

CINDERS

FEBRUARY 2009



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Number 2

Newsletter of the
PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
 Post Office Box 7302
 Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302

PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER, NRHS WEBSITE ADDRESS: www.phillyNRHS.com

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.

MEETING NOTICE

FRIDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 20, 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
 (\$5.75 after 6 PM), or Downtown Garage, Walnut Street east of
 10th (\$4.00 after 6 PM) *(Note that some of these parking prices
 have changed and will be adjusted in a future issue of Cinders.)*

Our February 20, 2009 meeting will feature another in our series of Railroadiana Auctions. Registration for the auction will begin at 7:00 PM, with no business meeting conducted. Rules for the Auction will be found on Page 2 of this issue. The auctioneer's gavel sounds at 7:30 PM, and the auction will continue until 9:30 PM, at which time all unsold material will be returned to the sellers. The Chapter has much of donated material for sale, and members may cull through their excess railroadiana, bring your wallet and come out and enjoy another fun-filled Philadelphia Chapter Railroadiana Auction – **Friday, February 20!!**

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, FEBRUARY 17, 2009 to National Director Larry Eastwood at 215-947-5769.** The menu will be choice of flat iron steak, homestyle mashed potatoes, or blackened salmon filet, mango orzo pilaf. Both come with fire roasted vegetables, with cherry pie w/whipped cream for dessert. Tossed garden salad, rolls and butter and beverages are included. Why not come out for dinner before our meeting. It's an enjoyable full meal, plus informal and interesting conversation, plus it's priced at only \$20.00 per person. Bring a friend, enjoy a leisurely dinner, and introduce them to Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS.

Obama Rides NEC to DC

Trip from Philly signals hope for Amtrak

by Frank Tatnall

On Saturday, January 17, three days before his Inauguration as 44th President of the United States, Barack Obama rode a special Amtrak train over the Northeast Corridor from Philadelphia to Washington, DC. As word spread on this bitterly cold day, throngs of people turned out along the 136-mile route to greet the President-elect with flags and banners, and to hear him speak at public gatherings in Wilmington and Baltimore. Vice President-elect Joseph R. Biden and his family boarded the train at Wilmington, joining the Obama family and perhaps 200 other friends, officials, special guests and a contingent of media people. The train departed from 30th Street Station around 11:45 AM, and arrived in Washington Union Station at 6:30 PM.

Security was tight, as hundreds of state, local and Amtrak police—in patrol cars and on foot—were positioned along the route while at least three military helicopters hovered overhead. Joining the general public were many railfans who turned out to photograph the train—or rather the *three* trains involved in the event. It is believed that the Obama special was the first “POTUS” train (railroad jargon for President of the United States) operated by Amtrak in at least 25 years. This type of operation requires a tremendous amount of logistical planning on the part of the railroad, the Secret Service and the event organizers, to insure the safety of the dignitaries as well as that of the bystanders. There is no information on how much the Presidential Inaugural Committee paid for the train but it is likely that all these arrangements cost Amtrak much more—which no doubt can be justified by the priceless publicity it received. Extremely cold weather on Saturday (the high temperature in Philadelphia was only 18 degrees) did create some discomfort—especially for those waiting hours for the train to appear. But the operation was considered a rousing success, the crowds were orderly and no arrests or injuries were reported.

After Obama spoke at a closed event for campaign workers in the North Concourse of 30th Street Station, starting just after 10 AM, he and his party boarded the chartered train. The consist was headed by gleaming P42 diesel locomotives #44 and 120 (appropriate for the 44th President to be sworn in on January

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**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: \$50.00 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.

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.

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 sent to you.

PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER, NRHS **2009 RAILRODIANA AUCTION RULES**

The following rules will apply to our 2009 Railrodiana Auction:

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

HUCKSTERING OF RAILRODIANA ON THE SIDE IN THE AUCTION ROOM IS DISCOURAGED WHILE THE AUCTION IS IN PROGRESS!

We urge you to dig through your attics and come up with some material for sale, and fill your wallet so you may also bid!! Contribution of lots of material to the Chapter are always welcome as a means of raising additional funds for Chapter projects.

Don't miss Philadelphia Chapter's 2009 Railrodiana Auction, on Friday evening, February 20, 2009. Bring a friend along to enjoy this fun evening! Have fun while adding some needed items to your railrodiana collection!

Chapter Members to Receive Membership Awards March 20

Philadelphia Chapter will have a total of 14 members receiving NRHS award pins in 2009, according to information received from NRHS Membership Awards Director Joseph Maloney.

A total of 14 members will receive their 25-year pins, they being: **H. Robert Brewster** (Golden, CO); **John A. Crick** (Meadville, PA); **John N. Feldman** (Southampton, PA); **Donald H. Flayhart** (Apex, NC); **William P. Goerig, Jr.** (Blue Bell, PA); **Jerry Lee Goldman** (Wilmington, DE); **Robert S. Korach** (Haddonfield, NJ); **Andrew J. Lewis** (Elkins Park, PA); **John P. McCloskey, Jr.** (Philadelphia, PA); **William H. Polk** (Blue Bell, PA); **James G. Rich** (Plymouth Meeting, PA); **Owen C. Robatino** (Newark, DE); **William S. Zavod, MD** (Merion Station, PA) and **Roy J. Zeiher** (Souderton, PA).

Presentation of the anniversary pins and letters will be made to the above members at the March 20, 2009 meeting, and each will be contacted to determine if they are able to attend.

The Chapter congratulates each member on their long years of service to NRHS and Philadelphia Chapter.

Chapter to Sponsor RailCamper at Scranton in 2009

At its Winter board of directors meeting held at 30th Street Station on Thursday evening, January 8, Philadelphia Chapter voted unanimously to sponsor an attendee at the NRHS RailCamp, to be held at Steamtown National Historic Site in Scranton, Pennsylvania from July 5-11, 2009.

