



CINDERS

DECEMBER 2009



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Number 11

Newsletter of the
PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
 Post Office Box 7302
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Holiday  *Greetings*

Some people are probably saying about now, "Well, it looks like we've survived another year." But I prefer to think that we've done more than just "survive," both in the fellowship of our Philadelphia Chapter and in our own lives. Of course, it's been a tough year on the economic front, which has touched just about everyone, yet in spite of it all we are ready to celebrate another wonderful holiday season.

If we consider how the year went in rail transportation—our common interest—it was a reasonably good one. While SEPTA and its customers did endure a six-day strike, there were many positives to be thankful for. Let us count the ways:

- At long last state and Federal agencies are taking a more enlightened attitude toward passenger rail, and appear ready to spend some serious money on infrastructure improvements and equipment purchases
- Transit also should benefit from a greater respect at various levels of government, with SEPTA already receiving a fresh infusion of capital funding.
- The freight railroads are doing well and remain solidly in the black in spite of sharply lower levels of traffic, while spending billions of dollars to prepare for an upsurge in business. For its part, Amtrak enjoyed the second highest ridership in its history.
- In our own area SEPTA has a new top officer who seems to understand how important good service is to the customer.
- Railfans and rail advocates are increasing in numbers, enthusiasm and technical skills, as we witness the proliferation of Internet websites, chat rooms and the continued popularity of print publications.
- And, finally, we have found a new and perhaps permanent home for our cherished FP7 locomotive at Steamtown National Historic Site.

With these thoughts in mind, I would like to thank each of you for your involvement in the Philadelphia Chapter, and for your continuing support of our railroad and transit industries. I extend my best personal wishes to you and your families for a joyful Christmas and Hanukkah season, as we await the New Year and its prospect of better times ahead for us and our country.


 FRANK G. TATNALL
 President

**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

CHAPTER OFFICERS

President.....Frank G. Tatnall (610) 688-5623
Senior Vice President.....William Thomas III (215) 545-3198
Vice President & Treasurer.....Richard Copeland (215) 343-2765
Secretary.....R. L. Eastwood, Jr. (215) 947-5769
National Director.....R. L. Eastwood, Jr. (215) 947-5769
Historian.....Larry A. DeYoung (610) 293-9098
Editor.....R. L. Eastwood, Jr. (215) 947-5769

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Equipment.....David R. McGuire (856) 241-8046
Membership.....Sheila A. Dorr (610) 642-2830
Program.....William Thomas III (215) 545-3198
Publicity.....William C. Faltermayer (215) 591-9018
Sales.....Dave Kopena (215) 671-0605
Trip.....R. L. Eastwood, Jr. (215) 947-5769
Webmaster.....John P. Almeida (215) 361-3953

Meeting Notice

FRIDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 18, 2009

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
(\$9.00 after 5 PM). There is a new underground garage directly
across from the Jefferson Alumni Hall (entrance on 11th Street just
above Locust) which is very handy. *(Please note that we are in the
process of updating the garages and prices and this will be
completed during the fall months.)*

Our Program on Friday evening, December 18, 2009 **(PLEASE
NOTE WE WILL MEET 3RD FRIDAY THIS DECEMBER)** will
feature a **Rail Slide Potpourri** from the **Joseph M. Mannix
Collection**. This program, put together by Editor Larry Eastwood,
will screen vintage rail views from all around the United States,
plus some more Philadelphia items, none of which were shown in
the first two programs. Don't miss this slide show.

The evening begins with our usual optional 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, DECEMBER 15, 2009 to National
Director Larry Eastwood at 215-947-5769.** The menu for
December features tossed garden salad, Parmesan crusted chicken
served over a champagne sauce, garlic mashed potatoes, grilled
vegetables, **OR** pecan crusted cod fish, brown rice with hot
cranberries, grilled vegetables. Apple pie with ice cream will
round the dinner. Why not come out for dinner before our
meeting. It's an enjoyable full meal, plus informal and interesting
conversation, and it's still priced at only \$20.00 per person.

Get into the Holiday Spirit by coming to our December 18
meeting, enjoy a nice dinner and some great Joe Mannix slide
views!

**NOTE: Our January 15, 2010 meeting will feature another in
our continuing series of RAILROADIANA AUCTIONS! Mark
your calendar for this meeting date.**

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: \$53.00 per person, which includes Chapter
and National dues. Chapter-only dues \$17.00 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.

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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.

**Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS
Board of Directors Meeting
4th Quarter (Winter), 2009
Wednesday, December 9, 2009
7:00 PM
Passenger Services Conference Room
Amtrak 30th Street Station
All members of Philadelphia Chapter
Are welcome and encouraged to attend**

If your Cinders Arrives in Bad Condition
If your *Cinders* arrives damaged, contact Editor Larry
Eastwood at 215-947-5769 or reastwood2@comcast.net and a
replacement copy will be promptly be sent to you.

CINDERS Damage Continues

Philadelphia Chapter continued to experience a higher-
than-normal level of damage as November *Cinders* was processed
through the Postal Service. Accordingly, you will note with the
December issue we are placing the fold at the bottom of the
newsletter and adding an additional tab on one edge. While this
consumes considerable additional time, it is hoped that it will
reduce damage to your copy so it is more readable. As always, see
notice above if you need a replacement copy.

**INFORMATION NEEDED: The Chapter is attempting to
determine the date on which Penn Central Budd Silverliner
#210 was destroyed by fire in Suburban Station (about
1970 or 1971). If you know, please contact Editor Larry
Eastwood by phone or E-Mail: reastwood2@comcast.net.**

Membership Renewal Update

As of November 20, 2009, 155 membership renewals had
been processed for the 2010 membership year. Members are reminded
that there will sometimes be a lag between the date their renewals are
mailed and when they are processed, because of the mandated once-a-
month transmittal to NRHS. Renewals received after November 20 will
be processed for the January, 2010 renewal cycle, but checks will be
deposited before December 31, 2009.

