



CINDERS

APRIL 2016



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Volume 77

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

Meeting Cancellation Notice

In the event of an extreme weather or transportation emergency 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 15, 2016

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 (*In the event meeting is relocated to another room, notice will be posted beside the grand staircase inside entrance to Main Hall*)). In addition to being easily accessible to all public transportation, there is generally plenty of parking on Chestnut Street right in front of Main Hall – pay at the kiosks.

MEETING START TIME: 7:00 PM

At our Friday, April 15 meeting, we anticipate having SEPTA General Manager Jeffrey D. Knuettel with us. Knuettel, who has an engineering background, joined SEPTA in 1988 as an entry level Structural Engineer, and was promoted to the position of Chief Engineer at the age of 36, and has risen steadily within the SEPTA organization.

Under his direction, the SEPTA team has completed 32 transit infrastructure improvements as part of a \$191 million Stimulus program. Jeff is a graduate of the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in New York.

On Friday, May 20, Amtrak Vice President-Operations Chris Jagodzinski, who is expected to talk about **ATC and PTC on the NEC**. We have lined up some excellent programs and personalities this Spring – please come out and bring a friend.

Drexel University has informed us that they will be unable to accommodate our June 10 meeting because of graduation activities. We hope to have an alternate activity for June.

SEPTA Picks Preferred Route For King of Prussia Spur

After years of study and discussion, SEPTA on February 26 announced that it has decided where to build the proposed extension of the Norristown High Speed Line to King of Prussia. This “preferred route” is one of the many routings previously suggested by a group of consultants which has been working for years on the project.

Construction costs are estimated at \$1.1 billion. No extra equipment should be needed since the existing NHSL fleet of 26 cars is considered large enough to handle the additional traffic to KOP. If built, the extension could represent the largest single capital project in SEPTA’s 50-year history. It is hoped that a “New Starts” grant from the Federal Transit Administration will pay half of the cost, but where the rest of the funding might come from is uncertain.

The selected route is the so-called “PECO-Turnpike-First Avenue” alternative. It would diverge from the existing NHSL at a point just north of the Pennsylvania Turnpike overpass, midway between the Hughes Park and DeKalb Street stations, then be carried on an elevated structure following Saulin Blvd. to Henderson Road where a station is to be constructed. Continuing west along a PECO right-of-way to the Turnpike, the line would follow the highway, cross over it near the King of Prussia Mall, then skirt the north side of the mall. It would make two stops in the mall area, cross the Turnpike again, turn west to follow First Avenue in the Valley Forge Business Park and end near the Valley Forge Casino Resort along North Gulph Road.

There is opposition to the preferred route among some residents, although nothing like the uproar against another route previously considered along highway 202 from Bridgeport to KOP. But there also is strong support in the community for the NHSL extension, which is projected to create many jobs and raise real estate values in the area. Proponents contend the new line is expected to carry up to 8,500 passengers a day between Philadelphia and KOP, one of the largest suburban business and commercial centers in the country.

Three open meetings were held in March to present the detailed plans to the public, and to receive comments on them. As expected, there was some opposition expressed to the preferred route. Since the project may not be finished until 2022, it will be interesting to watch its progress over the next several years.

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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2016 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES: \$18.00 per person, which covers only Philadelphia Chapter dues. (NRHS National membership dues for 2016 are \$50.00 per member, unchanged from 2015). NRHS chapters billed their members separately for 2016 Chapter dues, which was done in November, 2015. The donation requests for Philadelphia Railfriends were 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 be sure to include name, valid mailing address, telephone number and E-mail address, as applicable. Remittance should be made payable to **Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS**.

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 ANY 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.

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. The incidence of damage has been greatly reduced through the use of envelopes for mailing each issue, although there is an additional cost involved.

Notice of Annual Meeting & Election

Notice is hereby given of election of Chapter officers for the year 2016-2017, to be held at the Annual Meeting of Philadelphia Chapter, National Railway Historical Society on Friday evening, April 15, 2016, 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 15 meeting, or by placing your name in nomination by writing, before April 1, 2016 to: Daniel J. Murray, Chairman, Nominating Committee, Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS, 745 Sunflower Avenue, Langhorne, PA 19047-3747.

PHILIP R. MUELLER

March 3, 2016

The Officers of Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS, with deep sadness, inform our members and friends of the passing of longtime member and veteran railroader Philip R. Mueller, of Doylestown, PA, on Wednesday, March 2, 2016 at the age of 97 years. Phil joined Philadelphia Chapter in 1985, and spent 30 years with our organization. In addition, he was a member of the Bucks County Chamber of Commerce.