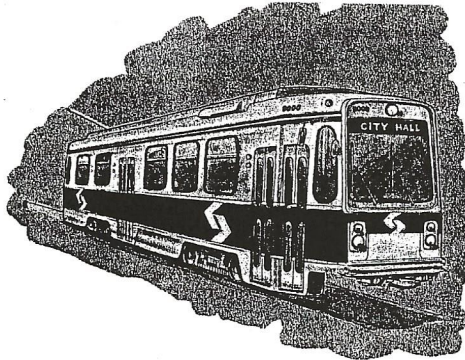
According to past RailCamp Director Larry Eastwood, the Chapter has sponsored two RailCampers during the project's 12-year history, both in earlier years, but has not been able to find a nominee. Longtime Chapter Member Samuel L. James was able to seek and locate a potential attendee for the 2009 session, and he has been contacted and will be interviewed.

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FRANK G. TATNALL, JR.

SEPTA TRANSIT



As reported here last month, SEPTA is aggressively going after a piece of the \$12 billion to be set aside for mass transit in President Obama's massive \$820-billion economic stimulus package. By starting preliminary work on several major projects, SEPTA managers hope to get a jump on other transit agencies when the stimulus is signed into law, possibly later this month. SEPTA's wish list calls for more than \$400 million in additional funding, which would double the size of its planned capital budget for Fiscal Year 2010 beginning July 1. The overall plan is to put together a galaxy of "shovel-ready" projects which can be awarded within 90-180 days, the money to be spent within two years on a "use-it-or-lose-it" basis. Obama has said that he is opposed to the time-honored practice of "earmarking" money for specific projects, so that transportation and other infrastructure funding may be prioritized according to the readiness of each project. Nationwide, transit agencies have identified \$48.7 billion in capital projects that could be started in the next two years, of which \$12.2 billion is in "ready-to-go" projects.

Lengthy permitting processes and joint efforts with other organizations such as AMTRAK will be avoided as much as possible in awarding contracts. The goal will be to improve SEPTA's infrastructure, enhance customer service, boost reliability and reduce long-term maintenance costs. At its January 22 meeting the SEPTA board approved \$6.25 million for engineering work on some of the projects, even though there is a calculated risk that all of the stimulus money may not materialize. The board seems to agree with President Obama that such infrastructure projects are not just New Deal-style make-work schemes but instead are investments in the future. Obama has said that his initiative will launch "the single largest new investment in our national infrastructure since the creation of the Federal [interstate] highway system in the 1950's."

As it stood at the end of January, the stimulus bill under consideration in Congress actually would appropriate about \$90 billion for infrastructure projects, more than half of that targeted to highways. The need for major infrastructure work was brought into focus last month when the American Society of Civil Engineers released its annual report card on the state of the

nation's roads, bridges, railroads, pipelines, water systems and the like, giving them an overall grade of D with railroads receiving a C- and transit a D. To bring all types of infrastructure up to a state of good repair would cost a total of \$2.2 trillion from all levels of government and the private sector, the report said.

SEPTA's anticipated program is divided into three segments, based on how "shovel-ready" each project is. First, projects with designs complete or near completion (nine projects totaling \$111 million) include such items as Darby Transit Center improvements (\$3 million), Broad Street subway Girard and Spring Garden station upgrades (\$36.5 million), R7 Croydon station rehabilitation (\$18.4 million), R5 Malvern station improvements (\$12.4 million) and the exercise of options for 40 additional hybrid buses in both 2009 and 2010 (\$23 million). Second, projects with designs to be completed and bids awarded within 90 days (31 projects totaling \$206 million), include bridge rebuilding (\$10 million), Chestnut Hill East and West Lines station improvements (\$3.8 million), construction of a new R8 station at Fox Chase (\$2.3 million) and improving clearances in the Gwynedd cut on the R5 Lansdale line (\$6.1 million).

Several transit-side projects also are in the 90-day window, including installation of welded rail on the Routes 101 and 102 trolley lines (\$24.5 million), improvements to grade crossings on Routes 101 and 102 (\$12.3 million), installation of a power control and passenger information system for Routes 100, 101 and 102 (\$10.1 million), replacement of yard track at Fern Rock shop (\$19 million), trolley track renewal in the city (\$16.4 million), radio equipment replacements (\$24.5 million), improvements to Broad Street subway signal equipment (\$10.2 million) and \$7 million to upgrade the troubled communications-based train control (CBTC) system in the subway-surface tunnel (see January *Cinders* and previous issues).

The third phase would focus on projects with designs to be completed and bids awarded within 180 days. These 19 projects costing \$182.7 million include construction of a new traction and signal power substation at Woodbourne on the R3 line (\$34.1 million), overhaul of the Ambler, Norristown, Lenni and Morton substations (\$20.4 million), rebuilding of the light rail section of 69th Street yard (\$8.2 million), repairing the Route 100 Schuylkill River viaduct (\$40.9 million), rehabbing five Regional Rail stations (\$6.8 million), installing new audio-visual public address systems on Routes 100, 101 and 102 (\$12.2 million) and on Regional Rail (\$24.5 million), rehabbing the Southern and Frontier bus garages (\$5.5 million), installing electric switch heaters in Powelton yard (\$9.5 million) and rebuilding the walls along the Regional Rail Mainline between 20th and 30th Streets (\$5.3 million). SEPTA will aim to spend most of the stimulus money on its own property where it can control the construction rather than at locations (such as those on AMTRAK) which could be subject to delay due to the owners' own priorities.

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SEPTA last month held a public meeting to receive input on its proposed capital spending plan for Fiscal Years 2010-2013. Included in the plan are various infrastructure renewal efforts which extend beyond the “ready-to-go” stimulus projects mentioned above, such as R5 Paoli-Thorndale line improvements, the R3 Elwyn to Wawa rail extension, Regional Rail signal and substation modernization, a new fare collection technology, “smart stations” and the vehicle overhaul program. The capital budget approved for the current year, FY 2009, contains 24 projects costing \$367.7 million. The City of Philadelphia submitted formal comments setting out its “immediate capital priorities,” also identifying several “longer-term” projects it would like to see advanced in coming years. These include the proposed rail transit extension along the Delaware River waterfront, restoration of trolley service on Route 23 to Chestnut Hill, the return of trackless trolley operation to Routes 29 and 79 in South Philadelphia, extension of the Broad Street subway to the Navy Yard and a new “Market West” subway station.

