



# CINDERS

JULY 2015



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Number 7

Newsletter of the  
PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER  
NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.  
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### 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](mailto:ayrestower@comcast.net) and a replacement copy will promptly be sent to you.

### Important Summer, 2015 Chapter Notes

Events occurring during the normally quiet summer months are affecting Chapter business and activity this year.

Some news items are partially curtailed this issue, but will be contained in our September issue. The September issue of *Cinders* will have an earlier deadline due to where Labor Day falls in 2015. Expected mailing date will be Tuesday, September 8.

Please follow the special instructions if you plan to attend the Chapter's Summer Board Meeting on Tuesday, August 18. It will be held in a different location at Amtrak's 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station, and advance reservation is requested if you plan to attend. Meeting Notice will be found on Page 2 of this issue.

Don't forget our annual Summer Dinner in Hatboro on Friday, August 21. Reservation details are found below.

### August 21, 2015 Hatboro Summer Dinner Deadline

Members are reminded that Philadelphia Chapter's annual Bill Wagner Summer Dinner will take place this year on Friday evening, August 21. The event is to be held at Café La Fontana, 58 South York Road in Hatboro, PA. The restaurant is an approximately two block walk from Hatboro station on SEPTA's Warminster Regional Rail Line, out Byberry Road or Moreland Avenue from the station.

Happy hour will be between 5 and 6 PM, with dinner served at 6 PM. The dinner menu will include a mixed greens salad, cheese ravioli, choice of Chicken Marsala or Flounder Francaise, and dessert. Price for the dinner will be \$41.00 per person. Alcoholic beverages at the dinner table will be by individual settlement. Entrée choice may be made at the restaurant.

Your reservation and payment for the August 21 summer dinner needs to be received by Monday, August 10, 2015. Remittance should be sent to: Summer Dinner, Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS, Post Office Box 7302, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7302. Chapter Members and friends are cordially invited to come out, participate in a social evening with each other, while enjoying a nice meal. No business meeting is anticipated.



Above is seen longtime Philadelphia Chapter Member and Philadelphia Railfriend Robert L. Abrams, who passed away June 24, 2015 at the age of 93. A Member since 1947, Bob is shown here with Red Arrow Lines St. Louis car #12 on delivery in 1949.

## ROBERT L. ABRAMS

June 24, 2015

Philadelphia Chapter is saddened to record the passing of long-time Chapter Member and Philadelphia Railfriend Robert L. Abrams, of Washington, DC on Wednesday, June 24, 2015, at the age of 93. A native of Philadelphia's Wynnefield section, Bob joined Philadelphia Chapter in 1947 and enjoyed an association of more than 60 years with us.

Bob had a long and distinguished career in the mass transit industry. He had relocated to Washington from his boyhood home at age 40, and spent the remainder of his life in the Nation's capital, with his last years in a retirement home known as Thomas House.

Bob's interest in rail transit started at a very early age. In June, 1933, he was recognized by *Ripley's Believe It or Not* for his detailed knowledge of the Philadelphia transit system. At age 7, he knew the terminals and destinations of virtually all Philadelphia rail lines, and by age 11 could quote without hesitation the complete route traversed by each of the Quaker City's 66 trolley lines, 22 bus routes and, of course, the subway-elevated system (see below).

Professionally, in his position as Chief Transit Analyst at the then Urban Mass Transit Administration in Washington, he was known as "The Dean" for his prodigious memory and intellect. Over the years, Bob and his many rail friends traveled to virtually every North American city to ride trolley, streetcar, cable car, rapid transit and light rail lines. New lines were ridden as each was added to transit maps.

The Chapter extends its sympathy to his cousins, Charlotte Greenberg and Lewis Lepow. Graveside services were conducted on Sunday, June 28, 2015 at Mount Lebanon Cemetery in Collingdale, Delaware County, PA.



"BOBBY" ABRAMS, 11 YEAR OLD WEST Philadelphia BOY, CAN GIVE THE EXACT STREET BY STREET ROUTE OF ANY TROLLEY, BUS, SUBWAY OR ELEVATED LINE IN THE CITY—

--from *Ripley's Believe it or Not*,

Philadelphia *Record*, June, 1933

## PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER, NRHS Board of Directors Meeting Summer, 2015

Tuesday, August 18, 2015, 7:00 to 8:30 PM

**Special Instructions for This Meeting: Please gather at the World War II Memorial statue on the 29<sup>th</sup> Street side of 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station at 6:45 PM. We will then be escorted to the meeting room. If you plan to attend, kindly call President Larry Eastwood at 215-947-5769 so we will have a list of attendees. Latecomers will not be able to access the meeting room.**

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

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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**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](mailto:ayrestower@comcast.net).