Stealth Strike Stops SEPTA Service

It loomed out of the early-morning darkness on Tuesday, November 3. At 3 AM, with no advance notice to the public, members of Transport Workers Union Local 234 went on strike, setting up picket lines at stations and shops throughout SEPTA's City Transit Division. Local 234 represents about 5,100 drivers, mechanics and cashiers on subway-elevated, trolley and bus routes operating in and around the City. Union President Willie Brown was unapologetic, saying that his union actually should be given credit for delaying the threatened walkout for three days, until after the last World Series game between the Phillies and New York Yankees at Citizens Bank Park had been played. (He later referred to himself as "the most hated man in Philadelphia" for calling the surprise strike.)

But Brown received little sympathy from the many unsuspecting SEPTA customers who went out as usual that morning to catch their trolleys, buses and subway-elevated trains, only to find that all transit service in the City had been shut down. Riders had to scramble to find alternate transportation to their jobs, schools or doctors' offices, with many of them making their way to the nearest Regional Rail stations while others car-pooled, rode bicycles or walked. There was considerable public outrage over the strike, which some viewed as an action by well-paid workers with secure jobs demanding still more money during a period of economic distress, and at a time when many of their riders are looking for work or working at low-wage jobs. Some newspaper columnists expressed similar sentiments, e.g., Ronnie Polanczky in the *Daily News* whose column was headed "To SEPTA strikers: How dare you!" The last time the TWU struck SEPTA was in the fall of 2005, a walkout that lasted for seven days.

As in past strikes, the commuter rail system was unaffected by the TWU job action, except to the extent that thousands of additional passengers tried to jam themselves into already-busy rush-hour trains. SEPTA supervisory personnel and police were quickly dispatched to the Market East, Suburban and 30th Street Stations to help control the crowds and regulate the flow of passengers onto the platforms. Regional Rail generally performed well, although it was unfortunate that two rush-hour train accidents occurred on successive mornings during the strike, resulting in long delays on two of SEPTA's busiest Regional Rail lines (see "Philadelphia Express" elsewhere in this issue). But for the most part the City's hardy commuters managed to make do until the walkout ended six days later. In addition to Regional Rail, all Victory District suburban services continued to operate, including the Routes 101 and 102 trolleys and the Norristown High Speed Line, whose drivers belong to a different union. For a time on Tuesday morning, however, only a few buses were able to leave the Victory depot in Upper Darby because TWU pickets had blocked the gates, and trolleys were bottled up at the 69th Street Terminal.

Soon after the walkout began things got rather testy when Mayor Nutter called the union's action "outrageous" and an "ambush," to which the TWU's Brown responded by declaring that he would no longer speak with the Mayor. As the strike wore on, there also were some harsh words exchanged in public between Brown and Governor Rendell, who had been active in negotiations to avert the stoppage and on October 31 had predicted that an agreement was nearly in hand (see November *Cinders*). Brown branded that statement a "lie," and ignored the Governor's later charge that the union leadership had turned down a "sensational"

offer from SEPTA. During midweek nothing much was accomplished toward a settlement, but by Friday, November 6, Rendell was again actively engaged in the negotiations. The *Inquirer* reported that talks would resume and, at Rendell's request, SEPTA was "crafting new financial and personnel proposals." Finally, late on Friday a so-called "handshake" agreement was announced.

But on Saturday a newspaper headline reading "SEPTA accord falls apart" made for grim reading. The union's board had voted to reject the tentative agreement. Governor Rendell was so displeased with the union's alleged intransigence that he threatened to withdraw the \$7 million in State development funds which he had offered as part of the settlement. That money was to be used to fund a \$1,250 signing bonus for each employee, but Rendell said the union would lose it unless Brown allowed his rank-and-file members to vote on the proposed contract by Monday evening the 9th. Brown refused, saying that the union's constitution did not permit such a vote.

The back story was that all week, while the media was reporting the negotiations to be unproductive, nonexistent or suspended, Congressman Bob Brady of Philadelphia was behind the scenes pressuring SEPTA and union officials to continue talking. Brady, as it turned out, was the real mover in this dispute, serving as a peacemaker who helped to hammer out the final agreement. An experienced labor negotiator and himself a member of the Carpenters Union, Brady kept a low profile while the front-row politicians appeared to be spinning their wheels. Without his efforts, it's anyone's guess how long the shutdown might have continued. He later said that, contrary to several public statements from both sides, negotiations had not broken down even though SEPTA thought they had reached "the point of futility." "We never stopped talking...Some numbers had to be massaged...Everybody cooperated." A SEPTA spokesman later said that Brady "has a remarkable reputation in this City as a lifeline between management and labor."

Early on Monday morning, November 9, the seventh day of the impasse, the strike ended just as quickly as it had started. At a 12:45 AM news conference in the lobby of the Bellevue Hotel, Rendell, Brady, Nutter, SEPTA and union officials announced that a five-year contract agreement had been reached, subject to ratification by TWU members on November 20 and by the SEPTA board on December 10. Many subway-elevated trains as well as trolleys and buses were back in operation in time for the morning rush, although full service was not restored until later that morning. It is likely that the union representing Suburban Division workers on the old Red Arrow lines will settle for a similar contract.

While the TWU initially had said that the funding of SEPTA's employee pension plan was the main sticking point in the discussions, it later developed that SEPTA's willingness to bend on two controversial non-wage issues actually sealed the deal. One was an increase in dental insurance coverage and the other an agreement to have a joint labor-management committee review the impact of any future Federal legislation on healthcare costs. With the signing bonus in place for the first year of the five-year contract, to be paid upon ratification, some money was shifted to provide a 2.5-percent wage increase in the second year and a three-percent raise in each of the following three years. Workers' contributions to the pension fund were increased from the present

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PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS



FRANK G. TATNALL, JR.



