Box 36301, San Jose, CA 95158-6301 (telephone 408-253-2798).

JULY 27-AUGUST 9: "Nevada-Colorado Rails" post-convention tour sponsored by Overland Chapter NRHS. Complete information may be obtained from Overland Chapter, 1412 12th Street, Moline, IL 61265-3075 (telephone 309-764-1834).



NRHS DIRECTORS APPROVE DEPOT DOCUMENTARY FILM, NEW BUDGET

NRHS directors took a number of significant actions at their spring directors meeting April 5 in Savannah, GA. Philadelphia Chapter's national director, Frank Tatnall, attended the three-day mini-convention in the historic city at his own expense.

Among major decisions, the directors representing 73 chapters approved the sponsorship of a documentary film on railroad station preservation to be produced by Philadelphia Chapter Member Janet Potter. The documentary, intended for showing on public television, would be funded through outside grants and donations and not by NRHS. A separate Society bank account is to be established to administer the funds for this project.

The directors heard a progress report from Member Lynn Burshtin on a list of passenger cars owned by NRHS and other groups, which is being compiled by Chapter President Michael Burshtin. Reports were also given on the Society's growing film and video collections, including numerous historic film titles to be found nowhere else. Many of these rare films have been copied onto videotape to make them more accessible to researchers. In addition, a study was presented which recommends new classes of membership, including a senior citizen category as well as levels of corporate and contributory membership. A revised budget of \$285,000 for Fiscal Year 1992 was approved, and a program of grants by NRHS for railway history projects was announced.

The director of Tri-State Chapter proposed that the books be closed on the ill-fated 1988 national convention, effective July 31, 1992. He stated that all justified refund claims have now been paid, and the only matter outstanding is a lawsuit filed by the truck driver involved in a collision with a convention train. That is being defended by the Chapter's insurance carrier at no cost to the Chapter. However, several members at the meeting stated that they know of additional claims, and the Tri-State representative requested that they be filed not later than the end of July. Tri-State's financial statement shows that it suffered a net loss on the convention of \$44,962, none of which is National's responsibility.

St. Louis Chapter reported that its near-final accounting shows that it cleared about \$77,000 on the 1990 convention, and C.P. Huntington Chapter's net on the 1991 event appears to be about \$35,000. National will share in both.

A recent survey of national directors and officers revealed that one of the major problems between the National and chapter organizations is a lack of communication to members. In many cases directors have failed to pass on to local members news of actions and events at the National Society level. This report is a first effort to correct that shortcoming for Philadelphia Chapter members.

Recently-released figures from National indicate that as of March 31 Philadelphia Chapter had 425 full members paid up for 1992, with only 22 members not renewed from last year. This places Philadelphia second only to Central Coast Chapter (429 members) in paid-up membership as of the March 31 cutoff date.

HISTORIC RAIL RECORDS AVAILABLE TO ENTHUSIASTS

by Dave Walter

More rail enthusiasts should be aware that a treasure trove sits in the Washington National Records Center. This trove consists of the original records of the Interstate Commerce Commission's 1917 valuation of the railroads of the United States. Any fan interested in his favorite railroad's entire physical plant at that time will find hours of pleasure—and not a little frustration—searching through the records at WNRC.

I had recent occasion to spend about two hours at the WNRC looking at the records on the Lehigh Valley Railroad. A friend wants to model the station at Laurys Station, PA, but has been unable to find a photo or drawing of what the roof looked like. Unfortunately, I could find nothing in the four boxes I examined. What I did see convinced me that anyone desiring an in-depth account of the structures, roadbed and equipment of their favorite railroad should visit the WNRC.

For instance, the Lehigh Valley records are stored in some 12 boxes. Each box has five or six binders containing the valuation sheets of particular branches or sections of the mainline. I had time to examine only four LV boxes but, in skimming, I found things such as descriptions of a particular branch ("the only agricultural district is around Quakake"), diagrams of roadbeds and computation of cubic yards of fill, the blueprint for the station shed in Buffalo, photos of bridges and retaining walls in Easton, written descriptions of all stations from Towanda to Sayre, number of sidings and customers served on the branch from Lizard Creek Junction, track diagrams showing connections with other railroads and a finely-crafted drawing of a switchstand. I got the impression I might have found valuation sheets on locomotives and rolling stock had I examined more boxes.

I'm not certain if the 1917 valuation covered just Class I railroads. One of the LV binders had originally said "Ironton Railroad", so the possibility exists that all railroads were evaluated.

The major drawback to finding anything in particular is that there is no index for each box or binder, making it hard to know where to find anything. Just to skim a box takes at least half an hour. All the archivist can tell you (and you are assigned an archivist when you arrive and register) is that a particular railroad is contained in particular boxes.

(Continued on Page 12)

HISTORIC RAIL RECORDS AVAILABLE TO ENTHUSIASTS (Continued from Page 11)

On the chance that you might want to journey to the WNRC and check out, say, the Reading's Plymouth branch crossing with the PRR's Whitmarsh branch, here's some pertinent information:

LOCATION: Washington National Records Center
4205 Suitland Road
Suitland, MD

Take Pennsylvania Avenue exit (Route 4 West) from I-95. Make a left onto Silver Hill Road. Go 3/4 mile and make a right onto Suitland Road. Turn left at blue sign for "National Archives". Follow access road to WNRC. Visitors parking slots designated in front of building.

HOURS: 8:30 AM to 4:15 PM, Monday to Saturday. There is no one to pull boxes for you on Saturday. You have to have the boxes you want pulled during the week. They will be kept in separate storage for you to use on Saturday.

COST: Free (Well, you really paid on April 15!). On your first visit, you apply for a researcher's card that is good for two years (at official archives all over the U.S.) Be sure to bring a photo I.D., such as your PA driver's license, to obtain a card.

OTHER: All you are allowed to take into the research room is pencil and ballpoint pens. Everything else, such as briefcase, books, coat, etc. has to go into a locker. WNRC even supplies you with notepaper. They will approve use of a laptop computer. There are all kinds of bureaucratic regulations designed to protect the integrity of the records: you must sign up to use the copier (10 cents/copy) and you have to show the guard the original document before and after you copy it. Only one box of documents may be open on your table at any moment, though they will bring five or ten boxes at a time to your table on a cart.

As noted above, an archivist is assigned to you to help identify which boxes you want. Before you go, you may want to call them at 301-763-7410 and ask to speak to the archivist who specializes in the ICC records of 1917. That way, he can check his records and have the boxes you need ready when you arrive. The archivist will get you the boxes you required; at no time do you go into any library or warehouse.

The archivist would be pleased to have you index everything in a particular box or binder since, as I noted, nothing is indexed. A great project for the NRHS or for the various historical societies that promote a particular railroad would be to catalog these records for the WNRC and for the use of fellow enthusiasts. Once an index is available, it would become practical for fans all over the country to call and have the WNRC copy, for a nominal fee, the specific records they want. Those enthusiasts who are retired, especially those living in the Washington, DC area, could be of significant help in preserving the history of the railroads and in making that history more available to fellow researchers by volunteering for such a project.

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