



# CINDERS

NOVEMBER 1999



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Volume 60      Newsletter of the      Number 10  
**PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER**  
 National Railway Historical Society Inc.  
 Post Office Box 7302  
 Philadelphia, Pa. 19101

## MEETING NOTICE:

FRIDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 19, 1999

Faculty Club, Alumni Hall, Thomas Jefferson University,  
1020 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA (three blocks south of  
Market East Station)

Dinner at 6:15 PM (\$19.00 per person), Meeting at 7:30 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 6 PM)

Our November 19, 1999 meeting features Philadelphia Chapter's RAILROADIANA AUCTION. The evening begins with our usual sit-down dinner in the Faculty Club, Alumni Hall, Thomas Jefferson University, at a cost of \$19.00 per person, beginning at 6:15 PM. DINNER RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE BY TUESDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 16, 1999 to Dinner Chairman Bill Gardiner at 215-632-7016. This is a STRICT deadline, and you MUST specify when ordering if you desire a fish dinner. PLEASE CALL BILL GARDINER to make this reservation. Thank you.

The auctioneer's gavel will sound at 7:30 PM in our Faculty Club meeting room, and will continue until 9:30 PM, at which time all unsold material will be returned to the sellers. Registration will begin at 7:00 PM. No business meeting will be conducted. RULES FOR THE AUCTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. Minimum bid price on any one lot is \$2; increments in bidding will be in multiples of 50¢.
2. Each seller is limited to a MAXIMUM of eight (8) lots of material. You will be assigned a seller number at registration and given forms to identify each lot number to be sold. Each item must be listed separately on the registration form. EVERY EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO ROTATE LOTS, GIVING EQUAL EXPOSURE.
3. Each BUYER will be given a BIDDER NUMBER. In an effort to speed the auction, payment on all items will not be made until the END of the auction, or until the bidder is finished bidding on lots. Settlement for items sold SHOULD BE MADE at the end of the evening, providing sufficient cash is on hand. The Chapter officers are in control of the auction, and reserve the right to reject any material offered for sale not considered in the best interest of the bidders. The Chapter retains 20% of the proceeds from each sale.

HUCKSTERING OF RAILROADIANA ON THE SIDE IN THE AUCTION ROOM IS DISCOURAGED WHILE THE AUCTION IS IN PROGRESS. Bidders are asked to pay attention while bidding and maintain a quick, spirited bidding pace to enable the auction to be completed, if possible.

We urge you to dig through your attics and come up with some material for sale, and fill your wallet so you can bid! Contributions of lots to the Chapter are always welcomed as a means of raising more funds to continue our FP7 project.

Last year, we sold a portion of a selection of cartons of material donated to the Chapter by the family of the late Chapter Member Homer Stineman, who had resided in Roslyn while he lived here, spending his retirement years between Florida and the Poconos. There are many vintage timetables from our area still remaining in this collection, and we'll select as many as possible for this auction.

With this type material available, you'll want to interest a friend in attending Philadelphia Chapter's Railroadiana Auction on Friday evening, November 19, 1999, in the Faculty Club of Jefferson Alumni Hall. Come out and have an evening of fun, while adding to (or subtracting from) your railroadiana collection!

## Volunteers Needed for Greenberg Show

Members are needed as volunteers for Philadelphia Chapter's information and sales table at Greenberg's Great Train & Collectible Toy Show Saturday and Sunday, December 11 and 12, said Sales Committee Chairman Dave Kopena. Volunteers will have free admission to the show at the Fort Washington Expo Center, and need work only part of either day as their schedules permit. This pre-Christmas show promises to be a busy one, stocked with large amounts of merchandise and numerous displays.

Anyone interested in helping should telephone Dave at 215-441-8092.

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

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MEETINGS: 7:30 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 (\$19.00 per person), Meeting 7:30 PM.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES: \$31.00 per person, which includes Chapter and National dues. Chapter-only dues \$16.00 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-only status.

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

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

## CRUSADER MODEL, OTHER PRIZES OFFERED IN CHAPTER RAFFLE

A beautiful 0-gauge trainset of the Reading Crusader will be the top prize in this year's Philadelphia Chapter fundraising raffle. Donated by Boscov's Department Stores, the set consists of a streamlined Pacific-type steam locomotive, two coaches, diner and two observation cars. Its retail value is \$999. Second prize will be a one-zone Amtrak Explore America ticket, third prize any book from the Chapter store and fourth prize any video from the Chapter store.

All members will receive a set of raffle tickets to either purchase or sell to friends as a means of supporting the Chapter's FP7 locomotive restoration project. Tickets are priced at \$5 each or six for \$25. The drawing will be held Sunday, December 12 at the conclusion of Greenberg's Great Train Show at the Fort Washington Expo Center.

## NEW YORK CENTRAL STEAM LOCOMOTIVE COMES HOME

The Utica & Mohawk Valley Chapter of the NRHS, in Central New York State, has been awarded ownership of New York Central 0-6-0 #6721, one of only four "modern" NYCRR steam locomotives to have survived the scrapper.

The 6721 had been maintained in excellent condition by Carillon Historical Park in Dayton, OH, but the park earlier this year trimmed down their railroad equipment holdings and were looking for a suitable home for the locomotive, which was manufactured and used by NYC in New York State. The U&MV Chapter was judged by Carillon Historical Park to have submitted the best proposal for future care of #6721, displaying it at Utica Union Station.

The 0-6-0 was moved from Dayton to Utica in late August. The U&MV Chapter would welcome financial support in any amount from other NRHS members interested in the New York Central to support subsequent site preparation at Utica Union Station, security, lighting, signage, authentic painting and lettering, as well as future maintenance of the display. Donations are tax-deductible and may be sent to: U&MV Chapter, NRHS, Inc., P. O. Box 257, Whitesboro, NY 13492-0257.