SEPTA TRANSIT

soon will be expanded to include some bus routes as well (see July *Cinders*).

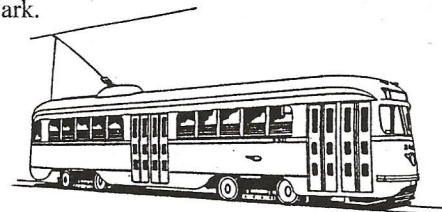
As predicted here in September, Pennsylvania has filed a new application with the Federal Highway Administration to place tolls on Interstate 80 across the northern tier of the State. This action is part of the strategy laid out in Act 44 of 2007, under which tolls from both the Pennsylvania Turnpike and I-80 are intended to provide a “predictable” funding source for highways, bridges and transit across the State—including SEPTA. Much of the toll revenue from I-80 would be used for maintenance of that highway, replacing general funds which could be diverted to transportation uses elsewhere in the State. A previous application was denied by the FHA last year, but officials hope for a better result from the present Administration which is considered to be more transit-friendly.....SEPTA will hold two public meetings on Tuesday, December 15, at the 1234 Market Street headquarters to provide a forum for comments on its proposed 2011 capital budget. The sessions begin at 11 AM and 5 PM.

For obvious reasons, no one at SEPTA will admit it but there must have been a few sighs of relief at 1234 Market Street when the Phillies lost the World Series last month. This meant no victory parade through center city and no possibility of another transportation nightmare such as occurred in October 2008 after the Phillies won it all.....Two more Market-Frankford cars have been “wrapped” in an advertising message. Cars 1071 and 1072 were photographed last month in a green wrap with messages from the new Clear mobile Internet service (Trainorders.com).....No work has yet begun on the proposed three-block extension of trolley Route 15 in Frankford Avenue between Girard and Delaware Avenues (see June *Cinders*)Route 15 was bused on Sunday morning, November 22, due to the running of the Philadelphia Marathon in Fairmount Park.

Last month’s six-day strike on the City Transit Division (see separate article) came on top of SEPTA’s already declining passenger revenues and ridership. During the first four months of Fiscal Year 2010 (July through October) consolidated passenger revenues of \$124.2 million were five percent below budget and four percent below the year-ago period, while average weekday ridership of 766,000 was four percent below budget and four percent below the same period a year ago. Revenues on the City Transit Division were down by three percent from last year, Suburban Transit and the Railroad Division by six percent. Ridership was off by three percent on the City Division, by four percent on Suburban and by six percent on the railroad. All this has resulted in an uncomfortable deficit of \$7 million after subsidies for the four-month period.

SEPTA is moving ahead aggressively with the 32 construction projects funded by the Federal stimulus program. By mid-November \$162.2 million has been budgeted out of the \$190.9 million which SEPTA expects to receive from the American Recovery & Investment Act (ARRA). Of that \$162.2 million, 85 percent will be awarded to third-party contractors. A total of 54 individual contracts have been finalized thus far, with notices to proceed on 44 of them. SEPTA officials say that they gambled by starting design work before funding was assured, thus giving SEPTA a jump on other transit agencies in requesting money for “shovel-ready” projects which are intended to get the cash flowing as quickly as possible. Among major projects on the transit side are renovation of the Girard and Spring Garden stations on the Broad Street subway (\$24 million), track and electrical improvements at the Fern Rock yard (\$15.6 million), upgrades to the Routes 101-102 Media-Sharon Hill trolley lines (\$24 million), rebuilding the Darby Transportation Center (\$1.5 million) and the purchase of 40 new hybrid buses (\$19.4 million). Nationwide, U.S. DOT reports that it has “jump-started” more than 10,000 projects, funded out of the \$48 billion allocated for transportation in ARRA.

Work on the first phase of the year-long Media-Sharon Hill rebuilding project (see October *Cinders*) should be completed by December 14. This will result in the restoration of rail service on the Route 102 between Drexel Hill Junction and Sharon Hill. On that date work will shift to the outer end of the Route 101 Media line, with buses substituted between Woodland Avenue station in Springfield and Media. This phase will continue through mid-March. SEPTA also plans to make improvements to all stations on the two lines.....SEPTA introduced its newly-designed website (www.septa.org) on November 18, containing features which make it easier for users to find travel information. Google Transit’s route planning service for rail trips on SEPTA, now available through a link on the SEPTA website,



The Obama Administration has proposed that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) be given the authority to enforce safety regulations on U.S. transit systems. While the Federal government regulates safety on the airlines and on long-distance and commuter rail systems, the regulation of transit operators is left up to state and local agencies. There is general agreement in Washington that the feds should have the power to enforce rules on transit systems, but some believe the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) should be given the job because of its long history of regulating safety on the nation’s railroadsThe current slogan “Go green go SEPTA” may bring back memories of some earlier slogans used by the agency. How about such winners as “We’re getting there,” “At your

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PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

(Continued from Page 4)

service” or “You can’t beat the system”?.....There always will be grippers, and one or more of them have set up a new website entitled www.septafail.com.



SEPTA REGIONAL RAIL

As if the transit strike didn't produce enough turmoil last month, Regional Rail suffered two serious accidents during the morning rush hours. About 6:55 AM on Wednesday, November 4, the second day of the strike, the lead MU on R5 train #4712 caught fire east of Overbrook station, adjacent to SEPTA's Overbrook shop. The front end of the car, Budd-built Silverliner II #257, erupted in flames with black smoke billowing high into the air, as shown in several dramatic photographs taken at the scene. The Philadelphia Fire Department responded quickly and had the fire under control within 40 minutes. Fortunately, the train crew a few minutes earlier had noticed a burning odor in the car and moved its passengers into the rear three cars, #222, 236 and 260. As #257 became engulfed in flames, all 500 passengers on the train were evacuated, with no injuries. Eastbound R5 train #522 approaching the scene also had to be evacuated. Many of the passengers milled around in the area awaiting further transportation, which had to be provided by school buses because SEPTA drivers were on strike.