# Summer Storms Blast PA, NJ

## High Winds, Rain Hit Rails, Roads, Air

As the skies darkened late on Tuesday afternoon, June 23, weather forecasters began issuing dire warnings of a powerful wind and rain storm approaching the Philadelphia area. And they were right. The storm struck at the height of the evening rush hour, with predictable results. Around 6 PM near hurricane-force gusts of 72 mph were recorded at Philadelphia International Airport—the fourth strongest in the history of that station. Torrential rains fell on much of the region, producing flash floods in several areas. The fast-moving storm was often violent but of short duration as it passed by.

Destruction throughout the western suburbs and especially in South Jersey was extensive. Users of public transportation suffered many service interruptions, scores of streets and highways were blocked by downed trees or high water and air traffic at PHL was halted. More than half a million electric customers in the nine-county region lost their power—some for as long as five days—as trees took out wires and fell across highways and rail lines in many areas. PECO reported some 222,000 customers without power and Atlantic City Electric was responding to at least 250,000 outages in South Jersey. Lower Merion Township on the Main Line reported 35 streets blocked by downed trees or wires on Tuesday night, and other municipalities experienced similar havoc.

Here is a summary of how the storm affected public transportation, listed by agency:

**SEPTA:** Regional Rail was by far the hardest hit segment of the SEPTA system. For a time on Tuesday afternoon all train service was suspended, but by 8 PM some operations had resumed with delays of anywhere from five minutes to more than an hour. Service on five of the 13 lines remained suspended: Airport, Cynwyd, Fox Chase and Media-Elwyn in their entirety and the outer section of Paoli-Thorndale west of Paoli. There were at least 70 train annulments reported, with only the West Trenton line escaping most of the wrath of nature. On the Airport line 21 trains were annulled, ten on Elwyn, ten on Fox Chase and eight on Paoli-Thorndale. Train #9561 **Great Valley Flyer** and other westbound trains to Thorndale had to be terminated at Malvern. Nearly 300 trains ran late. In most cases the stoppages were caused by trees falling onto the catenary or the tracks.

Airport service was restored early the next morning, Wednesday the 24<sup>th</sup>, and Fox Chase trains were running again by 7:45 AM. Malvern-Thorndale resumed around 9:15 AM after Amtrak forces cleared away trees near Thorndale and restored electrical power. Although Wednesday was sunny and bright, Media-Elwyn service remained shut down all day as SEPTA workers struggled to remove 17 fallen trees, repair damaged signals and restring catenary wire. More than 20 cars were stranded along the line, and were not herded into Media yard until after 7 PM. A total of 59 trains were annulled systemwide on Wednesday, most of them on the Media-Elwyn line. Although service had been restored on the Airport Line Wednesday morning, a broken wire hanger at 90<sup>th</sup> Street caused an unrelated series of delays starting around 1 PM. Single-track operation was in effect that afternoon between the Airport and “60<sup>th</sup> Street South” interlocking. Lengthy delays were common for much of the day

just about everywhere on Regional Rail, as crews worked to repair signals and restore normal operations. Media-Elwyn service finally resumed on Thursday morning after the tracks were cleared, wires replaced and equipment repositioned.

Elsewhere on SEPTA the storm also caused some customer inconvenience. The Norristown High Speed Line was initially suspended because PECO power cables had fallen across the tracks near Gulph Mills, but later on Tuesday evening trains out of 69<sup>th</sup> Street began operating as far as Radnor station. On Wednesday trains ran on 15-minute headways between 69<sup>th</sup> Street and Radnor while repair work continued, but full service to Norristown was not restored until Thursday morning. Many bus routes had to be detoured or cut back due to street flooding, and a section of Chester Transportation Center was shut down due to the collapse of a nearby building. Trolley lines feeding into the subway ran pretty well in spite of the weather, while Route 15 Girard Avenue and suburban Routes 101 and 102 already were being bused because of construction projects.

**AMTRAK:** About 7 PM on Tuesday the 23<sup>rd</sup> Amtrak suspended all service between Philadelphia, Washington and Harrisburg. After checking on the condition of track, wires and bridges, service was restored later that night on the Northeast Corridor although several trains were delayed for as long as three to four hours. Regional train #173, for example, due in Baltimore at 6:02 PM, arrived 4 hours and 41 minutes late, but performance improved steadily as the storm passed and the evening wore on. Keystone service to and from Harrisburg, however, remained suspended, due to a power failure and the fallen trees and wires at Thorndale mentioned above. Beginning with train #649 due to leave 30<sup>th</sup> Street at 4:45 PM all westbound Keystone trains were cancelled. Eastbounds also were annulled after #654 left Harrisburg at 4:30 PM. During the storm 654 lost catenary power around Parkersburg, stranding passengers without air conditioning or water for more than four hours. Reports of their predicament were sent via Twitter, and appeared in newspapers in Philadelphia and New York. The train finally got moving, presumably with diesel power, and arrived at 30<sup>th</sup> Street around 11:20 PM. Regular Keystone service was restored Wednesday morning, with some delays.

