

CINDERS

FEBRUARY 2004



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Volume 65

Newsletter of the

Number 2

PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER

National Railway Historical Society

Post Office Box 7302

Philadelphia, PA 19101

PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER, NRHS WEBSITE: www.trainweb.org/phillynrhs/

MEETING NOTICE:

FRIDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 20, 2004

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

Dinner at 6:15 PM (\$20.00 per person), Meeting at 7:30 PM
Parking in Wills Eye Hospital garage, 9th Street above Locust
(\$6.00 after 6 PM), Parkway garage, also 9th above Locust
(\$5.75 after 6 PM), or Downtown Garage, Walnut Street east of
10th (\$4.00 after 6 PM) *(Please note that some of the above
parking prices have been adjusted and we will update them for a
future issue of Cinders)*

Our meeting on Friday evening, February 20, 2004 will feature the
annual **Ray Muller Slide Contest**. Rules for the event, named in
honor of the late Chapter member who excelled in slide
photography, will be found on this page.

The evening begins with our usual sit-down dinner in the Faculty
Club, Alumni Hall, Thomas Jefferson University, beginning at
6:15 PM, at a cost of \$20.00 per person. DINNER
RESERVATIONS ARE MANDATORY and MUST BE MADE
BY TUESDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 17, 2004 to Dinner
Chairman Bill Gardiner at 215-632-7016. The menu will feature
soup, Mesclun salad with vegetable chutney, Chicken Francaise
or Stuffed Flounder entrée, mashed sweet potato rosette and
vegetable medley. Dessert will be Tiramisu layer cake. You must
specify when ordering whether you wish a MEAT or FISH
dinner. Please call Bill Gardiner with your reservation. NO-
shows will be responsible for payment for meals ordered!

Please note that all meetings in the 2003-2004 year are scheduled
in the Faculty Club, on the second floor of the Alumni Hall.

Looking ahead, our March meeting program is not yet finalized,
but our April 16 meeting will feature former Pennsylvania and
Penn Central employee Bob Watson, with a program on the
railroads of Korea and Fort Eustis, VA. At our March 19 meeting,
we will honor the Chapter's 25 and 50-year members (see article
elsewhere in this issue. Meanwhile, get your slides together and
screen them for your fellow members at the annual **Ray Muller
Slide Contest** on Friday, February 20, 2004.

MEETING CANCELLATION NOTICE!

In the event of snow, sleet or freezing rain on a
Philadelphia Chapter meeting day, Chapter officers will make a
decision on whether to hold the meeting as scheduled. If in
doubt, members should telephone 215-947-5769 after 12 Noon
on the day of the meeting for a recorded advisory. Thank you.

2004 RAY MULLER Slide Contest Rules

No entry form is required for the 2004 **Ray Muller
Slide Contest**, but entrants must register in person, beginning at
7:15 PM. Registration closes at 7:30 PM, with no entries accepted
after that hour. The slide contest is open to **2004 PAID-UP
Philadelphia Chapter members ONLY!**

There are, as usual, six categories in the Contest, and
categories (a) through (e) must contain only subject matter taken
since March 1, 1989, and category (f) only subject matter before
March 1, 1989. In case of uncertainty, the contest manager, Phil
Mulligan, will rule on appropriate categories or will disqualify
unsuitable entries. Contestant categories are:

- (a) **Steam**
- (b) **Diesel** (including RDC's, railcars, turbine-powered
equipment, SPV-2000's, etc.)
- (c) **Heavy electric** (including multiple-unit commuter
rail equipment)
- (d) **Light electric**
- (e) **General** (subjects not included in the first four
categories, such as rights-of-way, signals, stations
or other fixed facilities, buses, trackless trolleys,
unusual railfans, etc.)
- (f) **Oldies** (any subject prior to March 1, 1989)

Each contestant may exhibit a maximum of four slides
in each category, or grand total of 24 in the contest. The entrant
must have personally taken the slide, and it may be in color or
black and white, and subject matter from anywhere in the world.
The contestant's name **MUST** be on the slide. After the initial
screening, entrant will select **ONE SLIDE** in each category for the
projectionist to use in the **FINAL** judging. Thus, only six (6)
slides are permitted in the final presentation for any entrant.

In addition to the normal film prizes, there will also be
a **Best of Show** prize, awarded in memory of G. Gerrish Williams,
Chapter Member, author/photographer who passed away in 1998.

PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER, NRHS WEBSITE: www.trainweb.org/phillynrhs/

NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER, INC.

Post Office Box 7302, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302

Founded 1936, incorporated 1973 as a 501c3 non-profit corporation

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MEETINGS: 7:30 PM, third Friday of each month (except second Friday in December), at Faculty Club, Second Floor, Thomas Jefferson University Alumni Hall, 1020 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA. Dinner (optional) at 6:15 PM (\$20.00 per person), Meeting at 7:30 PM. No meeting July or August.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES: \$35.00 per person, which includes Chapter and National dues. Chapter-only dues \$16.00 per person per year. Membership applications should be forwarded to: Membership Chair, P. O. Box 7302, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302. Membership in the parent National Railway Historical Society is required to hold Chapter-only membership.

ADDRESS CHANGES should be sent to the Editor at Post Office Box 353, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006-0353. **PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR NEW TELEPHONE NUMBER** and E-mail address so our Membership List is complete. We will notify the NRHS National Headquarters of the change.

Cinders is published 11 times a year by Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS, Inc. Correspondence regarding *Cinders* should be directed to the Editor at P. O. Box 7302, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302. If your *Cinders* is received damaged or incomplete, contact the Editor at the address shown below for replacement.

EXCHANGE COPIES should be sent to: R. L. Eastwood, Jr., Editor, P. O. Box 353, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006-0353.

25 and 50-Year Members Named

Philadelphia Chapter has one 50-year member and nine 25-year members in the year 2004, NRHS Director, Membership Awards R. L. Eastwood, Jr., has announced.

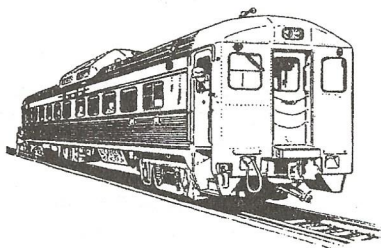
Member Richard T. Lane, Jr. of Philadelphia has devoted a half-century to rail history preservation. Lane, who for many years resided in Kennebunk, ME, where he worked for the Seashore Trolley Museum, is now a resident of the Germantown section of the city.