Electric power on AMTRAK's mainline was shut down for an hour and a half, with all Harrisburg, R5 Paoli-Thorndale and R6 Cynwyd service suspended until about 8:30. At least eight R5 trains were annulled and several others delayed for lengthy periods. The first westbound train to Thorndale was #515, leaving 30th Street at 8:45 AM. By 10:30 a diesel switcher had pulled the disabled train into Overbrook yard and smoke-blackened #257 was declared a total loss. Officials later decided that the blaze had been caused by a failure in an electrical heating element on car #257. All of this happened, of course, when the rail system already was under stress due to the heavy influx of displaced transit riders, and numerous other cancellations and delays were reported. A SEPTA spokesman called the fire “a catastrophe that wasn't,” emphasizing that there was no indication of sabotage.

At 8:35 the next morning, Thursday, November 5, a crowded R3 express from West Trenton struck and killed a 34-year-old SEPTA track inspector who was walking in the gauge of the #2 Mainline track between Melrose Park and Fern Rock. Train #327 was operating southward on what is normally the northbound track, although the railroad is signaled for bidirectional operation. The line was being single-tracked due to an earlier stalled train. All R1, R2, R3 and R5 service through the area was suspended for nearly three hours, during which time some northbound trains were turned back at Fern Rock.....Other than these two incidents, rail service during the strike week went relatively well, given the delays caused by large throngs of passengers and the usual slippery rails at that time of year. One tactic that SEPTA

employed on the busy R5 Paoli-Thorndale line was to operate all westbound rush-hour trains as locals, except for #5561 **Great Valley Flyer** which non-stops to Paoli, and express #7565. There were two reported delays of push-pull trains on Tuesday morning, November 3. ALP-44 #2308 assigned to Newark (DE) express #7295 lost power at Suburban Station and other equipment had to be substituted. That same morning, inbound R3 express #5340 from Elwyn was delayed for 25 minutes when AEM-7 #2304 shut down near Morton station.

While no official announcement has been made, comments from the SEPTA staff indicate that the “R” system of train designations is likely to be eliminated (see July, November *Cinders*). It is probable that the decision will be made prior to the next round of timetable reissues set for January 10, although that date may be set back a week to coincide with AMTRAK and NJ TRANSIT schedule changes.....With the January timetables half-hourly midday service will be restored to the R5 Lansdale line, now that rebuilding of the century-old bridge at milepost 20.25 near Penllyn station has been completed (see November *Cinders*). Hourly midday service will be restored to the R3 West Trenton line, following a tie replacement project, and those trains redirected to the Airport. The R3 Media-Elwyn to Philadelphia will become a stand-alone operation due to a trackwork project, eliminating the present midday pairing of trains with the R6 Norristown Line.....In a ribbon-cutting ceremony last month, SEPTA dedicated its new \$425,000 Crestmont station on the R2 Warminster Line. The glass-enclosed passenger shelter replaces a deteriorating wooden shelter, together with the addition of new platforms, walkways, signage, lighting and a paved parking lot on the outbound side.

As anticipated, during the week of November 2 SEPTA began rolling out its “gel train,” which sprays a substance laced with metal shavings on railheads to improve traction during the fall leaf season. This train supplements the wash trains described here last month, which blast water at high pressure to remove leaves from the railheads. Wherever the gel train operates it deposits a very noticeable white coating on the rails.....SEPTA's next project on the R5 Mainline will be a \$3.3-million effort to stabilize the Gwynedd cut north of Gwynedd Valley station. The project includes scaling of the loose rocks, installation of rock “draperies,” bolts and retaining walls or fences, and other work to make 70-mph operation safe through the area. The cut was formerly a tunnel built by the old North Penn Railroad, which was daylighted at the time of electrification in the early 1930's.

There are numerous other Regional Rail projects funded by the Federal stimulus program. Total cost of all the RRD projects is about \$56 million, which includes two station replacements, six station renovations, one high-level platform installation (R7 Croydon), 17 stations on the R7 Chestnut Hill East and R8 Chestnut Hill West Lines receiving general improvements, 17 stations on the R5 Paoli-Thorndale line getting new signage, right-of-way fencing along the R1 Airport Line, an \$856,000 parking lot expansion at the R3 Elwyn station and \$12 million for more parking space and a new pedestrian tunnel at the R5 Malvern station. Future plans include high-level or “mini-high-level” platforms at additional stations, with only three stations along AMTRAK lines where SEPTA has not received permission from the freight carrier for high-level platforms: Bristol, Marcus Hook and Thorndale.

(Continued on Page 6)

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS (Continued from Page 5)

Since our report of last month, Hyundai shipped six more Silverliner V car shells from South Korea to Philadelphia on October 19, following the first three that arrived here on October 21. Nine more shells were to be shipped last month for final construction at the South Philadelphia assembly plant. We were in error reporting that the three pilot cars were enroute to Philadelphia, because it developed that more testing was needed in South Korea. These cars should be on their way here sometime this month, ready for road testing on SEPTA. The order for new MU cars totals 120 units, with the last deliveries promised for some time in 2011.