**PATCO** suspended service about 7 PM on Tuesday the 23<sup>rd</sup>, as the storm roared into South Jersey. With electric power cut off, PATCO was forced to cancel all service during the Wednesday morning rush, with tickets being honored on NJ Transit buses. Train service was restored early that afternoon, with a special timetable issued providing 20-minute service for the rest of the day.

**NJ TRANSIT** felt the brunt of the storm in South Jersey, as most of the high winds and rain bypassed the northern part of the State. Flooded roadways caused some bus routes to be detoured and River Line light rail trains for a time could not run through the streets of Camden due to high water. But the major impact was on the Atlantic City rail line which had to be shut down for three days due to flooding and downed trees. Buses were substituted between 30<sup>th</sup> Street, Atlantic City and intermediate points. Rail service finally resumed with train #4632, which departed Atlantic City at 4:42 PM on Friday the 26<sup>th</sup>.

**LATER STORMS:** Even before the cleanup could be completed from the June 23 onslaught, another storm disrupted rail service in the region. A big blow on Saturday afternoon, June 27, caused a number of power outages due to fallen trees and wires.

(Continued on Page 8)



## Amtrak Crash Stirs Controversy

### *Investigations, New Rules, Lawsuits Follow*

The tragic derailment of Amtrak train 188 on May 12, in which eight passengers were killed and more than 200 injured, has caused a host of repercussions in Washington and elsewhere. The wreck of the eastbound seven-car train occurred at 9:20 that Tuesday evening when ACS-64 locomotive #601 accelerated to 106 mph as it entered the Frankford Junction curve in Philadelphia, a tight four-degree curve restricted to 50 mph.

Much discussion has ensued in Congress and elsewhere about Amtrak's failure to enforce the speed limit on that curve, and what should be done to improve rail safety in the future. The already active debate over the delayed installation of Positive Train Control (PTC)—which all agree would have prevented the accident—quickly intensified. In the background was the ongoing campaign led by the freight railroads to extend the government-mandated deadline for installing PTC beyond the present date of December 31, 2015. A comprehensive transportation bill introduced in the Senate last month would in fact set a new deadline of December 31, 2018, subject to certain conditions.

While Amtrak has pledged to have all of its railroad in compliance by the end of this year, the freight carriers admit that only about 11,000 of the 60,000 miles of their lines subject to the law will have operational PTC by then. Likewise, with the exception of SEPTA, most rail commuter authorities will not have PTC up and running by the end of 2015. Many reasons are cited for the delays, among them the advanced technology required, the difficulty in acquiring the needed radio spectrum, and the many regulatory hurdles imposed by Federal agencies.

But the Federal Railroad Administration lost no time in ordering Amtrak to cut in automatic train control (ATC) on the two eastbound tracks at the Frankford curve, the same as already in service on the two normally westbound tracks. ATC has been in operation on parts of the Northeast Corridor for several years, enforcing compliance with signal indications. While not as efficient as PTC, which is designed to prevent derailments caused by excessive speed *as well as* avoiding train-to-train collisions, ATC most likely would have slowed train 188 sufficiently to prevent the derailment. Amtrak said that it would implement the FRA's emergency order, while explaining that ATC had not been considered an immediate necessity for eastbound trains at Frankford since the speed limit on track #2 approaching the curve was only 80 mph, whereas the approaching speed for westbound trains was 110 mph. The FRA ordered Amtrak to identify all curves on the Boston-Washington Corridor where there is a drop of more than 20 mph in posted speed from the approaching straightaway, and to file a plan for dealing with those situations.

Acting on a recommendation by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), Amtrak also said that it would begin installing inward-facing video cameras in the cabs of its ACS-64 electric locomotives. These cameras will monitor the engineer and other personnel in the cab. Amtrak locomotives already are equipped with outward-facing cameras, along with advanced systems that monitor the actions of the train operator and the locomotive's performance. ACS-64's now in service will have the new cameras installed by the end of this year and still-to-be-delivered units will have the equipment pre-installed. The NTSB

reported in mid-June that close examination of the cell phone records of the engineer on the ill-fated train revealed that he was not talking or texting on his phone while operating the train.

