

CENTURIES

APRIL 2015



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Volume 76

Number 4

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

Notice of Annual Meeting & Election

Notice is hereby given of election of Chapter officers for the year 2015-2016, to be held at the Annual Meeting of Philadelphia Chapter, National Railway Historical Society on Friday evening, April 17, 2015, in Room 121, Randell Hall, Drexel University, 3141 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, beginning at 7:00 PM.

Any member in good standing who is interested in service as President, Senior Vice President, Vice President & Treasurer, Secretary or National Representative, may be nominated from the floor at the April 17 meeting, or by placing your name in nomination by writing, before April 1, 2015 to: C. Bruce Irvin, Chairman, Nominating Committee, 116 Linden Drive, New Holland, PA 17557-9490.

Dan Knouse Named Senior VP; Garforth Program Director

At the March 20 Philadelphia Chapter meeting, President Larry Eastwood announced that he had appointed Daniel J. Knouse, of Willow Grove, PA as the Senior Vice President of the Chapter, replacing Bill Thomas, who passed away unexpectedly on January 18, 2015. Dan's position is an elected one; he will stand for re-election at our April 17 Annual Meeting.

Dan has been a member of NRHS and Philadelphia Chapter since 1985. Because of his physical closeness to the Chapter's storage site, he has expressed an interest in assisting in that area; the Chapter's website is an area of interest to Knouse as well, and it is hoped that he and Webmaster John Almeida might be able to work together in this area.

At the same time, Harry Garforth has accepted appointment as the Chapter's Program Director. His duties will be to seek meeting programs for our monthly meetings. His long association within the rail transportation industry as well as his many connections within the rail history/enthusiast community should permit Philadelphia Chapter to enhance our programs.

Meeting Cancellation Notice

In the event of snow, sleet or freezing rain on a Philadelphia Chapter meeting date, 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, APRIL 17, 2015

Room 121, Randell Hall (access through Main Hall main entrance, 3141 Chestnut Street – just east of 32nd) Drexel University, (three blocks from Amtrak/SEPTA/NJ Transit 30th Street Station) (NOTE: If meeting is in a different room, there will be a notice on the right hand side of the grand staircase) (Easily accessible to all public transportation; at our recent meetings, there has been plenty of parking on Chestnut Street immediately in front of Main Hall – pay at the kiosks)

MEETING START TIME: 7:00 PM

At Philadelphia Chapter's meeting on Friday, April 17, 2015, we will be treated to another fine program from the PowerPoint archives of Chapter Member Dale W. Woodland. The program we will see is **Centuries in the 21st Century: Alco/MLW Locomotives Since 2000.**

Screened will be the secondary owners of these locomotive favorites, on the Bath & Hammondsport, Delaware-Lackawanna, Livonia, Avon & Lakeville, Minnesota Commercial, Morristown & Erie, New York, Susquehanna & Western, Southern Railroad of New Jersey, Reading Company Technical & Historical Society, West Chester and Western New York & Pennsylvania Railroads.

As a reminder, on May 15 we will join with East Penn Traction Club to view an updated version of the 1960's vintage **Just Yesterday** mythical trolley tour of Philadelphia, from the collection of the late Joseph M. Mannix (this meeting will be held off site, most likely in the basement food court area of SEPTA's headquarters at 1234 Market Street downtown).

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

Founded 1936, incorporated 1973 as a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation

CHAPTER OFFICERS (Elected)

President.....R. L. Eastwood, Jr. (215) 947-5769
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Vice President & Treasurer.....Richard Copeland (215) 343-2765
Secretary.....Frank G. Tatnall (610) 688-5623
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Webmaster.....John P. Almeida (215) 361-3953

2015 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES: \$18.00 per person, which covers only Philadelphia Chapter dues. NRHS National membership dues for 2015 \$50.00 per member (unchanged from 2014). For those members unable to pay on-line, see special instructions on Page 1, January 2015 *Cinders* for remitting 2015 National dues. For those who do not have internet capability, Philadelphia Chapter has provided arrangement for 2015 National dues payment. NRHS chapters were instructed to bill their members separately for 2015 Chapter dues, which was done with October *Cinders*. The donation request for Philadelphia Railfriends was mailed in early November via separate mailing from November *Cinders*. Anyone interested in becoming a member of Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS should forward remittance in the amount of \$18.00 to Post Office Box 7302, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302. Please include name, valid mailing address, telephone number and E-mail address, as applicable.

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 records are complete.

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 353, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006-0353. **EXCHANGE newsletters should be sent to:** R. L. Eastwood, Jr., Editor, P. O. Box 353, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006-0353, or by electronic mail to ayrestower@comcast.net.

NRHS Researchers Find New Home

NRHS National has ended its relationship with contractor Fernley & Fernley, effective April 15, 2015. In our May issue, we expect to have detailed information on how our members should access NRHS for member services.

The Society's volunteer researchers, meanwhile, have established a new location to maintain their files of chapter newsletters and answer research questions from the field. Member Burt Eisenberg worked with the Delaware Valley Association of Railroad Passengers (DVARP) to use desk space at their headquarters. Philadelphia Chapter Members Ray Cooney and Les Dean, in addition to Burt are the staff.