In addition, the following members have earned 25-year pins from the Society and our Chapter:

Gilman Angier, Jr., Cape Elizabeth, ME
Larry A. DeYoung, Devon, PA
Jeffrey B. Erlitz, Rego Park, NY
Gary E. Landrio, Warren, PA
Jeffrey G. Mora, Washington, DC
Jeffrey Moreau, Orangevale, CA
Peter M. Senin, Jr., Burlington, NJ
Stewart R. Wagoner, Lansdale, PA
Ralph M. Weischedel, Canton, MA

It is planned to honor these members at our March 19 meeting, where each will receive his pins recognizing years of service to NRHS and our Chapter.

We congratulate each member on this significant achievement.



2004 Membership Update

At February 1, 2004, 85 percent of Philadelphia Chapter members had renewed, according to Chapter Treasurer Rich Copeland.

In addition, Chapter members have provided strong support for both the National organization and the Chapter, with more than \$1,500.00 donated to NRHS and nearly \$6,500.00 to our Chapter. The officers of the Chapter are deeply grateful to each member who has been able to provide this continuing level of support toward rail history preservation.

Those members who have not renewed are urged to take a moment and send your renewal in while you are thinking of it. This is the last issue of *Cinders* that unrenewed members will receive.

Chapter Donates to Rebuilding of Wilmington & Western Railroad

At its meeting held on Wednesday, January 14, 2004, the Board of Directors of Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS unanimously approved the donation of \$1,000 to Historic Red Clay Valley, Inc., the owner and operator of the Wilmington & Western Railroad.

The W&W suffered nearly \$6 million in damage as a result of flooding from storms on September 15, 2003. The railroad needs to raise approximately 25 percent of that figure to be eligible for various matching fund sources. This was after the railroad had been rebuilt following a prior storm several years ago. Numerous bridges and trestles were washed out, although those bridges replaced following the prior storm held their ground.

Members who individually wish to donate may send tax-deductible contributions to: Historic Red Clay Valley, Inc., P. O. Box 5787, Wilmington, DE 19808-0787. The railroad, meanwhile, has resumed some partial operations while the reconstruction project proceeds.

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS



FRANK G. TATNALL, JR.



SEPTA
REGIONAL
RAIL

January was unusually cold in the Philadelphia area, as temperatures averaged about nine degrees below normal during the last three weeks of the month. The Railroad Division, of course, struggled against the cold temperatures, freezing rain and snow which caused distress to just about everyone who was forced to venture outdoors. The mercury fell to a low of 4 degrees on the morning of the 10th and to 7 the next day, with even lower wind chills. On the 15th one to two inches of snow fell and on the 18th and 19th light snow and icy roads created hazards for motorists. A three-pronged assault on the 24th, 26th and 28th produced a total of about seven or eight inches of snow in the region, more bitter-cold temperatures, icy roads and numerous school closings. While these problems paled in comparison with the record-breaking snows of last February, SEPTA did manage to run its trains relatively well during the storms, averaging only ten-minute delays through the period.

But this is not to say that Regional Rail was problem-free in January. Far from it. Power failures, broken rails, frozen switches and equipment breakdowns plagued the system throughout the month, with possibly the worst incident occurring on Thursday the 15th. At 5:38 PM, during the height of the evening rush, several trains on the Mainline between Wayne Junction and Jenkintown lost traction power. Lengthy delays ensued as dispatchers struggled to sectionalize power on the #2 northbound track. Stranded passengers were finally rescued by following trains #6380 and combined #578/6598 running against the current of traffic on #1 track. At 7:27 PM power was restored on #2 but it took some time to get the stalled trains moving again. Delays persisted for R2 Warminster, R3 West Trenton and R5 Lansdale/Doylestown passengers for another hour and a half. Cause of the outage was traced to a pulled-apart wire splice on the northbound layoff siding at Jenkintown.

SEPTA and its riders also suffered numerous equipment breakdowns during the long period of unusually cold weather. The old Budd Silverliner II's appeared to be the most vulnerable. Other winter woes included a rail kink on the West Trenton line's #1 track near Langhorne on January 5, requiring that some southbound R3 trains operate on #2 to Neshaminy Falls; a power failure on AMTRAK's #1 track between "Baldwin" and "Phil" interlockings on the afternoon of the 8th, which forced the passengers on one R2 train from Wilmington to transfer to another train on the #2 track; and a switch failure at "Arsenal" on the evening of the 9th that caused delays to at least 13 Airport and Wilmington trains. A broken rail in the #1 track east of Downingtown on the very cold afternoon of Saturday the 10th

produced extensive delays to R5 service on the Amtrak Harrisburg mainline, with one train (Thorndale-bound #8537) transferring its passengers to Amtrak #611 at Malvern. Another broken rail that frigid evening in the West Trenton line #2 track near Meadowbrook station delayed at least ten trains, while yet another broken rail that same night near Secane in the Media-Elwyn line #2 track forced R3 trains to operate on the opposite track.

Switch failures at the following locations created their share of delays as well: January 10 at Paoli and at "Vine" interlocking in the center city tunnel, the next day at Media and on a snowy January 15 at Wayne Junction, "Newtown Junction" and at "90th Street" interlocking on the Airport Line. On the 16th cold weather contributed to failures at 30th Street, Wayne Junction, Jenkintown and at several locations on AMTRAK's Harrisburg line. The following day saw delays on the Airport Line due to frozen switches at "60th Street" and "90th Street," and on the morning of the 20th at least eight R5 trains were delayed because of a non-working switch at Paoli. A major problem for R5 passengers bound for the Main Line occurred during the evening rush on Thursday the 22nd, when switch and signal failures in Amtrak's "Zoo" interlocking delayed at least 15 R5 trains, as westbounds had to operate over the #1 eastbound track as far as Overbrook. Eight R6 Cynwyd trains had to be cancelled, their passengers bused to and from Overbrook. SEPTA continues to maintain that Amtrak is responsible for a large proportion of its train delays, even showing the percentage of such delays on its daily control center report. Often that figure hovers around 40-50 percent (reaching 66 percent on January 22).....Let's hope that February is a milder month than last year!