Mueller was born in Detroit, Michigan on July 16, 1918 and graduated from the University of Michigan in June, 1941 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Transportation Engineering. He followed that up with courses at varying times between 1947 and 1959 from McCoy College (part of Johns Hopkins) and Loyola College in Baltimore; Northwestern University and Illinois Institute of Technology in that State. From October, 1943 to February, 1946, he served in the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers in the Western Pacific Theatre.

He started in railroading in the Summer of 1939 working on a track gang for the Chicago & North Western; the next Summer he was with the New York Central on a signal construction gang. Following his Army duty, in April, 1946, Phil worked as an Assistant Engineer for the Milwaukee Road in Chicago, lasting until December, 1947. In January, 1948, he moved to Baltimore, working for the Baltimore & Ohio through June, 1961, first as a Special Engineer and then as a Methods Research Engineer.

In June, 1961, Mueller moved to Philadelphia and began work as a Transit Engineer in the City of Philadelphia Department of Public Property. In December, 1963, he joined the Reading Company where he served as Manager, Industrial Engineering and later Assistant to the Vice President, Operations & Maintenance, through December, 1969. He ended his career with Amtrak, as Assistant Director, Cost Control for the Northeast Corridor.

Phil resided in Doylestown on Clemens Road and later at the Wesley Enhanced Living Heritage Towers on Veterans Lane, in the Bucks County seat. He and his wife, Ellen, who predeceased him, had four children: sons Paul and Lawrence, and daughters Ann Hughes and Mary Clare, four grandchildren and two great-grandsons.

A Funeral Mass was celebrated on Monday, March 7 at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Doylestown, celebrated by the Reverend Monsignor Charles H. Hagen and Deacon George Corwell. Interment was at St. John Neumann Cemetery in Chalfont. Chapter President Larry Eastwood and Treasurer Rich Copeland represented the Chapter at the services.

Philadelphia Chapter extends its condolences to the Mueller family and thanks them for sharing Phil and his vast rail transportation knowledge and experience with us.

—R. L. Eastwood, Jr.

PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER, NRHS Board of Directors Meeting Spring, 2016

**Passenger Services Conference Room
Amtrak 30th Street Station
(If meeting is at alternate location, note
will be posted on Conference Room door)**

**Tuesday, May 10, 2016
7:00 PM to 8:30 PM**

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

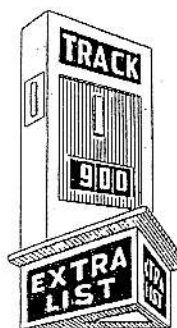
Friends of Philadelphia Trolleys to Restore Peter Witt Car #8042

Friends of Philadelphia Trolleys, the well-known local organization whose thrust is to operate light rail excursions and, in so doing, raise funds for the restoration of former Philadelphia trolleys, has a new project on its plate – the restoration to operating condition of former Philadelphia Transportation Company Peter Witt streetcar #8042, which currently resides in display status at the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum in Washington, Pennsylvania.

There were 535 Peter Witts on PTC, #8500-8534. In March, 1958, three cars were sold: #8530 to a private family in central Pennsylvania, where it remains today, and #8042 and #8534, which were sold to Bob Borzell and Earl Johnston, who were connected with the fledgling trolley museum in Tansboro, NJ. The 8042 ran under its own power at Tansboro in June, 1970, with the late Ed Torpey at the controls. Sadly, the museum at Tansboro never really took off, and its collection was moved to Buckingham, PA under the name of Buckingham Valley Trolley Association. In the early 1980's, the collection moved again, this time to Penn's Landing in Philadelphia. The 8042 went to Scranton, PA, as part of today's Electric City Trolley Museum.

The 8534, meanwhile spent some time at SEPTA, operating on excursions before also travelling to Scranton. In 2005, the Electric City group offered #8042 to the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum, whose tracks are broad gauge. (Thanks to Member Ed Springer and friends for much of the above information.) The 8534 now resides non-operational in Scranton.

FPT is seeking donations to restore #8042 to operating condition at the museum in Washington, PA. Donations should be forwarded to: Friends of Philadelphia Trolleys, Inc., P. O. Box 33397, Philadelphia, PA 19142. The 8042 is inside, and Philadelphia Chapter members are urged to support this very worthwhile effort.



Sunday, April 10, 2016:

George School, in Bucks County, will celebrate the heritage of the Philadelphia, Newtown & New York Railroad with dedication of two historical markers at the site of the Reading George School station. The event begins at 1:15 PM. The markers are the idea of Walter Hoffmann, of the Class of 1984 from George School. Hoffmann is also President of the Anthracite Railroads Historical Society; the markers are courtesy of ARHS. Chapter President Larry Eastwood is expected to make historical remarks on the Newtown Line at the event.