As they set their operations up in a new location, they are looking for some volunteer help on Wednesdays at the DVARP office. Members who may be interested should contact Burt on his cell phone, 267-312-4703 on a Monday or Tuesday to arrange a Wednesday visit with the regulars. DVARP's headquarters are located at Suite 1129, 1601 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102-2933.

After April 1, NO NRHS National correspondence is to go to Fernley & Fernley; such may be forwarded to the Chapter's Philadelphia address, where it will be held until May 1 for action.

PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER, NRHS Board of Directors Meeting Spring, 2015

**Tuesday, May 12, 2015
7:00 to 8:30 PM**

**Passenger Services Conference Room
Amtrak's 30th Street Station**

**Members of Philadelphia Chapter are
welcome and encouraged to attend**

About Our March 20 Meeting.....

After considering postponement of our Chapter meeting on Friday, March 20, the decision was made that we would hold the meeting. The Chapter held off until 3 PM in the decision. In checking conditions at that time, we noted that SEPTA operations were pretty much on schedule, and the temperature was holding at about 32-34 degrees and the precipitation was to end about 7 PM.

Nine hardy souls (plus one NEW member) showed up to see Larry Eastwood's PowerPoint presentation **An EMD F-Unit Potpourri**, which had been upgraded from a slide show to the PowerPoint show only two days before the meeting. A rescreening of this presentation is promised for a Fall, 2015 meeting.

Important Notice to NRHS Members

NRHS President Al Weber has issued notice to all NRHS chapters and members that, effective Monday, March 30, 2015, the Society is transferring its business operations from Fernley & Fernley. That contractor will no longer have any further responsibilities for updating and maintaining the membership database, nor will they have anything to do with NRHS finance operations. On March 31, we are asked to discontinue sending anything of any sort to Fernley & Fernley. NRHS will receive mail from the Postal Service to the following address:

National Railway Historical Society
c/o John K. Fiorilla, Esq.
Capehart & Scatchard, Inc., P. A.
Post Office Box 5016
Mount Laurel, NJ 08054-5016

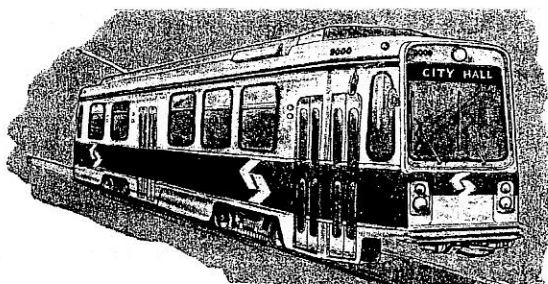
The NRHS telephone number remains 215-557-6606. The FAX machine and FAX telephone number have been disconnected. E-mail addresses, the NRHS Facebook page and NRHS website will remain unchanged. Members are asked to not send anything to F&F, and to not call the firm for any reason to ease NRHS's transition away from the firm. More details about future Society operations will be forthcoming throughout the next several months.

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS



FRANK G. TATNALL, JR.

SEPTA TRANSIT



SEPTA's proposed operating budget for Fiscal Year 2016 totals \$1.36 billion, an increase of 2.84 percent over the current year. The new budget, starting this July 1, will maintain existing service levels with no fare increases planned until 2017. Labor costs of \$984 million account for 72 percent of SEPTA's expenses as reflected in the budget, in addition to higher health-care costs. Operating revenues are projected at \$538 million in FY 2016, of which \$484 million are identified as passenger revenues. Public hearings on the operating budget will be held in all five counties during the week of April 20, with the Philadelphia hearings scheduled for Tuesday the 21st in the SEPTA board room, beginning at 11 AM and 5 PM. An examiner's report will be submitted and the SEPTA board will act on the budget at its May 28 meeting. The entire budget may be viewed on the website, www.septa.org.

The capital budget for Fiscal Year 2016 is pegged at \$534.5 million, down 6.4 percent from the 2015 budget of \$687 million but much higher than the budgets in the immediately preceding years. As in FY 2015, the increased capital spending is made possible by a boost in funding from the State under Transportation Act 89, approved in 2013. This is expected to account for 61 percent of the capital budget, with Federal sources contributing 37 percent and local governments two percent. SEPTA's "Rebuilding for the Future" campaign aims to restore the entire system to a state of good repair, although reaching that goal will require more than a decade.

The FY 2016 capital budget proposes that \$160.5 million be spent on vehicle acquisitions, with much of the balance for the rebuilding or replacement of deteriorated infrastructure such as bridges and power systems. The largest construction project in the new budget is the bridge program at \$48 million, which includes the start of work to replace the 1895-vintage Crum Creek viaduct on the Media-Elwyn line. The new "SEPTA Key" fare collection system is included in the budget at \$45 million. The acquisition of 13 new locomotives and more hybrid buses also are provided for, as well as starting the process to acquire a fleet of bi-level rail cars and to replace the 35-year-old Kawasaki trolleys. Public hearings on the capital budget will be held on Tuesday,

April 28, at SEPTA headquarters, starting at 11 AM and PM. More information may be found at www.septa.org/rebuilding.