But the most embarrassing incident occurred early on Tuesday, January 27, when an 11-car draft of empty MU cars was being shuttled from Powelton yard into the stub-end 0 track in Suburban Station. For reasons not yet disclosed, the train failed to stop, crashing through the bumper block and into the wall at the end of the track. The lead car, Silverliner IV #155, was buckled by the impact and may be scrapped, while its married mate, #156, and another car were damaged. During severe weather periods, SEPTA routinely shelters as many trains as possible overnight in the center city tunnel and at Suburban Station.....One rather unusual incident that took place on Regional Rail last month was the collision between R5 train #581 and a school bus at Villanova station, when the bus driver backed her vehicle so far that the rear end was fouling the #4 track!.....A trespasser who climbed on top of a SEPTA train in Lansdale yard on January 3 received severe electrical burns and was airlifted to Temple University Hospital.....A traction motor fire under MU #211 caused R5 train #568 to be terminated at Frazer on December 31A pantograph on R3 train #386 became entangled in the catenary at Noble station around 7 PM on January 5, resulting in shuttle buses being called into service..... Yes, SEPTA really does have a heart. On the evening of January 21 two adult passengers with a small child missed the last

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PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

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scheduled R2 train to Newark, DE (#9257), and had no other means of getting there. So SEPTA supervisors ordered the next Wilmington train (#265) to operate the extra 12 miles to Newark to accommodate the stranded passengers.

SEPTA is in the final stages of negotiating a contract for 104 new Silverliner V MU cars. SEPTA representatives were in Japan and South Korea last month to further review which firm will receive the expected \$310-million contract, which may go to the SEPTA board for approval at its February 26 meeting. Proposals were received from four carbuilders in January 2003.....Work on the long-running \$6-million restoration of historic Overbrook station was finally completed in December, except for construction of the mini-high-level platforms for wheelchair patrons.....The new Melrose Park station is slowly taking shape on the Mainline, with the inbound high-level platform and canopy largely complete and foundations for the station building in place. When this work is finished sometime this summer, attention will shift to construction of the outbound high-level platform, at which time outbound trains will be swung over to the temporary center track.....There is incremental progress on SEPTA's plan to single-track the Fox Chase Line over the 3.5 miles between "Newtown Junction" and "Cheltenham Junction" (see December *Cinders*). Four interlocking cabins have been set out at the sites of the two passing sidings, one to be installed south of Olney station and the other between Lawndale and Cheltenham stations.

Governor Rendell last month reopened the debate over SEPTA's long-dormant proposal to build the Schuylkill Valley Metro commuter rail line between Philadelphia and Reading. Reflecting new leadership from Harrisburg, State Transportation Secretary Allen Biehler has convened an SVM task force, which met January 14 at SEPTA headquarters in an effort to get the project moving. SEPTA's original plan to build a separate railroad all the way from Norristown to Reading has escalated in cost to over \$2 billion, which everyone now agrees is a non-starter. One approach may be to begin more modestly with an extension only as far as King of Prussia. Then a new proposal may be advanced to share NORFOLK SOUTHERN freight tracks rather than to build a paralleling passenger-only line. SEPTA General Manager Faye Moore was quoted in the *Inquirer* as saying that one of the goals is to increase State and local funding for the project from 20 percent to as much as 50 percent, which seems more likely to attract Federal support for the scaled-down project. Meanwhile, Senator Arlen Specter was successful in placing a \$14-million "earmark" in the recently-passed Federal budget to pay for engineering work on the SVM.

The threat of a one-day strike by a few AMTRAK unions (see January *Cinders*) is still looming, and it could affect SEPTA and NJ TRANSIT commuter service. If the unions walk out and other workers honor the picket lines, trains will not be able to operate on Amtrak rails unless supervisors fill in as dispatchers and at other needed positions..... SEPTA again this year will issue its "Bouquet Passes" for the Philadelphia Flower Show, set for March 7-14 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. They are good for unlimited one-day travel on the SEPTA system.....DVARP reports that Regional Rail's on-time performance during the calendar year 2003 sunk to 84.2 percent, down from 88 percent in 2002, which represents the worst on-time

record among all major U.S. commuter railroads. SEPTA defines "on time" as no more than six minutes behind schedule at destination..... Member Dale Woodland published an interesting all-time roster of SEPTA diesel locomotives in the January issue of *Railpace* Newsmagazine. This was a follow-up to his article on the same subject that appeared in the December issue.



SEPTA TRANSIT

Having just resolved its cash crisis in the current fiscal year (see January *Cinders*), SEPTA is now forecasting an even bigger budget crunch for FY 2005, beginning July 1. The tentative operating budget of \$917 million represents a five-percent increase over the final \$875 million figure for FY 2004. The remaining \$25-million deficit in the 2004 budget was finally closed in late December when \$15 million in State and local subsidies were restored and \$11 million received from equipment leasebacks was transferred to the operating budget. However, the leaseback transfer and an earlier shift of \$15 million in PennDOT funds from the highway program to SEPTA (see November *Cinders*) were one-time fixes and cannot be reused in formulating the FY 2005 budget. (The Federal Transit Administration late last year suspended the approval of any further leaseback deals, in which a public authority sells rolling stock to a private entity for its tax advantages and then leases back the equipment for operation.)

The projected budget deficit for FY 2005 is based on higher anticipated costs for health care, pensions, and a new contract with SEPTA's largest union, while revenues and subsidies are expected to remain flat. The current three-year contract with Transport Workers Union Local 234, which represents most City Transit Division workers, expires on March 15, and a tough fight over wages and benefits is feared. The union currently is in turmoil, with President Jean Alexander at odds with its board and currently under suspension. This type of infighting often leads to more demands in contract negotiations as various factions in the union vie for leadership. And once again SEPTA officials are voicing the familiar refrain that more help must come from Harrisburg, in the form of dedicated long-term funding. Warned SEPTA Chairman Pasquale Deon, Sr., "Without greater financial support...our ability to provide present transit services will again be jeopardized." Governor Rendell's proposed State budget for the coming year is due to be released this month, but it is not known if it will include reforms such as lifting the cap on the amount of the State sales tax reserved for public transit.

SEPTA's consolidated passenger revenues for the first six months of Fiscal year 2004 were \$1.4 million below budget, and a \$22.1-million deficit had been accrued prior to the infusion of the new monies mentioned above. Average daily "linked" ridership for the six months was 733,000, about one percent higher than the same period in 2002. Subsidized senior ridership declined for the third year in a row, but SEPTA got a boost from Eagles home football games at the new Lincoln Financial Field. An average of 10,500 fans rode the Broad Street subway to and from the games—an 18-percent increase over the previous season—partly due to parking restrictions at the "Linc."..... NARP reports that the Senate soon will be debating the renewal of TEA-21, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, which expired last year but was extended to February 29. The proposal

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PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

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AMTRAK

favored by both highway and transit lobbyists is the six-year, \$375 billion plan which originated in the House, a far higher figure than the Bush Administration wants. If no agreement is reached, Congress may further extend the present law, possibly to the end of the fiscal year on September 30.....SEPTA plans to begin rail renewal work in April on Woodland Avenue in the 42nd Street area, requiring Routes 11 and 36 cars to detour via Chester Avenue and 49th Street. During the summer the work will move west on Woodland, and Route 11 cars will detour via Chester Avenue and the reopened 58th Street connectorA small ceremony was held in Darby on January 31 to mark the 100th anniversary of the old Philadelphia Rapid Transit pony truss bridge over Darby Creek, which until 1932 carried trolleys of the Route 71 Media line into Darby terminal. The bridge, though closed, still survives, and a local group is hoping to restore it.