Amtrak has estimated the damages from the derailment at \$9.2 million, but much more will be paid out in personal injury claims. Some lawsuits already have been filed on behalf of injured passengers. Amtrak admitted liability for the accident and will not contest claims filed for compensatory damages, but will likely deny claims for punitive damages. Under Federal law, there is a cap of \$200 million in total claims resulting from any accident involving Amtrak, although some attorneys and members of Congress may now attempt to have that cap lifted.

As might be expected, Amtrak brass was called to testify before Congress concerning the derailment. On June 2 President Joseph Boardman was grilled on matters such as why automatic train control had not been installed on the Frankford curve (see above), and why previous funding had not been used to expedite the installation of PTC. Boardman assured the lawmakers that PTC (or ACSES in Amtrak terminology) would be in service on the entire Northeast Corridor by the end of this year. The House committee also criticized the NTSB for its slow progress in investigating the wreck (at the time of the hearing it was not yet known whether the engineer of 188 had been talking on his cell phone while on duty). The House later rejected a proposal to give Amtrak additional funding for infrastructure safety improvements, but the aftershocks from this accident undoubtedly will continue for some time to come.

NOTE: The report of the accident which appeared in the June issue of *Cinders* was incorrect in stating that locomotive #601 came to rest on its side. In fact, it remained upright even after careening along the ground for more than 300 feet from the point of derailment.

## 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.

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

## West Jersey Chapter, NRHS Releases Pavonia Yard Book

West Jersey Chapter has released copies of its newest publication, *Pavonia Yard & Shops: Southern New Jersey's Main Freight Yard, 1883-2013*. Authored by Christopher J. Young, Jr. and William J. Coxey, the 62-page soft-cover book is illustrated and contains much information on Pavonia, its history and operations. The book costs \$20.00 per copy (plus \$4.50 shipping and handling, if ordered by mail). Members desiring a copy may pick one up at a forthcoming West Jersey meeting, or by mail from: West Jersey Chapter, NRHS, 147 Atsion Road, Medford, NJ 08055-1360. with checks payable to West Jersey Chapter, NRHS.

# PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS



FRANK G. TATNALL, JR.

SEPTA  
TRANSIT



Philadelphia is preparing for perhaps the greatest crush of humanity ever to descend on the city, when Pope Francis pays a visit on the weekend of September 26-27. An army of planners is working feverishly to get ready for this unprecedented challenge, and among their top priorities are transportation and security. With private automobiles and most surface vehicles to be prohibited within the center city perimeter (still to be announced), SEPTA's rail lines will play a key role in handling many of the expected 1.5 million visitors. Ground Zero will be the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, where the Pope will attend the Festival of Families on Saturday and celebrate Mass on Sunday. He also will speak at Independence Hall on Saturday and make several other local visits. The Secret Service has overall authority for managing this mega-event, the complexity of which is difficult to summarize in a few paragraphs. SEPTA has its own task force charged with finding ways to handle hundreds of thousands of people each day.

The Regional Rail system is gearing up to carry some 175,000 passengers into and out of the City on both Saturday and Sunday, triple the normal weekday load. This will require a unique plan under which only 18 outlying rail stations will be served—just one to three designated stations on 11 different lines. There will be no service on Cynwyd or Chestnut Hill East. Passengers on each line will be restricted to a single station in center city. Jefferson Station: Airport, Fox Chase, Lansdale, Norristown, Warminster and West Trenton lines; 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station: Chestnut Hill West, Paoli, Trenton and Wilmington lines; University City: Airport and Media lines. Suburban Station will be closed. Mayor Nutter has warned the public to be prepared to walk long distances in town. Special maps have been issued showing the location of each of the 31 stops on the Regional Rail and rail transit lines where passengers may board. Fare collection on Regional Rail will be made only on the inbound trips.

All employee vacations are cancelled during the weekend to insure full staffing, and some headquarters personnel will be billeted in the 1234 Market Street building. Deputy General Manager Jeffrey Knieppel was quoted as saying that SEPTA had learned a lesson from the gridlock that almost shut down Regional Rail during the Phillies' World Series parade in 2008, and this time the agency is determined to manage the crowds as efficiently as possible. While special schedules are in place for

Saturday and Sunday, attention is being given to Friday and Monday as well due to the need to reposition equipment and crews in order to handle the regular weekday passenger loads. While the Catholic Church's World Meeting of Families also will bring 15,000 attendees to the Pennsylvania Convention Center Tuesday through Friday, regular SEPTA service will be operated.