A "Stand Up 4 Transportation" event is scheduled for Thursday morning, April 9, at Dilworth Park in center city. Several dignitaries, including former Governor Ed Rendell, U.S. House Transportation Committee Chairman Bill Shuster and PennDOT Acting Secretary Leslie Richards, will appear at the event to urge critical Federal investment in America's highway and rail infrastructure. It is sponsored by several chambers of commerce, SEPTA, the Delaware River Port Authority and numerous other groups.

As part of its annual service plan for next year, SEPTA may split bus Route 23 into two separate routes. It is believed that service would improve if the longest bus route in the system is divided in half. Also under consideration is the closing of certain low-volume stations on the Norristown High Speed Line, in order to speed up service. The first candidate is County Line station which has only around 20 boardings per day, while Matsonford and Parkview stations could be looked at in the future. The NHSL now has 22 stations in its 13-mile length..... SEPTA has decided to make permanent the 24-hour weekend operation of trains on the Broad Street and Market-Frankford Lines, something that was begun as an experiment last summer. This change has increased passenger revenue over the former NiteOwl bus service, but will cost an additional \$1 million annually.

SEPTA last month led three more public workshops on the proposed extension of the Norristown High Speed Line to the King of Prussia area. SEPTA has narrowed down the number of possible routes to five, which would connect with the present NHSL at locations south of the present DeKalb Street station and follow either U.S. 202 and Turnpike or a PECO right-of-way. The 202 route, however, has given rise to much local opposition. More information can be found at www.kingofprussiarail.comIn spite of brutally cold weather, SEPTA experienced an overall one-percent increase in ridership during February as compared with the same month in 2014 when the weather was even worse. Passenger revenues of \$37.4 million were about the same as in the previous year.....U.S. public transit ridership reached 10.8 billion trips in 2014, the highest in 58 years, reports the American Public Transportation Association.

"The coming storm clouds" was the headline on a lengthy article in the March 22 Inquirer, which detailed the increasing threat to SEPTA from long-term climate change. High water caused by more frequent flooding has forced SEPTA to spend a lot of money reinforcing its rail systems against such problems as flooded tracks, mudslides, washouts and falling trees. Given its

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close proximity to the flood-prone Schuylkill River, the Norristown Line is particularly vulnerable in areas like Conshohocken. This led SEPTA to install a new interlocking last year at "River," near Miquon station, to allow trains to quickly turn back toward Philadelphia when high water covers the tracks ahead. Raising signal-control huts on stilts is another response to expected flooding. The notorious incident in 2012 when 12 Regional rail cars were trapped in high water at Trenton station cost SEPTA more than \$1 million in repair costs. Over the next seven years SEPTA plans to spend some \$116 million on projects designed to prepare for extreme weather. In addition to several projects on Regional Rail, some \$5 million will go toward providing emergency power backup for pumps in the subway tunnels and \$12 million for an auxiliary control center if something disrupts the system center at 1234 Market Street. Even the Route 102 trolley line will get a \$5-million pumped drainage system to protect the often-flooded duckunder beneath the CSX mainline at Sharon Hill.



SEPTA REGIONAL RAIL

Work is proceeding at an accelerated pace on the track program in Bucks County, which will separate SEPTA's West Trenton trains and CSX freight traffic (see October 2014 Cinders). The \$39-million project will include a third track on the old Reading New York branch right-of-way between Woodbourne and Yardley, giving SEPTA two electrified tracks on the north side and a single non-electrified track for CSX freight traffic. Ties are now being installed and all track, catenary and signal work is scheduled to be completed before the end of the year. One important feature of the project is that each railroad will be able to perform its own dispatching and will use different types of Positive Train Control equipment, which under current Federal law must be in service by December 31. Currently, SEPTA handles all dispatching in the 5-1/2 miles of CSX-owned track between "Wood" interlocking and West Trenton.

SEPTA this month expects to receive proposals for the construction of 13 high-speed electric locomotives to replace the 30-year-old AEM-7's and the lone ALP-44 which now power the push-pull trains. SEPTA also has hired the LTK consulting firm to study the design of a fleet of bi-level coaches, similar perhaps to those now in service on NJ TRANSIT.....All Regional Rail timetables except for the Airport Line will be reissued effective April 5. The new Airport timetable will come out a few weeks later to coincide with the 30th anniversary of the start of revenue service to International Airport on April 28, 1985. A new train on the Norristown Line, #6291, will originate at Miquon using the new "River" interlocking to cross over. It will provide

local service as far as Allegheny station, allowing #6221 to run express inbound from Miquon.