SEPTA took delivery of its third PCC-II car from Brookville Equipment on January 27. The 18 cars in the order will run on the revived Route 15 Girard Avenue line, due to begin operation later this year. It was nearly 12 years ago, on September 12, 1992, that regular trolley service ended on Route 15. On that Saturday, Philadelphia Chapter sponsored a two-car "Farewell to the PCC's" excursion over the entire route between Lancaster & Girard Avenues in West Philadelphia and Richmond & Westmoreland Streets in Port Richmond, as well as a part of subway-surface Route 10. At the time, SEPTA told the public that it planned to order new light rail vehicles for the line, with delivery hoped for by 1996! The rebuilt PCC-II's utilize the original bodies of SEPTA PCC cars, altered most strikingly by the nearly-full-length "hump" on the roof which houses the air conditioning equipment and other accessories. Changes include newly-designed trucks, a center-door wheelchair lift, public address system and state-of-the-art operator's console. But many traditional features have been retained, including the PTC green-and-cream livery, silver wings on the headlight and Art-Deco bullseye light fixtures inside. The number series begins at 2320, following the last group of PCC's acquired by SEPTA from Toronto in 1975 (see September *Cinders*).

SEPTA has received all 12 of its initial order for diesel-electric "hybrid" buses from New Flyer, numbered 5601H-5612H. The 40-foot low-floor buses are based out of Southern depot, and they represent the first new dual-power buses in the City since PRT purchased a fleet of gas-electric vehicles in 1926! Tests have shown that the hybrids, which are equipped with regenerative braking, have better fuel economy and cleaner emissions than SEPTA's new diesel buses, as well as faster acceleration and longer brake lining life. Each of them is equipped with a Cummins six-cylinder, 280-hp diesel engine and an Allison/General Motors electric drive system. The SEPTA staff will recommend to the board that an additional 20 hybrid buses be ordered from New Flyer at \$515,000 per unit (the 300 diesel buses already on order from the same manufacturer will cost \$317,000 a copy)When the funeral for retired SEPTA Assistant General Manager Clarence Brangman was held on January 14, brand-new hybrid bus #5607H shuttled officials between SEPTA headquarters and the church in Germantown.

On January 22 the Senate finally approved a giant omnibus spending bill for the current fiscal year, sending it on to President Bush who signed it into law the next day. The \$373-billion measure, which funds much of the government's operations, includes a \$1.218- keep all of its trains operating and many of President David billion grant for AMTRAK, which the railroad said was enough to Gunn's state-of-good-repair projects funded. But some work, such as bridge upgrades on the Northeast Corridor, may be delayed, because the approved figure is well below the \$1.8 billion which Gunn requested for this year. However, improved management and accounting practices, as well as less spending than originally anticipated in FY 2003, have resulted in about \$200 million in cash being carried over to this year. In addition, AMTRAK this year will not be forced to repay the \$100-million loan from the Department of Transportation received in 2002, so that it will have about \$1.5 billion in working capital during the current year (NARP, *Railway Age*).

AMTRAK's funding request for Fiscal Year 2005 beginning this October 1 will go to Congress on February 15. The President was to submit his proposed Federal budget to Congress on February 2, in which he was expected to revert to his previous position that Amtrak should receive no more than \$900 million and be at least partially privatized (NARP)..... There are now two bills in the Senate that would reauthorize AMTRAK and increase the Federal investment in railroads. An effort will be made to combine the bills sponsored by Democratic Senator Ernest Hollings of South Carolina and Republican Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison of Texas, perhaps as part of the renewed TEA-21 legislation (see above)The Senate in December returned to the White House the nomination of Louis S. Thompson to the AMTRAK board, with the request that he be renominated in this session (NARP).

In common with many northeastern railroads impacted by severe winter weather, AMTRAK had a very rough January. Many of its long-distance trains were cancelled or suffered long delays due to the weather or freight derailments on their host railroads. Wire problems in Sunnyside yard, New York, created a chain reaction of delays along the Northeast Corridor on January 22. A CSX derailment the next morning in Charleston, SC resulted in the suspension of Silver Service trains for a full day and the busing of passengers stranded behind the derailment. A few days later a crippling ice storm struck the Carolinas, causing extended delays and even the cancellation of several trains using the CSX and Norfolk Southern mainlines. Both Auto Trains on Tuesday, January 27, were cancelled, as were the northbound **Silver Star** and southbound **Silver Meteor** that day. Corridor passengers were also affected, starting with the sleet, freezing rain and snow which blanketed the Northeast on January 27-28. Amtrak was forced to send out deadhead trains to clear the ice from overhead wires, so that some regular services could be operated. A modified schedule was in effect on Wednesday, January 28 when nine Acela Express trips were cancelled, as were seven Metroliners and Regional trains 130, 139 and 185; on Thursday the 29th six Metroliners and the same three Regional trains were annulled and on Friday the 30th seven Metroliners and those same three Regionals did not run (Amtrak, NARP, *Trains*).

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PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

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A study of AMTRAK's current operating timetable shows that the highly-touted Acela Expresses are not all that much faster than some other trains between New York and Washington. This is not surprising when one considers that most of the ex-Pennsylvania Railroad right-of-way dates back more than a century and the electrification infrastructure to the 1930's. Out of the total mileage of 225.1 between New York's Penn Station and Washington Union Station, there are only 50.5 miles where the Acelas can operate at a top speed of 130 or 135 mph. (On certain segments in Massachusetts and Rhode Island these trains can attain 150 mph.) Amfleet-equipped trains are allowed 135 mph over 22.9 miles of the mainline in New Jersey, the same as the Acelas, and 125 mph over 27.6 miles in Maryland. The Acelas have an advantage only on certain curves, where they can run faster because of their tilting mechanisms. In the present timetable, the speediest New York-Washington Acela schedule calls for a running time of two hours and 47 minutes with five intermediate stops, while the fastest Metroliner schedule is two hours and 58 minutes with five stops.