Special one-day "Pope Passes" for the September weekend will be sold via the SEPTA website at \$10 per person (\$5 for seniors), with no one permitted to board the trains without one. But there was such a stampede to purchase the 175,000 available passes for each day—54,000 requests in the first minute after the site was launched at 9 AM on Monday, July 19—that the website crashed and sales were halted. SEPTA had selected a Virginia-based IT firm to set up the site, but the consultants failed to anticipate the huge demand. As this is written, it appears that sales will resume during the week of July 27, perhaps using another vendor. Passes must be purchased online from specific stations and within two specific timeframes—5:30-8:30 AM or 8:30 AM-12 noon. Outbound service will operate from 5:30 PM to 1 AM.

The rest of the SEPTA system also is battening down for a monster weekend. Passengers on the Market-Frankford Line will have the choice of four stations outside of center city, Broad Street riders three and two on the Norristown High Speed Line. Suburban trolley lines will have just four selected stops and City Transit lines 11, 13, 34 and 36 are advertised to accept passengers only at their origin terminals and at the 40<sup>th</sup> Street portal. Route 15 Girard Avenue will operate with buses. SEPTA will sell three-day transit passes for \$10, good on the subway-elevated lines and other routes. A total of 31 bus routes will run on weekday schedules over the weekend, with 24 others detoured and 13 suspended. At this writing NJ TRANSIT had not announced its plans for the papal weekend, but Mayor Nutter's office said that regular service on the Atlantic City and River Lines will not operate, but special tickets will be offered for sale. PATCO is selling one-day papal passes for \$5, or \$10 for a two-day pass, or passengers may use their Freedom cards. Trains will run every 16 minutes, loading passengers only at the Lindenwold, Woodcrest, Ferry Avenue and Broadway stations.

AMTRAK also is making preparations, leasing NJT and MARC commuter equipment to operate as extra trains out of New York and Washington for the papal event. NJT is supplying ten-car multi-level trains as well as Atlantic City sets. Other special equipment, perhaps Superliners, will be brought in to the 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station area. Look for a further report on this huge event in the September issue of *Cinders*.

(Continued on Page 6)

## PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

(Continued from Page 5)

Work on the new West Terminal at 69<sup>th</sup> Street is progressing well, and rail service will be restored on Routes 101 and 102 effective September 7..... SEPTA's third annual "Trolley Tunnel Blitz" is scheduled from late on Friday, July 31, through Sunday, August 16. The service outage in the center city tunnel will allow for further maintenance and construction work, including more than a mile of new track between 22<sup>nd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Streets. All five trolley routes are diverted to the 40<sup>th</sup> & Market subway station .....Beginning in November, Route 23 between Chestnut Hill and South Philadelphia will be split into two routes (see April *Cinders*). Route 23 buses will turn back at 12<sup>th</sup> & Chestnut Streets and a new Route 45 will be created to operate the southern segment between 12<sup>th</sup> & Noble and Broad & Oregon. Once America's longest urban trolley line, Route 23 has been notorious for its service delays even after the conversion to bus ..... "Our Daily Grind" was the title of an article in the July 12 issue of the *Inquirer*, which stated that the Philadelphia area has one of the nation's worst commuting problems. The article said that it's often inconvenient to use public transit between widely-scattered employment and residential areas, and the highway system is inadequate.

## SEPTA REGIONAL RAIL



With the timetable reissue on September 6, SEPTA may have its track separation project on the West Trenton line completed and in service (see June *Cinders*). Construction of a new electrified track on the north side of the ex-Reading right-of-way will give SEPTA two tracks and CSX a single track for freight service between West Trenton and Woodbourne..... SEPTA hopes to have all Regional Rail lines operating under Positive Train Control (PTC) by late November, well ahead of the December 31 deadline. SEPTA and AMTRAK are among the few railroads in the country that seem ready to meet the government imposed deadline. SEPTA is rotating groups of ten MU cars out of service to equip them for PTC, the total project costing the agency more than \$300 million. Early last month, several elected officials were taken for a test run at SEPTA's Frazer yard to demonstrate how PTC works.

The \$30-million project to modernize Wayne Junction station is nearly complete, and an official dedication should be coming up soon..... Under a contract provision with SEPTA, 22 of the older (1987) Bombardier push-pull cars will be overhauled at Hyundai-Rotem's South Philadelphia shop. As of late July two cars had been completed and six more were in the shop.....Two of the 1970-vintage Comet cab cars, #2460 and 2461, are being converted for service on SEPTA's fall leaf cleaning trains. The ex-NJ TRANSIT cars are renumbered 605 and 606, and will replace the pair of demotored EMD and Alco F-units #615 and 622.....Fox TV interviewed SEPTA Conductor Rich Mumma after his last run on May 28, as he retired with 42 years of service.