There were 945 trespasser casualties on U.S. railroads in 2014, with 526 of those incidents resulting in fatalities, according to a report from the Federal Railroad Administration. The latter figure represents a 12-percent increase over the previous year. A total of 2,280 grade crossing collisions also were reported in 2014. An *Inquirer* story said that on average about ten trespasser deaths occur each year in the Philadelphia area, several of them suicides. Figures compiled by this writer, however, show that there were 21 trespasser deaths on rail lines in the five-county area and northern Delaware last year: 11 on SEPTA, seven on AMTRAK, one on PATCO and two on NORFOLK SOUTHERN.....Burned-out Silverliner II car #257 that sat in Overbrook yard for a couple of years was finally cut in half and trucked off to the scrapper on March 1. That leaves ex-Reading #9001 as the last remaining Silverliner II on SEPTA property and it is promised to the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania in Strasburg.

One of Regional Rail's most trying days last month—Sunday, March 15—was not caused by the weather. Instead, signal and power outages on AMTRAK together with heavy travel to and from the St. Patrick's Day parade in center city combined to produce an on-time performance of just 70 percent, as 130 trains out of the scheduled 427 ran late.....On Tuesday morning, March 3, train #9700 out of Trenton ran into a fallen auxiliary wire from the catenary near Morrisville, breaking the engineer's window in lead Silverliner IV #419 and burning the area around the window. No one was injured but the train had to be annulled and passengers transferred on the ground to following train #9730.....Claymont-bound train #4249 became disabled around 5:30 PM on Monday, March 9, near "Phil" interlocking, two miles south of 30th Street Station. Its 350 passengers were transferred to train #9251. The breakdown caused severe delays to several other trains and 9251 arrived at Wilmington an hour and 40 minutes late.....A tree fell on train #6566 just as it was arriving in Doylestown at 4:35 PM on Tuesday, March 17. Rail service had to be suspended and shuttle buses ordered to handle passengers between Link Belt and Doylestown until the tree was cleared and power restored at 7:25 PM. The 24 passengers on #6566 were able to walk from the stranded train to Doylestown station.....A four-alarm fire in a large warehouse at 24th & Westmoreland Streets in Philadelphia's Tioga section early on Saturday morning, March 28, forced cancellation of all service on the Norristown Regional Rail line through the end of service on Sunday, March 29. Concern about the potential collapse of a large wall adjacent to the tracks, plus some mudslides and possible washouts necessitated the service interruption. Several bus routes in the area were detoured around the conflagration.

AMTRAK



This year AMTRAK is replacing its large-scale National Train Day celebrations with individual "Amtrak Train Days" at locations across the country. As a result there will be no big event at 30th Street Station in May, as there has been for the past seven

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years, but there will be a Train Day kickoff event on Saturday, May 9, at Chicago Union Station. The Railroad Museum at Strasburg also will host a Train Day on May 9 and Steamtown will run a Train Day excursion. The Amtrak Display Train will be making the rounds for appearances in selected areas during the yearPhiladelphia's deputy mayor for transportation for the past seven years has resigned to take a high-level job at AMTRAK. Rina Cutler, 61, will become senior director for major station planning & development.

By mid-March Siemens had delivered half of the 70 ACS-64 electric locomotives ordered by AMTRAK at a cost of \$466 million. While the new units have had some teething problems, they are showing up with increasing frequency along the Northeast Corridor and Harrisburg line and generally have been performing well. The first unit, #600, entered revenue service in February 2014. As new units arrive more and more of the 35-year-old AEM-7's are being retired after logging millions of miles in revenue service.....The first of AMTRAK's new CAF USA-built baggage cars to enter revenue service was #61012, which left Miami March 23 on train #98 **Silver Meteor**. As more cars are hauled north from the Hialeah maintenance base they will be placed in service on other trains (Andy Kirk).

The promised spring edition of the National timetable still had not appeared as of late March. New folder timetables for the NEC, Keystone Service and other routes were published effective January 12, but the information booth at 30th Street Station on March 25 still stocked only the out-of-date schedules issued last June 9! (The current timetables were available in the nearby Customer Service office.).....The inspector general of the U.S. Postal Service has reported that in 2013 USPS moved only \$43 million of its annual \$3.4 billion of intercity mail by rail. This is far below what USPS was shipping in rail intermodal service even 20 years ago, and the I.G. wondered why, especially since competitor UPS is still a major rail customer.

The U.S. Supreme Court last month found in favor of AMTRAK and the Department of Transportation, in a case involving Amtrak's authority to set performance standards for passenger trains running on privately-owned freight railroads (see January *Cinders*). On appeal by Amtrak and the DOT, the Supreme Court reversed a lower court ruling in favor of the plaintiff Association of American Railroads which had claimed the 2008 law granting Amtrak the power to set standards was unconstitutional because it gave a "private" company (Amtrak) authority to regulate other private companies. After that ruling was handed down in 2013 the performance of Amtrak trains on host railroads declined sharply, but now the standards policy has been restored.



**CSX,
NS,
OTHER ROADS**

NORFOLK SOUTHERN President James A. Squires will take on the added title of chief executive officer, effective June 1. He succeeds Charles W. Moorman, better known as "Wick,"

who remains as executive chairman. Squires came up through the NS Law Department, then became EVP of finance, EVP of administration and finally was named president in 2013. Squires has already paid a visit to the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania and it is hoped that he will retain much of his predecessor's respect for the history of railroading and the legacy of NS. The railroad enjoyed record revenues and net income in 2014.