SEPTA's performance review for its 2010 Annual Service Plan shows that all 13 Regional Rail lines exceed the minimum acceptable operating ratio of 29 percent. The best performer was the R3 Media-Elwyn line at 67 percent, followed by R6 Norristown at 57 percent and R5 Paoli-Thorndale at 56 percent. The worst performers were R6 Cynwyd at 35 percent, R1 Airport at 37 percent and R7 Trenton at 38 percent. The operating ratio is the ratio between operating costs and operating revenuesIn an interview with the Pottstown Mercury last month, Pennsylvania Senator Arlen Specter said that he was surprised PennDOT's recent request for \$3.2 billion in Federal funding for passenger rail projects did not include the proposed extension of the R6 rail line to Reading (see March, September Cinders).....The SEPTA board on November 19 approved the purchase of temporary property easements along a section of the West Chester Line in Delaware County. The properties are needed for construction work on the extension of R3 service from Elwyn to Wawa, to be completed in 2013.

Regional Rail trains encountered a few glitches last month, in addition to those mentioned above. Two involved collisions with deer, one on Friday, November 6, when R5 train #514 struck an animal at "Glen" interlocking west of Malvern, and the other on Saturday the 14th when #4335 plowed into one at Media. Both trains suffered minor front-end damage. Previously-scheduled work on rebuilding bridge 20.25 near Penllyn caused numerous delays to R5 trains on Friday, November 6 (during the SEPTA transit strike) and on Monday the 9th, as many trains were rescheduled or turned back (see November Cinders). On Saturday afternoon and evening, November 14, four trains had to be cancelled because no engineers were available. One odd incident occurred on Thursday the 19th, when R5 express #7565 lost traction while proceeding upgrade between Ardmore and Bryn Mawr. The crew reported that AEM-7 #2301 was experiencing wheel slip because the locomotive had no sand! Passengers were discharged at Bryn Mawr for following trains #567 and 5571.



As Cinders went to press, AMTRAK was preparing for the challenges of a huge Thanksgiving week, with 125,000 passengers expected on Wednesday the 25th, the busiest travel day of the year. Most regular trains on the Northeast Corridor were not scheduled to operate on Thanksgiving Day but some added trains would run both on weekends and on Thanksgiving Day while normally weekend-only trains also were scheduled on the Thursday holiday. All trains during the period were reserved,

including the usually-unreserved Keystone trains to and from Harrisburg. Eight 3000-series "holiday extras" using commuter equipment were to run on Sunday the 29th, four in each direction between New York and Washington. (SEPTA loaned Amtrak one Bombardier trainset for protection.) As usual, Amtrak issued a special timetable for the holiday period, November 24-30, this time with an attractive cover showing four happy passengers and a train crossing a bridge on the Springfield line. Amtrak said that last year it carried 660,000 passengers during Thanksgiving week, serving seven tons of roast turkey, 20,000 servings of cranberry sauce and 20,000 slices of pumpkin pie on its long-distance trains.

The University of Delaware has announced that it will purchase the 272-acre site of the former Chrysler plant alongside the Northeast Corridor in Newark, DE. The \$24-million purchase will allow the University to greatly expand its research facilities. Earlier, it became known that AMTRAK and SEPTA likely will cancel their plans to relocate the Newark station to the "Davis" interlocking area a half-mile north of the present station, and retain the current location adjacent to the Chrysler site..... Implosion of the landmark chimney on the abandoned ex-Pennsy steam plant north of 30th Street Station was carried out on Sunday morning, November 15, one week later than the date mentioned here last month. The Art Deco-style boiler house with its 425-foot-high smokestack occupies land that AMTRAK needs for parking space and other uses. At 7:45 AM the huge octagonal stack fell to the ground in one piece with a great crash, an event well documented by the press and other onlookers. The steam plant itself along with the adjacent Pullman & Yard Service Building now are being demolished. Constructed in 1929 to furnish heat to the new 30th Street Station and other PRR buildings, the plant has been unused since 1964.

AMTRAK issued a revised New York-Washington timetable effective November 9, reflecting the latest service adjustments as the Northeast Corridor tie replacement program advances. Amtrak said this schedule will remain in effect until mid-January as part of a program to replace failing concrete ties which is expected to extend through next year. As a result, the semi-annual National timetables do not include the Corridor schedules.....AMTRAK has extended its special fare promotion on Northeast Regional trains through March 31, 2010, except for holiday periods. The cheapest Philadelphia-New York coach fare is \$34 (versus regular \$45) and Philadelphia-Washington \$33 (versus \$44). Tickets must be booked 14 days in advance (NARP).....AMTRAK is losing some of its Philadelphia-New York and Boston-New York business to low-cost bus operators, such as MegaBus and Greyhound subsidiary BoltBus. The buses also offer "WiFi" wireless Internet access, which Amtrak as yet does not.

A recent Internet report claims that AMTRAK will make its long-awaited announcement on new equipment purchases soon after the first of the year (Trainorders.com)..... In the December issue of Trains, Columnist Don Phillips vents against the perceived inaction of AMTRAK President Joseph Boardman in moving the railroad forward. Instead, Phillips says, Boardman has failed to take advantage of the opportunity presented when the new Administration "began throwing money at passenger rail." Phillips charges that "Amtrak is adrift in a sea of confusion...[It] needs leadership and none is evident now." Part of the problem may be that Boardman was appointed for only a one-year term, which expired at the end of November, but he is a candidate for the permanent position.....AMTRAK

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

(Continued from Page 6)

Chairman Thomas Carper announced last month that Theodore Alves will be the railroad's new inspector general, replacing Fred Weiderhold, Jr., who resigned unexpectedly in June. A former deputy inspector general at U.S. DOT, Alves "is highly respected in the inspector general community," Carper said. All Federal agencies are required to employ an independent inspector general to identify waste and fraud.