Friday, April 15: Regular monthly meeting of Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS, 121 Randell Hall, Drexel University, 3141 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA, 7:00 PM. Guest speaker scheduled to be SEPTA General Manager Jeffrey D. Kneuppel (rescheduled from January 15); details incomplete at presstime.

Saturday, April 16: Annual Banquet of Lehigh Valley Chapter, NRHS, at the Allentown & Auburn Railroad station, Kutztown, PA. Includes train ride over the Allentown & Auburn Railroad, beginning at 12 Noon, plus tour of the Tipton Locomotive Shop and photo runbys. Meal begins at 3:30 PM in the historic Kutztown station, and will be a complete Pennsylvania Dutch-style buffet meal. Speaker: Rich Frey, *Mainlines and Branchlines of the Reading Railroad*. Complete event price: \$40 per person. Make checks payable to Lehigh Valley Chapter, NRHS, and mail to: James Danner, 840 Point Phillip Road, Bath, PA 18014-9618. Additional information from 610-704-7738.

Saturday, April 16: "Rails and Ales" event at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, Route 741, Strasburg, PA, 7:00 PM to 10:00 PM, for benefit of the Friends of the Railroad Museum. See article on Page 7 of January *Cinders*.

Monday, April 25: Regular monthly meeting of West Jersey Chapter, NRHS, Haddon Heights Borough Hall, 625 Station Avenue, Haddon Heights, NJ, 7:30 PM. Program details unknown.

Saturday, May 14: "Down by the Station Day at Haddon Heights". West Jersey Chapter, NRHS will present a show featuring the photographs of West Jersey Chapter Robert L. Long at the Haddon Heights Borough Hall, 625 Station Avenue, Haddon Heights, NJ. Hours will be included in May *Cinders*.

Friday, May 20: Regular monthly meeting of Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS, 121 Randell Hall, Drexel University, 3141 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA, 7:00 PM. Amtrak VP Operations Chris Jagodzinski is expected to present program *ATC and PTC on the NEC*. Complete details in our May issue.

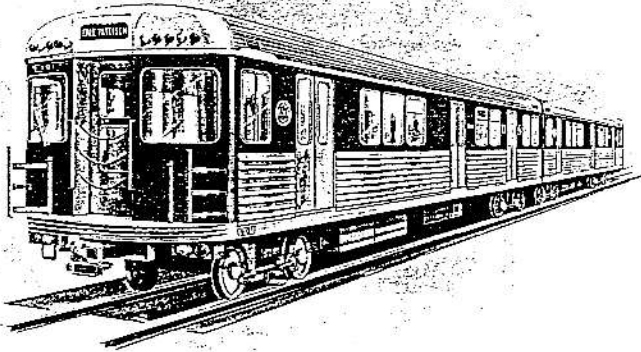
Sunday, June 19: Friends of Philadelphia Trolleys will sponsor Father's Day Charter covering SEPTA Subway-Surface Lines using a Kawasaki LRV. Trip departs from Elmwood Depot, 7311 Elmwood Avenue in Southwest Philadelphia, and lasts from 11 AM to 3 PM. Fare: \$45 per person. To reserve a seat, send check or money order, payable to FPT, Inc., to Harry Donahue, 103 Mulberry Court, Morgantown, PA 15433-8843. All proceeds will go toward restoration of former PTC Peter Witt car #8042 at the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum.

PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS



FRANK G. TATNALL, JR.

SEPTA TRANSIT

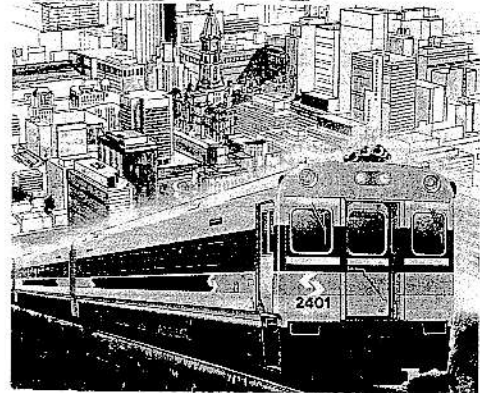


SEPTA's staff already is thinking about the best way to handle the crowds of visitors expected to ride the Broad Street subway during the Democratic National Convention in late July. Many of the delegates and other attendees will be staying at center city hotels and commuting to and from the convention site at the Wells Fargo Center in South Philadelphia.....We should be hearing something soon about the official start of the new SEPTA Key fare collection system on the Market-Frankford, Broad Street and other transit lines. Key has been in the testing phase for some time now and much new equipment has been installed.....Our report in the February *Cinders* that two-car trains would be discontinued on the Norristown High Speed Line turned out to be premature. The plan was suddenly withdrawn and schedules remain unchanged for now.