AMTRAK has extended its popular quiet-car program to all weekend Acela Expresses. Cell phones, pagers and other noisy electronic devices are banned in the quiet cars, and passengers are asked to carry on their conversations in hushed tones. Now a registered trademark of Amtrak, the idea for quiet cars originated in 1999 when a small group of regular passengers on an early-morning Philadelphia-to-Washington train asked their conductor if one car could be designated as "cell-phone free." The concept quickly spread to the point where virtually all weekday Corridor trains now include at least one quiet car—usually at the head-end (*Trains*).....Restoration of the Boston-Washington sleeping car on the overnight Federal has been pushed back to April 1, due to the continued backlog in shopping Viewliner cars (NARP).....AMTRAK no longer offers complimentary soft drinks to sleeping car passengers, although bottled water, ice and morning juice and coffee are still offered (NARP).

Major freight railroads are passing up millions of dollars each year in incentive payments for running AMTRAK trains on time, the Department of Transportation reports. Officials at CSX, NS, BURLINGTON NORTHERN & SANTA FE and UNION PACIFIC say that the cost of changing their freight schedules to meet Amtrak's needs would exceed what they would get in payments from Amtrak. Railroad freight traffic volume has increased 64 percent since 1980 while relatively little has been done to boost track capacity over that period (*Traffic World*). The business-oriented *Kiplinger Washington Letter* reports that U.S. railroads need to spend \$6 billion per year to maintain and upgrade their physical plants to properly handle more business, but are falling short of that goal by \$2 billion annually.



CSX
NS
OTHER ROADS

CSX boosted its fourth quarter rail and intermodal revenues from \$1.82 billion in 2002 to \$1.9 billion last year, but higher costs shrank net income by ten percent to \$123 million. For the full year of 2003, CSX's performance was not what shareholders wanted to hear: revenues dropped to \$7.8 billion from \$8.2 billion in the previous year, and net income of \$246 million was \$178 million less than in 2002.....In late November, CSX began taking delivery of 75 new 4,300-hp SD70MAC locomotives from EMD, numbered 4701-4775. Fourteen of CSX's earlier SD70MAC's, #775-788, were inherited from CONRAIL (*Railfan & Railroad*).....CSX is operating a former Baltimore & Ohio caboose repainted in a commemorative paint scheme in honor of the 175th anniversary of the B&O (*Bull Sheet*).....CSX is one of the railroads aggressively seeking intermodal business from Federal Express, which currently uses rail for only about three percent of its package business (*Traffic World*).....CSX will terminate up to 20 percent of its non-union workforce during the first half of 2004. A company publication outlines the procedures to be followed with laid-off workers: "The employee meets privately with a supervisor and a Human Resources representative as the termination announcement is made. Necessary paperwork is reviewed and explained, and...employees are then able to return to their work station, speak to colleagues, pack belongings and perform other measures they feel necessary before departure that day. It has not been the company's policy in recent history to provide guards to escort departing employees from the building, and the current termination process will remain consistent with that policy" (*Bull Sheet*).....CSX will lease three of the so-called "Green Goat" yard locomotives from RailPower Technologies of Vancouver, BC. These are experimental hybrid units which produce substantially lower emissions.

NORFOLK SOUTHERN last year increased its revenues by three percent over 2002, to a record \$6.5 billion. Fourth quarter revenues were \$1.68 billion, up six percent from the previous year. Net income for 2003 was \$535 million, compared with \$460 million in 2002.....NS will participate in the 150th anniversary this summer of the completion of Horseshoe Curve in 1854, which gave the PRR its own route to Pittsburgh and the West.....Work is well underway on the rebuilding of NS's bridge over the Christina River in Wilmington. This will open an alternate route to and from Edgemoor yard via the ex-Pennsy Shellpot branch, as opposed to running freight trains over AMTRAK's mainline through Wilmington station. In a rather unique deal, the State of Delaware will put up the \$13.5 million cost of repairing the old swing span, which was shut down by CONRAIL in 1994, and recoup the cost by charging NS a toll for each freight car passing over the bridge (see August 2002 *Cinders*).....NS is retrofitting its older SD70 locomotives, #2501-2556, with cab signal equipment and Locomotive Speed Limiter devices so that they can lead trains on AMTRAK's Northeast Corridor (Harrisburg Chapter)NS is leasing 48 six-axle locomotives to fill a short-term need. They will come from Helm leasing and MONTANA RAIL LINK (*Railpace*).....NS will test a new computerized on-board system designed to aid engineers in handling their trains to maximize safety and fuel efficiency. It is known by the acronym "LEADER," for Locomotive Engineer Assist Display and Event Recorder.....NS has filed to abandon 3.7 miles of the ex-Reading Bethlehem branch from north of Hellertown to South Bethlehem (*Railpace*).

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PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

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All railroads in the Northeast have taken hits from the cold and snowy weather which seemed to hang around most of January. AMTRAK and SEPTA's problems have been previously described, but CSX, NORFOLK SOUTHERN, CONRAIL and NJ TRANSIT were not immune. CSX issued several alerts to customers and employees describing the seriousness of the emergency in various areas—Level 3 for the worst conditions, then Level 2 and Level 1 for less serious conditions. Level 2 was in effect late last month from Richmond, VA, to Washington, Philadelphia and North Jersey, while a Level 1 alert covered the Conrail Shared Assets area in South Jersey. Special operating conditions also were observed on NS. Earlier in the month, all three railroads were forced to battle the elements in order to keep freight moving, which in the case of CSX involved rerouting of certain trains away from northern New York State..... The late January storm dumped much more snow on the New York City and North Jersey areas than it did on Philadelphia, creating numerous delays on the NJT system. NJT announced that the center doors on its commuter cars would not be opened, because they are prone to freezing after a buildup of snow and sometimes will not close properly. Extra employees were assigned and the cross-honoring of commuter rail, light rail and bus tickets was again in effect (*Trains*).

February 15 is the big day for NJ TRANSIT's River Line, because that's when its sleek diesel light-rail cars will finally start running between Camden and Trenton. After more than four years of construction and an expected price tag of \$1.1 billion, the line has been roundly criticized by some as a political boondoggle that won't carry many passengers (2,950 daily riders is the current estimate), but many of the 19 river towns along the 34-mile route are hopeful that it will provide an economic shot in the arm for the region along the Delaware River. The introductory fare will be a bargain \$1.10.....Don Phillips, long known as a crack transportation reporter for the *Washington Post*, has resigned after a dispute with the newspaper's management. He will, however, continue his "Potomac Pundit" column in *Trains Magazine*..... Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta has proposed a reorganization of his department, which would merge the Federal Railroad Administration and the Office of Pipeline Safety. It would become known as the Federal Railroad & Pipeline Administration (*Trains*).