## AMTRAK & PARK SERVICE STUDY ON-TRAIN GUIDES

Amtrak and the National Park Service are exploring the feasibility of providing a Trails and Rails on-train guide program on selected trains in the Northeast. NRHS has been invited to join these discussions, according to NRHS Senior Vice President Larry Eastwood.

On-train guides presently serve on other Amtrak routes around the country, notably the Cardinal and City of New Orleans. In some instances, NRHS chapters provide these volunteers to narrate scenic and historic points enroute. As envisioned, the program would provide educational opportunities for Amtrak passengers to learn and appreciate a region's natural and cultural heritage, promote National Park Service areas, and provide a value-added service to encourage ridership.

Philadelphia Chapter's board of directors will consider our involvement in such a program at the Chapter's directors' meeting on Wednesday, November 10.

## Eastwood Interviewed in Inquirer Feature

Cinders Editor Larry Eastwood was interviewed last month by an Inquirer reporter concerning the December 5, 1921 collision between two Reading passenger trains at Woodmont, PA. Twenty-seven people were killed and 70 others injured in the fiery wreck. Most of the fatalities were passengers who burned to death in the wooden coaches when hot coals from the locomotives set them ablaze. The interview, complete with a photo of Larry, appeared in the Montgomery County Neighbors Section of the October 31 Sunday Inquirer.

For several years Larry has researched the accident, which occurred on the Newtown branch just north of Bryn Athyn, where he grew up. He also has presented a program on the tragedy before several historical groups, including Philadelphia Chapter. The Woodmont accident was especially noteworthy because it resulted in an order from the Interstate Commerce Commission to eliminate the use of wooden passenger cars in most rail services.



## EL SIMON

## ON THE SCENE

An important milestone was reached in early October when Amtrak Acela Express trainset #2, normally based in Philadelphia, reached 168 mph on tests in Rhode Island (the train then returned to Philadelphia). This is the fastest speed reached by a locomotive-hauled consist intended for revenue service and was exceeded only slightly by a three-car United Aircraft TurboTrain and experimental machines such as New York Central Budd RDC-3 M-497, which hit over 183 mph in a July 1966 test at Bryan, OH.

Some Amtrak directors, plus politicians were treated to a ride along the same newly-electrified segment on a three-car train of Capstone 2001 cars hauled by an AEM-7. The train did not travel as fast as its high-speed cousin, but did serve to showcase Amtrak's plans for the improved Regional service most of us will actually use (Editor's Note: I rode Capstone 2001 Coach Class 82013 between Harrisburg and Philadelphia on October 29, and the refurbished cars are quite attractive and a fellow passenger was impressed). Planned production of refurbished Capstone cars has reportedly been reduced for Fiscal Year 2000, which began on October 1. (There were 38 cars scheduled for Fiscal Year 1999, and at least that many had been released by Bear or were in production by the above date.) As I understand it, the FY 2000 production will consist of 60 coaches, six Business Class and 11 food service cars. Generally, cars are scheduled into Bear on the basis of their brake dates (which expire in four years). Ideally, Amtrak hoped to keep all of the Amfleet cars on a four-year overhaul schedule, but cutbacks in production will require deferral of some maintenance. Of course, food service cars are well beyond a four-year cycle since Amtrak discontinued these overhauls months ago in anticipation of a completely new cafe/bistro design.

As this is written, no additional deliveries of HHL locomotives or Express high-speed trainsets have been observed. By the time you read this, an announcement may be forthcoming confirming the new introductory date (and my guess is the April schedule change). Meanwhile, I may have seemingly lost track of AEM-7 remanufactured units. The 916 is supposed to be the first such unit, following 912, which officially received only a heavy overhaul (but has reportedly emerged in Acela livery). Number 3 would be the 901, and this machine would be an almost-new locomotive, followed by the 924. Then, the 905 would apparently be the next electric to enter Wilmington shop. However, some reports indicate that the 918 could be the #2 unit, so stay tuned!

As part of its image revamp, Amtrak has introduced new uniforms for those employees who deal with the public -- conductors, ticket agents, baggage personnel, etc. Fashion Designer Stan Herman designed the new garb with extensive input from employees and customers. They will basically be gray with blue Acela accents for the Northeast employees (and other colors for the remainder of the country, which will follow). The new uniforms will be introduced with the launch of the Acela Express and Regional services next year.

As this issue of Cinders is put to bed, minor schedule adjustments were made on the Northeast Corridor effective October 31. An additional Regional evening round trip has been added between Washington and New York, with the northbound train assisting passengers who might otherwise be inconvenienced by a late-running Twilight Shoreliner coming off CSX. A review of the timetable shows new Train 196 Monday-Friday replaces Train 150 (Friday only) northbound, while Train 199 (Monday-Friday) replaces Train 151 (Sunday only) southbound.

The new National Timetable, meanwhile, did not disclose many significant changes, but some items noted include the Twilight Shoreliner adding Back Bay in Boston once again, as electrification nears completion. In Empire Service notes, Train 64-Maple Leaf runs about 30 minutes earlier, and the Adirondack discontinues its seasonal Port Kent, NY stop. Ethan Allen service to Rutland, VT is adjusted, with former Albany-Rutland morning Train 299 becoming a through New York-Rutland train, leaving New York at 6:15 AM, making regular stops to Albany, and running Albany-Rutland about an hour earlier than previously. Evening train 291 adds Saturday and Sunday, and on Fridays, a separate Train 293 will provide much improved service, leaving New York an hour later, running non-stop to Schenectady and then on to Rutland, about a half-hour later than previously.

The marathon schedule of the Pennsylvanian between Philadelphia and Chicago is lengthened by 25 minutes each way at Harrisburg to facilitate handling of RoadRailers.