Public hearings on SEPTA's Fiscal Year 2017 operating budget are scheduled for the week of April 25. Hearings will held in all five county seats, with the Philadelphia sessions set for Tuesday the 26th at SEPTA headquarters, 1234 Market Street, starting at 11 AM and 5 PM. Hearings for the FY 2017 capital budget are scheduled for Monday, May 2, at 11:30 AM and 5 PM, also in the SEPTA building.....U.S. DOT is soliciting applications for new transportation projects, with funds provided in the recently-passed Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The new grant program is entitled Fostering Advancements in Shipping & Transportation for the Long-term Achievement of National Efficiencies. Obviously, the program will be known as "FAST LANE" (*Trains*).

SEPTA may benefit from a possible partnership with ride-sharing services such as Uber and Lyft to find ways in which these services can help riders access public transit (see December *Cinders*). The *Inquirer* reported last month that SEPTA officials were preparing to meet with one of those organizations to discuss such cooperation.....The busy NHSL station at Radnor is getting a major overhaul, with construction expected to last another couple of months.

SEPTA REGIONAL RAIL



For three weeks last month SEPTA ran test trains with a new ACS-64 electric locomotive borrowed from AMTRAK. Unit #664 moved under its own power from 30th Street Station to Wayne Electric shop on Monday, February 29. It then operated a series of non-revenue trains using a SEPTA push-pull consist, mostly on the north side of the system. Several trips were run on the West Trenton line as well as to Warminster, Doylestown, Norristown and Chestnut Hill East. A few trips also were operated on the other side of the system to Thorndale, Media and Trenton. The locomotive was to be returned to Amtrak on March 23. SEPTA currently has 13 similar units on order from Siemens, which reportedly will be numbered 901-913. (Some of those numbers once belonged to the Reading FP7's!)

At presstime, SEPTA had not released information on the status of its Positive Train Control (PTC) system, which was partially activated in March. It is known that the initial tests on the Warminster Line were not successful. For the time being SEPTA is allowed to operate trains on AMTRAK with or without active PTC..... SEPTA has sued the Borough of Tullytown, asking a Federal judge to issue a restraining order against the town for imposing "exorbitant" fees and "excessive" regulations which are delaying the \$36-million rebuilding project at Levittown station on the Trenton line (see January *Cinders*). Already, SEPTA said that it has been charged more than \$200,000 in local fees.

There will be a general schedule change on Regional Rail effective April 10, which will see many trains retimed. One major change will be the pairing of West Trenton and Malvern trains on weekends.....A Morrisville police officer was injured on Tuesday, March 8, when he climbed atop SEPTA train #551 at Doylestown station to retrieve a package of suspected heroin tossed on the roof by a male passenger. The officer suffered burns when he came in contact with a catenary wire, while the suspect was immediately taken into custody. Several other

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trains were delayed due to the need to de-energize the catenary, one train being turned back at DelVal University station.

After the terrible storm in January, SEPTA and its riders enjoyed generally good weather during most of February and the first half of March. But in spite of that, there was an unusually high number of service delays and disruptions on Regional Rail—many of them caused by problems on AMTRAK. Here is a rundown on some of the major incidents:

At 5:30 AM on Monday, February 29, inbound train #501 struck something in the catenary near Oreland station, taking down the wire and knocking out power on track #1. A long list of train delays were posted due to the single-track operation through the area, until power was restored on #1 around 12:30 PM. The next day several trains were delayed when the new PTC system on the Warminster Line crashed around 9 PM. The cutover was fixed and normal operations on the Main Line and Warminster Line resumed within an hour.

Signal and power interruptions on AMTRAK caused a host of delays to SEPTA and Amtrak trains on Thursday, March 10. Early that morning signal power failed on the Northeast Corridor from 30th Street to Holmesburg, delaying many Trenton and Chestnut Hill West trains until power was restored about 35 minutes later. That same day at 4:25 PM a catenary power outage at Morrisville resulted in several delays and one SEPTA annulment. An hour later inbound Paoli-Thorndale train #582 got its pantographs caught in the wire at Frazer, and about the same time westbound AMTRAK train #649 became disabled at Ardmore with the overhead wires down. Service had to be suspended on all four tracks at 5:33 PM, putting this busy commuter line out of service for almost 12 hours. At least 20 Paoli-Thorndale trains were annulled and a host of others severely delayed. Buses were sent to rescue stranded passengers, and other riders were bused from 30th Street Station. Amtrak got one track open at Ardmore by 8:30 PM and could run some Harrisburg trains, but full SEPTA service was not restored until 5:10 AM Friday. Some deadhead trains were allowed to move before that time to get equipment to Thorndale.