SEPTA will order 13 new electric locomotives from Siemens at a cost of \$154 million, with an option for five more, under the capital budget approved by the board in late May. The first deliveries are expected in February 2018. And there are plans for acquiring 45 new multi-level passenger cars costing around \$192 million. These cars will not replace any existing equipment so Frazer shop will be expanded to handle the additional work ..... Three trespassers were killed by SEPTA trains in recent weeks. On Sunday, June 28, train 527 out of Doylestown struck a female trespasser near Mount Pleasant Avenue in Ambler. Many train delays ensued. Then, early on Tuesday, July 14, another woman stepped in front of train #503 at Main Street in North Wales. Again, many trains were delayed. (Two days later, after a tree fell and disrupted catenary power near Chalfont on the Doylestown Line, SEPTA issued a public apology to Lansdale-Doylestown riders for the delay-filled week.) Finally, a man was struck and killed by Elwyn train #9352 near Angora station around noon on Friday, July 17. Several trains had to be annulled until the line was reopened at 3 PM. A power loss at the Regional Rail control center around 1 PM on Thursday, July 23, caused a host of train delays systemwide that afternoon.



## AMTRAK

AMTRAK made good on its promise to donate a retired AEM-7DC electric locomotive to the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, when #915 arrived at Strasburg on June 11. It is one of the 54 original DC-powered units but was not among the 29 modified with AC traction power. Several AEM-7AC's remain in service pending completion of Amtrak's order for 70 new ACS-64 "Sprinter" locomotives.....The AMTRAK Exhibit Train will be at 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station on Saturday, September 19, as part of this year's Amtrak Train Days program. It is hoped that both locomotives honoring veterans, P42 #42 and ACS-64 #642, will be there too.

Starting October 1 SEPTA, NJT and other transit agencies will pay higher trackage fees on the Northeast Corridor. In a 2008 law Congress ordered AMTRAK and the commuter operators to devise a new formula for sharing the cost of maintenance on the NEC. The plan, approved by a joint committee set up for that purpose, will redistribute the \$425-million annual cost among the users. For SEPTA that will mean that its payments to Amtrak will increase from \$38 million this year to \$52 million next year.....Keystone train #653 struck and killed a trespasser on the Northeast Corridor near New Brunswick, NJ, on the afternoon of Wednesday, July 1. This caused delays to AMTRAK and NJT trains and even SEPTA's Trenton service.

(Continued on Page 7)



## Vermont Rails 2015 Successful; Notes from NRHS Meetings

*Below are notes from the 2015 NRHS Convention and the combined NRHS Board of Directors and Advisory Council Meetings held during the 2015 Rutland Convention. This report has been compiled by R. L. Eastwood, Jr., from notes taken by National Representative Peter M. Senin, Jr., and Membership Chair Sheila A. Dorr, who attended the meetings. The meetings were held on Wednesday, June 17, 2015.*

The NRHS Vermont Rails 2015 Convention, held at Rutland, VT from June 14 through June 21, 2015. There were some 500 people registered for the Convention, which was headquartered at the Holiday Inn in Rutland. Quite a number of Philadelphia Chapter members were noted on trips on different days throughout the week, and virtually everyone had positive comments about the rail excursion operations and seminars.

The Convention was managed nationally by Walter E. Zullig, Jr., of Ossining, New York. He worked with NRHS rare mileage guru Bart Jennings to produce a convention which was worth of attending. Jennings' wife, Sarah, put together a really outstanding convention guide, with much detail regarding the trips and the routes to be covered.

While convention trips will certainly be covered extensively in the railfan media circles, there were some interesting and unique trips and events. For instance, the trip on the Saratoga & North Creek Railroad on Monday, June 15 was well run, and the means to get from Rutland to Saratoga Springs did not include the usual chartered buses found at many conventions. No, NRHS used Amtrak's **Ethan Allen** from Rutland to Saratoga Springs. According to Amtrak, their train's passenger count was swelled by some 225 passengers on that day. The only catch was that the Amtrak return trip was about an hour late, so the conventioners had to hand out at the Saratoga Spring station and got back to Rutland a bit later than expected.

The Vermont Rail System ran a whole week's worth of virtually flawless trips, which provided members a rare opportunity to ride around the Green Mountain State on the train. The Vermont Rail System has an excellent reputation for the trips it runs in addition to its rather robust freight business, and, indeed, the former Rutland Railroad system is a valuable asset today.

There were various NRHS business meetings held on Wednesday, June 17, and we will go into detail on the meetings and items discussed in our September issue, when more space is available.