SEPTA has begun serious contract negotiations with Transport Workers Union Local 234, with the hope of avoiding a strike when the current contract expires on March 15. The aim is to avoid a strike such as that which shut down the City Transit Division in the fall of 2005. Local 234 represents about 4,700 operators, mechanics and other workers on the system, whose contract usually sets the pattern for employees on the Suburban Transit Division. SEPTA leaders are concerned that the union may feel, in spite of the current economic downturn, that it can take advantage of the increased financial support which the State is now providing to SEPTA under legislation approved in 2007—but which may be cut back next year.....SEPTA expects to unveil its five-year strategic business plan at the March 26 board meeting, which then will be aired at several public meetings.

While no one at SEPTA will say so, there must have been a sigh of relief at 1234 Market Street when the Eagles lost their playoff game to the Arizona Cardinals. As a result, there’s no possibility of an Eagles win at the Super Bowl on February 1 or of a victory parade in center city this winter. Remember the gigantic parade that followed the Phillies’ World Series triumph in October? As we all know, that event caused record-setting crowds to descend on SEPTA which in turn caused massive delays on Regional Rail and the Broad Street subway. (SEPTA actually had begun preliminary planning for a possible Eagles parade, but that effort was kept under wraps).....SEPTA is pondering a new bus route out of Frankford Transportation Center which would operate across the Delaware River to Palmyra, NJSEPTA has extended by two months the completion date for the long-running Market Street elevated replacement project. All work, including the new 63rd Street station, now must be finished by September 3.....A water main break and street cave-in at Front & Master Streets on Wednesday, January 28, caused some concern about the stability of a support column for the Frankford elevated located there.

SEPTA is considering a suggestion from the City to transfer some surplus M4 cars from the Market-Frankford Line to the Broad Street subway. The 218-car Adtranz fleet is far larger than needed for current operations, so the transfer of some of these M4 cars for service on the Broad-Ridge spur would free up all 125

B4 Broad Street cars for Fern Rock-Pattison mainline service. Of course, trucks on the M4’s would need to be converted to standard gauge and other modifications made..... Two Route 11 trolleys collided at the Darby loop at 8:30 AM on Tuesday, January 13. Six passengers suffered minor injuries and were taken to local hospitals. SEPTA provided shuttle buses until trolley service resumed about 10 AMA 57-year-old man was struck and killed by a Route 101 trolley on Christmas night, December 25, near the Drexel Hill Shopping Center west of Drexel Hill. Police said that it appeared to be a suicideOn Wednesday afternoon, December 31, a fallen tree on the Route 101 tracks forced SEPTA to run shuttle buses between Media and Scenic Road in Springfield.

SEPTA has redesigned its www.septa.org website to make it more attractive and easy to use. The site now features a series of photos taken on the system. The handy TrainView screen showing the status of Regional Rail trains can easily be accessed.....In response to a request from METRO officials, SEPTA sent 13 of its police officers (and two dogs) to Washington, DC, to help provide security during the Inauguration Day events of January 20. Thousands of officers from many jurisdictions assisted Washington police, military and Secret Service personnel in maintaining security during the day which, despite the cold weather, attracted a record-setting throng of more than 1.2 million people.....SEPTA’s fleet of 155 Neoplan articulated buses may be the next to be retired. By 2012 they will be 12 years old.....Work is to begin on a second elevator to the Juniper Street subway-surface station, this one connecting from the eastbound platform of the Market Street subway.....Once again this year, SEPTA plans to offer its popular one-day Bouquet Pass during the Philadelphia Flower Show at the Pennsylvania Convention Center March 1-8.

The snow and ice storm which struck the region on Wednesday morning, January 28, caused delays for SEPTA trolley and bus riders as well as on Regional Rail. Express service on the Route 100 Norristown High Speed Line was cancelled but local service operated every 15 minutes, some of it with two-car trains. Riders on the Routes 101-102 Media-Sharon Hill lines were being warned of delays of up to 30 minutes. Through late morning many Regional Rail trains were running from ten to 30 minutes behind schedule, sometimes due to slippery conditions at the stations. The TrainView screen showed a sea of “yellow-line” delays..... PCC-II car #2320 was used on the 16th annual “Super Saturday Streetcar Special” January 31, hosted by *Railfan & Railroad* Editor Steve Barry.....Some additional service will be added to Routes 101-102 effective with the February 9 schedule changePCC line car #2194 has received a fresh coat of orange paint at Woodland shop.



SEPTA REGIONAL RAIL

SEPTA has borrowed an idea from AMTRAK: “quiet cars.” Beginning on Monday, January 12, passengers riding six inbound and four outbound weekday express trains on the R5 Lansdale-Doylestown line were introduced to the new “QuietRide” car. It is always the first car in the train—and riders wishing to use

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those often-annoying cell phones and other electronic devices were asked to sit elsewhere in the train. (Headsets, however, are permitted). Loud conversations also are unwelcome, helping to preserve an air of peace and civility in the car. SEPTA said that QuietRide (it even has its own logo) is a pilot program which will continue until March as public reaction is measured. But within the first two weeks the concept proved so popular with commuters that SEPTA said it might be extended to express trains on the R5 Paoli-Thorndale line sometime this month. Reports indicate that the quiet cars appear to be self-policing, with peer pressure from other passengers discouraging violations. The impetus behind the program is said to have come from General Manager Joseph Casey, himself a rider on the R3 Media-Elwyn line which hosts three morning and two evening express runs.

Effective January 11, SEPTA issued new public timetables for the R2 Wilmington-Newark, R3 Media-Elwyn, R5 Lansdale-Doylestown, R5 Paoli-Malvern, R6 Norristown, R7 Chestnut Hill East-Trenton and R8 Fox Chase-Chestnut Hill West lines. Changes in weekday service on the Lansdale-Doylestown line are due to a catenary replacement project which will require single-tracking between Glenside and "Gwynedd" and the continuation of midday hourly service until Labor DayUpper Dublin Township is planning big changes at the Fort Washington Office Park, in order to relocate several businesses from a flood-prone area to higher ground. SEPTA serves the Park with shuttle buses from the R5 Fort Washington station.....SEPTA currently is building new high-level platforms at the R5 Wayne station and will proceed with similar projects at the R7 Croydon and Levittown stations. But plans for high-level platforms at several other stations, including Chester and Villanova, are awaiting the go-ahead from AMTRAK and the freight railroads due to clearance concerns.