A top CSX official said last month that the railroad expects domestic coal shipments to decline by at least five percent in 2015, as compared with last year. This is partly the result of the conversion of some electric generating stations to natural gas, and possibly to government pressure to reduce carbon emissions from coal-burning plants. CSX also said that it expects that the growth in crude oil shipments will moderate as oil prices remain low, but merchandise and intermodal traffic should rise.....*Fortune* Magazine has named CSX as one of its "World's most admired companies," for the fifth year in a row. It was ranked second in the transportation & logistics category behind #1 UNION PACIFIC. NS was ranked fourth.

NS is scheduled to handle the Ringling Bros. Red Unit circus train in the annual move from Trenton to Hershey, PA, on Monday, May 18. The previous move will be via CSX from Hartford, CT, to Trenton on May 11.....On weekends last month NS again was detouring its westbound intermodal train 21E via AMTRAK through Thorndale and Lancaster while SEPTA was doing construction work in Norristown. Eastbound 24K followed the reverse route. Both trains usually carry double-stacked containers, but because of catenary height restrictions on Amtrak they operated single-stack only.....NS has completed a locomotive swap with CSX, giving CSX 12 SD40-2 units in return for CSX's last 12 SD80MAC's. This means that NS will own all 29 SD80MAC's still in existence (one was scrapped), out of the 30 ordered by CONRAIL in 1996. They will carry NS numbers in the 7200 seriesA bill has been introduced in the U.S. Senate to extend the deadline for full implementation of Positive Train Control (PTC) by another five years. The present date is December 31, 2015, which the railroad industry maintains will be impossible to achieve due to many technological issues and various delays caused by government restrictions (*Trains*).

NJ TRANSIT has warned commuters that it may be forced to raise fares by 25 percent this year in an effort to close an \$80 million budget deficit. The agency says it is also in the process of identifying \$40 million in cost reductions. NJT increased fares by 50 percent just five years ago (NARP).....NJT staged an 80th birthday party for Penn Station in Newark on March 23. There were tours offered, musical entertainment and a vintage bus display*Railway Age* Magazine has given its 2015 Regional Railroad of the Year award to READING & NORTHERN. R&N also won the award in 2002 and 2011.

Steamtown National Historic Site in Scranton is gearing up for a big season. Free admissions will be offered over the weekend of April 18-19, and Baldwin 0-6-0 locomotive #26 could be back in steam this year for the first time since 2000. A full schedule of diesel-powered excursions begins on April 25 with a trip to Dickson City, and later specials will go to Carbondale.

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Final (?) Report on Winter 2015

First we had the "Blizzard That Wasn't" in January, then on March 5 came the "Storm That Wouldn't Quit," as the TV meteorologists dubbed it. Thursday the 5th was a very bad day in Philadelphia, when the heaviest snowfall of the season came to town. The official measurement at the Airport was 7.5 inches, with more in some areas to the north and west. Transportation in all its forms—highway, air and rail—took a beating. But by the following Wednesday the mercury had soared to 61 degrees, so were we seeing the end of a very nasty winter? No. Old Man Winter had saved up one parting shot, a snowstorm on Friday the 20th which coincidentally was the first day of spring. An official 3.9 inches fell at PHL and up to seven inches in some suburbs, as temperatures hovered near the freezing mark.

Since our report in the last issue of *Cinders*, rail travelers—not to mention those using the airlines and highways—have felt the continuing wrath of this arctic-style winter. In terms of how many people were delayed by the weather in March, air travelers probably took the dubious prize, as vast numbers of frustrated passengers found themselves stranded in airports or otherwise inconvenienced. Literally thousands of flights in the East were cancelled during the first few days of the month. Television reporters were stationed at PHL and other airports to hear the tales of bedraggled folks holed up for the night, watching the departure screens or waiting for flights to be rebooked.

But many rail passengers also had their bad moments. Here are some anecdotal reports from last month:

AMTRAK: The snow, sleet and ice which visited the Northeast Corridor region on Sunday, March 1, caused numerous train delays as temperatures did not rise above freezing. The next day, Monday, many streets and highways were icy but Amtrak service ran reasonably well. There was more snow and freezing rain on Tuesday the 3rd, but with no widespread delays on Amtrak.

Then came Thursday the 5th and a generous helping of snow. Amtrak went to its now-familiar "modified" (reduced) schedule between New York and Washington as well as on the Keystone Line to Harrisburg. There were many weather-related problems, most notably at Trenton where slush dripping off a highway overpass caused an ice buildup on catenary and track. The inevitable result was delays to Amtrak trains to and from New York ranging from two to 4-1/2 hours, with NJ Transit and SEPTA service also impacted. Amtrak sent out an "ice-mitigation" team in a catenary maintenance car, causing numerous track outages. Power failures also occurred Thursday afternoon in Philadelphia and on the mainline to Wilmington, although Amtrak operated more-or-less normal service north and east of New York. MARC and Virginia Railway Express cancelled all commuter service on Thursday in the Washington-Baltimore area.