A pilot program launched in September to equip conductors on the Keystone Corridor with hand-held credit card readers has met with only partial success. The devices wirelessly transmit the passenger's credit card information just as if the card were run through a machine at a ticket office, but the problem seems to be that the process is time-consuming and the readers sometimes lose wireless contact. Amtrak plans eventually to deploy the devices systemwide to handle on-board ticket salesWe spotted Train #81 **Silver Star** at Wilmington station last month with baggage car #1702 on the head end. It still carried lettering for "United States Mail."

The 2010 AMTRAK wall calendar has been issued. It features a dramatic photo of a westbound Regional train blasting through the snow near CroydonIn case you wish to review the AMTRAK study on expanding passenger services in Pennsylvania, which was released October 16, log onto www.amtrak.com and go to "Inside Amtrak" and then to "Reports & Documents." Amtrak concluded that it would be impractical to offer additional direct train service between Cornwells Heights and New York and between Princeton Junction and Philadelphia, but a second daily train could be run between New York and Pittsburgh at an additional annual subsidy of \$6.7 million. It also considered turning a train at Altoona and offering a coordinated bus-rail service from and to State College.



**CSX, NS,
OTHER ROADS**

CSX CEO Michael Ward joined Governor Rendell and Mayor Nutter in Philadelphia on November 16 to announce the start of a major effort to increase bridge clearances at 16 sites on the Trenton Subdivision. The \$32 million project, intended to allow double stack container trains to operate over the former Reading and CONRAIL line from Philadelphia to North Jersey, is being funded by CSX, the State and the Federal government. CSX crews undercut the Rhawn Street bridge in Northeast Philadelphia three years ago as a precursor to this project. Currently, double stack trains into and out of CSX's Greenwich terminal in South Philadelphia must take a circuitous route over NORFOLK SOUTHERN's Harrisburg and Morrisville lines via Norristown and Woodbourne..... CSX also has big plans to increase clearances on the ex-Baltimore & Ohio mainline between Baltimore and the Midwest, as part of its previously-announced \$842-million National Gateway Project. The old B&O main now has many tunnel and overhead bridge restrictions, which limit container trains to single levels. CSX will contribute \$395 million to the National Gateway Project.

In an item here last month concerning the demolition of Pier 124 in South Philadelphia, we incorrectly referred to it as the ore pier. Actually, Pier 124 was the Pennsy's export coal pier which CONRAIL deactivated more than 20 years ago, while its neighbor just to the north, Pier 122, was built in 1954 to handle imported ore. That pier also is being demolished, with the first of its four huge ore unloading machines crashing to the ground on November 20. Pier 122 was the subject of a Grif Teller painting on the 1957 PRR calendar.....NORFOLK SOUTHERN CEO Wick Moorman visited Philadelphia last month to announce that NS will expand its South Philadelphia intermodal terminal from 45 to 60 acres, at a cost of \$11 million. The yard lies just inland from the two piers mentioned above. The expansion is part of NS's ambitious Crescent Corridor rebuilding project, reported in previous issues of *Cinders*, which is intended to speed rail traffic from New Orleans, Birmingham and Atlanta to population centers in the Northeast, including New York, Philadelphia and the Harrisburg area. When work on the Corridor is completed around 2020, NS predicts it will divert at least 700,000 truckloads a year off of Interstate 81 and other highways. A new NS website, thefutureneedsus.com, touts the benefits of such projects.

A big story last month came out of Omaha, NE, when Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway, Inc., announced that it will pay about \$26.4 billion to purchase the 77 percent of BNSF RAILWAY stock it does not already own. Buffett, considered to be the second wealthiest man in America and an extremely shrewd investor, said that he "made a big bet on the economy" in buying BNSF, but that he believes the railroad industry already has seen the bottom of the current recession. He said that "it was an opportunity to buy a business that is going to be around for 100 or 200 years, that's woven with the American economy [and] is the most efficient way of moving goods in the country." In order to avoid any anti-competitive concerns, Berkshire will divest all of its holdings in NORFOLK SOUTHERN and UNION PACIFIC. The Justice Department still must approve the BNSF acquisition Trucking giant J.B. Hunt Transport last month announced that it has agreed on a long-term contract with NS to expand the handling of Hunt traffic. "Given the enormous confidence we have in [NS's] ability to provide the best intermodal service in the eastern half of the U.S.," said Hunt CEO Kirk Thompson, "we are delighted to have the opportunity to elevate our joint services into the future" (*Railway Age*).

While the nation still may be deep in recession, CSX was able to maintain its level of net income in the third quarter at a respectable 12.8 percent of gross revenues, the same as in the third quarter of 2008. Railroads are seen to be in a strong position to continue increasing their freight rates, probably up to an average of two percent next year, reflecting a modest increase in demand. But trucking company overcapacity—some 400,000 big rigs are lying idle—should keep a tight lid on rates in 2010 (*Journal of Commerce, Kiplinger Letter*).....A 37-year-old woman and her two-year-old son were killed by a NORFOLK SOUTHERN freight train on Friday, October 30, in Derry, PA, as she was struggling to push the child's stroller across the track. Two other young daughters managed to dart out of the way to safety (Trainorders.com).

NJ TRANSIT has redesigned its website to offer faster access to information, with color-coded "on-time" reports of its rail, light rail and bus lines. A trip planner featuring Google maps also will be available on www.njtransit.com.....A 31-year-old male trespasser was struck and killed by a Philadelphia-bound

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

(Continued from Page 7)

NJT train just south of PATCO's Lindenwold station on Monday, November 9.....The casino-sponsored Atlantic City Express (ACES) service is offering new, lower fares from New York and Newark to Atlantic City of \$29 one-way in coach and \$49 in first class. The weekend round-trip fare from Atlantic City to New York and return is \$39 coach.....NJT has replaced its ticket vending machines in 30th Street Station with a pair of newly-rebuilt machines. The upgraded machines are faster and easier to use, and offer a new feature. When a customer inserts a credit or debit card, the system will retrieve the most recent transactions made with that card and allow the rider to make the same purchase with just one touch of a button (DVARP).