The R6 Norristown Line Extension Study funded by Montgomery County should be completed this spring. It was originally due last June (see May-June, August *Cinders*). The study is looking at various options for extending R6 service beyond Norristown, either by stringing electric wires as far as Port Kennedy or implementing diesel service via NORFOLK SOUTHERN all the way to Reading and Wyomissing. But it is *not* intended as a clone of the vastly-expensive Schuylkill Valley Metro project, as proposed by SEPTA a decade ago but later vetoed by the Federal government. The study has assumed greater importance now that the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) has hired a consultant to put together a master plan to reduce the choking rush-hour traffic on U.S. Route 422, which parallels the railroad between Valley Forge and Reading. The *Inquirer* in its January 18 edition published a major article on the congestion problem along the Route 422 corridor, in which a DVRPC official is quoted as saying that Regional Rail service is a must for the corridor.....Ridership on Regional Rail declined slightly in December, perhaps as the result of jobs lost in the current economic recession.

SEPTA is in the design stage for a new \$49-million parking garage at Jenkintown station. The five-level, 700-space structure will rise on the site of the existing south parking lot, and should be completed in 2011. The adjacent Greenwood Avenue bridge over the railroad also will be replaced. Jenkintown is one of

SEPTA's busiest Regional Rail stations outside of center cityLower Merion Township plans to award a construction contract in April for the new Ardmore Transit Center on the R5 Paoli-Thorndale line. This project is intended to revitalize downtown Ardmore with what is referred to as a "transit-oriented development" (see April, May-June *Cinders*)SEPTA has a new promotional piece advertising its joint ticketing with NJ TRANSIT between Philadelphia and New York City. The featured attraction is the Rockettes at Radio City Music Hall. Through tickets can be purchased at 30th Street, Suburban and Market East Stations, making it unnecessary to scramble for NJT tickets while changing trains at TrentonSEPTA now is advertising its R1 Airport service on the *ceiling* of some Silverliner IV cars. We noted a color ad for the R1 plastered overhead for the entire length of car #295!

R5 Paoli-Thorndale riders were delayed on Wednesday morning, January 7, when fallen trees and ice on the wires knocked out signal power on AMTRAK's Harrisburg line. The outage began around 2 AM when all signals east of "Glen" interlocking near Exton went dark. Signal power was gradually restored in sections, and normal service resumed by 9 AM. Then, on the following Wednesday afternoon, a broken hanger on the catenary near "Carmel" interlocking at Glenside caused one track on the Mainline to be taken out of service. This delayed many R1, R2, R3 and R5 passengers as trains had to operate over a single track through Jenkintown while the wire train was working on the other track. Repairs were completed after the evening rush hour. Two days later, about 8 AM on Friday the 16th, R5 push-pull limited #9538 stalled near Daylesford when AEM-7 #2302 shut down. Passengers were rescued by extended Bryn Mawr local #9008 and by following train #9542. Several other trains also were affected.

Widespread delays were experienced on Saturday, January 17, because of President-elect Obama's special AMTRAK train (see separate article on Page 1). On the morning of Monday, January 19, a 37-year-old man was killed when he stepped in front of deadheading SEPTA train #D9218 at the Folcroft station, delaying several R2 and AMTRAK trains. Then, around 8 AM on Tuesday the 20th, push-pull express #5724 out of Trenton became disabled on Amtrak east of North Philadelphia station when AEM-7 #2307 suffered a power failure, delaying the train for 30 minutes. That same afternoon yet another AEM-7, #2302, lost traction power near Somerton station, stalling R3 express #6378. Fifteen minutes later the train got moving at reduced speed, but most of its passengers transferred to following #6380 at Neshaminy Falls. Eventually, the ailing express limped into West Trenton. On Monday, January 26, AEM-7 #2307 failed again, this time with R2 evening express #9254 at the Newark (DE) station. After the engine room filled with smoke the trip was cancelled and passengers were transferred to train #7256. Diesel #52 was dispatched to rescue the disabled train.

While stopped at a signal just north of "Newtown Junction" at 4:50 AM on Tuesday, January 27, southbound R1 train #0199 was rear-ended by work car #3161. Five passengers and four members of the work crew received minor injuries and were sent to hospitals. The accident resulted in delays throughout the morning to more than 60 R1 Airport, R2 Warminster, R3 West Trenton and R5 Lansdale-Doylestown trains ranging from ten to 30 minutes, as all trains were forced to use the #2 northbound and #0 siding to get around the incident. It appears that the maintenance vehicle, known to employees as the "baby wire train,"

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came around a curve south of Fern Rock Transportation Center and failed to stop before striking the train ahead of it. Only minor damage resulted, and both train #0199 and the maintenance car later were towed to Wayne Junction car yard by diesel #60. Normally, according to an *Inquirer* report, vehicles such as the wire train are not equipped with cab signals and must have permission from a dispatcher to proceed from one point to anotherAt 7 AM on Thursday, January 29, inbound R3 train #319 struck a 51-year-old male trespasser near Woodbourne station. He suffered arm and leg injuries. Train #319 was annulled and its passengers transferred to following #6323 on the opposite track, while four other trains were delayed from ten to 30 minutes.



NORTHEAST REGIONAL AMTRAK

AMTRAK provided significant additional capacity for those attending President Obama's Inauguration in Washington on Tuesday, January 20. Amtrak said that many of its trains were sold out on Inauguration Day, even though cars were added to regular trains and extra trains were operated. One extra, #3181, running from New York to the nation's capital, consisted of ALP-46 electric locomotive #4618 and ten multilevel coaches leased from NJ TRANSIT. A total of 90 trains were operated to and from Washington on Inauguration Day, eight more than on a normal Tuesday, and published schedules were adjusted to emphasize morning arrivals and late afternoon departures. Amtrak estimates that it handled 78,000 passengers to and from Washington over the January 17-21 period, which included the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday on Monday. Amtrak President Joseph Boardman rightly observed that "This has been a great opportunity for Amtrak to demonstrate its capabilities during a very historic and high-profile time. The choice of an Amtrak train for the ceremonial inaugural journey of the President and Vice President was a very nice prelude to the major events that followed."