Other notes find the Illinois Zephyr now providing Business Class service, while the City of New Orleans adds Marks, MS as a stop. The Oklahoma City-Fort Worth Heartland Flyer introduced last summer appears for the first time in the National Timetable. In the west, the California Zephyr has had its running time lengthened by 35-50 minutes overall, while the Empire Builder has its usual seasonal exchange of stops, dropping East Glacier and adding Browning, both in Montana. In Cascade service in Washington, baggage service is now available on the Talgo trainsets, and the new train between Seattle and Bellingham (761-762) appears for the first time in the National Timetable. The Coast Starlight, meanwhile, drops Marysville, CA from its stops, while San Joaquin service to Riverbank will be replaced by a stop in Modesto this winter. The one Capitol train that had been extended to Colfax, CA from Sacramento has been cut back to Roseville, with bus connection beyond. In San Diegan items, the stop at San Clemente, CA is discontinued until next summer, while the first northbound train from San Diego, #769, adds stops at San Juan Capistrano, Irvine and Anaheim, and also runs weekends.

## ON THE SCENE (Continued from Page 3)

The train that wasn't, but could be.....like a bombshell, it was announced that the Boston section of the Lake Shore Limited would be replaced by a Boston-Chicago through train (Trains 38-39) on an entirely new schedule and partially-new route. The trains had been thought to start on October 11, then October 16, and now have apparently been postponed indefinitely. Driving force behind the new train is United Parcel Service's commitment to Amtrak to move up to 30 RoadRailers each night between Chicago and Springfield, MA. The carrier has expressed dissatisfaction with CSX and NS service, but the former railroad was not about to surrender its high value traffic without a fight. CSX's contract with Amtrak calls for 60 days' notification of major schedule changes, and CSX could therefore delay introduction of the new train until mid-December (all the while trying to convince UPS not to switch). Likewise, UPS could use its influence to get CSX to permit the Amtrak train to start, so it's far from certain what might happen.

For the record, however, the tentative schedule for the new service looks like this:

Train 39		Train 38	
Lv. 12:15 AM ET	BOSTON	Ar. 7:03 AM	
2:35	SPRINGFIELD	4:13	
6:45	ALBANY-RENSSELAER	1:38 AM	
9:26	SYRACUSE	10:28 PM	
11:49	BUFFALO	7:49	
3:40 PM	CLEVELAND	4:48	
5:37 ET	FOSTORIA	2:20	
Ar. 9:35 PM CT	CHICAGO	Lv. 9:05 AM CT	

West of Cleveland, the train would operate via the "new" CSX route via the old ex-New York Central "Big Four" from Berea to Greenwich, OH, joining the refurbished former B&O route there, running west to Chicago with stops at Fostoria, OH, Nappanee and Hammond-Whiting, IN. If you've seen the Three Rivers, you have a pretty fair idea of what this train would look like. The Amfleet II coaches and Viewliner sleeper now on 448-449 would operate, plus whatever type of food service car Amtrak can come up with. Of course, there's plenty of head-(rear) end traffic, too! My choice for the new train's name -- how about the UPStart (for UPS)! Hey, a little humor never hurt. Realistically, it would appear New England States was a heavy favorite.

In some equipment items, Amtrak added a fourth hi-level car to the Heartland Flyer for the Oklahoma-Texas football game. There are five such cars in service, and the other two were on Trains 318 and 364.

The most recent sale of cars of interest was a four-car purchase of Heritage cars by someone designated as "ORC". They acquired 10-6 sleeper 2438-Pacific Castle, buffet-kitchen 8750, lounge 3106 and coach 4012.

For those who may have given up on ever seeing a rebuilt Amtrak diner, Beech Grove swears that work is ongoing on the first examples. All 25 cars are expected to rebuilt in two groups. Group I will consist of ten cars (8501, 8502, 8504-05, 8507, 8509-10, 8550-52). These include five former Burlington and five ex-Northern Pacific veterans. Group II consists of 15 cars (8511-15, 8519, 8521, 8524, 8527-28, 8553-54, 8556 and 8558-59). The heritage of these cars is nine New York Central, three Southern and three Southern Pacific.

The Amfleet I cars recently repainted for Regional service have appeared in a "powder blue" akin to the scheme the Rock Island employed at the end. Somewhat darker "shapes" appear in the window area at each end of the car and "Amtrak" appears in the former number board. However, Acela emblems have yet to be applied. Capstone 2001 production of recent date includes 82020 (ex-21605, 10-05-99), 82021 (ex-21120, 10-07-99), 82022 (ex-21225, 10-08-99), 82023 (ex-21603, 10-20-99) and 81504 (ex-44945, 10-01-99).

In a program to provide enclosed smoking rooms and names, seven of the 25 Amfleet II lounges have been completed (all will be done). Cars to date are: 28000-Miami Club, 28005-Chicago Club, 28007-New York Club, 28008-Pittsburgh Club, 28012-Meridian Club, 28018-Jacksonville Club and last, but certainly not least, look for 28024-Philadelphia Club!

Former Reading office car 15, now 800132-Henry Huntington, travelled to the recent AAPRCO convention in Tampa (arriving on the Sunset from New Orleans, then on to Tampa).

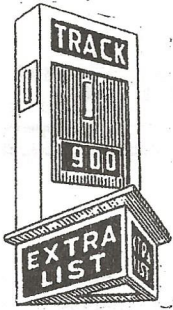
Amtrak has been testing two examples of the new EMD/CAT switchers, they being the 1505 (1,500 hp) and 2003 (2,000 hp). They are being evaluated as candidates to replace some of Amtrak's aging switcher/road-switcher fleet.

In some miscellaneous items, three segments of the New Haven-Boston electrification have been energized by mid-October. These include 26 miles around Kingston, RI, 34 miles south of Sharon, MA to just north of Providence, and 22 miles between Branford and Old Saybrook, CT. Work continues at major stations such as Providence and Boston.