However, NRHS is getting back on a reasonably stable financial footing, but much remains to be done to recover from the Fernley & Fernley disaster. Top priority is being given to basically reconstructing the membership database, and this work is being accomplished by volunteers, and that important fact needs to be understood. Membership cards for 2015 have been mailed to paid-up members, and there were three Philadelphia members who did not receive cards and they are being handled.

The successful NRHS Grants Program saw some \$140,000 in requests from 43 parties. Funding did permit the awarding of \$13,000 in grants to worth requesters.

## PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS

(Continued from Page 6)

U.S. DOT said last month that it had begun an investigation into possible price gouging by five airlines in the wake of the AMTRAK derailment in Philadelphia on May 12 (see June Cinders). Train service on a key segment of the Northeast Corridor was suspended for five days, forcing passengers to scramble for alternate transportation..... Persistent electrical problems in the Hudson River tunnels caused long delays during the week of July 20 for both NJT and AMTRAK trains. Catenary outages shut down one track or the other in the morning or afternoon rush hours on four successive days. Passengers lashed out via social media and the newspapers and TV reported the story. The executive director of NJT, Veronique Hakim, lodged a strong protest with Amtrak, saying that the disruptions had "wreaked havoc" with NJT commuters even though her agency "pays Amtrak approximately \$100 million annually towards keeping the Northeast Corridor running." Some of the tunnel problems are the result of flooding from Superstorm Sandy in 2012, which Amtrak says may require the future closure of one tunnel at a time for major repairs.

### Some Interesting Tidbits.....

From the July-August, 2015 issue of the *Spike and Tie*, newsletter of the Blackhawk Chapter, NRHS in Illinois, we pick up some interesting items from the past:

40 Years Ago: On August 5, 1975 the first Amfleet cars entered service on Amtrak.

70 Years Ago: On July 23, 1945, the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy's first dome coach, the **Silver Dome**, made its first revenue trip on the **Twin Cities Zephyr** between Chicago and Minneapolis-St. Paul.

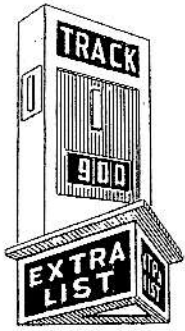
80 Years Ago: On August 29, 1935, the Railroad Retirement Board was established in the United States to administer pension benefits for railroad employees.

We thought you should know these facts.

The RailCamp program is back on track, and both programs were filled for 2015. Funding for RailCamp is needed to support and sustain this program, now in its 18<sup>th</sup> year.

As for Membership Services, NRHS has been producing **NRHS News** every other month, but at present it can only be distributed by electronic mail. To that end, Philadelphia Chapter is reviewing its records and providing E-mail addressed to NRHS as a means to make our members more connected, so they may be aware of National events. That will be taking place during the month of August.

Another subject with much discussion was that of "affiliate membership", where people may belong to a chapter without belonging to NRHS, an issue of contention and conflict with the NRHS By-Laws. This promises to generate considerable discussion going forward.



**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](http://www.Readingrailroad.org).

**Saturday, August 8, 2015:** 2015 Philadelphia Area Eastern Mini-Con, sponsored by Reading Company Technical & Historical Society and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Historical Society, at St. John's of Ivyland United Methodist Church, 820 Almshouse Road, Ivyland, PA, 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Admission: \$20.00 for members of either rail historical society, \$25.00 for non members. Registration limited to 75 people, which includes morning coffee and donuts and lunch. See Page 5 of May, 2015 *Cinders* for complete schedule of presenters. Complete registration form from Editor Larry Eastwood at 215-947-5769 or by E-mail to [ayrestower@comcast.net](mailto:ayrestower@comcast.net)

**Sunday, August 16:** 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Train Meet, sponsored by Central Pennsylvania Chapter, NRIIS, 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM, at Warrior Run Fire Department Social Hall, Second Street, Allenwood, PA (convenient to US Route 15). Model trains, model train supplies and railroadiana for sale. Food available at reasonable prices. Admission: \$3.00 per person, children under 12 free. Tables: \$15.00 each. For complete information, telephone Dave Hollenbach at 570-524-4703 – please, no calls after 9:00 PM.

**Friday, August 21:** Annual Bill Wagner Summer Dinner at Café La Fontana, 58 S. York Road (just above Byberry Road), Hatboro, PA. Complete details on Page 1 of this issue.

**Saturday, August 22:** Three Car, Three Generation Celebration at Rockhill Trolley Museum, Rockhill Furnace, PA. Museum will operate three cars from three generations on this date: Johnstown Traction Company 1922-vintage car #311, Philadelphia Transportation Company 1947-vintage PCC #2743 and 1982-vintage San Diego LRV #1019. Admission: \$8.00. For hours and additional details, visit website: [www.rockhilltrolley.org](http://www.rockhilltrolley.org).