The following evening, Friday, March 11, a brush fire near the tracks at Holmesburg Junction—the second recent fire in that area—caused some disruptions. Four Trenton trains were delayed for up to an hour. That weekend, March 12-13, saw heavy travel on many Regional Rail lines due to the closing days of the Philadelphia Flower Show at the Convention Center, resulting in numerous minor delays. Sunday saw even more travel because that was the day of the annual St. Patrick's Day parade on the Parkway. Late-night service on the Paoli-Thorndale line was slowed on Monday the 14th, after eastbound AMTRAK train #622 hit a trespasser just east of Malvern station. It was not a fatality so there was no extended shutdown.

Signal problems on AMTRAK in "Zoo" interlocking early on Wednesday morning, March 16, caused the suspension of all Cynwyd service during the day and delayed many Paoli-Thorndale trains for up to 20 minutes. Cynwyd passengers were

handled on shuttle buses to and from Overbrook station. A temporary loss of catenary power on the Norristown Line around 3 PM that same day resulted in several delays, and a disabled train #6378 at Jefferson Station took a track out of service during the afternoon rush. Then, at 7:25 PM on Thursday, March 17, a female trespasser was struck and killed by a deadheading train near the Levittown station. The train was enroute from Trenton to center city. The accident caused the suspension of Trenton service with six trains annulled, as well as delays to AMTRAK trains.



As planned, AMTRAK in early March began activating its Positive Train Control system, known as ACSES, on the Harrisburg line. The initial section to be converted was between Parkesburg and Harrisburg, with the work to be extended eastward in sections. This has created a problem for trains 43/42 **Pennsylvanian** because very few of Amtrak's P42 diesel fleet are equipped with ACSES speed control equipment. So in recent weeks the P42's were being led by an ACS-64 electric locomotive between Harrisburg and Philadelphia, a very unusual sightThe last of AMTRAK's 30-year-old AEM-7's have or soon will make their last runs on the Northeast Corridor, now that construction of all 70 new ACS-64 locomotives has been completed. One of the last AEM-7's in service, #927, made a run from Boston to Washington on March 1, and was set aside the next day.

AMTRAK announced last month that after eight years its popular National Train Day celebration has been discontinued. The event, which took place in many venues across the country, always drew large crowds to 30th Street Station. The Amtrak Exhibit Train tour, however, will continue with a scheduled event later this month in St. Paul, MN..... An AMTRAK maintenance worker was struck and killed by an NJ TRANSIT train early on on Tuesday, March 1, near New Brunswick.

Drexel University President John Fry last month revealed some details about the school's ambitious \$3.5-billion Schuylkill Yards plan, which would completely transform the 14-acre area west of 30th Street Station with new development and green space. Drexel, AMTRAK and several other parties also are working on a \$5-million study of a long-term plan to build above the 175 acres owned by Amtrak north of the station, including the Penn Coach yard (see *Cinders* February 2015, November 2013). There is a website that covers the long-term plan: www.phillydistrict30.com. The Schuylkill Yards project rated a front-page story in the March 3 *Inquirer*, complete with an artist's rendering in color. One of its many features would be a new underground concourse to link Amtrak's station with SEPTA's 30th Street subway station.

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CSX, NS OTHER ROADS

At the clock was ticking down toward a March 13 strike against NJ TRANSIT rail operations, management and the 17 rail unions agreed to a tentative deal to avoid the shutdown. The agreement still had to be ratified by union members. Governor Christie said that he did not want to see a spike in ticket prices as a result of the settlement, and that with the deal "we avert a strike and the damage it would do to our economy."

The nasty fight between CANADIAN PACIFIC and NORFOLK SOUTHERN over CP's proposed takeover continues unabated (see March *Cinders* and previous issues). The NS board has repeatedly rejected the terms of the deal as pushed by CP's aggressive Chairman E. Hunter Harrison, who now wants NS shareholders to demand at next month's annual meeting that negotiations begin. Last month, in response to a CP petition for a declaratory order on the matter, the Surface Transportation Board issued a decision specifying the dates by which responses to the petition be filed and when CP's rebuttal must be submitted. (Both the STB and the Canadian regulatory agencies would need to approve this merger.) CP also threatened to sue other Class I railroads—presumably BNSF, CSX and UNION PACIFIC—for allegedly working together to thwart the CP-NS union. The *Wall Street Journal* also reported that Harrison had again made overtures to CSX, but CSX CEO Michael Ward told *Trains* Magazine that he didn't see many synergies to be had in end-to-end mergers, and that "We're better off without the bumps and grinds of railroad mergers." Harrison also said that he questioned FedEx's "significant concerns" about a CP-NS merger, as expressed by FedEx in a letter to the STB. Earlier, competitor UPS had said that it was opposed to the merger.