Unprecedented crowds thronged into Washington for the Tuesday Inauguration festivities, with estimates running upwards of 1.2 million people packed onto the National Mall. At least 20,000 of them traveled on AMTRAK, and many more on special trains operated by MARC and VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS. Additional police officers and management volunteers were stationed in Washington Union Station to assist the crush of passengers. Amtrak said that it increased its usual weekday train capacity by 50 percent on Inauguration Day, by diverting cars from elsewhere and programming equipment maintenance to provide added capacity. A large convocation of private railroad cars also could be seen at Union Station and in Ivy City yard, with at least 16 cars reported by Trainorders.com. These included two BNSF office cars, the **Georgia 300** used by Obama on January 17, and six PV's which arrived in a special move from Philadelphia on Sunday the 18th. That train was made up of AEM-7 locomotive #905, Bennett Levin's **Pennsylvania 120**, **Little Juniata Rapids** and **Warrior Ridge**, plus the **Kitchi Gammi Club** and stainless steel parlors **Greenwich Harbor** and **Greenwich Estate**. The Levin cars carried a charter party of about 100 from Scranton, PA.

At this writing it still was not known how much money AMTRAK will receive as part of the economic stimulus program

under consideration in Congress. A figure of \$1.1 billion for intercity passenger rail was included in the first draft of the bill which was passed by the House on January 28. Amtrak most likely would spend the money on such labor-intensive activities as equipment restoration and track replacement. The railroad has submitted to Congress a list of projects for consideration under the stimulus bill, including the completion of a Positive Train Control system on the Northeast Corridor and the repair of stored equipment.....Newly-installed Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood told a Senate committee at his confirmation hearing last month that "I've been a strong supporter of AMTRAK. It is vital to many communities." This attitude is in sharp contrast to that of departed DOT Secretary Mary Peters, who always had given short shrift to passenger rail. Even Senator John McCain of Arizona, who is no friend of Amtrak, strongly endorsed LaHood for the DOT job.

AMTRAK has completed the rebuilding of "Shore" interlocking at Frankford Junction, with new switches, crossovers and signaling (see September, December *Cinders*). This is the junction with NJT's Atlantic City Line..... AMTRAK has redesignated the switches two miles west of "Cork" tower in Lancaster as "Lititz" interlocking, remotely controlled from "Cork." This is the junction with NORFOLK SOUTHERN's ex-Reading Lititz secondary track. Amtrak also placed in service new "Rule 562" signaling (bi-directional running with cab signals only) on both tracks between "Cork" and "Rheems" interlocking near Elizabethtown (see October, December *Cinders*). This completes the bi-directional signaling project from Lancaster all the way to Harrisburg (37 miles). It will later be extended eastward to Philadelphia as part of the Keystone Corridor project.

AMTRAK has a new chairman of its board of directors. Thomas Carper of Illinois (no kin to the Senator from Delaware) will step up to the chairman's position, while former Chairwoman Donna McLean is now the vice chair, replacing Hunter Biden (son of the Vice President) who remains on the board. McLean said that "With the change in administration, it's best for the company to have Tom as chairman. I am pleased to work with Tom and the rest of the board as we face the exciting and challenging years ahead" (NARP).....It was 30 years ago, on February 26, 1979, that the first of AMTRAK's double-deck Superliner cars entered regular service out of Chicago. A total of 479 Superliners were built by Pullman-Standard and Bombardier, of which 22 have been scrapped (*Trains*)..... AMTRAK has hired an ad agency to design a new series of TV spots touting the Boston-Washington Acela Express service. The 30-second ads, which will emphasize the perks of riding an Acela train, may or may not be seen in the Philadelphia market (*Trains*).

AMTRAK will replace about 74,000 prematurely-deteriorating concrete ties along the Northeast Corridor in New England. This follows a major effort during the past year to replace thousands of cracking ties along the Corridor in New Jersey (NARP).....That crumbling retaining wall along the Harrisburg mainline near 54th Street & Lancaster Avenue in West Philadelphia, pictured in a front-page *Inquirer* article last June, has been repaired and repainted. But just west of there at 55th Street another wall is in serious need of repair. While the basic structure of the wall appears to be in sound condition, the stucco facing is cracked and falling off.....The Federal Railroad Administration has okayed a plan to replace AMTRAK's century-old Portal bridge over the Hackensack River in the New Jersey Meadowlands. Long a weak link in the Northeast Corridor,

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PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

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the 961-foot double-track span will be replaced with a high-level, triple-track bridge just to the north, and a double-track movable bridge to the south. The project is expected to cost \$1.34 billion and be completed by 2014.

Former U.S. Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island died New Year's Day at the age of 90. Pell often is called the "Godfather of the Northeast Corridor" because in the 1960's he pushed for Federal money to rebuild the Pennsylvania Railroad's mainline between New York and Washington and helped create the high-speed Metroliner service (*Trains*)..... AMTRAK has standardized the placement of "quiet cars" on the NEC. On all Acela trains the quiet car will be adjacent to the First Class car and on Regional trains next to the Business Class car. All Acelas and most Regionals (other than Keystone Service trains) will have quiet cars in which cell phones, loud conversations and other disturbances are prohibited (NARP).....AMTRAK plans to purchase 2,000 portable credit card readers to speed up on-board ticket sales (NARP).....Westbound Acela Express #2255 struck and killed a male trespasser on the Neshaminy Creek bridge near Croydon, Bucks County, at 5:40 PM on Sunday, January 4. The coroner did not release the train until 8 PM, delaying at least 15 Amtrak and SEPTA trains from one to three hours.....Eastbound train #42 **Pennsylvanian** became disabled just east of Paoli station on Friday, January 16. Its passengers were transferred to SEPTA extra #D9504 for the trip into 30th Street Station.....Aramark of Philadelphia has been hired by AMTRAK to manage its food and beverage warehousing function, effective January 1. Aramark has extensive experience in the food, hospitality and travel businesses, and should help Amtrak achieve economies in the purchase of supplies.