Amtrak continued its modified service plan on Friday, March 6th, in the aftermath of the snowstorm. With temperatures remaining in the 20's, operating problems included frozen switches, catenary power failures and iced-up equipment. Still, service on the Corridor managed to limp along albeit with serious delays. Around 9:30 PM an accident occurred at Odenton, MD, south of Baltimore, when northbound train #198 derailed one truck on the rear coach, apparently due to a broken wheel. According to

a *Trains* Newswire report, no one was injured but more than a mile of track #1 was damaged and MARC trains could not access the station platform. (MARC was running a reduced schedule that day on the Amtrak Penn Line but there was no service on its Camden or Brunswick Lines.) The 109 passengers on #198 were transferred to following train #66, although the disabled car was not removed until the next day. Repair work on the track exacerbated delays in the area as the #3 track already was out of service for maintenance work. Warmer temperatures over the next few days helped speed the return to normal service.

Finally, the nuisance storm on Friday the 20th had only a minor effect on Corridor service. Several trains ran 20 minutes to an hour late during the afternoon and evening, but it's unclear how many of these delays were weather-related.

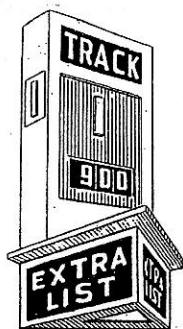
SEPTA: Some problems on City Transit lines resulted from the snow and freezing rain on Sunday, March 1, a day when the Philadelphia Flower Show at the Convention Center attracted more than the usual number of weekend riders. Regional Rail reported 100 late trains but only 20 of those were attributed to weather conditions. Icy streets caused detours and delays on numerous bus routes and there were many auto accidents. Some trolley riders also were delayed. The next day, a Monday, saw the icy conditions continue, as at least ten bus routes had to be detoured during the morning. The Market-Frankford Line operated all-stop rather than skip-stop service during rush hours.

Tuesday the 3rd was another bad day with snow, freezing rain and ice plaguing transportation of all stripes. A few bus routes in the City were detoured and trolley lines ran behind schedule due to ice on the wires. Suburban trolley routes 101 and 102 out of 69th Street were bused in the evening due to icy wires, and trains on the Norristown High Speed Line experienced slowdowns. Regional Rail logged numerous delays, some resulting from Operating Rule F-S1 speed restrictions which are imposed during extreme weather conditions. More than 50 trains were reported running late due to bad weather or slippery rails.

Thursday, March 5, proved to be a challenge for SEPTA riders and just about everyone else who wanted to get somewhere as snow continued to fall through most of the day. A snow emergency was declared in Philadelphia and schools were closed both in the City and in many suburbs. SEPTA attempted to operate a regular weekday schedule on all lines, but service on at least nine bus routes had to be suspended and 40 others were following detours. Trolley service also was impacted. Station platforms and parking lots proved to be hazardous due to slippery conditions. Again, the Market-Frankford Line ran all-stop service during the entire day. Trains on the NHSL ran every 15 minutes making all stops. On the Market-Frankford and Broad Street Lines trains ran all night, replacing the usual NiteOwl bus service.

Regional Rail service was suspended on several lines for part of the day, including Airport, Trenton, Chestnut Hill West, and Wilmington-Newark due to power and switch problems on Amtrak. In mid-afternoon eastbound train #1781 lost catenary power near Trenton station and a diesel was summoned to the rescue, but after 45 minutes electricity was restored and the train proceeded into the station without assistance. Even with the power back widespread delays continued on all lines through the evening.

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**Wednesday, April 8, 2015:**

"Riding the Reading to Bethlehem" lecture by Steve Stewart, at the monthly meeting of Old York Road Historical Society, 7:30 PM, in Homestead Hall in the Parish House of the Church of Our Savior, Old York and Homestead Roads in Jenkintown (behind the Church). Lecture is underwritten by a grant from the Jenkintown Lyceum and is open to the public, free of charge.

Saturday, April 11:

Annual Banquet of Harrisburg Chapter, NRHS, at Colonial Golf and Tennis Club, 4901 Linglestown Road, Harrisburg, PA. Cash bar 5:00 PM, dinner 6:00 PM. Program will be Amanda Trainor Patrick, CEM, of the Railway Supply Institute, Inc., in Washington, DC. Her presentation will be "Women in Railroading: Past, Present and Future". Buffet dinner, \$25.00 per person. Order tickets from: Dick Crow, 412 Ricky Road, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-4976, making remittance payable to Harrisburg Chapter, NRHS. Please specify buffet dinner or vegetarian entrée. Reservation deadline is April 1, 2015.

Saturday, April 18:

Annual banquet of Lehigh Valley Chapter, NRHS at the Kempton Hotel, Kempton (Berks County), PA. Presenters will be Jim and Andy Schlegel, "Harrisburg to Allentown to Kempton to Kutztown and Back" Fare: \$34.00 per person, which includes train ride over the WK&S Railroad at 3:30 PM., banquet at 5:30 PM. Order tickets from: James Danner, 840 Point Phillip Road, Bath, PA 18014-9618 (telephone 610-704-7738). Reservation deadline is April 13, and tickets will be held for check-in at the WK&S RR. Make remittances payable to "Lehigh Valley Chapter, NRHS".