In another effort to streamline its operations, NS last month said that it was cutting its operating regions from three to two, effective March 15. The Northern, Eastern and Western Regions were reorganized into the Northern Region encompassing five divisions, and the Southern Region with five divisions. The Harrisburg Division operating in the Pennsylvania-New Jersey area will be a part of the Northern Region. Earlier this year NS combined its Virginia and Pocahontas Divisions into a larger Pocahontas Division (*Trains*).....NS has begun scrapping the last of its 45-unit fleet of General Electric B32-8's. They were built in 1989 (*Trains*).

As is well known by anyone who buys gas these days, the price of crude oil has dropped precipitously over the past year. This means that the volume of crude oil moved by rail from North Dakota and other sources has declined due to the lower prices, as

foreign crude arriving by tanker ships has again become competitive with domestic producers. This means fewer unit oil trains through our region to points such as Delaware City, DE, Eddystone, PA and Westville, NJ. There has been a major cut in the number of oil trains moving over SEPTA's Airport Line to Eddystone in recent months, which seems to have quelled the dispute over restrictions imposed by SEPTA on the movement of those trains. But if world oil prices increase significantly once again, empty tank cars could be taken out of storage in the near future and returned to active service.

STRASBURG RAIL ROAD soon will be using a green-and-cream GP9 to substitute for its one diesel, black ex-New York Central SW8 #8618. Ex-Maine Eastern #764 will be moved to Strasburg while 8618 receives new wheels and upgraded traction motors. The 764 is being leased from owner MORRISTOWN & ERIE (*Trains*).....READING & NORTHERN has begun work at its Port Clinton (PA) shop to restore ex-Reading T-1 #2102 for excursion service. The big 4-8-4 has been stored at Port Clinton since 1998. It became famous during the legendary Reading Iron Horse Rambles between 1959 and 1964.....Chapter Member James Mundy, who is director of education & programming at the Union League of Philadelphia, was the subject of a story on the first page of the *Inquirer's* local section on March 13. Complete with photo, Jim was interviewed on the importance of the Civil War in Philadelphia, which he said should be recognized along with the city's fame as birthplace of the nation during the Revolutionary War.

**2016 NRHS Convention
Denver, Colorado
July 19-24, 2016**

Amtrak Says National Train Day is Done Due to Financial Challenges

After eight years, "America's Railroad" has pulled the plug on one of its more successful promotions: National Train Day. The event began in 2008 as a way to spread information to the public about the advantages of rail travel and the history of railroading in the United States. It was held each year on the Saturday closest to May 10, the anniversary of the Golden Spike, which marked the completion of the first transcontinental railroad in 1869.

Amtrak Spokesman Marc Maglieri was quoted, "Since its inception, Amtrak Trains Days/National Train Day has been a popular program, allowing us to celebrate the value that Amtrak brings to local communities nationwide. In light of the financial challenges we are currently facing, we have chosen not to continue the Amtrak Train Days program and to prioritize our resources more efficiently. We would like to thank everyone who devoted their time and effort over the years to making these celebrations of Amtrak and passenger train travel a success."

It is believed that the popular Amtrak Exhibit Train will continue; it is scheduled to make its first appearance of 2016 at Union Depot Train Days in St. Paul, MN April 30-May 1.

Trolley and Electrified Commuter Rail Crossings in the Philadelphia Area - 1930-1940

by Harry Garforth

Trolley companies and railroads had many battles over crossings of their respective lines throughout history. Safety was cited as a chief concern for railroad employees with electrified wires passing over railroad tracks at a relatively low elevation. Track maintenance was also a concern where long freight trains impacted rails at gap points allowing the trolley wheels to pass. In some cases competition with lower cost passenger service was also a concern for railroads.

In Philadelphia, where a large trolley network operated, there were many crossings with railroads, however few were on main lines with higher train speeds. The one crossing which has remained in service at 9th & Main Streets in Darby, allows SEPTA Route 11 to pass over the CSX's Philadelphia Subdivision. This crossing has been redesigned to allow trolley wheels to ride up and over the main line rails requiring no gap in the railroad track.

Other locations where crossings were established usually involved lower speed railroad operations. One example is Washington Avenue in South Philadelphia where several north/south trolley routes bounced across multiple railroad tracks. Derailments and trolley de-wirements were a common occurrence.