On Saturday, October 23, trains were being routed through the Allied Junction station in the Meadowlands on the eastbound station track to facilitate construction. A train I was on was held over 40 minutes at Penn Station in New York for a "window" over the single-track segment.

Amtrak and Hertz have entered into an enhanced marketing agreement which will allow passengers booking travel to designated locations to be automatically transferred to a Hertz representative. Wilmington, DE is one of the first 18 locations, with others being added over time.

This year's Thanksgiving program will probably be much like last year's, with additional refurbished Amfleet cars and locomotives. The lack of any new equipment will hurt, because a number of cars are still tied up in the HHL test program and neither of the two Turbo sets being rebuilt at Schenectady's Super Steel will be ready for service on the Empire Service route. (Continued on Page 8)



THROUGH NOVEMBER 28, 1999: "Trains That Passed in the Night" photograph exhibit of the famed night photographer O. Winston Link, at the Cantor Fitzgerald Gallery, Whitehead Campus Center, Haverford College, 350 Lancaster Avenue, Haverford. Gallery hours are 11 AM-4 PM Monday-Friday, and 12 Noon-4 PM Saturday and Sunday. Admission is free. Nearly 80 photographs, mostly taken along the Norfolk & Western, are featured. For information, telephone 610-896-1287.

THROUGH DECEMBER 11: Exhibit on the life of A. Philip Randolph, civil rights activist and organizer of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, at Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, Strasburg. Regular admission charges apply. Museum is closed Mondays. For information, telephone 717-687-8628.

NOVEMBER 10: Chapter Member John LaForce, SEPTA's deputy chief engineer for operations, will discuss the planned communications-based train control system for the subway-surface tunnel at monthly meeting of Philadelphia Section, IEEE Vehicular Technology Society, in Hill Seminar Room, 2nd Floor of Lebow Engineering Center of Drexel University, Market Street between 31st and 32nd Streets, Philadelphia. Meeting begins at 6:30 PM and admission is free. For information, telephone 215-349-4695.

NOVEMBER 11: "The American Railroad Station: Two Centuries of Redevelopment," lecture by Chapter Member Janet Greenstein Potter, 7:30 PM at Main Line Art Center, Old Buck Road & Lancaster Avenue, Haverford, PA. For information, telephone 610-525-0272. Admission is free.

NOVEMBER 13: Annual banquet of Delaware Valley Chapter NRHS at Cock 'n Bull Restaurant, Lahaska, PA, starting at 7 PM. Featured speaker will be Kurt Bell, archivist and historian for the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, with a presentation on restoring the John Bull replica and its operation at Railfair '99 in Sacramento, CA. Ticket price for non-Delaware Valley Chapter members: \$27 per person. Order tickets from: Rich Murray, P. O. Box 413, Forest Grove, PA 18922-0413, making checks payable to "Delaware Valley Chapter NRHS." For information, telephone 215-598-3803.

NOVEMBER 13: "Old Sowbelly Railroad Story" about the long-abandoned Delaware River & Lancaster Railroad between Kimberton and St. Peters Village, PA, presented by Historian Jim Lockart at Warwick County Park, Route 23, Knauertown, PA, beginning at 10 AM. Admission free. Limited to 20 adults, the event is sponsored by the Chester County Parks & Recreation Department. For information, telephone 610-469-1916.

NOVEMBER 20: Annual Train Show & Sale sponsored by Chalfont Boro Police Benevolent Association at Lenape Middle School, 313 West State Street, Doylestown, PA, near Route 611 bypass, 9 AM-3 PM. Admission: \$3 adults, children under 12 free. For information, telephone Paul Myers at 215-345-5017.

NOVEMBER 26-28: "Santa's Express" on West Chester Railroad from West Chester to Glen Mills, PA and return. Diesel-powered, heated trains leave Market Street station, West Chester, at 11 AM, 1 and 3 PM each day. Fares: \$10 adults, \$6 children. Reservations suggested. Lunch with Santa on 11 AM and 1 PM trips: \$20 adults, \$14 children including lunch, with reservations required. For reservations, information, telephone 610-430-2233.

NOVEMBER 27-28: GATSME Lines HO and HO3 model railroad open house in basement of New Horizons Montessori School, Prospect & Madison Avenues, Fort Washington, PA, 12 Noon-4 PM both days. Admission by donation. For information, telephone Ed Wilson or Paul Bryant at 215-646-2033 Thursday evenings. This event will be repeated December 4-5.

NOVEMBER 27-28: Cheltenham Hills Model Railroad Club open house at 8000 Old York Road, Elkins Park, PA, 12 Noon-4 PM both days. Admission by donation. For information, telephone 215-635-9747.

DECEMBER 3-5: "'Westy' the Snowman Express" on West Chester Railroad from West Chester to Glen Mills, PA and return. Diesel-powered, heated trains leave Market Street station, West Chester, at 11 AM, 1 and 3 PM each day. Fares: \$10 adults, \$6 children. "Westy" will have a treat for each child. For information, telephone 610-430-2233.

DECEMBER 4-5: Annual Holiday Train Show & Sale at historic Music Pier, Boardwalk & Moorlyn Terrace, Ocean City, NJ, 10 AM-5 PM Saturday, 11 AM-4 PM Sunday. Show will feature operating displays, buying and selling of model trains of all gauges. Admission: \$3 adults, \$1 children. For information, telephone 609-525-9300.

DECEMBER 4-5: GATSME Lines HO and HO3 model railroad open house at Fort Washington, PA, 12 Noon-4 PM both days. See November 27-28 item above.