Saturday, April 25:

5th annual Project 113 Slide Show in Minersville, PA, at Minersville Junior-Senior High School, 1 Battlin' Miners Drive (off 5th Street), Minersville, PA. Presenters will be Kermit Geary, Jr., Allen Keller, Craig Werley, Joe Fusco, Mike Smith, Dale Woodland and Dave Augsburg. Admission price of \$30.00 includes lunch. Seating is limited. Order tickets by sending \$30.00, payable to Project 113, and send to Project 113, 113 East Sunbury Street, Minersville, PA 17954-1720. Doors open at 8:00 AM for coffee and doughnuts, presentations begin at 9:00 AM. For additional information, telephone 570-544-8300 or E-mail rproject113@hotmail.com.

Monday, April 27:

Regular monthly meeting of West Jersey Chapter, NRHS, Haddon Heights Borough Hall, 7th & Station Avenues, Haddon Heights, NJ, 7:30 PM. Program will be **History and Evolution of Station Buildings on the PRR Main Line from Overbrook to Paoli**, presented by Greg Pritchard. Among the locations given attention will be Stratford station and its history.

Sunday, May 17:

SEPTA PCC-II trolley charter, sponsored by Friends of Philadelphia Trolleys (FPT), covering all six city trolley lines. Trip leaves Elmwood Depot 11:00 AM, returns about 3:00 PM. Fare: \$45.00 per seat. No lunch stop will be made, but snacks will be sold on board the car. Order tickets by sending \$45.00, payable to FPT to: Harry Donahue, 103 Mulberry Court, Morgantown, PA 19343-8843. Additional information from Harry Donahue at had2709@aol.com. Trip is being run as part of 22nd National Model Trolley Event at the Courtyard Philadelphia Downtown by Marriott.

Monday, May 18 (third Monday because of

Memorial Day): Regular monthly meeting of West Jersey Chapter, NRHS, Haddon Heights Borough Hall, 7th & Station Avenues, Haddon Heights, NJ, 7:30 PM. Well-known NRHS member J. William Vigrass will be the presenter, and the subject will be **The Railroads of the Canadian Maritime Provinces in the Summer of 1961!** Among the provinces visited during that summer trip of Bill's were Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and tiny Prince Edward Island. In too many instances the rails are long gone, but the Kodachromes still exist for us to enjoy!

Saturday, June 6:

Museum of Bus Transportation annual "Spring Bus Fling" at the Antique Automobile Museum and Campus, Hershey, PA (one mile from Hersheypark), 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. Bus displays, inside bus and transportation flea market with a variety of transit-related artifacts. Admission: \$7.00 (Museum of Bus Transportation members are free). For additional information, please call the Museum at 717-566-7100, Ext. 119.

Sunday, June 14 through Saturday, June 20:

Vermont Rails 2015, NRHS Convention at Rutland, VT, featuring numerous excursions on Vermont Railway, plus a trip on the Saratoga & North Creek Railroad. Tickets are now on sale and sales have been excellent – most premium class tickets have been sold. The Holiday Inn on U. S. Route 7 in Rutland will be the headquarters hotel, and is filling up quickly (Sunday night, June 14 hotel is sold out). Vermont is beautiful any time of year, and Vermont Railway is very hospitable and runs excellent trips. To sign up, visit www.nrhs.com. Amtrak's **Ethan Allen** operates daily from New York Penn Station to Rutland.

July 1 through July 6:

Reading Railroad Days at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, Route 741, Strasburg, PA. One highlight of the weekend will be the large and ever-expanding HO scale model railroad built and operated by members of the Reading Company Technical & Historical Society. Other exhibits featuring the Reading will also be available. Regular Museum hours and admission charges will apply. For additional information, visit the website www.rrmuseumpa.org or call the Museum at 717-687-8628..

Through October, 2015:

A new exhibit, *Building the Reading*, will be hosted by the Reading Railroad Heritage Museum, 500 South Third Street, Hamburg, PA 19526. The contributions of ethnic groups are highlighted, as well as tools and materials used to build the railroad. Regular admission rates apply: \$7 adults, \$6 seniors (65 and older), \$3 children 5-12, age 4 and under free. Museum hours: 10 AM to 4 PM Saturdays, Noon to 4 PM Sundays. For more information, call 610-562-5513 or visit website: www.Readingrailroad.org.

Important Phone Numbers

CINDERS lists below the telephone numbers which should be used to report suspicious sightings, emergencies or other conditions affecting rail operations, including trespassers, vandalism, fires, defective equipment, etc.