Philadelphia Chapter has donated \$1,000 to the WILMINGTON & WESTERN RAILROAD to help rebuild the line. It's estimated that about \$6 million will be needed to fully restore the W&W, which had six of its wooden bridges destroyed and much other damage inflicted by the record flood of last September 15.....MORRISTOWN & ERIE last month resumed service over its entire Octoraro line in Chester County, after repair of a major washout near Kennett Square caused by that infamous September 15 flood. M&E has assigned an ex-CANADIAN PACIFIC C424 to the Octoraro line, based at Chadds Ford Junction (Paul Kutta).....Senator Charles Schumer of New York said last month that he would oppose the sale of DELAWARE & HUDSON by parent CP if the sale is to other than a Class 1 railroad. Several shortline groups reportedly were considering a bid for the D&H, but shortlines would not be required to maintain existing collective bargaining agreements with employee unions (*Traffic World*).....The Railroad Retirement Trust Fund posted a 19.9-percent return on its investments during Fiscal Year 2003, after permission was granted

to allow a portion of the fund to be invested in other than U.S. Treasury financial instruments (*Weekly Rail Review*).

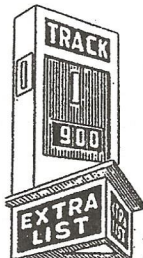
Railroad Development Corp., a Pittsburgh-based railroad operator run by Chapter Member Henry Posner, has acquired full ownership of the 687-mile IOWA INTERSTATE RAILROAD. For several years IAIS has operated the former Rock Island mainline between Blue Island, IL and Council Bluffs, IA (*Traffic World*).....The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers joined the giant Teamsters Union on January 1, following approval of the plan by BLE's membership. Its new name is the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen (NARP).....Former United Transportation Union President Charles Little last month pleaded guilty to charges that he took cash and other gifts from lawyers doing business with the union. Little could receive up to 20 years in prison and be fined \$250,000 when he is sentenced. Also indicted in the same proceeding was current UTU President Byron Boyd, who denies any wrongdoing (*Trains*).....PATCO has completed the installation of concrete ties, a major part of its ongoing capital program, but the replacement of escalators has fallen behind schedule (*Railpace*).....Budd Company's abandoned Red Lion railcar plant in Northeast Philadelphia occupied only part of a large tract of land. The property has been taken over by the Island Green Country Club, which built a clubhouse, 18-hole golf course and driving range.

U.S. shortlines are becoming increasingly concerned about the growing use of 286,000-pound-capacity freight cars, and whether they will be able to handle these heavy cars on some of their secondary lines. A bill was introduced in Congress last year to address this problem by authorizing up to a \$10,000 per mile tax credit to help pay for the upgrading of tracks on Class II and III railroads. In testimony before Congress, Richard F. Timmons, president of the American Short Line & Regional Railroad Association, said that it "will cost approximately \$7 billion to make the nation's shortline track structure capable of handling 286,000-pound cars." Now, in its March issue, *Trains Magazine* has weighed in with a major article entitled "The plight of the shortline railroad," which warns that if sufficient investment is not made in track improvements "thousands of miles of that track is going to be abandoned in the near future," affecting many rail-served customers.....Reports have surfaced in the trade press that General Motors may again be trying to sell its Electro-Motive Division.....Ranulph Bye, a Bucks County artist known for his watercolor paintings of historic railroad stations, died in December of pneumonia at the age of 87. One of his best known collections was published under the title of *The Vanishing Depot*.

Radnor Township officials recently predicted that construction of the Radnor Multi-Use Trail will begin sometime this winter, and the 2.2-mile trail will be open by the fall of 2004. When first proposed in 1976, the project ran into heated opposition from some nearby residents, but it finally received approval from the voters and the township commissioners. It will be built along the old Philadelphia & Western Strafford branch, which was abandoned in 1956.....The derelict Bethlehem Union Station has been beautifully restored, and was opened last fall as an outpatient center for St. Luke's Hospital. Closed in 1961, the station once served trains of the Lehigh Valley and Reading Railroads (*Railpace*).....Leo F. Mullin, 60, formerly a senior vice president at CONRAIL in the late 1970's and later the CEO of Atlanta-based Delta Air Lines, retired from the airline last

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FEBRUARY 14-15: Greenberg's Train, Toy & Hobby Show at Fort Washington Expo Center, Virginia Drive, Fort Washington, PA, 10 AM-4 PM both days. Admission: \$7 adults (good for both days), children 11 and under free. Philadelphia Chapter will be represented with a sales and membership table.



FEBRUARY 21: 40th Anniversary "Vermont Snow Express" sponsored by Massachusetts Bay Railroad Enthusiasts, Inc. Chartered Amtrak special train operates from Boston to Brattleboro and Bellows Falls, VT and return. Optional sidetrips include Vermont Feast Luncheon at Putney Inn, tour of covered bridges and historic village of Newfane, sleigh rides, or browse in shops and galleries at Brattleboro. Fare: \$79 adults, \$49 children, sidetrips extra. For info, send SASE to: Mass Bay RRE, Box 4245-BV, Andover, MA 01810-0814, or telephone 978-470-2066. E-mail contact: trips@massbayrre.org. MasterCard and VISA accepted for Mass Bay RRE trips.

FEBRUARY 21: Winter Blues III Multimedia Show at Summit Station Fire Hall, PA Route 183, Summit Station, PA. Ten different presenters will provide various subject matter (see separate article elsewhere this issue). Admission: \$25 per person, including family style buffet. Hot dogs and hamburgers will be on sale for lunch. Tickets should be ordered from: Michael Harting, 2094 Running Deer Drive, Auburn, PA 17922-9362, enclosing stamped, self-addressed envelope. For additional information, telephone 570-739-1190 (website: www.winterblues.net).

MARCH 6: EastRAIL 2004 at Warren Hills Regional High School, Washington, NJ, 10 AM-6 PM, sponsored by United Railroad Historical Society and featuring professional multi-media sound-slide programs. Admission in advance: \$10 adults, \$5 children (under 16), or at door \$15 adults, \$8 children. Order tickets from: URHS, 158 Heights Terrace, Middletown, NJ 07748, making checks payable to "URHS." For information, telephone 732-671-9644 between 7 and 9 PM (website: www.urhs.org).