DECEMBER 11-12: Greenberg's Great Train & Collectible Toy Show at Fort Washington Expo Center, Virginia Drive, Fort Washington, PA, 11 AM-5 PM Saturday, 11 AM-4 PM Sunday. Admission: \$5 adults, \$2 children (6-12). For information, telephone 410-795-7447. Philadelphia Chapter will be represented with an information and sales table.

DECEMBER 11-12, 18-19: "Santa's Express" on West Chester Railroad from West Chester to Glen Mills, PA and return. See November 26-28 item for details.

DECEMBER 31: New Year's Eve party at newly-renovated Pennsylvania Railroad freight station, Christiansburg, PA, sponsored by Lancaster Chapter NRHS. Social hour begins at 6 PM followed by catered buffet dinner at 7. Entertainment includes a barbershop quartet and dancing to music supplied by a disc jockey. Big-screen TV will allow revelers to see millennium celebrations in cities around the world. Door prizes, raffles and a millennium gift for everyone will be included. At midnight there will be a New Year's toast followed by continental breakfast. Price: \$75 for one, \$140 per couple. Order tickets from: Ron Irwin, 15 Highland Drive, Lancaster, PA 17602-3313, making checks payable to "Lancaster Chapter NRHS." Visa, MasterCard and Discover card also accepted. For information, telephone Ron Irwin at 717-299-6405. Lancaster Chapter has leased the station building as its headquarters.

# PHILADELPHIA



## FRANK G. TATNALL, JR.

SEPTA is moving ahead with improvements at several Regional Rail stations. In late September the new platforms at Philadelphia International Airport were opened for service, allowing passengers in the baggage claim areas quick access to R1 trains. The \$800,000 shelter and platform improvements at Downingtown were dedicated October 1, with General Manager John K. Leary, Jr. presiding. The new Thorndale station is to open November 21, and the \$4.3-million restoration of historic Strafford station has started. Work on two other 19th-Century stations on the Main Line, Overbrook and Radnor, has been underway for several months.

SEPTA is fighting its annual battle of the trees, employing a variety of tactics to remove the slippery film left by leaves falling on the rails. Sanding, scrubbing and use of a new gel applied to the rails reduce but do not eliminate delays, which result when engineers must use caution to avoid sliding past certain stations. Electric MU cars are not equipped with sanding devices.....As of late October, SEPTA had completed the interior overhaul of 104 of its 231 Silverliner IV cars.....SEPTA is installing six change-making machines near its ticket-vending machines at 30th Street, Suburban and Market East Stations.

An outside contractor will start laying a fiber-optic cable along SEPTA's West Chester Line from Wawa to Philadelphia, possibly beginning this month. A leased red GP38, NREX 2001 which arrived at PennCoach yard October 20, will be used to power the four-car cable-laying train for account of Level 3 Communications. It will be a daylight operation.....Seven bridges across the Schuylkill River will be equipped with permanent floodlighting, including SEPTA's Mainline bridge just east of 30th Street Station. The project is part of the City's Millenium Philadelphia celebration, with the lights to be turned on for the first time at 8 PM December 31.

Later this month SEPTA will begin applying the new red, white and blue decals to its entire MU car fleet (see August Cinders). Even the eight "yellowbird" St. Louis cars will receive the new look, eliminating their distinctive Airport Line colors.....SEPTA has expanded its West Trenton yard, which now can store upwards of 25 cars. Some nearby residents had protested the plan, fearing increased noise.....SEPTA now expects Bombardier to complete delivery of ten new push-pull cars by February 2000.

NORFOLK SOUTHERN last month threw cold water on SEPTA's planned Schuylkill Valley Metro project, which would restore commuter service to the Philadelphia-Reading corridor. In an Inquirer report, H. Craig Lewis, the Philadelphia-based vice president of corporate affairs for NS, said that the railroad had informed SEPTA "in no uncertain terms, will we share track with them? It is out of the question. There are about 26 freight trains a day that already run on that line, and we want to increase that." The NS official made it clear that not only would NS balk at Regional Rail commuter trains operating over its 43-mile former Reading line between Norristown, Reading and Wyomissing, but also that it would object to a light rail line built on NS property alongside the freight tracks.

Lewis said the same denial would apply to the proposed Cross County Metro, which is planned to follow NS's Dale secondary track (the former Pennsy Trenton Cut-Off) between Morrisville and Glen Loch. One obvious concern is the fact that light rail cars lack the structural strength of mainline rail equipment, in the event of a collision. The Federal Railroad Administration recently has declared that its jurisdiction includes safety matters both on railroad rights-of-way and on any transit route built within about 30 feet of an active rail line.

Nonetheless, SEPTA Assistant General Manager Bernard Cohen put the best face on the situation, saying that there are "a lot of options on the table," and that he did not see "any reason why we can't reach an agreement to operate passenger service in the corridor." Skeptics, however, have long believed that the need to obtain an operating concession from the normally hard-nosed Norfolk Southern was the Achilles heel of the Metro plan. Two years ago, while attempting to gain local political support for its takeover of a major part of the CONRAIL system, NS officials were noticeably silent on their attitude toward the Metro, but many observers felt that the project would be a non-starter with the railroad because of its long-held concerns regarding joint freight and passenger operations. Further, SEPTA was unsuccessful in getting any condition favoring the Metro included in the Surface Transportation Board's approval of the Conrail transaction. A \$75-million feasibility study of the Schuylkill Valley Metro project is due for completion next January.

One of SEPTA's best friends in Washington, Federal Transit Administrator Gordon Linton, resigned last month after six years in the job. He will form his own consulting firm. The Philadelphia native had previously served in the Pennsylvania legislature, where he was instrumental in establishing a dedicated source of funding for transit in the State.....Former SEPTA General Manager Louis J. Gambaccini was elected last month to the Hall of Fame of

**SEPTA**   
SERIOUS ABOUT CHANGE.

the American Public Transit Association. Gambaccini, 67, headed SEPTA for more than eight years as its longest-serving GM, and previously had run the PATH system in the New York City area before becoming New Jersey's commissioner of transportation. He currently is director of the Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University in New Brunswick.