The National Press Photographers Association last month lodged a formal complaint with AMTRAK, protesting the actions of certain Amtrak police in threatening photographers with arrest and forcing them to delete images on their cameras. The letter from NPPA's attorney asked that Amtrak "take immediate steps to remedy the railroad's unconstitutional treatment of law-abiding photographers." In its response, Amtrak denied that its employees "acted in an unconstitutional manner" toward NPPA members, and said that Amtrak allows photography in spaces open to the public, and on-board photography in situations where the activity does not interfere with crew operations. But "Amtrak does prohibit photography in areas restricted to the public, such as rights-of-ways and posted no trespassing areas. It is also limited on train platforms to ticketed passengers who may do so briefly before boarding or departing from a train." The response went on to state that "Amtrak police can investigate activity of photographers that is reported or observed to be suspicious in nature" (*Railway Age*).



**CSX, NS,
OTHER ROADS**

The current economic slump is affecting the freight railroad industry to the extent that many of its customers have less traffic to ship. "Recession rides the rails" read a headline in

Traffic World Magazine, describing the first three weeks of January when rail shipments nationwide were down 17.4 percent from a year ago. One sign of this is the thousands of cars now in storage, which became surplus with the decline in freight volume. CSX alone reportedly has 24,000 cars in storage, both its own and those belonging to private leasing companies. Hundreds of gondola cars are stored on CONRAIL and CAPE MAY SEASHORE LINES in South Jersey, while NORFOLK SOUTHERN also is storing unneeded gondolas..... Still, CSX reported operating income of \$692 million during the fourth quarter of 2008, a 16-percent increase over the year-earlier period, on revenues of \$2.7 billion, four percent higher than in 2007. NS meanwhile reported record net income of \$452 million for the fourth quarter, a 13-percent gain over the previous year, on operating revenues of \$2.5 billion, a two-percent increase.

NS lost a major customer when Chrysler Corp. closed its Newark, DE, assembly plant in December. The plant had been producing automobiles since the 1950's.....NS announced that it has reduced the number of its train and engine service employees by six percent over the last eight months, to 11,600, as a result of the downturn in business. The reductions were made through furloughs and a slowdown in hiringCSX may sell its world-famous Greenbrier Resort at White Sulphur Springs, WV. Built originally by the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway, a CSX predecessor, the Greenbrier has long had a sterling reputation as an upscale resort, but it lost \$35 million last year as demand for such amenities declinedIndustry groups last month formed the OneRail Coalition, which "brings passenger and freight rail stakeholders together for the first time." The coalition includes such organizations as AMTRAK, the American Public Transportation Association, the Association of American Railroads, the American Short Line & Regional Railroad Association, the Railway Supply Institute, the Natural Resources Defense Council and the National Association of Railroad Passengers (*Railway Age*).

NJ TRANSIT was preparing to launch its long-anticipated Atlantic City Express Service (ACES) on Friday, February 6, between New York's Penn Station and the South Jersey gambling mecca (see January *Cinders*). A joint venture with three casino operators and the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority, ACES will have two special trains each powered by an ALP-46 electric locomotive on the Corridor and an ex-AMTRAK P40 diesel on NJT's non-electrified Atlantic City Line. The trains will reverse direction at Frankford Junction ("Shore" interlocking). There will be two southbound trips and one northbound on Fridays, three southbounds and four northbounds on Saturdays and four southbounds and four northbounds on Sundays, with point-to-point travel time ranging from two hours 33 minutes to two hours 55 minutes. Ticket prices are set at \$50 one-way coach and \$75 first class, with Amtrak handling the reservations and ticketing. ACES has spent \$19.5 million to upgrade eight NJT multilevel cars with special amenities and to lease four P40 locomotives. NJT will be paid \$3.8 million per year to operate the service (*Railway Age*). This effort to gain more upscale customers comes at a time when the gaming industry is suffering from the recession, with six of the 11 Atlantic City casinos either in or near bankruptcy. Further information on the trains can be found at www.acestrain.com.

The long-discussed transfer station between NJT's Atlantic City Line and its River Line light rail service in Pennsauken, NJ, has received a thumbs-up from the Delaware

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Obama Special (Continued from Page 1)

120 (appropriate for the 44th President to be sworn in on January 20), followed by nine Amfleet cars including six freshly-shopped coaches and three dinettes, and heavyweight open-platform car **Georgia 300** for Obama, his family and staff. This 1930-vintage Pullman-built PV, now based in Florida, has been used on numerous political excursions in the past, the latest being Candidate Obama's whistle-stop special from Philadelphia to Harrisburg in April 2008.

During the hour-and-a-half stop at Wilmington, both Obama and Biden spoke to a crowd of about 8,000 assembled outside the station, and at a public appearance at War Memorial Plaza in Baltimore the President-elect spoke to an estimated 40,000 people. In addition to these events, it was announced that the train would briefly pause at two other locations, the Claymont (DE) and Edgewood (MD) stations. Large crowds assembled at both places and a heavy police presence was needed. The Wilmington stop was particularly notable, because then-Senator and now Vice President Biden is well known there as a resident of nearby Greenville. As a Senator for the past three decades, Biden had been an almost daily commuter between Wilmington and the nation's capital, in the process developing a rapport with the Amtrak crews on his trains. Indeed, he has long enjoyed a personal relationship with Conductor Gregg Weaver, who was invited as a guest on the special train and who introduced Biden at the rally outside Wilmington station. It was during his somewhat emotional speech there that Biden declared "I have a love affair with Amtrak," a surprising attitude for a high government official that may help the railroad in its annual plea for increased Federal funding.