MARCH 13: NRHS Weekend at Steamtown. All-day film presentations by NRHS Media Services Director Mitchell Dakelman; and Steve Barry, editor of *Railfan & Railroad Magazine*, at Steamtown National Historic Site, Scranton, PA. Regular admission charges apply (NRHS members showing their membership cards receive \$1 discount). Further details in March *Cinders*.

MARCH 14: NRHS Weekend at Steamtown. Slide presentations by NRHS Senior Vice President (and *Cinders* Editor) Larry Eastwood at Steamtown National Historic Site, Scranton, PA. Two different slide shows will be screened twice during the day: "The Twilight of the Reading Company and Jersey Central" and "Three Decades of Amtrak". Regular admission charges apply (NRHS members showing their membership cards receive \$1 discount). Further details March issue *Cinders*.

MARCH 14: "West Chester Express" diesel-powered excursions from West Chester to 30th Street Station and return, sponsored by Chesapeake Railway Association and West Chester Railroad Heritage Association. Special train will be made up of West Chester Railroad coaches with ex-Pennsy GP9 locomotive #99 on one end and ex-Canadian Pacific RS18u #1803 on the other end. Train will make two round-trips over WCRR and SEPTA

trackage, including SEPTA's freight-only Glen Mills running track between Glen Mills and Elwyn, and the regular R3 route from Elwyn to 30th Street. First trip leaves West Chester (Market Street station) at 8 AM, Glen Mills at 8:30 and Elwyn at 9:30, then leaves 30th Street (Upper Level) for the return trip at 10:30 AM. The second trip leaves West Chester at 1 PM and returns from 30th Street about 3:30 PM. Photo stops will be scheduled on both southbound runs. Fare: \$35 per person, good for one or both round-trips. Optional box lunches may be ordered for \$7.50 each. Order tickets and lunches from: WCCRHA, P. O. Box 355, Yorklyn, DE 19736, making checks payable to "WCCRHA." For further information, telephone 610-430-2233 (website: www.westchesterrr.net).

MARCH 20: 23rd annual Canal History & Technology Symposium at Lafayette College, Easton, PA, sponsored by the National Canal Museum. Registration for the all-day event begins at 8 AM in the William E. Simon Center. Eight presentations are on the agenda, including such topics as "Surveying the cultural resources of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad's main stem," "Pennsylvania's early transportation infrastructure and some efforts to improve it—prior to 1824" and "The Conewago Canal: Pennsylvania's first canal." Registration fee (by February 27): \$60, which includes continental breakfast, buffet lunch, reception and copy of proceedings. Send check or money order to: National Canal Museum, 30 Centre Square, Easton, PA 18042-7743. For additional information, telephone 610-559-6616.

THROUGH APRIL 19: "Pageant of Locomotives: Photograph from North American Railroad Fairs" display at Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, Strasburg. Included are events from the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia to the 1948-1949 Chicago Railroad Fair. Regular museum hours and admission charges apply. For information, telephone 717-687-8628.

"Rails to the Northstar"
2004 NRHS CONVENTION
Minneapolis, MN
June 29-July 4, 2004

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

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month. He tried to get his pilots union to accept pay cuts to help stabilize the carrier, but was forced out after it became known that he had guaranteed \$45 million in pension payments to 33 top executives if the airline went bankrupt (*Business Week*)..... "America on the Move," the expanded transportation exhibit that opened last fall at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History in Washington, has the Association of American Railroads as a major sponsor. The exhibit has 19 sections, and one of its "largest and most spectacular sections" showcases the history of the U.S. railroad industry. Included are green Southern Railway Pacific #1401, an important part of the Smithsonian's previous locomotive display, and the Santa Cruz Railroad Jupiter, built by Baldwin in 1876, recovered from Central America and restored by the museum staff (*Railway Age*).

**OPERATION
LIFESAVER.**

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ODDS AND ENDS.....by Roy L. Hudson

(This column will appear from time to time to provide Cinders readers with some hopefully useful information which has been gathered from miscellaneous sources)

"I have seldom heard a train go by and not wished I was on it" (Paul Theroux).....When Ward McAllister, chamberlain to Mrs. Lina Astor, first devised his list of New York City's 400 most socially elite, he excluded the Vanderbilts, because railroad money was considered "vulgar" (*New York Magazine*).....AEROSAURUS! Rep. John Mica (R-FL) called the U. S. airlines "braindead" and "pigs at the trough" for seeking financial aid from the Government. "You can only feed dinosaurs for so long," he says. (*Traffic World*)....."Let's Face Reality Department": The rails-to-trails advocates call it "rail banking", but as of the end of 2003 there has been no location in the United States where rails have been turned into trails and then back to rails again (Burlington, VT *Free Press* via 470 Railroad Club).

The Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania has just received an important piece of railroad history: PRR 19103, a 40', Class X54 plug-door boxcar is on site. The car was one of a series of 400, built in Samuel Rea Shop in Hollidaysburg. It doesn't look bad, considering that it hasn't been painted in at least 36 years. While at the Museum, we learned that General Electric-built Amtrak E60 #603 will also be in place at the Museum, and Reading 0-4-0 #1187 is being actively considered for restoration and possible use on the Strasburg Rail Road.....The next time you are in Coatesville, check the railroad display at the Lukens Historic District (directly south of the ex-PRR stone arch viaduct). There is on exhibit a 3-foot-gauge mill train complete with a restored steam locomotive (0-4-0T) lettered Lukens No. 10.....The first iron railway bridge in the United States was probably the one on the Reading near Manayunk. It was first used on May 4, 1845 and was ½ mile south of Flat Rock Tunnel and was replaced by a culvert in 1901 (*Guinness Book Rail Records* - from Rick Bates).

What single event in the history of the Budd RDC will live longest in the record books? How about New York Central's RDC-3 #M-497, modified with jet engines, which on July 23, 1966 was clocked at 183.85 mph on a special run between Butler, IN and Stryker, OH, running on jointed rail! A plaque was recently dedicated and mounted at Amtrak's Bryan, OH stop commemorating the event.....December 10, 2003 marked the 50th anniversary of the construction of the last steam locomotive built for a U.S. common carrier railroad. On December 10, 1953, brand-new Norfolk & Western Class S-1, 0-8-0 #244 was pulled from N&W's Roanoke, VA shop for its official builder's photo (*The Keystone*).....At Port Deposit, MD, the Bainbridge Development Corp. is working to redevelop the ex-U. S. Navy Training Center (boot camp). Once located on the PRR's Octoraro Branch, the base was the scene of frequent doubleheaded steam - powered troop trains (mains) during World War II (*USA Today*).