(Continued on Page 7)

## PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS (Continued from Page 6)

SEPTA has decided to have the car builder replace the door systems on its new M4 Market-Frankford cars. The doors have been a problem since the first cars were delivered in 1997.....General Manager Leary has alerted all SEPTA employees to the service demands during the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia next summer, asking that no vacations be scheduled during convention week.....SEPTA is looking to award a \$30-million contract for a new computer-aided radio dispatching system to control all buses and light rail vehicles as well as supervisory and maintenance vehicles.....Route 13 trolleys resumed their normal operations via Chester Avenue last month, following completion of a new bridge near 49th Street.....An effort to limit Federal transit aid available to any one state to 12.5 percent of the national total failed last month, as Congress approved and the President signed a \$49.5-billion transportation appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2000. Total transit funding was set at \$5.8 billion, the limit fixed by last year's TEA-21 legislation (Railway Age).


**Amtrak**

AMTRAK will receive its full request of \$571 million in capital funding for FY 2000, under terms of the transportation bill signed into law last month.....During Fiscal Year 1999 ended September 30, AMTRAK ridership increased two percent over the previous year, to 21.5 million. Total revenues were up seven percent, to \$1.84 billion. Metroliner service carried a record 2.24 million passengers, a seven-percent jump.....Have you noticed the recent blizzard of ads for AMTRAK's new Acela marketing campaign? Some of the posters are a bit hard to decipher, bearing in capital letters such messages as "ABRAINSTORMB" and "ARECHARGE," with just a small Acela logo. They are intended to suggest some activities that passengers on the Acela Express service can engage in while traveling between points A and B, once the new high-speed trains are in service sometime next year. We've even spotted a SEPTA bus encased in a full wrap-around Acela ad.

Effective with the October 31 timetable change, AMTRAK has shortened the schedules of its Philadelphia-Harrisburg Keystone service, following completion of this year's trackwork.....AMTRAK and the Hertz Corp. have expanded their partnership with the opening of a car-rental counter in Wilmington station. Hertz services are now available at 18 Amtrak locations.....BURLINGTON NORTHERN SANTA FE refrigerated RoadRailer units are being handled in AMTRAK's Pennsylvanian (#43-44) and Three Rivers (#40-41) to and from Philadelphia. The big white trailers carry "Ice Cold Express" logos.....A Federal judge in Philadelphia has declared a mistrial in a civil case involving the fatal shooting of an AMTRAK supervisor by a deranged employee at the Wilmington shop in 1997. The victim's family was attempting to recover damages from Amtrak.


**NS**  
**NORFOLK SOUTHERN**

Even though NORFOLK SOUTHERN's revenues rose 43 percent in the third quarter as a result of its CONRAIL acquisition, the notorious traffic delays cost the railroad big time. Revenues increased to \$1.5 billion from \$1.05 billion in the year-earlier period, but net income plummeted 67 percent to \$50 million, from \$151 million in third quarter 1998. Operating expenses rose 71 percent to \$1.35 billion, far in excess of the percentage increase in revenues.....While most observers agree that NS operations on its former CONRAIL lines have improved over the past few weeks, yard delays and trains parked on mainlines are still common. With the heavy fall shipping season well underway, both NS and CSX will have their hands full over the next couple of months. In a message to employees, NS Chairman & CEO David R. Goode said that the Conrail takeover "has been a costly learning experience for us individually and corporately. The degree of our difficulties has been both surprising and disappointing..."


**CSX**  
**TRANSPORTATION**

Meanwhile, in September a top CSX official told reporters that his company is "not in as good a shape as we'd like to be, but we're not in bad shape--the railroad is running much better than in June or July"(Bull Sheet).....CSX is returning to its old regional and divisional operating structure. With the formation of five large regions (see October Cinders), it is reorganizing its service lanes into divisions. Effective in September, the new Northeast Region based at Albany includes the ex-CONRAIL Albany Division (former Albany Service Lane) from Philadelphia to Albany, and the Baltimore Service Lane from Philadelphia west, which was split into the Baltimore and Cumberland Divisions (Bull Sheet).....On former CONRAIL lines, CSX has converted its train symbols to its standard three-digit format, in lieu of Conrail's four-letter symbols, although NS is still using the old system.....CSX is renumbering more than 800 former CONRAIL locomotives, to make them compatible with the existing CSX system. General Electric units are being assigned odd numbers as the leading digit and EMD's even numbers, with road numbers generally increasing according to horsepower (Railpace).....Former CONRAIL E8's #4021 and 4022 will be renumbered to CSX 9998 and 9999, but are stored at the Huntington (WV) shop. Two F40 units leased from AMTRAK are providing the power for CSX office car specials. Meanwhile, NS has renumbered its ex-CR E8 #4020 to 1000, but it has not yet been reported in use.

According to a recent Forbes Magazine article, the CONRAIL takeover increased NS mileage from 14,400 to 21,600, and CSX's from 18,300 to 22,700. The locomotive fleets grew from 2,300 to 3,483 for NS and from 2,773 to 3,646 for CSX.....NS is installing a digital video recording system known as "Railview" on its locomotives, which is mounted in the cab and makes a visual record of what is seen in a forward direction as well as logging other data (Paces).....NS is installing new operating systems known as Centralized Yard Operations (CYO) and the Thoroughbred Yard Enterprise System (TYES). By the end of August, CYO and TYES had been fully implemented on three of NS's 12 operating divisions, including the ex-CONRAIL Harrisburg Division. These systems are designed to produce more timely and accurate car and train movement information (Paces).