As passenger rail networks were formed, it was also common to find trolley crossings near station locations. The Reading Railroad commuter lines radiating out of Reading Terminal included many crossings. North of Spring Garden Street, Reading's trunk line included several streetcar crossings (except Columbia & Lehigh Avenues) until the railroad was elevated above streets as far as Wayne Junction during a seven year period, 1906 to 1913. The Seventeenth Street overhead Bridge was also constructed in the early 1900's.

The elevation of the 9th Street Branch grew out of a partnership with the City of Philadelphia to eliminate at-grade crossings. The grade separation of the City Branch during the 1893-1898 period was another major project undertaken by this partnership. Individual crossing elimination efforts included the Reading's trackage at Wyoming Avenue near Second Street (next to PTC's offices and trolley backshop).

Out on the Reading Railroad branch lines, crossings continue to exist. The Norristown Branch passed one at 22nd Street Station with Route 33, and two more in Norristown with the Schuylkill Valley Traction Company on Dekalb and Main Streets. On other branches, crossings existed at Cheltenham Avenue in Germantown, Old York Road in Willow Grove and Oxford Road in Fox Chase.

On the PRR side, almost all lines were grade separated with trolley lines with the exception of Dekalb Street in Norristown and Cheltenham Avenue in Germantown which was eliminated prior to 1918 when the branch was electrified.

When the railroads embarked upon electrification of their Philadelphia commuter lines, an engineering challenge was encountered on how to design an electrified crossing of the

trolley's 600 volts DC power lines with the 12,000 volts AC of the railroad lines. Insulation between the two power supplies created dead sections within the crossings requiring both trolleys and electric trains to coast through unpowered.

Surprisingly three of these crossings existed in the Philadelphia area. The Pennsylvania Railroad operated through one at Dekalb Street in Norristown with a Schuylkill Valley Traction Company route. It was short-lived as the PRR electrified the line on July 20, 1930 and the trolley service ended September 10, 1933. The Reading Railroad's electrification of their parallel Norristown Branch began operation on January 30th, 1933 using a bridge over Dekalb Street.

The second was created when the Reading Railroad electrified the New Hope Branch to Hatboro in 1931. Trolley Route 55 operated up Old York Road from the city to Willow Grove Terminal until 1940 when the service was converted to bus. The nine year duration of the crossing is the longest of the three examples. Trolley Route 6 also served Willow Grove Terminal until 1958, but it crossed over the New Hope Branch at a three level crossing (road, trolley, and railroad) at Moreland Road.

The third trolley crossing was created when the Reading's Norristown branch was electrified. At 22nd Street Station, PTC Route 33 intersected the catenary of the Norristown Branch.

Although the Reading had embarked on major grade separation efforts to eliminate grade crossings on the Norristown Branch at Wissahickon, Manayunk and Norristown before starting electrified service in 1933, the 22nd Street grade separation was not completed until 1938, five years later. Ironically, Route 60 on Allegheny Avenue was not operated across the tracks, but stopped short forcing passengers to walk across the tracks to continue their ride on a shuttle to 35th Street designated Route 60A from 1923 until 1939.

Was there a fourth short lived electrified railroad crossing? A question remains concerning Main Street in Norristown. Did the Reading's electrification of their Norristown Branch extend to Elm Street originally on February 5, 1933, or was this portion deferred until the pending discontinuance of the trolley service on September 10, 1933? An April 24, 1933 Reading Railroad Norristown public timetable indicates that the new Elm Street Station was served by electric trains, providing evidence that a fourth electrified crossing did exist!

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

The Caboose

by Peter Vaira

"There is nothing like the caboose. It captures the tradition and romance of railroading." Those are words Brian Solomon and John Gruber, authors of *Caboose*, published by MBI Publishing Company, from which a great many of the facts related in this article were taken.

The history of the origin of the caboose is somewhat vague. There is a popular tale that Nate Williams, a conductor of the Auburn & Syracuse Railroad in New York in the 1830's, needed a place on his freight trains to do paperwork. The conductor also needed room to keep lanterns, lantern oil, flags and other equipment for displays for delays, and signaling, which were common at the time before the use of the telegraph in railroad operations. He requisitioned an old box car to serve as his office and equipment car. This was supposedly the start of the caboose. By the 1850's trains needed room to carry extra brakemen, as there were no airbrakes, and the brakemen needed to be located somewhere on the moving train to climb from car to car setting and releasing brakes. This was in addition to having a place for the conductor to do his paperwork. There was hardly any room for such persons in the cab of the locomotive. Thus the caboose was a necessity.