The Delaware River Port Authority said last month that it wants to build a trolley line on Market Street from City Hall to the waterfront, linking center city with DRPA's proposed light rail line along Delaware Avenue and Columbus Blvd. (see October *Cinders*). The entire project is estimated to cost at least \$500 million, with no immediate funding source in sight. The idea immediately ran into a storm of criticism from some elected officials and others as a waste of taxpayer money. The *Inquirer* editorialized that the trolley line would duplicate faster subway service on the Market-Frankford Line beneath street level and its projected ridership would be low. "Another big-picture concern," the editorial read, "is that any plan to run trolleys up and over I-95 would saddle the waterfront for decades with the ugly, existing scissor ramps leading down to Columbus Blvd." Opposition also was expressed to building a new rail bridge over I-95, which "might also deter City officials from pursuing a better solution for the highway: to bury or cover it. As long as I-95 stands as a barrier to center city, it will complicate and possibly stymie efforts to create the thriving waterfront envisioned by Mayor Nutter and City planners."

Pennsylvania's ongoing budget crisis has resulted in the Historical & Museum Commission taking a major hit in its appropriations. One result has been the layoff of nine out of the 16 full-time employees at the Railroad Museum in Strasburg, the Commission's top revenue producer (WGAL-TV).....The National Mediation Board has proposed a rule to make it easier for railroad workers to unionize. Under the proposal, a worker abstaining from a vote on unionizing would not be counted as a "no" vote as at present, which Board members said is at odds with "the basic principles of democratic elections" (*Trains*)*The Journal of Commerce* last month quoted a Republican U.S. Senator as saying that the rail reform bill currently being drafted by the Surface Transportation Subcommittee will not change the limited antitrust immunity currently enjoyed by railroads, which certain shipper groups want revoked. The industry has been furiously opposing the elimination of its antitrust immunity, maintaining that the current law provides adequate protection for shippers.

By 2013 American railroads will adopt a new digital "trunked" radio system, as mandated by the Federal Communications Commission. The new system will drastically reduce the number of radio channels by squeezing more capacity into duplex frequencies, similar to those now in use by many public-service entities to provide two-way communication for fire, police and other municipal departments that share radio spectrum.

Many scanning devices already are compatible with trunked systems (Wayne Bode).....A Berks County Commissioner wants to revive rail service on the 8.6-mile Colebrookdale branch between Pottstown, Boyertown and Bechtelsville, which was recently shut down by EAST PENN and purchased by the county for \$1.35 million. Several potential customers have expressed interest in rail service, but one obstacle is Wal-Mart's refusal to allow trains to operate across the driveway at its store near Boyertown. The county now is looking at the possibility of exercising eminent domain for the Wal-Mart property (Rick Bates).

Long-time Wayne Resident and former NRHS Member Joseph H. Flagler, Jr., died November 8 at the age of 91. A Main Line businessman, Joe sometimes would attend Philadelphia Chapter meetings and rode our excursions.....Chapter Member Eric Levin is superintendent of motive power for CONRAIL at its Mount Laurel (NJ) headquarters and chief mechanical officer of JUNIATA TERMINAL in Philadelphia. He was written up in the September issue of *Railway Age* for his innovative solution to preventing diesel locomotive freeze-ups in winter. He "devised a method of connecting the 'very reliable' Kim Hotstart heater to a Lat-Lon remote wireless monitoring device," so that if coolant temperature falls below a pre-set level while the engine is shut down, the Lat-Lon automatically sends a message to Eric's iPhone and other wireless devices. A repairman then can be sent immediately to avert critical damage to the locomotive. One of Juniata's EMD SW1500M's is leased to a General Electric plant in Maryland, where the alarm connection was first installed.

Train and engine service employment on U.S. Class I railroads increased one percent in October from the previous month, to 57,198. Total Class I employment in October was 149,020, down 0.27 percent from September and 9.15 percent from October 2008 (*Railway Age*).....The United Transportation Union has served "Section Six" notices on Class I railroads, outlining its contract demands for a series of general wage increases every six months, the elimination of two-tier pay, cost-of-living wage adjustments and other changes. UTU represents conductors and certain other employees on major railroads (*Weekly Rail Review*).....Crews from the PBS television show "Tracks Ahead" were filming at the MIDDLETOWN & HUMMELSTOWN in September during the annual Middletown Autumn Fest (Harrisburg Chapter).

The FRA released a study last month showing that U.S. freight railroads achieved a 22-percent improvement in fuel efficiency between 1990 and 2006. Citing the environmental benefits of rail freight service, FRA Administrator Joseph Szabo attributed the big increase in efficiency to improvements in diesel-electric locomotives, increased use of double stack container trains, track and signal improvements and longer trains (*Railway Age*).....The *New York Times* reported a weird story in which a young North Salem, NY, resident was charged 23 quadrillion dollars (that's 17 digits!) on her Visa card statement for a one-way train ride on METRO-NORTH from Grand Central Terminal to Goldens Bridge, NY. (The actual fare is about \$10.) After the customer complained, Visa said the "overcharge" was due to a computer programming error, and reassured her that she would not actually be charged the \$23 quadrillion. But Visa offered no apology either (Pat Purcell).



DECEMBER 5-6, 2009: Annual Holiday Train Show & Sale in Ocean City, NJ at the historic Music Pier on the Boardwalk and Moorlyn Terrace. Running displays, model trains of all gauges, parking available. Admission: \$3 adults, \$1 children. Hours: Saturday 10 AM-5 PM, Sunday 11 AM-4 PM. For additional information, please call 609-525-9300.