An FRA study has concluded that the four largest U.S. railroads--BNSF, CSX, NS and UNION PACIFIC--are "ready for the year 2000" and should have a very small risk of any so-called "Y2K" disruptions (Railway Age).....The Inquirer ran a long article on September 19 describing the problems still plaguing both NS and CSX in the split-up of CONRAIL. At that time, the article reported, many customers were still dissatisfied with their service levels, and that it's costing them a "bundle" in delayed shipments and higher costs for shipping by truck.....The Delaware River Port Authority plans to upgrade and expand its Ameriport container

## ON THE SCENE (Continued from Page 4)

The progress Amtrak has experienced recently has been backed by Congressional and Senate confirmation of the full \$571 million in support which Amtrak had requested. Certainly, Amtrak still faces daunting challenges and needs to continue to make cuts in many areas. But, it is refreshing to hopefully see the end of the annual battles over Amtrak's financial future. Never forget that the Amtrak Reform Council, which includes several outspoken Amtrak critics, is still out there, seemingly waiting to exploit any missteps.

Amtrak has won a contract to overhaul the 73 existing cars used in Caltrain's Peninsula commute service in San Francisco. Amtrak is partnering with Alstom, the prime contractor and will provide certain components and final assembly at the Beech Grove and Wilmington heavy maintenance facilities. This follows a contract to overhaul cars for the Fort Worth Transportation Authority. The cars to be overhauled were built by Nippon Sharyo in 1985-87 and include 21 bi-level cab and 42 bi-level coaches (a follow-on order included ten more coaches). Concurrently, Caltrain F40's are being rebuilt at AMF Montreal and are moving back and forth on the Adirondack, Lake Shore Limited and California Zephyr.

The Peninsula service, of course, was famous under Southern Pacific for operating Fairbanks-Morse TrainMasters into the early 1970's. On a personal level, I still remember a 1966 visit to a friend in Burlingame on my way to duty in Southeast Asia -- waking to hear a parade of the big units whistling for one crossing after another. There are certainly worse ways to remember home!

## PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS (Continued from Page 7)

terminal in South Philadelphia to handle more import and export traffic. Now served by NS, CSX and CANADIAN PACIFIC, the yard was opened seven years ago with only the minimum facilities needed.....The U. S. Supreme Court last month refused to hear an appeal from several retired CONRAIL managers who had demanded a share of a \$533 million surplus in an employee stock ownership plan (ESOP), which was distributed to participants at the time of the CSX-NS purchase.

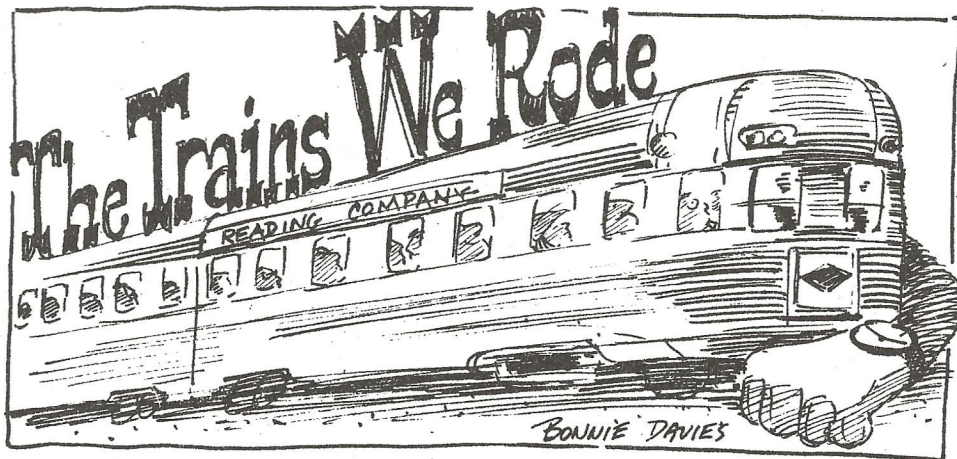
James L. Holton, author of a two-volume history of the Reading Company and a longtime journalist in Reading, died September 2 at the age of 78.....The grand opening of the Electric City Trolley Station & Museum in Scranton was set for October 30. Located in the Steamtown National Historic Site complex, the museum eventually will offer trolley rides over a portion of the former Laurel Line when electrification is completed. At the opening ceremony, it was expected that restored Red Arrow center-door car #76 donated by Buckingham Valley Trolley Association would operate over a short stretch of track.....A Brigantine man was killed by an NJ TRANSIT train enroute from Atlantic City to Philadelphia on August 31. With four friends, he was walking in the track gauge near Absecon station. Trains were delayed for several hours.....Reportedly, the NEW HOPE & IVYLAND also suffered damage from the heavy rains of Hurricane Floyd on September 16, finally resuming service to Warminster on October 2 (Howard Bender).

RailAmerica will become the largest shortline operator in North America when it completes its \$325-million purchase of RailTex by the end of the year. Its empire then will consist of 51 shortlines in the U.S., Canada and overseas, with expected annual revenues of \$450 million. RailAmerica operated the now-defunct Delaware Valley Railway in this area (Railway Age).....Longtime Steam Excursion Guru Ross Rowland is reportedly trying to form a tourist operation on Vancouver Island in Canada. RailAmerica has the concession for freight service on the former CANADIAN PACIFIC Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railway. Rowland is also negotiating with AMTRAK to run steam excursions with ex-Chesapeake & Ohio 4-8-4 #614 out of Chicago next summer (New York RRE).....The WEST CHESTER RAILROAD is seeking permission from SEPTA to run a diesel excursion from West Chester to Philadelphia next March 19.....CANADIAN PACIFIC last month opened a \$1.1-million bulk transfer yard at the west end of the old Philadelphia Naval Base property. This is the first terminal in the area actually to be operated by CP, which reaches Philadelphia via NORFOLK SOUTHERN trackage rights. CP will continue to serve the nearby Ameriport terminal for intermodal traffic.