The caboose with a cupola is said to have originated on the Chicago & North Western. T. B. Watson, a conductor, was taken off his regular route and as a result lost his regular caboose. On the new route all that was available was an old boxcar. Watson discovered that there was a hole in the roof of the boxcar. He found a way to poke his head through the opening, and was amazed at the view this gave him of the entire train. At that time the conductor needed to watch the moving train for defects, hot boxes, dragging equipment and loose lading. It is said that Watson went to the car shop and requested that they convert the regular cabooses to include extended openings for the conductors to view the trains. Thus the cupolas were gradually built to what that appendage became.

The early cabooses were four-wheelers, known as "bobbies" because of their rough bouncing ride. Because of lesser cost, the four-wheelers were continually built for many years. There are many preserved four-wheelers in museums and siding displays in public parks. The Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden has several well-preserved narrow-gauge four-wheelers. There is a special four-wheeler from the Albany & Susquehanna on display in Oneonta, New York. It is Number 10, and was the meeting place of trainmen in 1883 when a union was formed which became the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen.

As freight cars became taller, it became more difficult to build cabooses high enough for good view from a cupola, especially where there were low clearances. Trainmen complained that the cupolas became overheated. Thus emerged the "side bay" caboose. The Baltimore & Ohio was a pioneer in the construction of the side-bay caboose, with some models appearing as early as 1929. The B&O built 125 between 1941 and 1945. The New York Central acquired hundreds of them after World War II.

Eventually special needs caused the introduction of the steel caboose. Steel cabooses had the advantage of the strength to

withstand a helper engine behind for heavy grades, with the ease of uncoupling at the top of the grade, permitting the regular manifest to continue with little delay. There were many instances of wooden cabooses being crushed by power helper engines.

The transfer caboose is a very utilitarian car for short distance switching and yard work. These are usually a small shed with windows, which provided weather protection, a place for eating lunch, or operation breaks, situated on a type of flat car. These are used for short distance trains of mixed freight cars for pick up and drop off on industrial sidings. They are also found in large assembly yards for convenience of a crew serving a switch engine. As there is a lot of switching, the transfer cabooses have large open spaces on each end for brakemen who must get on and off frequently.

Changes in technology and railroad procedures, and the roles of the men riding the caboose gradually made them obsolete. In the 1980's most railroads withdrew cabooses from regular service; but the caboose is still used in certain operations. There is a need for a caboose on the end of certain very long freight trains or local freight trains with complicated switching assignments. Work trains require them where there is a need for a number of workmen with different skills, such as rail laying trains of trains with specialized rail maintenance assignments. The Department of Defense requires cabooses on trains carrying hazardous materials, where emergency maintenance personnel are necessary. Hopefully the caboose will remain in limited operation; railroading will not be the same without it.

The book, *Caboose*, is available in hardback from Amazon for \$10.00.

(From the same Summer of 1941 issue of the National Railway Bulletin that an article on Philadelphia Chapter in 1941 appeared, the AAR notice below was printed advising of potential terrorism around rail property - 75 years ago!! It is interesting.)

ATTENTION ALL N. R. H. S. MEMBERS

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN RAILROADS

33606

Office of the President

TRANSPORTATION BUILDING

WASHINGTON, D. C.

Robert S. Henry,
Assistant to the President

TO ALL RAILFANS:

As every railfan knows, the railroads are playing an important role in the national defense program. They are moving huge quantities of defense materials and supplies (manufactured in carefully guarded factories) and large numbers of troops. It is absolutely essential to national security that this transportation job—which only the railroads can do—be done safely and speedily.

Under these conditions, the railroads feel that, for the time being, they must discontinue the practice of permitting outsiders to inspect railroad plants and facilities and to photograph railroad equipment and facilities. The restriction will, of course, have to be applied to everyone without favor or discrimination, including groups of college students and members of railroad "fan" clubs.

Because we realize that this new development will temporarily hamper some railfan activities, we are writing to all of our railfan friends so that they may be assured that this step has been taken only after due consideration of their interests. At the same time we want to ask for the understanding and cooperation of all railfans so that there will be no obstacle to a prompt resumption of railfan-railroad cooperation when the need for this restriction on visiting railroad facilities and photographing railroad equipment has passed.

Every real railfan will agree, I believe, that the railroads would be derelict in their duty to the people of America if they didn't take every possible precaution to safeguard railroad plants and facilities and the movement of national defense materials and supplies, and troops and equipment. And even though railfan activities may be temporarily curtailed by this restriction, I believe that the railroads can count on the fullest cooperation and the sympathetic understanding of the railfans.

Very truly yours,

ROBERT S. HENRY.