From this writer's vantage at Fox Point State Park just north of Wilmington, the following train movements were observed, all southbound, during the 10:30 AM-12:30 PM window:

- 10:45 AM -- Catenary inspection vehicle #A16503
- 10:55 AM -- Regional train #155 with AEM-7's #911-947, 8 Amfleet cars
- 11:55 AM -- Pilot train with P42 diesels #54-100, Police mobile command car #10020-**Pacific Command**, track geometry car #10002-**Corridor Clipper**.
- 12:15 PM -- Obama special train with P42 diesels #44-#120, 9 Amfleet cars, private car **Georgia-300**
- 12:30 PM -- Chase/protect train with P42 diesels #71-77, 4 Amfleet cars, business car #10001-**Beech Grove**

Reports indicate that the Secret Service demanded a total shutdown of regular Corridor operations in the security envelope created for the special trains, which delayed numerous Amtrak and SEPTA trains anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour and a half. As the specials moved southward all opposing trains were ordered to stop. To cite one example, just after 11 AM northbound SEPTA R2 train #4610 enroute from Marcus Hook was instructed by the Amtrak dispatcher to hold at Eddystone station. It was not released until about 12:25 PM! Wilmington station was closed to the public from 10 AM until after 2:30 PM in order to secure the area for the Obama special, and all regular

trains operating during that period were delayed and then run through the station without stopping. SEPTA passengers were warned of delays on the R1 Airport and R2 Wilmington lines during the morning, and beginning at 9 AM all Wilmington-bound SEPTA trains were turned back at Marcus Hook until around 3 PM. Midday R2 trains #4213 and 4612 between Philadelphia, Marcus Hook and Wilmington were cancelled.

Evidently, it was decided to use diesel power on the three special trains as a hedge against a possible failure of the 12,000-volt electrical system. Not surprisingly, all equipment was in sparkling-clean condition. Thanks to some alert manager at Amtrak, the two locomotives which hauled the Obama train, #44 and 120, were selected for their numerical significance (a fact overlooked by most of the media) and had to be moved from the West Coast for this historic event.

The journey received widespread coverage in the media, with several television networks deploying their mobile units to photograph both the train and the crowds which turned out to see the President-elect pass by. They also broadcast live the gatherings at 30th Street Station, Wilmington, Baltimore and scenes of the train's arrival at Washington Union Station. Many newspapers gave the event full coverage as well. The front page of the Sunday Philadelphia *Inquirer* featured a large color photo of the Obamas and Bidens standing on the rear platform of the **Georgia 300** at Wilmington station, under the headlines "On to History" and "Throngs brave cold to greet Obama's train." Inside that issue were two full pages devoted to the trip, complete with photos. Some of the media, however, revealed their unfamiliarity with railroads, such as the Washington *Post* which told its readers that Obama "rode to Washington in an antique caboose." CNN Anchor Wolf Blitzer also reportedly used the same terminology. Seen on CNN during the arrival at Washington Union Station was Philadelphia Chapter Member Rich Bernhardt who, it turns out, was the conductor on the pilot train, and was observed being photographed with other crew members and the President-elect.

The past eight years have witnessed Amtrak's continuing struggle to stay alive in the face of outright hostility from the Executive Branch. Now, everyone who believes in passenger trains can hope that the White House and Congress will make good on Joe Biden's recent promise that "this will be the most railroad-friendly Administration in history."

Chapter Book Closeout Continues

Philadelphia Chapter continues its closeout sale of hard-cover Morning Sun Books. The Chapter's board of directors took this action last year due to the declining number of train shows at which we could appear in our area.

A lengthy listing of books appeared in the January issue of *Cinders*, and quite a number of members have ordered titles for their railroad libraries. Even so, there is still a wide variety of titles still available, and anyone wanting one at the cost price (plus sales tax) should contact National Director Larry Eastwood at 215-947-5769 or by E-mail to reastwood2@comcast.net.

Books may be picked up at the Chapter meetings, or if they need to be shipped, you will be informed of the shipping cost at the time it is confirmed that items you wish to have are still available. Remember, all titles are being sold at 40% off the list price, so take advantage of this great value while available.

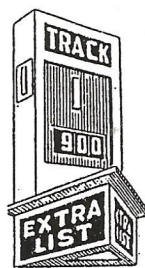
ODDS AND ENDS.....by Roy L. Hudson

(This column appears on a reasonably regular basis to provide Cinders readers with some useful as well as interesting information which has been gathered from miscellaneous sources. Mr. Hudson also now pens a column called "Comments from Track 34" for New York RRE; perhaps he resides in a stored New York Central sleeper in the bowels of Grand Central Terminal.)

How many U. S. railroads, past or present, can you think of which were/are named for real people? We understand that the Ann Arbor doesn't count, but if you said Pere Marquette and R. J. Corman Lines, you would go to the head of the class! (*Tower Topics*).....Have you been watching the railroad shows ("Extreme Trains") on the History Channel? The episodes are interesting and informative but host Matt Bown is too "cool" and always over-foams. Roy continued to watch all the shows, and there are reruns for those who missed the first go-around (Roy).....Kodachrome era ending? Yes, no two ways about it. There is only one lab in the world left to get your film processed and that is Dwayne's Photo of Parsons, KS. Kodak now makes a master sheet (20,000 rolls) once a year for the world market, and rumors area that it will not make another. Many railfan photographers have switched to Digital and others to Fujichrome which costs about one-half that of Kodachrome with processing. Old Geezer Roy says "Film forever!" (*The Fast Mail*).....Bombardier's net surges as aerospace slumps. Thanks to its Transportation Unit, the Montreal-based firm is ahead of the game even though its Aerospace Department business is off (*Wall Street Journal*).

Yes, both the "fancy pants" Pennsylvania Railroad and New York Central Railroad offered rare twin-unit dining cars on their flagship trains **Broadway Limited** and **20th Century Limited**. But these almost paled in comparison to Southern Pacific Railway's 1939-vintage masterpiece – the triple-unit diner-kitchen-coffee shop. The dining section had 18 tables which seated 72. The tri-plex was the largest unit of its kind in the world (Nils Huxtable).....Speaking of the **20th Century Limited**, it returned to New York's Grand Central Terminal (so to speak) for one day. Restored observation car "**Hickory Creek**" made two round-trips to Albany and Track 34 was decked out with the famous "red" **20th Century Limited** carpet. (*Railfan & Railroad*).....In the early 1950's the Long Island Rail Road was the leading passenger carrier in the United States. It also had freight service, covering 136 stations with four "class" yards with a car lot of more than 6,000 cars. There were public delivery tracks that could hold 1,800 cars and about 750 firms had private sidings. The less-than-carload (LCL) was handled by substituted motor trucks (*Railroads of New York* brochure).