DECEMBER 12: Christmas lights night photo trolley trip over SEPTA Route 15 Girard Avenue using decorated PCC-II car, sponsored by Wilmington Chapter NRHS. Trip leaves Callowhill depot, 60th & Callowhill Streets, at 5 PM. Fare: \$40 per person. Order tickets from: Wilmington Chapter NRHS, c/o Steve Barry, 117 High Street, Newton, NJ 07860-1003. Credit cards accepted. For information, telephone 973-383-3355 9 AM-5 PM weekdays.

DECEMBER 31: Annual New Year's Eve trolley, sponsored by Friends of Philadelphia Trolleys. PCC-II car will depart Route 10's 63rd & Malvern loop at 10 PM, returning around 2 AM January 1. Fare: \$40 per person, with proceeds going toward repainting of PCC #2743 into 1969 PTC green and cream at Rockhill Trolley Museum. Snacks and drinks will be available on the car. Order tickets from: Harry Donahue, 103 Mulberry Court, Morgantown, PA 19543-8843, making checks payable to FPT, Inc.

THROUGH DECEMBER 31: "Energy, Innovation & Impact" display on how the railroads historically impacted the American environment, at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, Strasburg. Included are film clips of how contemporary railroads are working to utilize cleaner energy. Regular museum hours and admission charges apply. For information, telephone 717-687-8628 (website: www.rmmuseumpa.org).

THROUGH DECEMBER 31: "Trains in Motion Pictures," a presentation on the role of trains in Hollywood movies over the years, at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, Strasburg. Included will be video clips of some of these movies, plus photographs and artifacts. Regular museum hours and admission charges apply. For information, telephone 717-687-8628 (website: www.rmmuseumpa.org).

JANUARY 9-10, 16-17, 23-24 and 30-31, 2010: Keystone N-Trak Model Railroad Club will hold their 2010 open house in basement auditorium of Burholme Baptist Church, 905 Cottman Avenue (Five Points), one block east of SEPTA's R8 Ryers Regional Rail stop. Hours are 1-5 PM. For additional information, please call 215-722-4250 or visit club website: www.keystonetrak.us.

SEPTA Strike (Continued from Page 3)

two percent of base salary to 3.5 percent, the maximum pension was raised from \$27,000 to \$30,000 a year and employees are assured of no increases in their health-insurance contributions. Currently, the union's pension reserve is funded at only 52 percent.

After the strike ended the *Inquirer* ran a story that SEPTA plans to raise fares next year as part of a long-term strategy for modest increases every three years. SEPTA insisted, however, that any such fare boost could not be blamed on the new labor agreement. (SEPTA's last fare hike took effect in 2007.) According to the newspaper report, SEPTA has budgeted for a 9.5-percent increase in passenger revenues for Fiscal Year 2011 beginning next July 1. This would mean the base fare would likely be raised from \$2 to \$2.20, the price of tokens would go from the present \$1.45 to about \$1.60, and a weekly TransPass from \$20.75 to about \$22.75. Meanwhile, in Harrisburg some area legislators were expressing anger at the union, at least one of them suggesting that a new law should be passed to prohibit strikes by all public employees in Pennsylvania rather than just by police, firefighters and prison guards. Several other states already ban strikes by most public employees, as in New York where the Taylor Act has been used to end transit walkouts.

--Frank Tatnall

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---from The Germantown Courier, May 21, 1953



For your Holiday shopping, visit SEPTA's Transit Gift Store, located on the ground floor, SEPTA Headquarters Building, 1234 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA. Transit books, DVD's, memorabilia, gifts and toys. Holiday Sales weekly, including Thomas the Tank Engine & Friends, train sets, other gifts. For details, visit website www.septa.org/store, or telephone 215-580-7168 for details and hours.

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READING RAILROAD

(On this back sheet you'll find two vintage advertisements from the Reading Railroad. The "Saturday Special" ad is undated, while the "Take Your Choice to New York" ad dates from October, 1960. Also, enjoy the B&O Wayne Junction ad on Page 9. All are from the archives of the late Joseph M. Mannix)

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It's the smart man's way to travel — in complete air-conditioned comfort. Adjustable reclining coach seats pillow your ride. Tastefully furnished Club Car provides refreshing beverage service.

| SCHEDULE | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| EASTBOUND (Read Down) | WESTBOUND (Read Up) |
| Lv. 6.55 AM . . . Reading Terminal . . . Ar. 7.25 PM | Ar. 7.19 PM . . . North Broad Street . . . Ar. 7.19 PM |
| Lv. 7.01 AM . . . North Broad Street . . . Ar. 7.14 PM | Lv. 7.06 AM . . . Wayne Junction . . . Ar. 7.14 PM |
| Lv. 7.06 AM . . . Wayne Junction . . . Ar. 7.06 PM | Lv. 7.15 AM . . . Jenkintown . . . Ar. 7.06 PM |
| Lv. 7.15 AM . . . Jenkintown . . . Ar. 5.30 PM | Ar. 8.50 AM . . . New York* . . . Lv. 5.30 PM |

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| SCHEDULE | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| EASTBOUND (Read Down) | WESTBOUND (Read Up) |
| Lv. 7.40 AM . . . Reading Terminal . . . Ar. 6.25 PM | Ar. 6.19 PM . . . North Broad Street . . . Ar. 6.19 PM |
| Lv. 7.46 AM . . . North Broad Street . . . Ar. 6.19 PM | Lv. 7.51 AM . . . Wayne Junction . . . Ar. 6.14 PM |
| Lv. 7.51 AM . . . Wayne Junction . . . Ar. 6.14 PM | Lv. 7.58 AM . . . Jenkintown . . . Ar. 6.06 PM |
| Lv. 7.58 AM . . . Jenkintown . . . Ar. 4.30 PM | Ar. 9.30 AM . . . New York* . . . Lv. 4.30 PM |

*Liberty-Cortlandt Street Station

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