CSX is considering selling 200 miles of the ex-Chesapeake & Ohio line between Doswell-Charlottesville-Clifton Forge, VA for a short line/regional type rail operation (*Richmond Times-Dispatch*).....Since 1980, the major railroads have abandoned more than 100,000 miles of track, according to the Association of American Railroads. Of that, about 52,000 miles were acquired by regional and shortline railroads. More than 500 small railroads are scattered across the United States (*Interchange*).....Intermodal

freight is likely to overtake coal for good in 2004 as the railroads number one revenue generator. It is symbolic of the industry's transformation from a slow-moving carrier of low value bulk commodities to a low-cost provider of fast and reliable transportation of finished goods (*Traffic World*).....It seems almost like what we would expect from the Motor City! Detroit has officially closed its Heritage Tramway on Washington Boulevard and placed all the European trams for sale (*Tramways & Urban Transit*).

On January 2, a northbound Brandywine Valley Railroad freight train derailed at Centerville, DE. The first unit spread the rails and the slow-moving train ground to a halt. It was operating on the former Reading Wilmington & Northern branch and was hauling scrap steel, vegetable oil and propane (*West Chester Daily Local News*).....The Chester Valley Trail, when finished, will run from the Valley Forge area to Downingtown, mainly along the Reading's old Chester Valley branch. The trail is not expected to be completed until 2006-7 and has already sucked out \$3.2 million in grants from the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act-ISTEA (Chester County Nature of Things).....After five years of planning, Gettysburg has bids out for a \$2 million restoration of its historic 1858-vintage ex-Western Maryland Railway depot. The borough hopes to have a dedication in November, 2004, 141 years to the month since President Lincoln arrived at the station on his way to deliver the Gettysburg Address (*Civil War News*).....Officials have proposed automating the railroad bridge over Mantua Creek in Paulsboro, NJ. The drawbridge, located off Commerce Street, is owned and operated by the Conrail Shared Assets. The change will eliminate the need for a bridge tender by allowing the bridge to be opened by a member of the train crew (*South Jersey News*).

Regarding the parallels between the British Railways and the Church of England: both had their heyday in the mid-19th Century, both own a great deal of Gothic architecture which is expensive to maintain, both are regularly assailed by critics, and both are firmly convinced that they are the best means of getting man to his ultimate destination (Reverend W. Awdry, author of the "Thomas the Tank Engine" books).....This year's Spring Festival travel season is expected to be heavy and the Ministry of Chinese Railways has said they need an additional 5,000 (yes, five thousand!) passenger cars to cope with the crowds (*Peoples Daily* via the Internet).....The Long Island Rail Road's former president, K. J. Bauer and five managers allegedly got thousands of dollars in meals and entertainment from private companies involved with the railroad, according to an investigation which found they violated New York State law. One of the recipients was the manager for telling the staff about rules governing such gifts (*New York Times*).

Let's set the record straight! "Old Ironsides" (2-2-0, Baldwin, 1832) was the first locomotive built and operated on a predecessor line of the Reading Company. It ran in passenger service on the Philadelphia, Germantown & Norristown until 1846. The "Rocket" on display at the Franklin Institute was one of eight such 0-4-0's built in London in 1838 for the Philadelphia & Reading (*Steam Locomotives of the Reading* - Wiswesser).....As we know, Steamtown National Historic Site is located on the site of the former Delaware, Lackawanna & Western shop and yard in Scranton. Steamtown has a rare hometown locomotive. It is DL&W #565, a 2-6-0 built by Alco in 1908 and it is being cosmetically restored for display. The only other existing example

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ODDS AND ENDS (Continued from Page 9)

of a Lackawanna steamer is Camelback #952 at the Museum of Transport near St. Louis, MO (*Steamtown Timetable*)....."I do verily believe that carriages propelled by steam will come into general use, and travel at the rate of 300 miles per day." (Oliver Evans in 1813).

The Denver-Winter Park (CO) Ski Train is back this year for the "shushers". On the rear for first class travel are ex-DR&GW business cars, the vista dome **California** and the open-platform observation **Kansas** and **Utah** (*Lifestyle Magazine*).....The highest summit on a currently-operated (though seasonal) adhesion-operated rail line in North America is Cumbres Pass (10,000-feet-plus) in Colorado. Perhaps the Moffat Tunnel, at 9,242 feet, is the highest for regular freight (Union Pacific, ex-D&RGW) and passenger trains (Amtrak, Ski Train).....Denver & Rio Grande narrow gauge steam locomotive #346 from the Colorado Railroad Museum at Boulder has been moved to the Strasburg Rail Road shop for extensive repairs on its boiler and running gear (*470 Railroad Club*).

General Electric Transportation Systems, the Railroad Division of GE (mainly locomotives) has merged its management functions with GE aircraft engines. The combo will be called GE Transportation. The company has been manufacturing railroad equipment in Erie, PA since 1911. The Aircraft Division represents sales five times greater than that of the Rail Unit (*Erie Times-News*). Of concern is that Aircraft brings in about 25 percent more sales per employee. GE is known to dump poor performers fast!

NJ Transit Delays River Line Opening (Again); Now Set for March 14

On Monday, February 2, New Jersey Transit announced that it was delaying (again) the opening of the \$1.1-billion, 34-mile River Line Camden-Trenton light rail route to Sunday, March 14, 2004. Revenue service had originally been scheduled to start on Sunday, February 15.

NJT's contractor, Southern New Jersey Light Rail Group, LLC, a unit of Bechtel Corp., said in a Philadelphia *Inquirer* article that most of their problems surrounded malfunctioning gates at about 12 of the 52 grade crossings along the route, mostly in Burlington County. The *Inquirer* article also alluded to unmentioned delays which apparently had nothing to do with the operational ability of the line, according to Bechtel.

NJ Transit was to begin a \$750,000 advertising and information campaign in mid-February to promote the line, which will apparently go on as scheduled. Some 80,000 mailers will be sent to homes, and a dedicated website to the River Line, www.RiverLine.com, is set to be up and running on February 15.

Meanwhile, testing of the railcars and the crossing protection devices continue, with the hope that the March 14 date will see actual operation of the line. Apparently, however, the contractor has been unable to get through a full day of "dry runs" and hold to the schedule. NJT is counting on its heavily-discounted \$1.10 fare on the line to generate and build ridership.

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