AMTRAK	800-331-0008
CSX	800-232-0144
CONRAIL Shared Assets	800-272-0911
NJ TRANSIT (NJ only)	800-242-0236
NORFOLK SOUTHERN	800-453-2530
PATCO Transit	856-963-7995
SEPTA	215-580-8111

Final (?) Report on Winter 2015

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Although the sun reappeared on Friday the 6th, the numbing cold persisted and so did the service problems. The mercury fell to 11 degrees that morning and schools in the City remained closed. Bus detours and service suspensions were rampant and all-stop service continued on the Market-Frankford Line. Trolley service also suffered delays. Regional Rail had another tough day as on-time performance sunk to just 46 percent—400 trains out of 745 scheduled were delayed by an average of 15 minutes. Many of these delays were attributed to losses of catenary power on Amtrak lines. Trains equipped with Silverliner V cars suffered numerous breakdowns and car shortages were widespread. Seven trains were annulled, five of them on the Cynwyd line due to a switch failure at "Zoo." Train delays on Regional Rail continued to a lesser extent over the weekend with nearly 200 trains running late on Saturday, but part of this was due to heavy travel to and from the Flower Show.

The snowfall on Friday, March 20, came just about as forecast, except that Philadelphia and suburbs to the north and west did not see the snow turn to rain in the afternoon. Instead, it just kept snowing. Highway traffic was affected and hundreds of flights cancelled in the Northeast, but SEPTA carried on pretty well. Eight bus routes had to be detoured and the Market-Frankford Line was shut down for a time in the afternoon due to an electrical fire at 13th Street. Regional Rail reported 69 weather-related delays but service generally ran well. By Saturday morning most service was back to normal although 12 bus routes still were on detour.

NJ TRANSIT had its share of problems both on its rail and bus systems. On Monday, March 2, icy conditions affected some bus and rail lines, and cross-honoring of tickets was in effect. On the big snow day of Thursday the 5th, NJT attempted to operate its regular schedule but many delays and cancellations were necessary. The worst were on the Northeast Corridor Line where the Amtrak power outages referred to above forced the cancellation of service to and from Trenton, Hamilton and Princeton Junction for several hours during the day. Cross-honoring of tickets systemwide was in effect but ridership reportedly was well below normal on many rail and bus lines. There were some delays on the Northeast Corridor and elsewhere during the March 20 storm, but nothing too serious.

PATCO operated a special snow schedule on Thursday, March 5, with ten-minute headways during rush hour, 15 minutes in midday and 24 minutes in the evening. No serious problems were reported. On Friday the 6th PATCO operated its current "construction schedule" for the Ben Franklin bridge repair program, per the most recent timetable dated February 12.

As *Cinders* goes to press the winter of 2015 is thankfully in the rear-view mirror, but the threat of a hot summer remains on the horizon.

—Frank Tatnall

If your *Cinders* Arrives in Bad Condition

If your *Cinders* arrives damaged or with pages missing, contact Editor Larry Eastwood at 215-947-5769 or ayrestower@comcast.net and a replacement copy will promptly be sent to you.

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

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Moscow, Tobyhanna, Cresco, East Stroudsburg and Delaware Water Gap. More information may be found online by visiting www.nps.gov/stea The *Inquirer* reports that the Delaware River Port Authority is seriously considering spending up to \$18.5 million to reopen PATCO's long-shuttered Franklin Square station in Philadelphia (see January *Cinders*). The revival of Franklin Square Park above the station and new developments nearby are the chief motivators for the proposal..... The William Penn and Knight Foundations have announced that they will donate \$11 million for park improvements in Philadelphia. Some of this money will go toward preliminary work to convert the long-abandoned Reading Railroad viaduct in center city into an elevated park, reminiscent of the highly successful High Line Park in New York City. The first work will be done on the old City branch ramp from North Broad Street to the main viaduct at 11th & Callowhill Streets.

Honesdale Excursions to Resume, Freight May Follow

The popular excursion trains on the 25-mile line between Lackawaxen and Honesdale are set to return beginning May 9-10, according to a report from *Trains News Wire*. The shortline is now known as the Delaware, Lackawaxen and Stourbridge Railroad.

According to Tom Shepstone of the Honesdale-Lackawaxen Shippers Association, the Myles Group of West Chester, PA has moved several pieces of rolling stock to Honesdale in recent months and has invested about \$30,000 to get the line's rare EMD BL2 locomotive back in operating condition. The plan is to re-establish the popular passenger excursions from Honesdale to Hawley and Lackawaxen. According to Shepstone, the excursion trains are "desperately desired by the community."

Renewal of freight service along the route is possible, too. About a half dozen potential shippers have been contacted, with propane and stone high on the list. Shepstone says the railroad "would like to get some of the fracking business, as well".

The Myles Group once owned and operated the Wellsboro & Corning Railroad and the Tioga Central excursion line in north central Pennsylvania. Myles sold 70 percent of the Wellsboro operation to Genesee & Wyoming, at which time excursions there were discontinued. According to Shepstone, the Myles Group was contacted by the local shippers group because of their experience in developing operations.

The Honesdale line, formerly an Erie Lackawanna branch, was unwanted when Conrail was formed in 1976, and has had several operators since. The largest shipper on the line closed in 1999, and no freight trains have operated since 2008. Past excursion trains were operated by the shippers' group and the local chamber of commerce using a former Bangor & Aroostook EMD BL2 and several former Lackawanna commuter cars for more than 30 years.