**Saturday-Monday, September 5-7:** Steamtown Railfest 2015 at Steamtown National Historic Site, Scranton, PA. All of the normal exhibit features, and this year Nickel Plate Berkshire #765 will be visiting, with numerous excursion opportunities anticipated, as follows: Saturday, 9/05, NKP 765 excursion from Scranton to Delaware Water Gap and Portland, PA, plus diesel-powered trip to Moscow, PA behind DL&W-painted EMD F3's; Sunday, 9/06, DL&W-painted F3's will head excursion to Moscow, PA; NKP 765 on display at Steamtown; Monday, 9/07, NKP 765 will head steam excursion from Scranton to Delaware Water Gap and Portland, PA. Latest trip updates from [www.nps.gov/stea](http://www.nps.gov/stea). Diesel excursion tickets should be reserved through Steamtown at 1-570-340-5204. Major credit cards accepted. NKP 765 excursion tickets sold **online only** through the Fort Wayne Railway Historical Society, [www.fortwaynerailroad.org](http://www.fortwaynerailroad.org).

## Summer Storms (Continued from Page 3)

Catenary and signal power was knocked out on the entire Media-Elwyn line around 5 PM and was not fully restored until almost 7 the next morning. Eight trains were annulled. At 5:45 PM trees in the catenary over both tracks at Frazer forced Amtrak to suspend all service west of Paoli, until both wires could be re-energized around 11 PM. SEPTA's Thorndale trains and Amtrak's Harrisburg service suffered a number of delays.

Then yet another storm—accompanied by tornado warnings and so-called “macrobursts” of wind and rain—arrived late on Tuesday the 30<sup>th</sup>, just a week after the first round of heavy weather. On Wednesday morning, July 1, Amtrak announced that its Keystone service to and from Harrisburg was being suspended because of a loss in signal power over the entire line. By 4:45 AM that problem had been corrected but soon after that SEPTA's first eastbound train, push-pull #1502 out of Malvern running cab car first, struck a fallen tree just east of Strafford station, pulling down wires. This forced another shutdown of Paoli-Thorndale and Keystone services. Meanwhile, Northeast Corridor operations between Philadelphia and Wilmington, including SEPTA's Wilmington-Newark and Airport lines, suffered delays until normal service was resumed about 8:30 AM. Three of four tracks on the Harrisburg line were restored to service by 10:30 AM, but not before the first three Amtrak trains in each direction that morning had to be annulled and SEPTA had scratched 35 Paoli-Thorndale trains. The first westbound to Thorndale, #525, departed 30<sup>th</sup> Street at 11:25 AM but delays persisted for much of the day. Diesel #61 was dispatched from Wayne Junction to rescue 1502's disabled equipment.

A week later, a line of squalls moved through eastern Pennsylvania in the early evening of Thursday, July 9, bringing thunderstorms and heavy rains. A small tornado with 105-mph wind gusts touched down in Hamburg, destroying the roof and other parts of an elementary school, but no one was injured. In the Philadelphia area the storm hit around 8 PM, causing flooding on some highways and rail lines. City trolley routes were delayed and NJT's River Line trains again had to terminate at the Walter Rand Transportation Center in Camden due to flooding in the streets. More than 20 SEPTA Regional Rail trains suffered delays—a few for more than an hour—after lightning knocked out the signal system at “Carmel” interlocking in Glenside about 8 PM+. Signals were restored by 1:40 AM. There also was some flooding in Suburban Station but not enough to interfere with train operations. Amtrak reported a power outage near Elizabethtown, causing train #656 out of Harrisburg to be held for more than two hours, and several other trains in both directions were delayed up to an hour.

Given the intense storms and tornadoes that have ravaged large areas of the U.S. during the first half of 2015, meteorologists are predicting an active weather season for this summer—even though the number of hurricanes making landfall is expected to be fewer than normal. *Cinders* will continue to report on developments affecting this region.

**Friday-Sunday, September 11-13:** Anthracite Railroads Historical Society 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Convention, to be headquartered at Hilton Scranton & Conference Center, 100 Adams Avenue, Scranton, PA 18503. Events include night photo session, seminars, banquet (Rob McGonigal of *Classic Trains* Magazine is speaker) and Nicholson Bridge 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Excursion with ARHS F3 units. For complete information, send stamped, self-addressed envelope to: ARIIS, Attn: 2015 Convention, P. O. Box 519, Lansdale, PA 19446-0519.