Have you seen the book *Pennsylvania Railroad Facilities in Color, Volume 1*? It covers the New York Division, from Sunnyside yard to "Lane". The book (list price \$59.95) is mentioned because any number of fine photographers are represented, including Philadelphia Chapter Member (and New York Railroad Enthusiasts Vice President) Allan H. Roberts. As information, advertisements indicate *Pennsylvania Railroad Facilities in Color, Volume 3* is scheduled for issuance on March 1, and will cover the PRR's Philadelphia Division.....The first run of New Jersey Transit's Atlantic City Express Service (ACES) was to start on Friday, February 6. We should mention that prior to the "Casino Era" in Atlantic City, the January 1930 *Official*



MARCH 1, 2009: Annual Train Show & Sale, sponsored by Jersey Central Chapter NRHS, 9 AM-4 PM at Mother Seton Regional High School, Clark, NJ (Exit 135 of Garden State Parkway). Show will feature model trains, railroiana, book and slide sales, circus train display, door prizes and trainset raffle. Admission: \$5 adults, \$8 families. For information, contact Mitchell Dakelman, 334 S. 3rd Avenue, Highland Park, NJ 08904-2515.

MARCH 14: 23rd annual Harrisburg Railroad Show & Collectors Market, sponsored by Harrisburg Chapter NRHS, 9 AM-3 PM at I. W. Abel Union Hall, 200 Gibson Street, Steelton, PA. Show will feature model train layouts, railroiana sales, movies, exhibits, workshops and seminars. Donation at door: \$5 per person (children under 12 free). For information, telephone Mark Irvin at 717-732-3867.

MARCH 14: 28th annual Canal History & Technology Symposium at Lafayette College, Easton, PA. Among presentations of railroad interest are "Sticks & Stones: The LC&N-Beaver Meadow Railroad 'Battle of Bear Creek' 1835-1836" by Michael Knies, and "Railroad economic theory applied to the design of the Pulaski Skyway" by Dara Callender and Emory L. Kemp. Several other presentations relating to canals and the anthracite coal industry will be featured. Registration and continental breakfast begin at 8 AM with the first presentation at 9 AM. Registration fee by March 2 is \$60 per person, including breakfast and lunch (\$5 late fee after March 2). Order tickets from: National Canal Museum, 30 Centre Square, Easton, PA 18042-7743. For information, telephone 610-559-6616 (website: www.canals.org).

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.rrmuseumpa.org).

Guide showed that the Pennsylvania Railroad operated a non-stop (after Newark) all-parlor car service on this route. It was mostly Friday-only and was known as the **Atlantic City Limited**; it was extra fare with a two-hour, 30-minute schedule, and the return companion train was known as the **New York Limited** (Arch Barr).

The CNJ Historical Society informs us that some 150 years ago, between April 1857 and March 1858, the Central Railroad of New Jersey installed a second track between Elizabethport and Hampton, NJ and then made both tracks dual-gauge to accommodate the then broad-gauge Delaware, Lackawanna & Western RR. This lasted until the DL&W gained control of the Morris & Essex Railroad which allowed the anthracite traffic to ride on home rails to the Port of New York.....What's the oldest operating steam locomotive in the United States? That's right, it is the Baltimore & Ohio's wood-burning "**William Mason**" which was built in 1856 at Taunton, MA by the Mason Machine Works (B&O Railroad Museum).....On December 11, 1959, the New York Central ended its West Shore commuter service between Weehawken, NJ and West Haverstraw, NY and on December 17 PRR authorized abandonment of its historic Jersey City, NJ passenger terminal (*Railroad Facts*).

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

(Continued from Page 7)

(Railfan & Railroad).....The 1930-vintage ex-Reading passenger station at West Trenton is again for sale. The renovated building has been occupied by an architectural firm (Rick Bates).

Newly-confirmed Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano said last month that one of her priorities will be to tighten security on surface transportation modes, specifically mentioning rail. She told a Senate committee that "We haven't done as much there as we have on the aviation side" (*Traffic World*).....General Electric said last month that it would lay off 230 workers at its Erie (PA) locomotive works until March, due to a drop in orders. GE employs 5,600 workers at the plant (*Trains*).....Senator Richard Durbin of Illinois announced that he will introduce a bill to provide incentives for foreign railcar manufacturers to open plants in the U.S., as well as give tax breaks for American companies to expand into railcar production (NARP).....*Washington Monthly* Magazine in its January issue carries a major article decrying the failure of Washington lawmakers to include any Federal stimulus money for expanding the nation's freight rail network. "More highways? Lunacy. More freight rail? Brilliant!" read the headline on the cover.....The History Channel is rerunning its "Extreme Trains" series from last fall, which was partially sponsored by CSX. Only three of the eight episodes are of some local interest. These covered the movement of a coal train via NS from Bailey Mine in Southwest Pennsylvania to a generating station near Bloomsburg, PA, AMTRAK's Acela Express on the Northeast Corridor and the Ringling Bros. circus train move from Baltimore to Washington.

Valley Regional Planning Commission. DVRPC hopes to use Federal transportation funding to build the proposed Pennsauken Transportation Center (*Railway Age*).....River Line riders were delayed for up to 30 minutes on the evening of Monday, January 5, when one of the diesel-powered light rail trains became disabled on single track near Florence.....NJT instituted cross-honoring of tickets on rail and bus lines due to the snow and ice storm that struck the region on Wednesday, January 28. The River Line was operating with 15-minute delays.

Reading Company T&HS and Philadelphia Chapter NRHS have extended their agreement with the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania. This will allow FP7's #902 and 903 to remain on loan to the Museum in Strasburg for another year, with an option to renew for up to three years.....Two very old steam locomotives were in the news last month. WILMINGTON & WESTERN 4-4-0 #98 will celebrate its 100th birthday this year, having been built by Alco in 1909 for the Mississippi Central Railroad. The American-type has been in service on W&W since 1972, except when it was being rebuilt 2001-2004 (*Trains*). Meanwhile, ex-Jersey Central 0-6-0 #113 (Alco 1923) should be steamed up this year for the first time since 1960. Members of the Kimmel family of Minersville, PA, have dedicated themselves to the restoration of #113 ever since acquiring the derelict switcher from the W&W in 1986. It was moved to Minersville in 1991

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