Montgomery County has received a setback in its efforts to create a 17-mile multi-use trail on the right-of-way of the former Reading Perkiomen branch. A State Superior Court ruling in favor of adjacent landowners affirmed the reversionary clause in the railroad's original purchase of the property, under which the land is to be returned to the owners after abandonment of the track. The County, which paid the Reading \$120,000 for the right-of-way in 1978, indicated that it would now negotiate for access to the line.....President Clinton's recent veto of a \$792-billion tax cut plan advanced by Congressional Republicans also killed a proposal favored by the railroad industry. The legislation would have ended the 4.3-cent-per-gallon tax paid on fuel by railroads and barge lines, but not by truckers or airlines.....The ex-Peco Whitcomb switcher #28, stored on the NEW HOPE & IVYLAND at New Hope, has been offered for sale. The center-cab unit was built in 1951.....Passenger train advocates are alarmed by a proposal advanced by the mayor of Bethlehem to abandon NORFOLK SOUTHERN's ex-Reading, ex-CONRAIL line through South Bethlehem. NS has indicated the line is no longer needed, which the City could convert for parking space in the redevelopment of the former Bethlehem Steel property. But such action would also permanently eliminate rail access to Bethlehem from the south, at a time when re-establishing passenger service to Quakertown is under study.

ILLINOIS CENTRAL was the only major U.S. railroad to earn its "cost of capital" during 1998, according to a Surface Transportation Board report. IC's rate of return on net investment (ROI) was 13.6 percent, followed by NORFOLK SOUTHERN (10.5 percent), BNSF (9.7 percent), CSX (8.1 percent), CONRAIL (6.9 percent), SOO LINE (4.9 percent), GRAND TRUNK WESTERN (3.0 percent) and UNION PACIFIC (2.9 percent). The STB considers any railroad whose ROI does not equal or exceed the current cost of capital, set at 10.7 percent, to be revenue inadequate (AAR Train-It).....The Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania will construct a new Railway Education Center in its Rolling Stock Hall, a 4,500-square-foot facility in the style of a Late-Victorian period freight station facade. To open next year, the center will feature numerous exhibits and an enlarged G-scale model layout.





## Gray Matter

# The reliable Reading

By Herm Thoenebe

As I write this the state of our railroads serving suburban Philadelphia is being investigated, the latest reason being a crash at Jenkintown, allegedly due to negligence. This set me to reminiscing.

I became a commuter in 1940, taking the 8:14 from Oreland each morning to town and usually the 5:25 from the terminal each night. And I did that come rain or come snow for 29 years until I retired in 1969. In comparing notes with friends I often referred to the "Reliable Reading." In those 29 years I could not recall getting to work or arriving home late for dinner more than a dozen times, and two of those delays were caused by hurricanes Hazel and Diane.

Now as I listen to the morning news I hear every few days of 20 to 30 minute delays due to power failures or switching problems. I'm no longer involved yet I wonder what I'd be thinking were I still a commuter.

Commuting used to be fun. We met neighbors at the station, sat with them in the cars. We knew our conductors and trainmen. One, Andy, was the pleasantest fellow I've ever met. Then there was Todd; "Toddy" we called him. Toddy was a skilled conversationalist and he daily entertained us by barking like a dog at each stop.

The trains were not only on time, they ran almost every half hour. Wouldn't you think the technology that can send the Challenger into space and bring it back precisely at a predetermined minute could get us back and forth to Philadelphia on time?

The stations on the way to town were open all day and handled freight as well as passengers. Now, many of them are locked or boarded up and badly in need of repair. Is that parasite, the automobile, to blame?

For two years of my business life I traveled to New York each Monday morning, taking either the Crusader or Wall Street from Jenkintown. I enjoyed a comfortable seat, a great ride, and a bracing ferry trip from Jersey City to Liberty Street in New York. On the return trip I usually had dinner. For three dollars I had everything from soup to lamb chops to dessert.

As the train pulled into Jenkintown it was met by a man we knew as Albert who waited, clean towel in hand, to wipe the handrails. Except on rare occasions a connecting train of the Lansdale division would be on hand to complete the trip to Oreland. I don't get to the Big Apple these days. Before my last trip ferry service from Jersey City to New York had been suspended. Passengers were dropped off at Newark to transfer to the Tube to New York; something memorable had gone,

probably forever.

While lamenting the sad state of the rails today another train incident popped into mind. This occurred during my salad days when I was courting the girl who became my wife. I was rooming then in Elizabeth, N.J. Whenever possible I came to Philadelphia for weekends to see her, operating from my family home in North Philadelphia. I had such a difficult time saying goodbye on Sunday evenings that I delayed leaving the North Philadelphia station until 11:29. This particular Sunday night in August of 1928 the 11:29 was 15 minutes late to begin with. At or near Princeton a preference freight left the tracks and some 20 cars of vegetables risked becoming garbage. Our train waited until a quarter past three in the morning then backtracked to Trenton.

Everyone who had carried bottled spirits had long since thrown away the empties. For what seemed an eternity we bucked and bolted before the engineer got the green light to proceed. We reached Elizabeth at exactly quarter to six. Since my construction job started at seven I reported for work directly, in my Sunday suit. The super greeted me with, "Hey, you're all dressed up. Going somewhere?" "No," I said, "I'm coming from somewhere." It was a rough Monday.

(The above article was printed in the May 2, 1985 issue of the Jenkintown Times-Chronicle, published by Montgomery Newspapers of Fort Washington. The author, Herm Thoenebe, wrote periodic small articles for the chain of newspapers, and lived in Oreland, until his passing a year or two ago. The article is courtesy Bill Polk.)

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